

may assist in alleviating that woe, and that we should help, even as the blessed Master brought healing and sight to this blind man.

"*I must work*," v. 4. The words are singularly impressive in the mouth of our Lord. "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel!" exclaimed Paul (1 Cor. 9: 16), because he had himself felt the power of the Gospel, and because he recognized himself as called of God to proclaim it to men. It brings Christ very close to us to hear Him say: "I must work the works of Him that sent Me." He, too, had a mission to fulfil. The fact that He was the Son of God did not absolve Him from the necessity of labor. *Noblesse oblige*. Just because He was the Son of God the obligation to spend Himself upon men was the greater. It would be wrong to say that He had felt the power of the Gospel in the same sense as Paul had felt it, because he was without sin; but He was also "in all points tempted like as we are," and therefore knew the need men have of the Gospel. We have approached very near to Christ in spirit when we feel the overwhelming obligation to labor for the uplifting and healing and saving of our fellowmen.

"*He anointed the eyes of the blind man*," v. 6. The tender touch of a loving hand. A lesson for us in the helping of those in need, whether in the larger field of public charities or in the quieter domain of our homes and of our daily walk in life. The virtue is well-nigh altogether wanting in charity that is doled out through an organization, or with cold, unsympathetic hand. It is personal contact that tells. Food tastes the sweeter, clothing feels the warmer when these are given to the famishing by one who loves them, and who shows his love by the way in which he bestows his gift. And if the shiftless and imprudent and criminal are to be raised up into self-respect and self-support, it can only be by their coming to know and feel the human sympathy which administers to their wants.

"*Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam*," v. 7. A wild scheme it must have seemed at first to this blind man. How absurd it was to expect that any good would come of it! What would the neighbors say? But, notwithstanding, he goes, and goes promptly, to do as this Man of Nazareth had told him. It was his need that drove him. He was

blind, and even the faintest glimmer of hope for sight was to him as the first streaks of dawn to one who has been wakeful through a night of agony. We should bless God when, in His providence, we are allowed to feel our need of Him, whether for the burden of sin or for help in time of suffering, for to feel our need makes it easier to trust.

"*Came seeing*." It looked a hopeless thing, this errand. But what a result! The washing in the Pool of Siloam is followed by sight to the blind eyes. Cause and result appear to be entirely out of proportion. But is it ever otherwise with God's ways? "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed," said our Lord to His disciples, "ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." If we are to understand the relation of cause and effect in such instances, we must remember the presence of God. When God works, even a germ of a pin's point in size may develop into a great tree. The slightest push of penitence and trust at the door of God's mercy opens the Father's house to the returning prodigal. One wonders that, when God requires so little of us in order that He may bestow His best gifts upon us, we should be so slow to take Him at His word.

"*The man that is called Jesus... anointed mine eyes*." The blind man was frank to acknowledge Jesus as his healer. That acknowledgment brought sore trouble upon him. The jealous Pharisees were enraged that this Nazarene whom they hated should have wrought such a work. They visited their wrath upon the beggar by casting him out of the synagogue, that is, excommunicating him, with all the dreadful consequences that excommunication brought with it. The man remained firm: Christ had helped him. He could not but acknowledge Christ. An example for us all. It is possible that the secret disciple, such as Nicodemus was for a time, may be saved. But Christ Himself tells us that we must confess Him before men, and that on such confession before men depends our confession by Him before the Father in heaven. Is it not the manly thing, too, when we believe on Christ and when Christ is helping us day by day by His presence within us, to acknowledge that Divine Master and Friend before men?