

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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A QUESTION FOR THREE.

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## A Sermon

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C. H. SPURGEON,

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"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"—John ix. 35.\*

THIS blind man, whose eyes Christ had opened, was a very shrewd-headed fellow and wonderfully straightforward and determined. What he did know could not be beaten out of him, neither could he be led to draw unfair inferences from what he knew. He would hold to what he clearly saw to be the fact. He believed Jesus to be a prophet sent of God, and he stuck to his belief whatever the Pharisees might say. Now I believe that is the kind of man to learn more. The man who knows something, and yet trifles with it, is not likely to be further instructed of God. Nothing is more displeasing to him than trifling with what you have already learned, tampering with your conscience, not following the guidance of the light which you have already received. But to him that hath, and that uses aright what he hath, more shall be given, and he shall have abundance. The honest and good ground was the sort of soil in which Jesus loved to sow the good seed of the kingdom, so he thought it was worth his while to search for this man whom the Pharisees had excommunicated, that he might still further instruct him in divine truth. O dear hearers, as far as ever you have received the light, act up to it, and praise God for the light that he has given you. If you value the moonlight, he will give you sunlight before long. But be upright, straight, honest, and sincere before the Lord, for he looks with hopefulness to the true and the upright, for these are the people whom he is most likely to bless.

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\* Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, upon this question, are as follows:—*Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1,088 (double number), "The Essence of Simplicity;" No. 2,141, "The Question of Questions;" No. 2,667, "A Pressed Man Yielding to Christ;" and No. 3,008, "An All-important Question."

I. Our Saviour, having found this man, put to him the question in my text, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" This question I am going to consider with you as the Holy Spirit shall help us; and, first, I see here AN EXAMPLE OF WISE PERSONAL ENQUIRY.

*Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke to this man personally because he meant to do him good.* He did not invite him to listen to a sermon, though that also might have done him good; but he got him alone, and put to him this pointed, personal question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Christian people, this agency, which Christ himself used, you ought to employ more than you do. Talk to people personally and pointedly. Push them up in a corner from which they cannot easily escape. Whenever a sermon is preached, it is the preacher's duty to apply it to his hearers; but it is quite as much the duty of his Christian hearers to apply it to each unconverted person present by asking, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Get hold of a man's button-hole, and do not let him go until you have put to him this personal question. Sunday-school teachers should do this to each child in their classes; perhaps their work just needs that finishing stroke to make it effective. Parents especially should do this with every boy and girl in their family. It should be close personal work with each one. Teaching may be general, but it should always be followed by a personal catechizing of those who have been taught.

*Our Saviour put this question to the man when they were alone.* He did not ask him this while there were dozens of people around them; it might have been very awkward for the man if he had done so. But, getting him quite by himself, Christ said to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" You also, dear friends, will find this to be a very useful way of working for Christ, because it will often bring men to a crisis. They are, possibly, halting between two opinions. Perhaps, in their own minds, they have a sort of notion that they do believe in Jesus, and yet they really do not; so, when they are pointedly requested to say whether they do or do not believe in him, it helps them to understand their true position, and very frequently it drives them out of a wrong position into a right one. In the case of the man whose eyes Christ had opened, the question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" led to the discovery of a very serious flaw in his condition. He was spiritually ignorant, he did not know the Saviour even though he was standing close beside him, and talking to him. He said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" That lamentable ignorance on his part might not have been discovered by him if the question had not been so pointedly and plainly put to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" That question led to the removal of his ignorance, brought him into clearer light, and ended in his saying, "Lord, I believe," and in his falling down to worship the Saviour of whose Deity he had just before been ignorant.

May I, then, without enlarging upon this point, earnestly urge upon my Christian brethren and sisters the wisdom of often using this agency of pushing the individual sinner up into a corner, and

