



LESSON VIII.—AUG. 21.

Naaman Healed.

II. Kings v., 1-14. Read the chapter. Memory verses 13, 14.

Golden Text.

'Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved.' (Jer. xvii, 14.)

Home Readings.

- M. II. Kings v., 1-19.—Naaman healed.
- T. II. Kings v., 20-27.—Gehazi smitten.
- W. Luke iv., 16-27.—None . . . was cleansed saving Naaman.
- T. Jer. xvii., 1-14.—'Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed.'
- F. Psa. II., 1-19.—'Wash me . . . whiter than snow.'
- S. Matt. viii., 1-17.—'Himself . . . bare our sicknesses.'
- S. John ix., 1-38.—'I went and washed, and I received sight.'

Lesson Story.

Naaman, the captain of the Syrian host, a mighty man, and greatly beloved by the king, had one sore affliction, which took from him all the pleasure of life, Naaman was a leper.

Now Naaman's wife had a little serving-maid who had been brought captive from Israel by a band of raiding Syrians. And the little maid with deep pity in her heart for the sufferer, told her mistress of the wonderful miracles of the prophet Elisha in Israel, and expressed a wish that Naaman might go to Elisha and see if the prophet could not heal him.

The king heard of the little maid's information and decided to try what could be done for his favorite general. He sent at once to the king of Israel, with a large present and a letter demanding that he should have Naaman healed of the awful disease of leprosy. When the king of Israel received this letter he was filled with dismay. How could he heal diseases? What should he do? Which way could he turn?

Elisha, the man of God, heard of the king's dismay and at once sent for Naaman. So Naaman with all his pomp and pride came in his chariot and stood at Elisha's door. The prophet sent a messenger saying, 'Go, wash in the Jordan seven times,' with the promise that by this he should be perfectly cleansed of the dread disease.

But the great general was very angry at this message, he had expected Elisha to come humbly out and perform some wonderful miracle in his sight. Besides, the beautiful rivers of Syria would surely be more cleansing than the dark waters of Jordan! So he reasoned in his rage, but his servants came lovingly and persuaded him to obey the prophet. Naaman at last went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, and his flesh became pure and wholesome and soft as the flesh of a child. Thus did God heal Naaman, the Syrian, through his obedience. The great man wished to make some return to the prophet, but he would take no reward for God's work. But Gehazi, Elisha's servant, secretly and wickedly went after Naaman, and in his master's name accepted a large present, for which sin the leprosy of Naaman clung to Gehazi for the rest of his life.

Lesson Hints.

- 'King of Syria'—Benhadad II.
- 'The Lord had given deliverance'—we can do nothing of ourselves, God gives strength and deliverance.
- 'A leper'—having the most loathsome and dread disease. Leprosy in its hideous defilement is the most perfect type of sin. Naaman probably had everything else that his heart could desire but health. Riches, power, popularity and love, all were his, but the sweetness of life was gone from him, he was a leper.
- 'A little maid'—one of the captives from Israel. In her own country she had heard of Elisha's wonderful works, and she believed in Elisha's God. She must have proved very trustworthy and truthful to have her word so implicitly believed at this time. She did what she could.

'The king of Israel' — Jehoram, son of Ahab. Benhadad sent to the wrong man, but he probably thought that Elisha was at court, or, at least, in the employ of the king. 'Ten talents of silver,' etc.—the whole gift being worth about one hundred thousand dollars.

'Thou mayest recover him' — the king knew he had no power, and he had quite forgotten the prophet through whom the God of Israel worked.

'Elisha sent a messenger'—to show that the God of Israel was greater than the king of Syria.

'Wash in Jordan'—the waters themselves had no virtue, but simple obedience to God's word always brings salvation and deliverance.

'Naaman was wroth'—at the simplicity of the event. Many of us are like Naaman in fretting to do some great thing, when all God asks of us is simple, loving obedience in the little things of life.

Questions to Be Studied at Home.

1. Had Naaman everything he needed to make him happy?
2. What does leprosy typify?
3. What lesson can we learn from the conduct of the little maid?
4. Which was the greater, Elisha's Master or Naaman's king?
5. Why did Naaman have to wash in the Jordan?
6. What happened when he obeyed?
7. Do you try to obey God always?

Suggested Hymns.

'Dare to be a Daniel,' 'Jesus bids us shine,' 'Jesus saves,' 'Tell the glad story,' 'Tell it again,' 'Stand up for Jesus,' 'Jesus is our Shepherd.'

Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON. Aug. 21.

A spoonful of mud will spoil a pot of honey. Verse 1.

God often uses little children to show forth his praise. Verses 2, 3; 4.

If in seasons of distress we flee elsewhere than to God, we cannot find relief. The world cannot cure a disease it will never understand. Verses 5-7.

God always has his workmen though the world may not notice them. Verses 8; 9.

Our Father's commands may be grievous to the flesh, but they are life to the soul. Verse 10.

