

Christ Giving Sight to the Blind

John 9, 10.

from **Memorials of the Ministry of G. V. Wigram.** Vol. 1.

[Notes on Scripture; Lectures and Letters.

Second Edition, Broom 1881 (First Edition 1880)]

Part Fourth. LATER MINISTRY.

In John 8 we get the development of part of the truth of Christ referred to in John 1, as the One who is the Light of the world, because in Him was life. In John 9 we get another thing connected with the same truth. Now He is the One who not only has eternal life and is light, but who also has the power of communicating sight. There is a close connection between the blessing of sight and the enjoyment of light, and both flow from Christ. He is Light; but there cannot be enjoyment of it except in possession of sight. In His dealings with this man He showed it in a very simple way. In John 10 He takes up what the question of light is, not in the enjoyment of a poor groping thing, but He knows what the blessing of possessing sight is. He knows the Father's plans, and how all is found in Him

Verse 2: "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" This question is so like the mind of man. Christ says, "I do not take it up in that light." He takes up God's side, showing that sorrow and privation are connected in God's mind with some work of power not yet brought out. It was as it were a spot in providence that this man was born blind. Christ says, "I am come into the scene where everything is out of course, to gladden hearts, and display the glory of God."

"Siloam" (sent). There is an immense deal of instruction in this. The whole virtue of the cure lay in this, that the blind man took the Lord's word. If he had not gone, would he have been healed? No. Why? The same God who had power to cure had a right to dictate how it was to be done, and he obeyed the word. It was not the clay that cured his eyes — a strange thing to cure a man's eyes by filling them with dust. The working of faith is a very simple thing; it obeys the word of God *because* it is His word, and owns God in the immutability of His truth.

A man born blind and now seeing! It is no wonder that at first he was occupied about what was done to him. The people help him on; they come and question him. He owns it: "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight." (v. 11) They could not let the matter rest. There was something in those who were blind of heart that made them unable to leave alone a man dealt with by the Saviour. Then came the great offence — "it was the sabbath-day" — Christ's expressing His idea of God's rest by removing sin and this blindness, a result of sin.

Verse 15. Remark the progress in the man's mind. When a person is being led on by God it is wonderful how even his adversaries help him. Now it is "He is a prophet" — God's mouthpiece — not merely "a certain man called Jesus." (v. 17.) The parents are called. They did not say, "How blessed for us to be cast out of the synagogue for being the father and mother of a blind man healed by Christ." They shirked everything like the recognition of the power of God working. Then again the Jews called the man, and questioned him. They did not see who was leading him on. They tried to puzzle him; but, as with Christ Himself, when they tried to catch Him with questions, He went on calmly. (v. 29.) Now says the poor man, "Here is a wonder of wonders! You clever doctors of the day, and you cannot tell who this is that has opened my eyes!" and he takes the place of a teacher among them. A poor stupid

man, only fit to be cast out of the synagogue, yet giving a testimony to God in His character. Then they excommunicate him. Directly the links are cut between him and these Jews, what follows? He who had been drawing him on, He who had given him sight, and had watched and guided everything for him now meets him, and says, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Cast out of the synagogue, cut off from all outward connection with God (though all was in ruin), Christ puts Himself simply before him. His heart is ready for anything. "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him." There is the Christ giving power of sight to the eye of a man, but at the same time dealing with the soul, so that that man got into the position of calling him "Jesus," then a "prophet," and then owns Him as the Son of God, and falls down before Him and worships. He had got the power of seeing spiritually the Son of God, who was Light because He was Life — not only the One who as the Light diffused the character of God in the whole world, but the One who gave sight to the blind, to enable an individual to say, "Now I see everything in connection with Thee. Thou art the centre of all, and I have got my joy in it."

In John 10, we get brought out what sort of person the Christ was who, after speaking of Himself as the "light of the world" in John 8, tried them again, not only by His word, but by His works. He had taken up the blind man to show out the character of God, who was not only a shelter to the poor woman, but whose goodness could underlie affliction, and bring out His power in it. It is often the crippled child that God first picks up and makes the channel of blessing to a family.

Do you think this poor man would ever regret having been born blind? Were you to meet him in eternity, and to say to him, "Are you the man that was born blind that Christ might be magnified? and kept blind all those many years because Christ needed you just then and there, as something He could take up as a sign of His readiness to bless by His works, when they would not have His word?" Would you find he regretted it? What a blessed thing in the midst of sin, and the bitter fruits of sin, to know One triumphant above all — able to pick up things that look only dark in nature's eye, and turn them into glory and joy!