saying to him, "Dost thou believe?" When we are publicly instructing people, we are very often like persons who are building a great bonfire. We bring barrels, and faggots, and coals, and I know not what, and keep on heaping up the pile, yet there is no bonfire. What we need is a match to set light to the pile; and, very often, that pointed, personal question, "Dost thou believe?" pressed right home upon the individual hearer, is just like the lighted match thrust in among the combustible materials, and so the instruction already given becomes profitable and effective. Have you ever used this agency, dear friends? I believe that, in many cases, parents go on with family prayer, and instructing their children in divine things; yet their boy is not a decided Christian because his father does not take him into the study, or into the little quiet parlour, and put his arms round his neck, and pray for him, and say to him, "My dear boy, have you really given yourself to Jesus Christ?" And when a mother does that, oh, how many boys and girls have been brought to Jesus by those earnest personal enquiries from a mother whose tearful eyes give still greater force to her loving entreaties! I think that most Sunday-school teachers will tell you that, when they have persistently charged home the truth—of course, all other points being attended to as well,—when they have persistently charged home the truth upon the individual conscience, they have seen greater immediate results than they have had from their more general teaching. I pray God to make us ministers more personal in our preaching. I have sometimes felt, when I have heard a sermon, as if the people whom that sermon concerned must have lived in the moon or on the planet Saturn, but that they certainly did not live down here on this earth. The congregation was addressed as though we were all very good respectable people, and if the preacher had told us what we really were, somebody would have been sure to exclaim, "I can't hear such a preacher as that; he is so shockingly personal." But to be personal, in the sense of being faithful to each one of our hearers, is a mark of excellence in a Christian minister; and instead of being condemned for being thus personal, we should be commended for being what we were intended to be. We were sent by God to be personal, and to deliver personal messages, as Nathan did to David when he said to him, "Thou art the man." I wish it were possible for us, in a wise and prudent manner, to be more closely personal than we ever have been, and so to imitate our Saviour's example of wise personal enquiry when he said to this man, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

II. Now, secondly, anyone who is thoughtful can perceive, in our Saviour's question, AN INDICATION OF THE VITAL POINT OF CHARACTER.

Jesus Christ said to this man, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" *He had been aggrieved by the conduct of the Pharisees;* they would not believe him, they had been prejudiced against him, and they had put him out of the synagogue; so Jesus Christ seemed to say to him, "Yes, I see how wrongly they have acted

towards you, and I see how truthful and courageous you have been; but the Pharisees do not believe on me, and that is the reason of their prejudice against me; but do *you believe* on me?" It is quite possible for you not to take part with sceptics and opposers of the gospel, and yet, after all, you may not be yourself a believer in Christ. So I put the question again to each one of you, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" I want this question to come home to you, good, amiable, excellent people, who never did oppose Jesus Christ in your whole lives, and who do not intend to do so; and who are very vexed that there should be any Pharisees who do such things. Still, do you really believe in Jesus Christ yourselves? That is the vital point. It is not enough to be a non-opposer, you must personally be an adherent of the Lord Jesus Christ, for he said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

*This man had also been suffering for Jesus Christ's sake.* He had been browbeaten and abused by the Pharisees, and now he had been put out of the synagogue. But Jesus seems to say to him, "Yes, it is well that you should suffer for the truth's sake, and for believing that I am a prophet; but that is not enough. 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?'" Some of you, perhaps, will persist in attending a place of worship, though you have to suffer a great deal at home because of it; and you continue to read the Bible and other religious books though you get laughed at for doing it; and you come regularly to the prayer-meetings and the week-night services though there are many who consider you foolish for doing so. All that is well, but it is not enough. You might even give your body to be burnt for Christ's sake, but if you had not faith in him, you would not thereby be saved. This is the point, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

*This man could have replied to Christ's question, "I believe that thou art a prophet."* But Jesus would still have said to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" To believe that Jesus is a good man, and a great prophet, and that he was sent of God, is not enough. Saving faith lays hold upon both Christ's humanity and his Deity. We must believe in him as the Son of Mary and the Son of God, truly Son of man, yet just as truly Son of God. There must be genuine faith in the Deity of the Saviour, or I do not see anything in the Word of God which gives even a glimmer of hope to the soul, so I press home the question upon each one here, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "Well," says someone, "I believe the Bible; I am not an opponent of Christ; and I have even suffered for Christ's sake." So far, so good; but "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Hast thou given up all other ground of hope, and committed thy soul's eternal interests to that atoning sacrifice which alone can reconcile thee to God, and enable God to look upon thee with favour? If thou hast, it is well; but if thou hast not, it is far from well with thy soul.