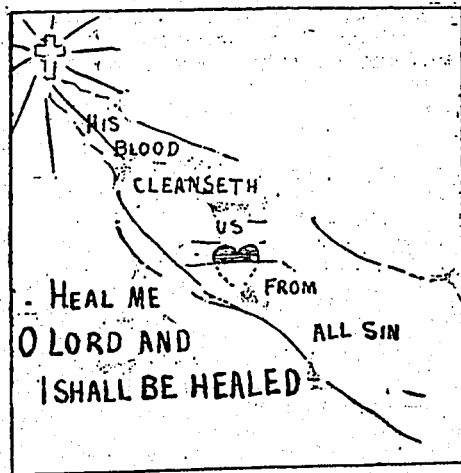
Though God's ways may be different from ours, they are always so much better that it never becomes us to lose our temper over them. Verses 11, 12.

A soft answer turns away wrath, and often leads the erring one to a better line of action.—Verses 13, 14.

Tiverton, Ont.

The Lesson Illustrated.

Our lines here do double duty. First we draw the lines of the river representing Jordan, then a heart cleansed only in that part



which is dipped into the river. This stands for Naaman, and the healing from his leprosy. Then we draw the cross at the source of the river, and it becomes the stream of atoning love, that flowing from the cross of Jesus, cleanses all who trust in him. Many and fair are the Abanas and Pharphars that men have chosen for their cleansing, but this stream alone is of any value.

Christian Endeavor Topics.

Aug. 21.—Practical uses of the bible.—Psa. cxix., 97-105.

Under Shepherds.

(Rev. J. R. Miller, in 'Sunday-school Times')

Jesus made very clear the essential qualifications of a true shepherd. Before he committed his little lambs to the care of Peter, he asked him in the most solemn way, 'Lovest thou me?' and got his answer, 'Yea, Lord.' There must be love for Christ in the heart, else the apostle was not ready to be the shepherd of Christ's lambs.

It is well that all who are set to care for children should understand the full significance of this requirement. Love for the work itself is not enough. There are some people who like to teach children, but this is not a sufficient qualification. Enthusiasm for childhood alone does not fit one for the sacred work. The children are Christ's special care, and he will not entrust them to anyone who is not loyal to him, and who does not love him. He does not say that the shepherds must be very learned or very wise, or highly cultured, but he does insist that they must love him. No one who does not feel towards the children as Jesus himself does, is ready to do his work for them and in them. The lambs are tender and easily harmed. An ungentle touch would hurt them. An unkind word might mar the beauty of their spirit.

It is evident that nothing but love will fit one to be a shepherd of Christ's lambs. Imagine a mother without love. A little child is laid in her arms, but she does not love it. She undertakes to care for it in a perfunctory way, nursing it, providing for it, teaching and training it, yet all without love. Think of that tender young life growing up without the nurture of love! It might almost as well be in a home for foundlings as with an unloving mother.

But even the best human love, sweet and holy as it is, even mother-love, the deepest, purest, most sacred of human affections, is not enough to prepare one to be a shepherd of the lambs. The love of Christ must be in the heart of one who would fittingly do this holy work. Unless a woman loves Christ—however much she may love her child—she is not ready to be a mother of little children who belong to Christ. The teacher who does not love Christ, however naturally affectionate and sympathetic he may be, lacks the essential qualification for being a true shepherd of Christ's little lambs.

Why is the love of Christ necessary for this shepherding? Nothing in this world is so sensitive as a child's soul. A rough or careless touch may leave eternal marring on it. You go out one day with a geologist and he shows you on certain rocks the prints of birds' feet, the indentation made by falling raindrops, the impression of a leaf with all its fine veinage. Once that rock was plastic clay, and the birds walked over it, the rain fell on it, and the leaf fluttered down and lay there. Next day the clay became dry and hardened, holding all these impressions. At length it became rock. Then some mighty upheaval tossed it to the side of a great mountain, where the man of science found it. But through all the long centuries, and in fire and flood, it has kept these ancient marks to tell the story of its origin.

Yet more sensitive to impressions than the plastic clay, and holding them yet more tenaciously, is the life of a little child. Every phase of influence that passes over it leaves its own record indelibly written. If we are impatient, the impatience will leave its trace; if we grow angry, our anger will make a wound; if our life is impure, it will leave tarnishing. They must be holy, pure and meek, who would do Christ's work worthily on the soul of a little child. Nothing but the love of Christ in a heart will make it truly fit for shepherding Christ's lambs.—Rev. J. R. Miller.

Every Sunday-school having a library should expend a certain amount of money annually for new supplies. These new supplies, however, should never reach the shelves without being carefully examined by a special committee set apart for this work. Too much care cannot be exercised in the choice of this committee; that they be 'full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,' would not be requiring too much. Fathers, mothers, teachers, and others, who, while keeping in touch with the best literature, also keep sufficiently in touch with the young people about them to know what will interest while it profits, will serve well on this committee. Such a committee will not fail to secure supplies that will be of value also to all the members of the school, whether they be pupils, teachers, or officers.—'Sunday-school Times.'