

characteristic of Peter's impetuosity. He seems to have thought that Je-us did not realize the eagerness of the people's search for him: he little imagined the nature of the prayer he interrupted. VER. 37. The people were afraid he was about to remove from Capernaum, where his stay in Peter's house was clearly temporary. VER. 38. *Came I forth.* The word is identical with the "went out" in ver. 35, and a striking sense is obtained if we identify the two. But this is not required, as the first is the evangelist's word and the second Christ's own. Luke's "I was sent" seems to decide for the deeper meaning. Comp. John 8. 42. Christ's refusal to remain in the neighborhood of Capernaum seems to indicate that the multitudes sought him as a wonder-worker only: his words remind them that to "preach" was his great work. VER. 39. The fuller description in Matthew probably is not confined to this missionary journey. Note the supremacy given to "casting out devils," the most symbolical and spiritual of his works of power. VER. 40. The separation of this miracle in Matthew is due to his employing a topical, not chronological, order: his narrative is arranged so as to set and illustrate the sermon. That the miracle immediately followed the sermon is nearly, but not absolutely, certain. *Kneeling.* Luke records his falling into an attitude of even more passionate eagerness. If. Spiritual applications of this are apt to make us take this if as a flaw in his faith. But it follows our Lord's own model (chap. 14. 36). Only the greatest of prophets had healed the leper, and Je-us had as yet wrought few miracles. Thus the faith involved was most conspicuous, and the exquisite trustfulness and reticence of the prayer are full of profoundest teaching. VER. 41. *Compassion.* Mark loves thus to bring out the motives of Jesus. We should study these revelations of that divine pity which caused the Incarnation. Comp. Luke 1. 78; Matt. 9. 36; 14. 14; 15. 32; 18. 27; 20. 34; Luke 7. 13; 10. 33; 15. 20. *Touched.* Thereby incurring Levitical defilement. He might have healed with a word, but he would show us that contagious purity which cleansed all it touched, incapable of defilement itself. His strict injunction of secrecy was perhaps partly designed to prevent the hindrance to his work which would have followed a sentence of ceremonial uncleanness. Note how promptly his answer comes, as the exact echo of the prayer—only two words, yet there is a whole gospel in them. VER. 42. *Straightway.* Except on one or two occasions (as chap. 8. 22-26), where special lessons were intended, the cures of Jesus were instantaneously complete, his fullness of power contrasting with the painful effort generally appearing in the prophets' miracles. VER. 43. *Charged.* Literally, "having sternly commanded him, he straightway cast him out." Nothing could have been more peremptory than the way he was hurried away before the crowd could come up. Such a miracle was enough to kindle a perfect conflagration amid a populace so inflammable, constantly eager for a national leader. Therefore Jesus sought to keep away mere marvel-seekers: he would draw those needing help by faith in his words rather than in his acts. Here there was also the danger that the priests might refuse to pronounce clean one known to be healed by Jesus. VER. 44. See Lev. 14. 1-32. *Testimony.* That is, that the Jews might satisfy themselves of the reality of the cure. VER. 45. Thus the faith which was so perfect in adversity failed in prosperity. Obedience was better than sacrifice, however gratitude might urge the neglect of what seemed only excess of humility in the Healer. His disobedience cut off all opportunity of quiet work in the towns, and Jesus was compelled to

remain in lonely districts, even there with difficulty finding the seclusion needed for prayer.

Bureau Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

There was an abundant fountain in Jerusalem which never failed when all other streams were dry. It was found to have underground connection with a vast system of reservoirs, "Solomon's Pools" at Bethlehem. So Christ on earth lived in communion with his Father in heaven, and so may we. . . Show Jesus in various relations in this lesson: 1.) With God the Father, ver. 35. 2.) With his followers. 3.) With a needy world. 4.) With the powers of evil. 5.) With suffering and trouble. 6.) With the organized Church, as a loyal member, ver. 44. . . . Show the example of Christ in this lesson. (Thoughts for Young People.) . . . In this lesson leprosy may be taken as a type of sin: 1.) Hereditary. 2.) Loathsome. 3.) Defiling. 4.) Incurable. 5.) Deadly. . . . Christ's healing of the leper a picture of salvation: 1.) Need. 2.) Prayer. 3.) Faith. 4.) "He touched him." 5.) Cleansing. . . . Note the attractiveness of a godly and useful life—"all men seek thee." Go with any one who lives to do good. . . . The healing of souls a greater miracle than healing of bodies. Jesus could not give all his time to cleanse lepers, for there were souls to cleanse from sin—a lesson for us.

References. FREEMAN. Ver. 39: The synagogue. 636. FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Ver. 35: Pro-e. 860. 4568. Ver. 38: Pro-e. 6091. Ver. 39: Prose, 7173. Ver. 40: Poetical, 3212; Prose, 7173, 7178. Ver. 41: Prose, 7229. Ver. 45: Prose, 712, 4511, 1157, 11950.

O for a thousand tongues!
There's a wideness in God's mercy.
Jesus, the very thought of thee.
I sing of his mercy.
Deep are the wounds.
Wonderful words.
The cleansing wave.
I'm poor, and blind, and wretched.
Invitation accepted.
To Jesus I will go.
Even me.
Take me as I am.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Jesus's Touch Cures Sin.*

This is a lesson which needs careful, prayerful preparation. The story of the leper's cure is tragic in its intensity, and may be made most vivid to the children. But it is the story within the story, the picture of the Saviour touching the sinner, which holds the real lesson, and this we need to bring to the children, believing that little hearts need and often feel the need of the Saviour's cleansing touch.

The Leper. Tell enough about the disease of leprosy to show how it shut one out from home and friends and all the joys of life. Draw a picture of this leper, a wanderer, feared and shunned by every one, hearing how Jesus cured the sick by a touch. He knows that no physician can cure him. He thinks Jesus can if he will. Perhaps he is afraid that Jesus will not touch so loathsome a creature. But he goes to him, and, kneeling down, he begs him to cleanse this dreadful disease away. "If thou wilt," he says, "thou canst." This was the leper's faith. He believed in the power of Jesus. But he did not yet feel sure about his love.