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THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

THE MAN BORN BLIND
Golden Text — One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. John 9:25
THE LESSON AS A WHOLE
Approach to the Lesson

We have already noted our Lord's use of the name I AM (Lesson for Feb. 7). Here it may be well to list the seven main usages:

1. "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35)
2. "I am the light of the world" (8:12; 9:5)
3. "I am the door" (10:7)
4. "I am the good shepherd" (10:11, 14)
5. "I am the resurrection, and the life" (11:25)
6. "I am the way, the truth and the life" (14:6)
7. "I am the true vine" (15:1)

Such claims require substantiation, and many of these were receiving substantiation even in the days of our Lord's humiliation, while more and more evidence of their validity is piled up with the passing of the years.

The miraculous feeding of the multitudes was a partial demonstration of the Lord Jesus' claim to be the Bread of Life, but those down the centuries who have "tasted that the Lord is gracious" are witnesses to the truth of His claim. So we could examine all of them, and attest their truth.

In the case of the second ("I am the light of the world,"

the claim was first made (8:12) apart from any apparent incident calling it forth. It was immediately challenged by the Pharisees on the ground that it was self-witness. But it was soon challenged in a more practical way — the presence of a man who had never seen the light of day. In face of this challenge our Lord repeated his claim (9:5) and proceeded to prove that it was no idle boast. The healing of the man born blind was a demonstration in the physical sphere, where all could observe of what is equally true in the spiritual sphere. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9).

Verse by Verse

John 9:24 — "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." The ground of their charge that Jesus was a sinner was His having wrought this deed, as other deeds of mercy on the Sabbath day (vs. 14, 16). The inference from their statement is that God was using a wicked agent to accomplish His works of mercy.

Verse 25 — "...one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." The man thus exhorted falls back upon an undeniable experience. He has no interest in questioning the character of his benefactor.

Verse 26 — "What did he do

toe...?" A repetition of their former questions (v. 15) shows that they were not too sure of their position, despite their dogmatism.

Verse 7 — "I have told you already... will ye also be his disciples?" The inquisition was becoming a bit boring. I cannot help feeling that there is some sarcasm in the last question of the verse.

Verse 28 — "Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples." Reviling is the questionable resort of those who are beaten but will not admit it. Christ could have answered their claim to be Moses' disciples. Compare 8:39.

Verse 29 — "God spake unto Moses... this fellow, we know not from whence he is." The first statement was correct. It was the business of these guardians of the revelation to find out whence this new rabbi came, but their prejudice and unbelief hindered them.

Verse 30 — "...ye know not from whence he is and yet he hath opened mine eyes." To the healed man the logic of the case was simple. The conclusion from such a miracle was not far to seek.

Verse 31 — "...if any man doeth his will, him he heareth." This is not a question of whether God ever answers a sinner's prayer, but whether a sinner, a blasphemer, a rebel against God's Law has constant power with God so as to draw on the power of God even for such miracles as this!

Verse 32 — "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." Here he insists on the magnitude and uniqueness of the miracle wrought. It was not the work of man, but of God.

Verse 33 — "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." Compare 15:5. This verse sums up the philosophy of the man, and is his answer to the Pharisees' professed ignorance in verse 9. "The man who wrought this miracle is from God," affirms this fearless witness in effect.

Verse 34 — "Thou wast al-

together born in sins... And they cast him out." The Pharisees could not endure being taught sound theology by a poor layman. If he was born in sins, how were they born? Of course they were laying his blindness to the sin of his parents. Compare verses 2, 3. Excommunication (v. 22) was the price of his boldness.

Verse 35 — "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" It was a blessed excommunication that cast him into the arms of Jesus. Soulsight in addition to eyesight awaited him.

Verse 36 — "Who is he, Lord that I might believe on him?" The question of a hungry, seeking soul, longing for a resting place for his faith.

Verse 37 — "Thou hast both seen him and it is he that talketh with thee." Jesus' first statement is a reminder of the new and wonderful blessing, while the second is a direct claim on Jesus' part. This man (as the philosophers would say) had the empirical evidence — the evidence of the senses.

Verse 38 — "Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." In verse 36, "Lord" may have been used in the sense of "sir" but not here. It is here the divine title, and the worship is that offered to deity. The Heart of the Lesson

No case is beyond the practice of the Great Physician. Some cases of blindness from birth yield to the skills of modern science, but nineteen hundred years ago one born blind was doomed to a life of hopeless darkness. That is, except such fortunate ones as came in touch with Him who said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (v. 5). Our Lord's method on this occasion (vs. 6, 7) was unusual and I am persuaded that the purpose of it, was to give both help and expression to the blind man's faith. There is always wisdom in our Lord's methods and we dare not bring them into question.

Since the subject of this mission was well known as a beg-

3744 Sheep Killed By Dogs in 1953

W.P. Watson, Ontario livestock commissioner, told the Ontario Sheep Breeders' Association Wednesday it is well backed by legislation to deal with the problem of sheep losses from roving dogs.

"Since there are a lot more dog owners than there are sheep owners I am surprised that we haven't been accused of extending privileges to sheep men with respect to the disposal of dogs," he said.

In most cases townships took in more money from dog taxes than they paid out for sheep killed by dogs. Last year of the 8,592 flocks in 305 Ontario townships, 1,744 had been attacked and 3,744 sheep killed. Compensation paid to sheep owners totalled \$107,583.

gar, the incident immediately attracted public attention, resulting in interested and curious inquiries. So amazed were the common people, that they decided it should be brought to the attention of their leaders (v. 13) whose prejudices made them do everything in their power to discount the miracle. Their questioning of the man and of his parents in turn brought them no comfort (vs. 15-23), and the inquiry resolved itself into an attempt to bully the man out of his testimony in face of which he stood firm. Indeed, the more they bullied, the more bold he waxed, till he finally preached to those Pharisees a sermon full of spiritual insight and downright logic. Beaten thoroughly by the steadfastness of the witness, they resorted first to reviling (v. 28) and finally to an act of excommunication (vs. 22, 34).

But the excommunication of men-only drove him into the embrace of the Saviour, till the spiritual light which had been dawning came to its full glory as he bowed before the Son of God in an act of ardent worship and the glad confession, "Lord, I believe" (v. 38). The sting of human rejection was completely removed in the joy of that blessed reception. So the story of that wonderful day was: physical sight, the breaking of spiritual sight and the burst of full vision at the feet of Jesus. He had met the Light of the World, and could say, "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:8).

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