*This man might have said, "I have had my eyes opened; I was blind, but now I see;"* yet Christ, who had opened his eyes, said to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Perhaps someone

here says, "I have given up drunkenness." I am glad to hear it, as glad as I am to hear that this blind man's eyes were opened. "Well," says another, "I am very different from what I was twelve months ago. Through attending the means of grace, I have become, I trust, respectable, whereas before I was disreputable and given over to every evil thing." I am glad of it, I say again, as glad as when I read that this blind man's eyes were opened. But, my dear friend, that is not the main point. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Morality is excellent as far as it goes, but without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and holiness far exceeds mere morality. Holiness can only be produced by a real change of heart, and that real change of heart can only come through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit which manifests itself through faith in Jesus Christ. Moral changes are commendable, and we would be the last to say a word against them; but just as silver is not gold, so morality is not holiness, and the message we have still to deliver is this, "Ye must be born again." So we press the question of the text home upon the conscience of everyone here because it concerns the vital point of faith in Christ. I am convinced that this question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" is the most important question that a man can ever have to answer; this is vitally and overwhelmingly important. "I am a Churchman," says one. "I am a Nonconformist," says another. "I am a Calvinist," says one. "I am an Arminian," says another. Well now, I am not going to ask you anything about your belief on any of these points, though I know what I think is the right view concerning all of them. But I can tell you that you may go to heaven or you may go to hell either as a Churchman or as a Nonconformist, as a Calvinist or as an Arminian; but if you believe on Jesus Christ, you shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of his hands. It is believing on him that is the all-important point, so I still urge each one of you to answer the question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

III. Thirdly, the text seems to me to give a HINT AS TO THE REASONABLENESS OF BELIEVING IN JESUS CHRIST.

Our Saviour seems to say to this man, not in words, but in reality, "You have had your eyes opened, a great deal has been done for you; now, do you believe on the Son of God? It is a natural inference, from the opening of the eyes of a man who has been born blind, that the One who has opened them is Divine; have you perceived that great truth? Do you see it now?" "Why," I think I hear you all say, "he ought to see it. There ought certainly to be, in such a miracle as that, enough to convince him; he has been all his life in darkness, and now he has had his eyes opened, so that he who opened his eyes must be the Son of God." Very well, but what about yourselves? You say that you believe the Bible; then how is it that you do not believe on the Son of God? You say that the testimony of God in Scripture is true; then why do you not believe it? Why do you not trust your soul to him who you know is able to save you? You know what faith is; then why do you not exercise it? You know that

the things which you are bidden to believe are true; then how is it that you do not believe these things? Some of you have heard the gospel preached many hundreds of times. A hundred and more times every year I have tried to batter away at the doors of your hearts, and sometimes you have been a great deal impressed by the truth that you have heard. You have gone home, and prayed over the sermon, or you have sat here, and wept under it. You have said truly that God has come very near to you; then how is it that you have not believed in him? You have, perhaps, seen your daughter saved. Your wife also you know to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have seen your sister brought to Jesus, you remember what wonders of grace God wrought for your old father, and how triumphantly your dear mother went home to heaven. You believe that all this is true; then you are no atheist, no sceptic. You believe that Jesus Christ can save you, and you also believe that he will save you if you trust him; what reason can there be then why you do not trust him? I sometimes hear a person say, "I cannot believe." Cannot believe the truth? Do not tell me such a falsehood as that. A thing is true, then who dares to say that he cannot believe it? When you say that you cannot believe, it is a shamefully mean way of saying that you will not believe. God is true, and all that God says is true; and it seems to me that, being true, God ought to be believed, and all that God says ought to be believed. If a man says to me, when I state a thing positively to him, "That is not true," I am not angry with him, because it is clear to me that he does not know me, and he may think that I can lie, and I have no right to expect a good character from him until he knows me. But when he knows me, and has become my friend, and has found out my true character, if he then says to me, "I do not believe you," I feel hurt. But when a man says concerning what God himself declares, "I do not believe it," that is to charge God with lying, and is such a great sin that God justly says, "He that believeth not is condemned already,"—as he rightly deserves to be,—"because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

