



■ † Sunday of the Blind Man

## Simplicity of Faith\*

Epistle

(Acts 16: 6-34)

*In those days, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed by a spirit of divination met us. She had brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same followed Paul and us, crying out and saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation.” And this she did many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, “I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that same hour. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they caught Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace unto the rulers, and brought them to the magistrates, saying, “These men, being Jews, trouble our city exceedingly, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive nor to observe, being Romans.” And the multitude rose up together against them, and the magistrates rent off their clothes and commanded that they be beaten. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. He, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awakening*

out of his sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew out his sword and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had fled. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here!" Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." And they spoke unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all who were in his house. And he took them that same hour of the night and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

### Gospel

(Iuáiv. 0' 1-38)

**A**t that time, as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Master, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground and made clay with the spittle; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay and said unto him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which interpreted means, "Sent"). He went his way therefore and washed, and came back seeing. The neighbors therefore, and those who before had seen that he was blind, said, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him." But he said, "I am he!" Therefore they said unto him, "How were thine eyes opened?" He answered and said, "A man who 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." Then they said unto him, "Where is he?" He said, "I know not." They brought to the Pharisees him that beforehand was blind.

And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and do see." Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day;" Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles?" And there was a division among them. They said unto the blind man again, "What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." But the Jews did not believe concerning him that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see?" His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind; but by what means he now seeth we know not, or who hath opened his eyes we know not. He is of age; ask him. He shall speak for himself." These words spoke his parents, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already that if any man confessed that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, "He is of age; ask him." Then they again called the man who was blind and said unto him, "Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered and said, "Whether he be a sinner or not, I know not. One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Then said they to him again, "What did he do to thee? How opened he thine eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear. Why would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples?" Then they reviled him and said, "Thou art his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke unto Moses. As for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." The man answered and said unto them, "Why, herein is a marvelous thing: that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshiper of God and doeth His will, him He heareth. Since the world began it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one who was born

blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered and said unto him, “Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?” And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out. And when He had found him, He said unto him, “Dost thou believe in the Son of God?” He answered and said, “Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him?” And Jesus said unto him, “Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.” And he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him.



**S**implicity of faith argues with crafty unbelief. Faith, coming to the blind man who received sight, enlightened his mind’s eyes, and he clearly beheld the truth.

See how everything was logical for him. They ask him: “What do you say of Him Who gave you sight?” “He is a prophet,” he answered, that is, a messenger of God clothed in miracle-working power. An indisputably true conclusion!

But learned erudition does not want to see this truth and seeks to evade its consequences. This being impossible, however, it approaches unlearned simplicity with the suggestion: “Give God the praise: we know that this Man is a sinner” (St. John 9:24).

Simplicity of faith does not know how to connect these concepts—sinfulness and miracle-working—and expresses this openly: “Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see” (St. John 9:25).

What can one say against such deduction? But the logic of the unbelievers is obstinate, and even in the face of the obvious it is not ashamed to affirm that it does not know where He Who opened the blind man’s eyes is from. “Why herein is a marvellous thing,” the sensible logic of faith says to them, “that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing” (St. John 9:30–33).

It would seem as though after this nothing remained other than to bow down before the power of such a conclusion. But “learned erudi-

tion” could not stand the sensible logic of faith, and drove it away....

**G**o now and try to prove the truth of the Faith to those whose mind has been corrupted with obstinate unbelief.

**T**he unbelievers of all times are cut from the same cloth.



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(\*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God*.