John 10: 2, 3. Has Christ a people on earth now? And do they know His voice? Are you conscious of Christ's voice speaking about you, speaking to you? If you are, it is because He has given you eyes to see, and ears to hear. "They know His voice," etc. There is something peculiarly attractive in this to one who knows the power of a voice. What is a mother's voice in a time of distress in her nursery? It is safety and rest to the hearts of her children, even apart from what she says; so with the voice of Christ.

Verse 14. What a place for Christ to take as to His poor disciples, as to you and me! Is there One on the throne of God that has such thoughts about you and me? Does Christ know me? and do I know Christ? Thoughts exceedingly gracious in character drop here from His lips.

Verse 17. It is not in the fruits of Christ's death for us where the commencement of blessing is. Where is the commencement? There was a certain intercourse between the Father and the Son before the foundation of the world. The Son received from the Father a commandment to do a particular work for a particular purpose, and — strange as the work was for Him who knew no sin to be made sin, for the Prince of Life to go down to death — He perfectly fulfilled His Father's will. Believers do not see enough the difference between the basis of their blessings and the blessings themselves. The basis is that there is one God — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that God was pleased to make a display of His redeeming love, and the Son came forth to display it, and to vindicate God as regards the question of sin. This is something entirely out of self — there I rest. There, in connection with divine glory in

the heaven of heavens — there is the foundation of blessing.

How sweetly must all this have fallen on the ear of the poor blind man. How beautiful to see Jesus as the Advocate of the poor sinner. So here; not merely did Christ vindicate God and display His own ways, but there to a poor blind man, utterly rejected by all. I will let him hear that I have a Father; he has come out after Me — men have cast him out; what are My thoughts about him? "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." How sweetly it must have sounded on his ear! He might well say, "Is this my portion? Is this what He sees in the light in which He is? I have lost my father and my mother; I am cast out; but He talks of my having eternal life, of none plucking me out of His hand; this is something blessed indeed!"

Verse 29. It is not merely the glory of the Son, but we also get every blessing in connection with the Father and the Son. I may be a poor specimen of a Christian; but if the Father gave me to Him, is not He to love me? If I am not the fruit-bearer I would desire to be, yet if every glance of Christ's eye is on me, saying, "There is one the Father gave Me," is my poverty to change one thought the Son has about the Father's love? The deeper the poverty, the deeper the ruin, the more shines out the Father's confidence in the One who cannot possibly fail Him. The Father of this only-begotten Son selected Him as the One into whose hand He put all, foreseeing all the world and Satan could do, and the Son took it as an expression of the Father's love to Himself; and what are the Son's thoughts about those given to Him? The Lord Jesus Christ thinks of them as given to Him of His Father. It is impossible for Christ to draw motives from below Himself. He must, because He is God, draw His motives from God. He cannot say, "I forget My Father, I forget Myself, and think about your feelings." He begins with His Father, and then He says, "You have not got the least thing — a pain or ache, the tiniest thing, but I have got it all in My heart, and My hand is under you in the little as well as the big things." But while in His sympathy He enters into every little thing — and oh, they are very little! — He does it from first to last as God. He says, "You are keeping this trouble from Me. I cannot let you keep it from Me. I *must* share your sorrows, and you must share My joys. I *must* sympathize with you, and you must sympathize with Me." And the poor man heard all this. The end of it is fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

Fellowship is to stand and hear Him talk about the Father, how He has used Him, and how He has done everything according to His will. Have you got eyes to see the Lord? And if so, are you hearing His voice? It was strange language to the poor man, except when Christ spoke; it was trouble everywhere, except with Christ. He went straight forward; his ear was opened to hear all these blessed, precious things about the Father and the Son, and about all. the offices put upon Him as One who had sheep on the earth, and the way He identifies Himself with these sheep.

Are *you* seeking to live that out? seeking now to live out the life that is hid with Christ in God — a life fed in you by the thought in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ up there, altogether above this scene? Your feet may tread a dark valley, where there are all sorts of roughnesses, and much you cannot understand; but your life may be an expression of present hearing by faith the words of the Lord Jesus in glory to His Father about you. "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Nothing short of that will do. The days are critical, and the question will be pressed more and more, Who are living to Christ, and who are not? If I say, "He has loved me, and I must live to Him," I shall not be caught in the storm.