

preach. Preaching first, miracles afterward to confirm the preaching. **Came I forth** may mean (a) from Simon's house, (b) from Nazareth (ver. 9), or (c) from the Father. The latter (c) would certainly be John's way of speaking, but not Mark's, periphrasis (John 8: 42). The first (a) would be most likely to be understood by Simon and the rest as his meaning. What they tell him is no surprise. He deliberately left Capernaum before dawn, that he might preach elsewhere **39. Went into synagogues.** On the Sabbath, when he could teach (ver. 21). Perhaps they would not be expecting cures on that day (chap. 3, 3), and so would pay the more heed to his teaching. **All Galilee.** When he said "the next towns" he did not reveal his full purpose. He could not at once admit them to the full breadth of his plan. Josephus says that there were two hundred and forty towns and villages in Galilee in his time, but some scholars hesitate about believing him.

II. Jesus Heals a Leper (vers. 40-44). Cometh to him. Notice the word "full." Luke 5: 12. How dared he approach? (Lev. 13: 45, 46.) Read Lev. 13: 17. Do you see from this reference that the disease was made to teach not merely a Sabbath but a religious lesson? **40. A leper.** It is well-nigh incredible for the average reader to conceive the physical torture, the utter eclipse of comfort and hope implied by this term. The leprosy was an hereditary disease of the blood and skin. It was a loathsome, painful, chronic, and incurable. The victim was required to dress in mourning, to notify others even of his approach in a loud voice, and to live alone or with other lepers. This dreadful physical scourge was recognized and used by religious teachers as a most impressive picture of the curse of sin and its consequences. Consider such cases as that of Miriam (Num. 12: 10), Gehazi (2 Kings 5: 27), Uzziah (2 Chron. 26: 20). The best account of the Jewish feeling about leprosy is in Lev., chap. 13, 14. It is uncertain whether the leprosy of Scripture exists in modern times or not, though the disease is technically known as elephantiasis is often identified with it. The writer remembers a hideous figure in the Orient running along by the carriage asking for alms, with vocal organs that had been partially eaten away, and holding up an enormously swollen hand from which some of the finger joints had originally dropped. A malady called leprosy prevails in the Sandwich Islands. Within six or seven years one thousand one hundred and fifty lepers were banished to the island of Molokai. Miss Bird describes the parting scene at one such banishment. "The woe of those who were left, and taken, the dismal wailings of the friends and relatives clung to the swollen limbs and kissed the glistening, bloated faces of those who were exiled from them forever. I shall never forget." **Him.** How many "hims" in ver. 40? How many in Matt. 8: 2? Do you see a liveried, more circumstantial style in these four little separated clauses? **Knocking.** What did the posture mean? (Matt. 8: 2.) The attitude spoke before words could be pronounced. **Beseeching him.** With his lips close to the ground he uttered his muffled, half-articulate request in his guttural Aramaic. **If thou wilt.** Like our familiar phrase: "If you have a mind to." It is not, if you had a mind to. The man has not given up Jesus's willingness as out of the question. The Greek "if" implies that the sequel will show whether Jesus is willing. He is not to be blamed by whether Jesus is willing to help. His experience with men for a good part of his life, perhaps, had shown that ninety-nine out of a hundred would religiously shun him. Even the women, though motherly and sisterly tears would sometimes glisten behind their veils, would take good care not to get too near. The only real token of sympathy from the non-leperous world came from the outcast, unclean dogs (Luke 16: 21). Would not this Rabbi, like the rest, braid his nose, turn his face away, and go off without a word? He would see. **Thou canst.** How much had the man heard of Jesus's miracles? We cannot guess. His faith encouraging him to believe the difficulty of cleansing leprosy would not be more hopeless than the expulsion of demons. He may have been convinced from the sermon on the mount (Matt. 8: 1) that Jesus was a prophet, and, like Elijah, could send a leper to the Jordan and miraculously cleanse him. Doubtless he could do for a nameless beggar as much as for a great military commander. Would he? There was the rub. **Make me clean.** The priests can pronounce the man clean, but not make me so.

