

*On the Love of God and the Illumination of the Blind Man*

St. Augustine, Bishop and Doctor

Translated by M.F. Toale, D.D.

(PL 39, 1539-32.)

Love God. You will not find anything more worthy of love. You love silver, because it is more precious than iron or bronze. You love gold still more, because it is more precious than silver. Still more precious stones, for they are prized above gold. Last, you love this light; which all who dread death fear to leave. You love light, I say, as he loved it, with deep longing, who cried to Jesus: *Son of David, have mercy on me.*

The blind man cries out, as Jesus was passing by. He heard He might pass by, and not heal him. And how earnestly he cried? Though the crowd rebuked him, he would not be silent. He overcame his rebukers, and held our Saviour. While the crowd clamoured against him, and forbade him cry out, Jesus stands, and called him, and said: *What wilt thou that I do to thee? Lord, he said, that I may see. Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole.*

Love Christ: Seek ye the light that is Christ. If he longed for the light of the body, how much the more ought you to long for the light of the soul? Let us cry out to Him, not with words, but with virtuous living. Let us live in virtue, and esteem not the world: all that is transitory to us is nothing. They will rebuke us should we live as worthy men, and lovers of ourselves, and lovers of the earth, delighting in the games, drawing nothing from heaven, unbridled in heart, and testing all delights: they will, and without any doubt, rebuke us; and should they see us despise what is human, what is earthly, they will say: why do you wish to suffer? Why are you foolish?

The crowd clamours, that the blind man shall not cry out. There are not a few Christians who seek to hinder us from living as Christians: like the crowd that walked with Christ, and hindered the man crying out to Christ, and hungering for light from the kindness of Christ. There are such Christians: but let us overcome them, and live in virtue: and our life shall be the voice of our cry to Christ. He will stand; because He stands.

For here is a great mystery. He was passing by when this man began to cry out: when He healed him He stood still. Let Christ's passing by make us prepared to cry out. What is Christ's passing by? Whatsoever He has endured for us here is His passing by. He was born, He passed by: for is He yet being born? He grew up, He passed by; is He yet growing up? He was suckled: is He yet suckled? When weary He slept: does He yet sleep? He ate and He drank: does He yet do this? At the last He was seized, He was bound with ropes, He was beaten, He was crowned with thorns, He was struck by blows, He was defiled with spittle, He was hung on a Cross, He was put to death, He was pierced by a lance, He was buried, He rose again. Till then He passes by.

He ascended into heaven, He sits at the right hand of the Father: He stands still. Cry out all you can: now He will give thee light. For that in Him the *Word was with God*, He has of a surety stood still; since He was not changed. And *the Word was God: and the Word was made Flesh*. The Flesh has wrought many things through passing by, and suffered many. The Word has stood still. By this Word the soul is enlightened; as by this Word the flesh which He took on is adorned. Take away the Word, what then of the flesh? It is as yours. That the flesh of Christ be honoured, *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us*. Let us live virtuously, and so cry out to Him.

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