

The Man Born Blind (John 9:1-7)

In the gospel of John, the few miracles recorded are introduced not so much for their own sake, it seems, as because of the discourse and actions surrounding them.

As our story begins, we find Jesus in retreat from the precincts of the temple, after almost being stoned by the enraged Jews. But as "he passed by," he saw a blind man sitting to beg, and recognized that he had been blind from his birth. Such a condition would have been hopeless, even to modern scientists. The disciples probably noticed the Saviour's concern, and see an opportunity to ask the answer of a troublesome and speculative question. They were beset by something of the same false attitude that hounded the three friends of Job when they insisted that he must have sinned terribly, else he would not have been so afflicted. So they ask, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus answers so as to indicate that neither he nor his parents had sinned in such a way as to cause this affliction. He does not maintain that they never committed any sins. Christ here shows that there may be other reasons for sorrow than personal or family sins. He tells them that the man was born blind "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." That is, the miraculous works which God alone could perform. There is no reason to take a conjectural journey at this point and attempt to probe the mind and providence of the infinite Being. God will vindicate his own honor, and we may accept the saying in simple faith. However, God often calls upon his children to suffer that they themselves may be purified and that they may show his glory to others. Verse four illustrates emphatically the fact that we must work while opportunity presents itself, else the

opportunity will slip past. He continues by asserting that he is the "light of the world." Then the Lord spat on the ground and made clay. He applied this preparation to the blind man's eyes, probably making the man more conscious than before of his blindness - heightening conviction. Then comes the test of faith - "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." The blind man obeyed, and "came seeing." No long time was required for the blind man to become accustomed to distances, etc., as a baby must, but he saw all things clearly at once. These observations seem to logically follow:

- (1) "Almost every miracle is a parable of redemption."
- (2) The maintenance of a calm and untroubled spirit is essential if we are to serve Christ to the best of our ability. Our Lord, in this instance, was just escaping from the Jews who were attempting to stone him. But even in such a trying situation, he has time to stop for the blind man. He never lost his mental and spiritual equilibrium. His unbroken peace and tranquility of spirit was an important element of power in his life. This is essential if we are to keep abreast of our work, and accomplish each task in its own hour.
- (3) The raising of questions in the purely speculative realm interferes with the pressing duties of practical life. Thus Paul warns Timothy, "Foolish and ignorant questions refuse, knowing that they gender strifes." So the Lord hastily puts aside the question of the disciples and proceeds to the practical duty at hand. And so should we. Christ did the same on other occasions: When his followers asked, "Are there few that are saved?" he replied, "Strive ye to enter in at the strait gate." And when Peter asks what John is to do after being forewarned of his own death, Christ answers, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Let us

be spared from speculation - to promote the practical.

"Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deut. 29:29.