

They lived apart by themselves, and had to utter the dreadful cry, "Unclean!" when any one approached them. The cases of Naaman and Gehazi do not invalidate this, for the one was a foreigner, and the other lived in the northern kingdom, where the Mosaic law was not observed.

And what is the special curse of sin? Is it not exclusion from God's presence and favor? It was so with Adam and Eve, they were banished from Paradise; nay, they had hid themselves from God before that. So always. Isa. lix. 2; Psa. lxxvi. 18. It was this that David feared after his great sin; see Psa. li. 11, "Cast me not away from thy presence." It is this that is the final punishment of the ungodly. 2 Thess. i. 9.

Now see how the leper in our passage obtained his cure. He comes to Christ; he believes Christ can cure him, ("Thou canst,") but he is not sure whether He will, ("If Thou wilt,") still he will try. See the crowd giving way in horror as he approaches, fearing to be made legally "unclean" by contact with him. But Jesus shrinks not. He actually touches him. The pure is not defiled by the foul, but the foul is cleansed by the pure. In a moment the leprosy is gone, the leper is restored.

What a picture of the sinner's cure! He, too, must come to Christ. Christ is able (Heb. vii. 25,) and willing (Matt. xi. 28.) He has touched our nature, taken hold on it, taken it on himself, (Heb. ii. 14;) He actually became legally unclean for us, and bore the sentence of exclusion from God upon the cross. Let us believe it.

"Believing we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lord with cheerful voice,
And sing His bleeding love."

It will be seen that this lesson depends much upon the texts quoted. It generally is so where analogies have to be traced out; and many more might have been referred to.

Seed-Thoughts for Senior Scholars.

1. Why did Jesus go from place to place in preaching, rather than remain at great centres?
2. What is the force of the expression, *For therefore came I forth*?
3. What can be said of Christ's preaching?
4. Why did he preach in the *synagogues*?
5. What was the condition of this leper?

6. What were evidently his *feelings*?
7. What did his faith embrace?
8. What *four* things did he do?
9. What *moved* the Saviour's compassion?
10. In what respects did the leper resemble all sinners?
11. In what other respects did he resemble penitent sinners?
12. What similarity between his *healing* and the sinner's *pardon*?
13. Why did Christ enjoin on him secrecy?
14. Did he do wrong in publishing his healing?
15. May it be supposed, or not, many believed on him there?

Blackboard.



In this blackboard lesson the *precious love of Jesus* is represented by the crown of mercy. It is a beautiful crown set with pearls of love, sparkling with tears of compassion like diamonds, and its rubies are the sacred drops of blood shed upon the cross. This crown is for every one who cries for mercy. It is large enough for the whole world, and small enough for the most humble sinner. It is the crown of Jesus bought with a price for you and me. All the world cannot purchase it, and no human power can secure it; but the dropping of a tear, the pleading of an earnest prayer, or the whisper of a sigh, will bring it very near—because of the blood that bought it on Calvary. The cry of the poor leper, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," is as effectual now as in the days when Jesus walked on the earth, and every one who is not thoroughly cleansed from leprous sin should plead the leper's cry, and be saved by the *precious love of Jesus*.

O bliss of the purified, bliss of the free!
I plunge in the crimson tide opened for me!
O'er sin and uncleanness exulting I stand,
And point to the print of the nails in his hand.

Chorus: O sing of his mighty love, mighty to save.