

OUT OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

"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." John 9:25.

This animated, fascinating and dramatic incident took place on an autumn Sabbath Day in Jerusalem more than nineteen centuries ago. As the Lord Jesus and His disciples walked along near the temple gate they saw a blind beggar whose eyes had rolled in irksome night since his birth. While he was not permitted to solicit alms on the Sabbath, his very affliction was a plea for help.

I. The Conversation.

Obviously the disciples knew something of this man, at least that he had been blind all of his life. They said, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" Their question disclosed that they, in common with multitudes in that day, believed that all afflictions were the direct result of sin. In some respects this question was absurd. It was an absolute impossibility for him to have committed any sin prior to his birth. Neither could his blindness have been due to any special sin in his life for it preceded the committal of any wilful sin.

Their question was an illustration of the fact that men have an inordinate curiosity about those who are handicapped or afflicted. Even the disciples of Christ were prone to see in one who needed their help a case for theological speculation rather than one in whom God's glory could be revealed. It was as if they had said, "Here is a specimen, let us examine it. How did this happen? Who was responsible?" The Saviour was displeased with their inquisitive attitude. In repudiating their idea that affliction is always God's retribution for sin, He declared that suffering is not necessarily the result of sin, nor for the purpose of judgment or punishment. Frequently the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper. Neither the blind man nor his parents were sinless, but Christ indicated that this case of blindness was not due to any sin of either member of the family, but it was permitted in order that the Lord might show His grace and power.

II. The Cure.

What a pitiable sight this blind man was! Not for one moment had he ever been permitted to see the sunlight of a single day, the wonders of nature or the beauties of the world, nor had he ever had the joy of looking into the faces of his parents or others whom he had learned to love. Think of the numerous enjoyments of which he was deprived and of the narrow world into which his affliction confined him!

Observing his need, Christ took ordinary clay, moistened it with saliva, smeared it over the eyes of the blind beggar and said unto him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." Having heard these instructions of the Great Physician, he obeyed. His unhesitating and prompt obedience was beautiful. As a result thereof, he instantly received sight. His cure was supernatural, immediate, complete, and permanent. While the method by which it was wrought was very simple, it was entirely sufficient.

III. The Controversy.

On the part of his neighbors, there was astonishment and amazement. They observed a great change in the man, but not knowing how it was wrought, they wondered if he was the same man. While they discussed whether or not he was the same man, he declared emphatically, "I am he."

His neighbors asked him, "How were thine eyes opened?" In answer to their query as to how he received his sight, he told them exactly how it took place. How those eyes must have sparkled as he related what Christ had done for him! For each of the "hows"

of his neighbors the happy man had a full, frank, and faithful confession.

When the man, who was formerly blind, was taken before the Pharisees, they failed to get anything from him except evidence which damaged their own cause. The more they tried to confuse him, the deeper they entrapped themselves. Unable to intimidate him, they decided to summon his parents. They sought to discredit the miracle by getting the parents to deny that their son had been blind from his birth.

Afraid of their inquisitors, the parents merely testified that he was their son and that he was blind when he was born. They were very careful to avoid giving any positive evidence in behalf of Christ. They were exceedingly cautious about asserting that he was the Christ because they feared excommunication from the synagogue. After testifying that he was their son, the parents advised these enemies of Christ to interview their son about these matters in which they were interested, inasmuch as he was quite capable of answering for himself.

Having failed to accomplish their purpose with the parents, the Pharisees again summoned the man who had received his sight for additional information and a thorough cross-examination. They sought to convince him that the One Who had healed him was a sinner because He had wrought this miracle on the Sabbath. Their accusation that Christ was a sinner was one of ignorance born out of conceit and animosity. So great was their hatred of Christ that they were willing to go to any length to discredit Him in every possible manner.

These enemies of Christ refused to admit that He was worthy of any glory. They branded Him as a sinner because He did His work on the Sabbath. In substance they argued, "Christ had nothing to do with your healing, so, give God the praise for that. Christ could not have wrought such a miracle. He is a sinner, a Sabbath-breaker. Such a person could not have healed you." By these false arguments they sought to rob Christ of His deity and to brand Him as a sinner. But, in spite of their attempt and of numerous similar efforts during the intervening centuries, Christ ever remains the same—God incarnate and the Saviour of all who will believe on Him.

Frankly and fearlessly, the man readily admitted that he did not know whether or not his Physician was a sinner, but there was one thing of which he was certain, namely, that "Whereas I was blind, now I see." He had passed out of darkness into light and no one could ever disprove that. Therefore, their questions and threats failed to change his position.

When he was arraigned before the Pharisees again, this man proved to be a splendid witness. Knowing for a certainty that Jesus Christ had opened his eyes and enabled him to see, he never deviated in the least in his testimony. He readily admitted that he did not understand all that had happened, but, in reply to their persistent accusations that Christ was a notorious sinner, he said, "We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth." Therefore, such a miracle must have been done through the power of God. There was no doubt in the mind of the healed man that God had placed His sanction on the integrity and deed of the One by Whom the miracle was performed.

When the Pharisees failed in their desperate effort at intimidation, they reproached and mocked him, and cast him out.

IV. The Conversion.

No sooner had they cast him out than the Saviour sought him and talked with him. He asked him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" The Master revealed Himself to him, saying, "It is he that talketh with thee," whereupon the man believed on Christ and was saved. He promptly acknowledged Christ as his Saviour and worshipped Him as his Lord and Master. He discovered that it was much better for him to be outside with Christ than on the

inside without Him.

Christ Jesus continually looks out for the interests of His own. Always anxious to help, He never fails to compensate, in some way or other, those who suffer for His sake. He is truly a Friend in need. There is no other like Him. Do you know Him? If not, you do not know God and are still in your sins. Have you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour? If not, come, trust Him now and thereby receive from Him light, life, liberty and love.