

some great thing, but he would not try God's easy unencumbered plan; and so there are many who refuse to believe the gospel in order to be saved, they think that simply to believe in Jesus is too easy a way to get peace with God; and a well grounded hope of heaven. Such an easy way of being saved is foolishness unto them: and they go away, with their proud hearts unsubdued.

The important truth brought before our mind in the whole history of Naaman the leper is simply this, : God's method of curing either the body or the soul is the best; and though the human means to be employed are simple, easy, and in themselves utterly inadequate to effect the end, yet we need not expect the blessing unless the conditions are complied with.

It is quite evident from the sacred history that Naaman was a man of rank, and honour, and influence. He was captain of the host of the king of Syria; he had done much in his day to establish the throne of his sovereign, and was exalted in station to the very highest position in the kingdom. Though he was a heathen by birth, by education, and an idol-worshipper by practice, the God of Israel had given him victory over Israel. All his honour and glory, however, were beginning to fade away from him, for this mighty man of valour was slowly but surely being conquered by a loathsome disease. He was afflicted with leprosy. "This dreadful disease, which prevails in Egypt and Syria is scarcely perceptible in its commencement; there appearing only a few reddish spots on the skin which are not attended with pain or any other symptom, but which cannot be removed. It increases imperceptibly, and continues for some years to be more and more manifest. The spots become larger, spreading over the skin, till at length they cover the whole body with a leprous scurf. The disease affects at the same time the marrow and the bones; so much so that the farthest joints in the system gradually lose their powers, and the members fall together in such a manner as to give the body a mutilated and dreadful appearance. In its final stages, the whole mass of the patient's flesh and blood seems to turn to corruption, and he may be said almost literally to fall to pieces. This disease, though very unfrequent in Europe, indeed almost extinct, made its appearance about the year 1730 in the western continent, and spread its ravages in the sugar islands of the West Indies, particularly Guadeloupe"*

* See Professor Bush on the Book of Leviticus. Ch. 13, 2.