It is very sad to think that men will not believe the very God who made them. A friend who is here from Edinburgh told me, this afternoon, a pretty story, which I wish I could tell you in Scotch, but it was somewhat to this effect. A Christian man, walking down Princes Street, Edinburgh, one night saw a sight that attracted his attention. An old man and an old woman were evidently looking for somebody, so he asked them for whom they were looking. They said they were looking for their poor girl, who was out upon the streets, leading a life of shame. He waited to see what would happen. By-and-by, they found her, and her father took hold of her with both his hands, and said to her, "Lassie, will you no come home to your own father and mother?" She would not go home with them, but went away to her sin. Well now, it seems to me that God appears thus to lay hold of sinners, and say to them, "Will you not come home to me in heaven? Will you not come to my Son, Jesus Christ, who died to save just such

sinner as you? Will you not yield to that gracious Spirit who loves to bring sinners to Jesus?" Christ seems to me to put it so to this man, "Your eyes have been opened; do you not believe on the Son of God?" And he bids me remind you that you have had warnings, entreaties, invitations, privileges, you have seen the hand of God stretched out on your behalf, then will you not believe on his Son? Surely you are unreasonable if you do not.

IV. But I must pass on. The text seems to me to give, in the fourth place, A SUGGESTION AS TO THE BEST GROUND FOR COMFORT TO A MAN WHO IS IN TROUBLE.

Look at the man whose eyes Christ had opened. The Pharisees had cast him out of the synagogue, and the consequence of his excommunication would be that nobody would employ him. "Oh, you are the man who was put out of the synagogue, are you not?" "Yes." "Well then, I can give you no work." He goes to an old friend, and asks for entertainment, but the friend says, "I am sorry, but I cannot suffer you to tarry in my house. You have been put out of the synagogue; and if I harbour you in my house, I also shall be excommunicated. You are now cut off from Israel, so I cannot have anything to do with you." So this poor outcast man, as he stands there, is full of trouble. Jesus Christ comes to him, and in order to comfort him he says, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"—as much as to say, "If thou dost, never mind the rest."

*Jesus did not ask him to comfort himself with the thought that he had done the right thing, and had been straightforward about it; and if they had put him out, he could bear it, for he had done the right thing. There is some comfort in that thought; but if we had no comfort except what we could get out of what we ourselves had done, it would be a miserable comfort indeed. Jesus did not say to this man, "Well, you are not like those prejudiced Pharisees who have put you out of the synagogue." There are some people who can always get comfort out of the badness of other people. They say, "Well, we are glad we are not like old So-and-so." Jesus did not wish him to get comfort in that way, and he did not say to him, "Well, poor man, they have put you out of the synagogue, but they cannot hang you, and they cannot stone you; they have done as much as they can to injure you." There are some people who say, "Well, they have done all they can now; they cannot do anything more to me;" and they seem to be turned into Timons, men-haters, who hate their species, and seem to get comfort for themselves by defying all mankind beside. That is not the way to get comfort.*

If you have been treated badly,—if you are the odd one in the family,—if everybody tries to take advantage of you,—if you have been slandered,—if your mistress is harsh and unkind,—if your master is tyrannical,—if your fellow-clerks make you the butt of their jests, do not try to get comfort from any of the sources I have indicated, though a great many do so, but answer this question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" If thou dost, then thou art saved, and thou mayest well rejoice in that fact. Believer, you are one with Christ; rejoice in that. Your affliction

is borne by Christ as well as by yourself; rejoice in that. And rejoice also that, as Christ is with you in your suffering, you will be with him in his glory. Even now, he has fellowship with you in your low estate, so rejoice in that. You have to go home to-night to those who mock at your religion, those who have no sympathy with you, whose every word is a taunt, and whose every look is a sneer. Then, when you get home, sit down quietly by yourself, and say, "My name is written in heaven, for I do believe on the Son of God; and though the world knows me not, I remember that it knew him not; it is enough for me to share the lot that was my Lord's, for the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. Believing in Jesus, I can bear and forbear, and wait until the glory is revealed, for Jesus will never fail me, nor forsake me."

If there are any of you in great trouble, I would like to remind you of this fact, that *faith in Jesus is the best cure for every care, the best balm for every wound*. Get you away to Jesus; at the foot of his cross is the best place for mourners. All our other sorrows die where Jesu's sorrows are revealed. Faith in Christ is what you need beyond everything else.

V. The last point is this. When our Saviour asked the man whose eyes he had opened, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" it was AN INCITEMENT TO THE MAN TO CONFESS HIS LORD.

