

obedient servants. We must cultivate the spirit of humility. The more we grow in the Christ-life, and the more the character of Christ is reproduced in us; the more exalted our views of Christ, the more humble will we grow. **Our duty**—Eternal life is the gift of God, not an attainment gained by merit or works of righteousness (Rom. 6: 23). We can never make God our debtor, or cause him in any respect to be under compliment to us. "The Christian system sets before us such incomparable excellency, that we are always coming short of it." (Pulpit Com.) Alas, the blindness and folly of such as confide in the efficacy of works of supererogation (Rom. 3: 27; 1 Cor. 4: 7).

II. FAITH PLEADING. 11. **As he went**—Jesus ever went about doing good. Jerusalem and the thrilling scenes soon to be enacted there were ever before his mind. **Through the midst**—Along the boundary line between Samaria and Galilee. The "must needs" of life are all, however, in perfect accord with the divine plans and purposes. 12. **A certain village**—not known. With what accuracy, even in detail, are some of the incidents in Christ's ministry recorded. **Ten men that were lepers**—Leprosy, the most loathsome disease, incurable, long regarded a type of sin, believed among the Jews to be a special mark of God's displeasure on account of some particular sin. "Was nothing short of a living death, a poisoning of the springs, a corrupting of all the humors of life, a dissolution little by little of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away." (Trench). **Stood afar off**—In compliance with the requirements of the law (Lev. 13: 45, 46). National barriers and religious prejudices broken down by a common disease. "Companionship established between men that were excluded from all other fellowship." (Bruce). 13. **Lifted up their voices**—What a blessing that their power of speech had not been destroyed by their disease. They dared not approach him, but arrested his attention with their hoarse, pitiful cry. The legal distance which lepers were compelled to keep from passers by, was a hundred paces. **Have mercy on us**—Conscious of their need and utter helplessness, recognizing the presence of a willing and able helper, they cried aloud for mercy. It was no round-about-world sort of prayer. It was short, specific, earnest and reverent. 14. **Go shew yourselves unto**

the priests—When a leper was healed, before he could become a member of society, he was required to go and shew himself to the priest; make an offering and receive of the priest a certificate of cure (Lev. 14). Jesus was careful to see that the requirements of the law were duly heeded, "for he came, not to destroy, but to fulfil the law" (Matt. 5: 17). There was an implied assurance of healing in Christ's command. **As they went**—Not while they were sitting, but in the path of duty they were cleansed.

III. FAITH SAVING. 15. **One of them**—True character revealed. No doubt nine of them continued on their way to shew themselves to the priests in obedience to Christ's command. The tenth, upon realizing that he had been cleansed, immediately "returned to give glory to God," not in obedience, but acting under the power of the higher law of love and gratitude. Doubtless he went afterwards and shewed himself to the priest. Two duties, both right, (1) to give glory to God, (2) to shew themselves to the priests. The former the higher duty, and the lower duty must always give way before a higher (Matt. 8: 21, 22). 16. **Giving him thanks**—Thanksgiving is the first act of a truly grateful heart in recognition of favors and blessing received. **A Samaritan**—Apparently nine were Jews and one a Samaritan. The Samaritans were hated and despised by the Jews (John 8: 49; 4: 9). At the present day in Jerusalem in the leper-houses "abodes of the unfortunate," persons of different races, Jews and Mohammedans, associate together. Under no other circumstances would these mutually hostile people do this. 17. **But where are the nine?**—How common is the spirit of ingratitude! Think of the untold thousands that are discharged cured from the different hospitals in the land. How few of them "return to give glory to God." The many use their regained vigor to feed upon the "husks" of pleasure and worldliness. The process of winnowing and sifting character: Gideon's army of 32,000 reduced to 300. 18. **This stranger**—An alien. Gratitude is often shown where least expected (Luke 7: 37, 38). God deals with mankind as individuals, not in the mass (Luke 12: 6; Matt. 10: 30). 19. **Thy faith has saved thee** (R. V. marg.)—The Samaritan's faith "mediateiy;" but Christ's power "energetically" saved him.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

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1. *The importance of strong faith.* Unbelief is limiting in its influence. This limiting power was felt by our Lord. We are told that in certain places he could do no mighty work on account of the unbelief of the multitude. Our Lord illustrates the power and importance of faith by showing that even a small amount of active faith would be able to remove great obstacles and overcome many difficulties that are in the way. In view then of the many dangers,

difficulties and trials of life which can only be overcome by faith, the importance of the prayer of the apostle will be realized. The stronger our faith the more vigorous our lives, and the more we will inspire faith in others. The more faith is exercised the stronger it will become.

2. *Our service of Christ must be in humility.* We are not to imagine that by any service of ours we can merit any favor from Christ. When we have done our duty we have simply