

Blind Bartimeus.

JULY 23.

MARK X: 46-52.

Golden Text, Isaiah, 35: 5.

COMPARE Matt. 20: 29-34; Luke 18: 35-43. Matthew says there were *two* blind men; Mark and Luke mention only one. This seeming discrepancy does not affect the credibility of a narrative recorded by different writers, long after the miracle took place, and from different sources of information. If there were two, which we believe, Mark had doubtless a good reason for selecting one of them for special notice, as perhaps being a well known character, in the same way that he describes the cure of a demoniac in Ch. 5, when it is equally clear that there were two such, Matt. 8: 28. V. 46 *Jericho*—an ancient and celebrated city mentioned sixty-three times in Scripture, about 15 miles N. E. from Jerusalem, in the fertile plain of Jordan, noted for its palm-trees, first mentioned in Deut. 34: 3; Besieged by the Israelites on their entering the promised land, Josh. ch. 6; had a school of the prophets in Elijah's time, 2 Kings 2: 5. In N. T. times it was a favourite resort of the priests. It is now a cluster of squalid huts inhabited by about 60 families. *Bartimeus*—*Bar*, the Amaraic used for son, corresponding to the Scotch prefix *Mac*, as in *Barjonas*, *Bartholomew*, *Barabbas*, &c. Blindness was very common in that hot, dry country, and *beggars* were and are still found everywhere in the East. This highway for pilgrims going to Jerusalem would be sure to have plenty of them. V. 47. *When he heard*—Bartimeus must often have heard of Jesus and his wonderful cures and no doubt had inwardly resolved that should he ever pass that way he would appeal to him for relief. Now the opportunity has come and he loses not a moment in making his case known to the great healer. *Jesus of Nazareth*—"The Nazarene," names by which he was familiarly and sometimes contemptuously known among his countrymen. *Thou Son of David*—repeatedly uttered, may be regarded as a rebuke to the unbelieving crowd, and a recognition on the part of Bartimeus of the Messiahship of Jesus, of whom it was expressly predicted that he should open the eyes of the blind, see Golden Text an: Is. 29: 18; 42: 7. V. 48. The populace charged him to hold his peace because they did not wish that the attention of Christ should be anywise diverted from themselves, even the disciples, perhaps, because they would protect their master from interruption as they had often done before, Matt. 19: 13, though not with his approval. *He cried the more*—see the prevailing power of earnest, importunate, specific prayer, and learn to ask with all the heart for one thing at a time; Ps. 27: 4; Luke 10: 42. V. 50. *Casting away his garment*—his outer cloak; so must the sinner lay aside every weight and hasten to Jesus, Heb. 12: 1, 2 V. 52. This man's faith was the more commendable because of his blindness, Jn. 20: 29. *He followed Jesus*—The best evidence he could give that his faith was genuine and that the eyes of his mind had been opened to see his Saviour. Blindness is a type of the sinner's condition. Rev. 3: 17; 2 Pet. 1: 9. This miracle illustrates the infinite compassion of the Saviour and affords strong encouragement to seek his gracious aid in every time of need.

The Triumphal Entry

JULY 30.

MARK XI: 1-11.

Golden Text, Zech. 9: 9

COMPARE Matt. 21: 1-9; Luke 19: 29-44; John 12: 12-18. After giving sight to Bartimeus, Jesus spent a night at Jericho, in the house of Zaccheus, Luke 19: 1-10. He reached Bethany the following evening, Friday. The next day, the Jewish Sabbath, was spent there in quiet retirement; in the evening, the Sabbath being over, he sat down to supper in the house of Simon the Leper, Matt. 26: 6 and was anointed by Mary, John. 12: 2, 3. During the night the Jews met to consider proposals for putting both Jesus and Lazarus to death, John 12: 10; on the morning of the first day of the week in which he was crucified, our Saviour commenced the triumphal procession so graphically described by all four evangelists. V. 1. *When they came nigh*—all the way from Jericho was a steep ascent—Jerusalem being 3000 feet higher. *Bethphage*—"the house of figs," and *Bethany*, "the house of dates," about 2 miles from the city on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. At the latter was the house of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, the "friends" with whom Jesus lodged when he was in this neighbourhood, and from this place he ascended up into heaven. Vs. 2, 3. The instructions given to the disciples, their finding the ass' colt, and the questions put to them by the owner afford convincing proof of Christ's omniscience. The answer they were to give—*The Lord hath need of him*—may be paraphrased in a variety of ways. The Lord still has need of what we call "our property," though it is really his. He has need of us—no matter how poor our gifts—how feeble our instrumentality—he will weigh to use us. V. 7. *They sat him thereon*—This is neither to be considered as an act of humility in Christ, nor an indignity put upon him. The ass was held in great esteem in the East and was ridden by men of highest rank, see Gen. 22: 3; Jud. 10: 3, 4, and 12: 13, 14. It was intended as an honour by the humble people who took part in the ceremony; it fulfilled a well-known prophecy, Zech. 9: 9; and was in keeping with the character of Him who though "meek and lowly," was yet a Prince—the Prince of Peace, Isa. 9: 6. Vs. 8-10. At this time between two and three millions of people would be gathered together and every thing wore a holiday aspect. Many would go out from the city to meet the Gallileans and join in the procession. *The branches* were the leaves of the palm tree, John 12: 13, which were in great demand at the Feast of Tabernacles, and were waved by the people as they shouted their "Hosannas" at certain intervals while the priests chanted the great "Hallel," i. e. Psalms 113 and 118. Every child, even, who could carry a palm branch took part in the solemnity, Matt. 21: 15. As Matthew Henry says—"the outside of the triumph was very mean, but the inside was very great." Like our Lord's parables and miracles this triumphal entry had a double meaning, Alas! that the same people, if not the same men, so soon exchanged their hosannas for "crucify him!" V. 11. His going into the temple fulfilled another prophecy, Mal. 3: 1-3.