Jesus seemed to say to him, "Do not hide that great truth; do not keep that precious treasure to thyself." And straightway the man said, "Lord, I believe;" and then, next, he practically proved that he meant what he said by falling down and worshipping the Lord. My dear fellow-Christians, there may be some of you who have lately been converted to Christ, but you have kept the good news to yourself. Now, believe me, if it is genuine faith in Christ, you cannot conceal it. A man may put fire into the middle of a stack of hay, and tell it not to shine, lest somebody should try to put it out. But it is not in the nature of fire to hide itself, so you will soon see the blaze. It is said that fire and a cough and love cannot be hidden; and, certainly, that is true of the holiest sort of love, love to Jesus. It is sure to reveal itself somehow or other.

I knew a man who thought he would go to heaven alone, and never tell anybody that he was a Christian; but he lived in a village where there was a prayer-meeting, and he stole in once, and he liked it so much that he went again, and sat in a quiet corner where he thought nobody would see him; but the brother who was conducting the meeting said, "Will that friend in the corner be kind enough to engage in prayer?" He shook his head; he was like a snail in his shell, and he did not mean to come out in that public fashion; but when he got outside, he thought to himself, "I am afraid I have almost denied the Lord Jesus by refusing to pray when I might have done so. However," he thought, "if I am asked again, (I hope I shall not be,) I think I will just pray, but I shall not say much." He was asked another time, but again he was very timid, and he did not pray; so, after the service, the leader said to him, "I am glad to see you here, dear friend, though

you do not pray with us. Do you like to be here?" He answered, "Oh, yes, I enjoy it very much." "Then," said the other, "I trust you know something about the Lord." And, almost before he realized what he was doing, he had told all his secret out. He could not help it; and what is there, after all, that we should want to hide? If I really love my Saviour, and anybody says to me, "Thou also art one of his disciples," I ought gladly to answer, "Yes, yes, yes; and if he is not ashamed to own me as his disciple, I cannot be ashamed to own him as my Master. Oh, that I may never put him to shame! And, certainly, to confess him as my Saviour shall never make me ashamed."

Why is it that some of you, who do believe in Jesus, are so backward in confessing your faith in him? Do not profess to believe if you do not; but if you do believe in Jesus, I ask again, why are you so backward in confessing your faith? Jesus Christ said to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." And then he told them what gospel to preach, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." You see the two parts of it. "Ah!" say you, "you Baptists make a great deal of baptism." We Baptists do not make any more of baptism than the Lord Jesus Christ has done; but I was not talking about Baptists, I was talking about the words of the Lord Jesus Christ as they are recorded in the New Testament. He says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Is not that plain? Someone asks, "Can we not be saved without being baptized?" I am not going to answer such a question as that; my business is to bid you listen to what Jesus Christ says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Give good heed to what Christ says, and raise no questions concerning it. For my part, I am going to run no risks, and therefore I take the whole passage just as it stands. My Master alone knows the relative importance of the two parts of the message, but I am bound to deliver his message just as I have received it. Suppose I send a servant to my front door with a message, and the person to whom it is sent says to her, "Your master did not mean all that," she would naturally say, "I have nothing to do with what my master means; I have only to tell you what he said." So say I concerning what my Master said, and what he said was, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" and he has also said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, (which is there the same thing as not confessing him,) him will I also deny (or, not confess) before my Father which is in heaven." Come along then, you who have been hiding yourselves; come forth, and confess that Jesus Christ is yours.

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### Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

#### JOHN IX.

Verse 1. *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.*

Therefore the man could not see Jesus, but the more important matter was that Christ could see the blind man. And you, dear heart, may not yet have learned to look on Christ, but he can look on you in your blindness, and a look from him will speedily work a wondrous change in you.

2. *And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*

Many of Christ's disciples are still occupied in asking questions that serve no practical purpose, like this one, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3. *Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents:*

That is to say, sin on their part was not the cause of his blindness.

3. *But that the works of God should be made manifest in him.\**

Human nature is a platform for the manifestation of divine work. The more in need you are, dear friend, the more room there is for God's mercy to operate upon you.

4—7. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.†*

Christ used very simple means to cure this man's blindness, very unlikely means, apparently, to produce the desired effect. It might have seemed, indeed, that the man would have been more in the dark than ever when his eyes were plastered over with clay; yet the Lord chose to work in that way. And so, when the poor preacher feels as if he was nothing and nobody, and that his agency may rather hinder his Master's work than help him, yet still his Lord can work through his weakness, and get to himself glory notwithstanding his servant's infirmities.

