

## **ENTREATY ANSWERED, – BLIND EYES OPENED.**

MARK 10:46-52. – DEC. 9.

**"Lord, that I might receive my sight."**

WHILE PASSING along a road in the vicinity of Jericho, possibly going from the old city to the newer one of the same name, a great multitude following him, our Lord passed by two blind men, sitting begging by the wayside. (Mark mentions only one, the chief subject of the lesson, but Matthew mentions a companion.) Bartimeus, one of the two, as he heard the multitude passing and learned from some of them that they accompanied Jesus, the reputed Messiah, of whom he had no doubt heard before, was struck with the fact that his opportunity for a blessing was near at hand and rapidly passing from him. He began to cry out, his voice rising above the din of the multitude, saying, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Our Lord paid no heed at first, but passed on. The multitude rebuked the blind man, so to speak, saying, "You, poor beggar, should not thus cry out and annoy and seek to take the attention of so great a one as this, whom we verily believe to be the Messiah, and whose mission is the establishment of God's Kingdom; keep quiet!" But so much the more did he cry out for mercy. He longed for sight, and had faith to believe that the great Messiah might be prevailed upon to rescue him from darkness. Jesus stopped and gave the word to the multitude to bring the blind man to him. He might have gone to the blind man, or he might have lifted up his voice and spoken to the blind man, bidding him to come; but instead he chose to use instrumentalities – to give those about him an opportunity of sharing in the work of blessing. So the word was passed from one to another, and the blind man was helped forward and thus greater attention was brought to the whole miracle and to the divine power which it manifested. Those who had but a moment before upbraided the blind man for his temerity in expecting a blessing from the Messiah, now gladly bore the message

of hope to him, saying, "Be of good cheer! arise; he calleth thee." And he sprang up, casting away his outer robe that he might go the more quickly to Jesus for the blessing.

Everything connected with the case shows us that Bartimeus possessed a large amount of faith, and that he was very earnestly desirous of the blessing which **[R2729 : page 350]** he received. When he came to Jesus, altho the latter knew well his desire, he inquired respecting it. He would have the blind man express himself respecting his hopes and desires. He answered, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight!" The word "lord" here is "rabboni," the most reverential term of four titles used amongst the Jews at that time (rab, rabbi, rabban, rabboni). Then Jesus touched his eyes (Matt. 20:34), saying, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." Sight came immediately, and Bartimeus became one of the followers of Jesus.

The lesson itself is a very beautiful one in demonstration of the Lord's tender compassion and divine power; and from its incidents we might draw other lessons, parallels, as it were. For instance, sin brought alienation from God, and moral blindness, which prevails today in every land and on every hand. The Apostle thus pictures some of the heathen, desirous of having the light of truth, as blind men groping after things desired. He speaks of such as crying out to the Lord in prayer, and "feeling after God, if haply they might find him;" just as Bartimeus had cried out to the Lord and then went to him. And as Bartimeus cast away his outer robe that he might go to the Lord the more speedily, so the sinner should cast away everything found to be a hindrance – he should make acknowledgement and repentance of sins, and he should make restitution also as far as possible, and thus approach the Lord.

And such, when their eyes are opened to see the blessings of God bestowed upon them, should look, **[R2730 : page 350]** as Bartimeus looked, first into the face of the Savior with gratitude and appreciation, and look unto the Father through him. Indeed, their eyes being opened by the word of truth, they will gradually come to see everything in a

new light, and be able to say, "Old things [of darkness and sin] are passed away; all things are become new" – lighted by the knowledge of God; for we have been "translated out of darkness into marvelous light." It is unnecessary to add that such transformed sinners should thenceforth follow Jesus as his disciples, seeking to walk in his steps.

Another lesson might profitably be drawn from this narrative. Bartimeus was not a sinner, in the sense of being an alien, stranger, foreigner and outcast from the divine favor. He was a member of the household of faith, an Israelite, to whom belonged the promises and the covenants, etc. (Rom. 9:4); yet he was blind. And so there are today in spiritual Israel many who are not sinners, strangers, aliens from God, but members of the household of faith and heirs of the promises, who are mentally, spiritually, blind. They are blind to the goodness of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord: they do not appreciate the love of God, having been blinded thereto by false theories and traditions of men. Because of their blindness they are unable to "*comprehend* with all saints the lengths and breadths and heights and depths and to know the love of Christ," as they should do. Perhaps some of them are accountable to some extent for their own blindness, and quite possibly others are in no measure responsible.

We notice that in the case of Bartimeus Jesus did not inquire respecting his responsibility for his condition. It was sufficient that he realized that he was blind, and that he earnestly desired from the heart to receive his sight, and that he demonstrated this by his prayers and his efforts to obtain sight. So today, to those spiritual Israelites who are blind to the beauties and harmonies of the divine character and plan, if they are willing to admit their blindness, and so anxious for the light that they will cry aloud and not be dissuaded from their good desires, they will undoubtedly get the blessing they crave, the opening of their eyes of understanding, that they may be able to understand "the deep things of God." – 1 Cor. 2:10-12.

We see many blind people of this latter sort today. Nearly all of the nominal churches are full of them. But alas! the vast majority are unlike Bartimeus – they do not realize their condition nor hunger and thirst for the light, nor come to the Master in the humble attitude necessary to receive it. Their pitiable condition is described by the Lord himself (Rev. 3:17) under the name Laodicea. He tells why they do not receive their sight – why they cannot comprehend the lengths and breadths and depths of divine love: "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."

As it was not within the power of the multitude to give Bartimeus his sight, neither is it within our power to give sight to the spiritually blind. All we can do is to let the blind ones know that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by – that the great Physician is able and willing to grant them the opening of the eyes of their understanding. Those who long for sight, who love the truth, who hate darkness and error, and none others, will be attracted by the information, and lift up their voices in supplication for assistance. But, alas! when they do cry aloud for help there are sure to be some, even amongst the Lord's friends, to rebuke them for their earnestness, instead of encouraging it. However, such oppositions only serve to demonstrate the amount of faith and the measure of love for the light, and the Lord evidently intends that only those who seek for truth "as men search for silver" shall find the knowledge of God. – Prov. 2:4. **[R2730 : page 351]**

When the faith and earnestness of the seeker for light have been sufficiently demonstrated the Master will grant him the opportunities he desires. Nevertheless he will require that even in their blindness all shall manifest and exercise faith, and come to him through evil report as well as through good report, to receive the enlightenment sought. And when they obey thus they surely receive a good reward in their appreciation of the Lord's character and plan. From this new standpoint they can sing with the spirit and with the understanding also, –

"How happy and blessed the hours,  
Since Jesus I always can see;  
Sweet prospects, sweet birds and sweet flowers  
Have all gained new sweetness for me."

They will surely acknowledge that whatever their joys in the Lord previously they are multiplied by the opening of the eyes of their understanding. And is it surprising that such will follow the Lord? Nay, verily! How could we do otherwise than "show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light"? – 1 Pet. 2:9.

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