41. Compassion. He put me so, but not make me so. **41. Compassion.** He thought himself in the leper's place (Heb. 4: 15). He thought

what it would be for him to carry that aching, festering body through an unfeeling world. It will be well to seek other instances of Christ's sympathy. Combine in your thought this new trait with that other which the Capernaumites (vers. 22, 27) discovered, and reflect. Comp. Matt. 8: 3, and Luke 5: 13 with this verse, and answer the question, Why these words? **Stretcheth forth his hand.** He has not yet spoken. Quintilian says we speak with our hands. What do the extended palm and fingers say? What but a swift reply to the leper's doubt, I love you! **Touched him.** The result was inconvenient, as it made Jesus ceremonially unclean (ver. 3). As in the case of Mary (John 12: 3), love does not stop to count the cost. **I will.** How prompt the response! Can you imagine the intonation and the look? Try. "He gives twice who gives quickly." No resentment at the poor man's implied but unintentional reflection. He accepts the leper's confession of his authority. If he is to be cured at all, it must be by Jesus's will. Observe how much Jesus, in these two quiet words, claims for himself. **Be thou made clean.** That is, Thou art this moment made clean. The imperative was not a command, but a declaration. **42. Straightway.** Mark notices the instantaneousness of the response to the appeal to Jesus for sympathy. **Made clean.** The impossible had happened, a profound physical change had occurred in the twinkling of an eye. **43. Strictly charged him.** A very strong expression in Greek, implying at least that Jesus was as earnest in his manner as one is when he angrily threatens another. Same word in chap. 14: 5. The leper cannot make a mistake as to what Jesus expects him to do, and could see in the Master's manner that he meant every word he said. **Sent him out.** Out of his presence. The same word in Acts-16: 13 is translated "thrust out" and may have reference to the gestures, tones, and manner of Jesus as expressing urgency. In his excitement the man would be apt to forget his duty (Lev. 14: 10, 21, 22). **Offer, say nothing.** Another mark of special distinction. **Say nothing.** Keep your wonder and joy to yourself and do not. Jesus knew his man as one that talked too much. So on the demoniac (chap. 5: 10, Rev. Ver.) the duty of reticence is laid. **Go.** To Jerusalem, where the temple was. **44. Show thyself.** The self is here prominent in the original. **How long?** To talk about himself but to present himself to the proper authorities for official scrutiny. **Offer.** Make the prescribed offering. **For thy cleansing.** So Jesus, whose touch had driven away leprosy, surely had no need of ceremonial purification, but man, who had no such authority, did. **45. But.** What things? Turn again to Lev. 14: 10, etc. **Unto them.** Whom? Not the priests, but the people. The priests should thus give unintentional but sincere testimony to the work of Christ. The man was intruded with an errand whose dignity he little suspected. **45. But.** Contrast what the benighted man did with what he might be expected to do. **Began.** His disobedience was as prompt as Christ's pity had been. **Published much, and to spread abroad.** **Versus.** "Say nothing to any man." Where is the double and reverent figure of ver. 40? Average human nature. Nine other lepers; no sooner are they cleansed than they go their way and ignore their benefactor (Luke 17: 18). Sincere, no doubt, the fellow was, and full of zeal—the zeal of Rom. 10: 2. He preached in his own way of course, without the call of chap. 6: 13. He was a vigorous and political application of his cure, doubtless, and put his congregations in such a frame of mind as we read of in John 6: 15. He would make up for obedience by an industry only second to that of ver. 39. **Could no more.** Without producing a popular excitement which frustrated all attempts at teaching. **Openly.** Comp. 7: 34. He would have to stand in after dark to lodge, and leave before light, as in ver. 35. He could send his disciples into town after food, as in John 4: 8. **Without.** In the suburbs of towns. **Desert places.** Regions of open country where there were no houses. The plural indicates that he still moved about. Word would be passed around (chap. 2: 1) in the populous towns that the prophet was in the fields—east, north, west, or south, and the crowds would swarm out as they did from Gerasa (5: 15, 16) and Samaria (John 4: 30). The crowds could be better managed in the fields than in the cramped and winding streets of a city. What gracious words, how many "sermons on the mount" the surging crowds were privileged to hear! **Come to him.** In spite of the distance and uncertainty of his abiding-place. **From every quarter.** This is the first allusion reached in the story of the rapidly rising popularity of Jesus in Galilee, which began with ver. 16.