8, 9. *The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.*

"There is no question about my identity; I am the same man whom you have seen sitting and begging, and I now come before you with my sight fully restored."

10, 11. *Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.*

It was only a short story, but it was very sweet to him, and he told it with no excess of detail, but with all its salient points. He was a sharp, shrewd man of few words, but those few words were weighty. Friend, when thou tellest the story of Christ and his love to thee, do not embellish it with flowers of speech. There is enough in what Christ has done to make it shine without any fine words of thine. The beauty of Christ's work is such that it is most adorned when unaorned.

12. *Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.*

There are a great many things concerning Christ which you may not know, but if you know that he has opened your eyes, you may be well content with the knowledge of that until he shall be pleased to reveal more about himself to you.

\* See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 2,309, "God's Works Made Manifest."

† See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1,977, "The Blind Beggar of the Temple, and his Wonderful Cure."

13. *They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.*

I am sure that this was a very distressing sight to them, for there was nothing that ever grieved their hearts more than for Christ's power to be displayed. They did not want to see the blind man whose eyes Christ had opened; if the miracle brought Christ any glory, it brought them just so much misery.

14, 15. *And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.*

That seemed to be the principal question with them; they always wanted to know the manner in which Christ's cures were wrought.

16. *He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.*

That is shorter than his previous account of the miracle. When Pharisees ask a carping question, the shorter the answer the better; it is a pity to cast pearls before swine.

16, 17. *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.*

He was a brave man, who dared to say what he believed whether he offended or pleased. He did not know much, but what he did know he did know, and he was quite certain about it. There are some men whose breadth of knowledge is as remarkable as its shallowness. It is like water upon the meadows when a river overflows its banks, and covers a wide area, but there is scarcely an inch of depth. Give us the narrower river that is deep, and that can bear onwards to the ocean a noble fleet, rather than the wide expanse of useless, shallow water.

18—21. *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.\**

They were timid, but they were also shrewd enough to let their son speak for himself, as he was quite able to do.

22—24. *These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.*

They thought they could get over him by giving him a little of what they called good advice: "Praise God, but be quiet concerning this man; depend upon it, he is a sinner."

25—28. *He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him,—*

Of course, that is the usual way with those who are in the wrong. Abuse the plaintiff when you cannot answer his case. "Then they reviled him,"—

\* See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1,393. "Speak for Yourself. A Challenge!"

28—30. *And said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.*

Where could he have come from but from God? Who could have wrought such a miracle unless he had been sent from God?

31—33. *Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

That was very forcibly spoken. Oh, that all of us, whose eyes Christ has opened, would speak for him as bravely as this man did! Our cure has been quite as clear and quite as notable as his was, so let us not be ashamed to testify for him before gainsayers and opposers.

34. *They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?*

“Such learned men as we are, with such culture and such penetration as we have, ‘dost thou teach us?’”

34. *And they cast him out.*

It was a great mercy for him that they did excommunicate him; one of the greatest blessings that could come to him was that of being cast out of the synagogue, and being cast out of the society of such men as those Pharisees were.

35. *Jesus heard that they had cast him out;—*

Jesus knew all that had happened to this man, but someone probably related the story to him; and our Lord knows all about each one of us, and he knows whether anyone here is suffering for his sake or for the truth's sake. Jesus knew that they had cast him out;—

35. *And when he had found him,—*

For he always finds those whom the world or false professors have cast out,—

35, 36. *He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?*

He was a sensible man, and he had the sense to perceive that knowledge rightly used leads to faith. He desired to know in order that he might believe; and if you ever say that you cannot believe, but are anxious to do so, then make enquiry as to what is to be believed, examine the evidence concerning it, and so faith will come to you by the operation of God's good Spirit.

37—40. *And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?*

“Are we blind?” It seemed impossible to them that it could be so. Jesus answered them with scathing words:—

41. *Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*

“If what you have done had been done in utter ignorance, you would have been comparatively guiltless; but you have sinned against light and knowledge, with a most determined antipathy to the grace of God, and therefore your sin remaineth in all its scarlet hue to condemn you.”