

• The Quiet Hour. •

Bartimaeus Healed.

BY WAYLAND HOYT, D.D.

They come to Jericho (v. 46.) Jesus and His followers had passed through Peraea, the eastern side of the Jordan, had crossed the Jordan by its fords near by, and had now come to Jericho on the way to Jerusalem. Jericho was distant from Jerusalem about twenty miles. Matthew tells of two blind men: Mark and Luke of one. This one was the more earnest and prominent, and so more mentioned. It is more difficult to reconcile the statement here with Matthew and Luke, who say this incident took place, Matthew, as our Lord departed from Jericho; Luke, as our Lord was come nigh unto Jericho. I do not think it well to try to harmonize. The Gospels are most condensed accounts. Evidently not all the facts are given us. If they were, there would be no discrepancy. The essential fact is the healing of the man.

Bartimaeus, a blind beggar (v. 46). Bartimaeus means son of Timeus. Blindness is very common in Palestine; the prevailing rock is white limestone, and the reflection from it of the dazzling sunshine is exceedingly trying to the eyes; also, the long and rainless heat during a large portion of the year so bakes the soil that it is easily broken into the finest dust, which, wind-blown, settles on the eyes, often producing severe inflammation resulting in blindness. And beggary is as common as blindness. Notice that our Lord did not withdraw Himself from usual human wants and woes. He went and wrought among them. As He was no recluse socially, so He was not from human ills and sorrows. This is a gracious fact. Jesus, though now glorified, does not hold Himself apart from us.

When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me, (v. 47). Another well says: "Suddenly and unexpectedly sometimes our greatest opportunities come to us. Here a day of grace dawns without notice; for a golden moment divine omnipotence and mercy are within this blind man's reach. One of the English kings was named Ethelred the Unready. Many, not kings, have his melancholy characteristic." But notice that this man seized his opportunity; your opportunity for approach to Jesus is now; do not neglect it. Notice, too, that this man would not accept the common speech concerning Christ—"Jesus of Nazareth," they called Him; "Thou son of David," he called Him; yield Christ His utmost claims; have high thoughts of Him not low ones. Mark, too, the instantaneousness of his prayer; so do you instantly call on Christ. Mark, also, the personal quality of his prayer—"mercy on me;" that is what we all need, personal blessing from the personal Christ. Mark, too, that the hope of this blind man was in Christ, not in himself; you cannot save yourself any more than this man could cure himself; you must cry to Christ.

Many rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried out the more a great deal (v. 48). Very often in conversion, of which this miracle is an acted parable, the

S.S. Lesson, December 9, Mark 10: 45-52.—Golden Text.—Lord, that I might receive my sight.—Mark 10: 51.

place of crying to Christ is the place of conflict. "Like the 'many' here, there are many things which rebuke one and bid him hold his peace. Sometimes one's own sin is such a rebuker, making him feel that for such a sinner calling on Christ is useless; sometimes one's want of feeling is such a rebuker; sometimes one's preconceived notions of conversion, sometimes the inconsistencies of Christians, sometimes friends, sometimes doubts and scepticism. The only way rightly to treat such rebukers is "the more a great deal" to cry to Christ.

Jesus stood still, and said, Call ye Him (v. 49). Jesus hears prayers; the man's cry arrests Jesus; Jesus will surely hear your prayer. Jesus would associate others with Himself in ho'ly service—"Call ye him." Are you calling anybody to Christ?

Casting away his garment (v. 50). The place of conversion is also the place of casting away—"casting away his garment." It was the long outer robe which Orientals wore, which impeded quick motion. This the blind man flung aside that he might swiftly go to Jesus. So, precisely, are there often things which one must "cast away" if he would become a Christian and receive healing forgiveness from the Saviour. Bad companionship, evil habit, a wrong business, or a wrong twist in a right business, an unholo grudge—such hindering things as these must be cast away.

Rabboni, that I may receive my sight (v. 51). The blind man prays a great prayer; dare to pray for great things. Jesus is the giver of vision. How must we need to pray this very prayer, Lord Jesus, "that I may receive my sight."

Thy faith hath made thee whole (v. 52). Why did faith make the man whole? Because by faith the man laid hold on Christ who could make whole.

Straightway (v. 52). There was a moment in which the man passed from blindness to sight. So, too, there is a moment of conversion; that moment is when we totally accept Christ as Saviour and Lord, as this man accepted Him as healer.

And followed Him (v. 52). Notice the test of true conversion. He who has really come to Christ will follow Him. Is this test plainly evident in you?—Christian Endeavor World.

Immortal.

Once we have loved we never lose,
That is not love which can forget,
Through loss and loneliness and grief
This gem is as its coronet,
That true love never can forget.

That is not faith which drops its hold,
Once we have trusted, in our clasp
Forever lies life's changeless gold,
Nor withers in our loosened grasp;
True faith through all times keeps its clasp.
—Margaret E. Sangster.

God often lets His people reach the shore as on the planks of a shipwrecked vessel. He frequently takes away our supports, not that we may fall to the ground, but that He may Himself become our rod and our staff; the embarrassments of His people are only the festive scaffoldings on which His might, His faithfulness and His mercy celebrate their triumphs."

How to be Great.

Do not try to do a great thing; you may waste all your life waiting for the opportunity which may never come. But since little things are always claiming your attention, do them as they come from a great motive, for the glory of God, to win His smile of approval, and to do good to men. It is harder to plod on in obscurity, acting thus, than to stand on the high places of the field, within the view of all, and do deeds of valor at which rival armies stand still to gaze. But no such act goes without the swift recognition and the ultimate recompense of Christ. To fulfil faithfully the duties of your station; to use to the uttermost the gift of your ministry; to bear chafing annoyances and trivial experiences as martyrs bore the pillory and stake; to find the one noble trait in people who try to molest you; to put the kindest construction on unkind acts and words; to love with the love of God even the unthankful and evil; to be content to be a fountain in the midst of a wild valley of stones, nourishing a few lichens and wild flowers, or now and again a thirsty sheep; and to do this always, and not for the praise of man, but for the sake of God—this makes a great life.—F. B. Meyer.

The Refuge of Lies.

"We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." Is it not a lie to think that we can resist Omnipotence and prosper? Is it not a lie to suppose that we can rush upon the bosses of Jehovah's buckler, and escape unscathed? Is it not a lie to act as if what the Holy One pronounces to be "filthy rags" could suffice for a protection in the day when He arises to judgment? Is it not a lie to think that the creature can satisfy the soul, though we feel that it melts away while we try to grasp it? Is it not a lie to suppose that sin can afford pleasure to the soul, while it draw down the wrath of God, and ripens us for everlasting burnings. Yet these, and such as these, are the delusions to which men cling; to these they flee, in the hope that they can find a refuge there from Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire. A converted Chinese once said that he might as well seek shelter from a thunderbolt behind his own shadow, as from the justice of God behind his own righteousness, and will not that man rise up in judgment against those who seek an asylum in lies?

But bless the Lord, O my soul! He who is the Truth has been here. He came to withdraw us from our refuges of lies, by showing how they crumble about us and threaten to bury us in their ruins. He answered the question, What is truth? by the announcement, "I am the Truth," the truth concerning God—the truth concerning man—and the truth concerning the mode of making them walk together like those who are agreed. Hast thou then, O my soul, learned the truth, and has it made thee free? Are the devices of the evil heart, and of the father of lies, now an abomination to thee? Then the Spirit of truth has led thee to the God of truth. No refuge of lies will satisfy thee. The Rock that is higher than we will be thy confidence, and "a man shall be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, like rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come. He will guide you into all truth."—W. K. Tweedie, D.D.