

still confined to her room, was visited every morning by her grandpa before he went to his office. One morning she had broken some crackers and laid them on the floor, spelling out the words, "Please, grandpa, bring me a doll." Grandpa made no reply, but left her with a kiss and a smile. As soon as he had gone she rearranged the broken biscuits so as to read, "Thank you, grandpa, for bringing me a doll." She believed her grandpa would grant her request. This woman believed in God. So conspicuous was her faith, she is mentioned among the great worthies in (Heb. 11). Her faith was not like Martha's—belief in a resurrection at the last day—but anticipated it as Abraham did, reckoning "that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." Her burden was transferred to the Lord and she was sustained. Persistent in her plea, she could not be satisfied with the servant, though he carried the prophet's staff. Jacob at the brook Jabbok said, "I will not let thee go." This woman says, "I will not leave thee." Like Jacob she was triumphant.

The picture changed again. Her child was given back, now doubly precious, as the glorious reward of her faith. The love-sent calamity became a blessing. Her tears were seeds of joy, her sighs a prelude to the song of a rewarded faith. This last scene seems to say:

"All is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His dear will."

"Cast thy burden on the Lord and he shall sustain thee."



LESSON 8. — AUGUST 21, 1898.

Naaman Healed.

(Lesson Text: 2 Kings 5: 1-14. Memory Verses: 13, 14.)
(Read the chapter.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved." —Jer. 17: 14.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, 2 Kings 5: 1-7. Tuesday, 2 Kings 5: 8-16. Wednesday, Mark 1: 35-38. Thursday, Luke 17: 11-19. Friday, John 9: 1-11. Saturday, Rom. 5: 12-21. Sunday: 1 John 1.

The Heart of the Lesson.

At the Queen's Jubilee, the son-in-law of her majesty, the then Crown Prince of Germany, rode in magnificent uniform, the stateliest of all the twenty princes who followed the carriage of Queen Victoria in that memorable procession. "But," amid the cheers and admiration he drew from thousands that day, there was a flaw in the crystal of his prosperity, a fly in the ointment of his applause, a shadow that clouded his glory. He felt that the disease which was to strike him down after a short reign as emperor was a fatal presence that followed him everywhere, the bitter dreg in his cup of joy.

Affliction and disease are not the heritage of poverty alone. They find their way into the highest and wealthiest homes. "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Death robs the Shunammite of her child, and the Syrian general is smitten with leprosy. Naaman was a great officer, a great man with his master, the recipient of great honors because of his success in fighting the king's battles. He was a chivalric hero, a popular man of valor, enriched by his master with the spoils of successful warfare. Tradition says it was he whose hand shot the arrow that wounded Ahab between the joints where his borrowed armor did not fit. "But he was a leper." He possessed superior qualifications, but he was hindered by his loathsome disease. All his honor and power was nullified by this powerful obstacle to his success.

But there was in the home of this great man "a little maid." A little chink may let in much light, and this captive, with her heart warm to her mistress, cherishing no bitterness against her captor, was sympathetic. Her pity and compassion went out to her suffering master. She believed that God was able to heal his disease though he was a heathen idolator. She, by intuition, believed in the boundless universality of God's grace. She was better informed and had more real, religious knowledge than Joram, the king of Israel, who did not seem to know there was a prophet in Israel that could heal a leper (v. 7). He ought to have known; but kings have short memories for prophets' services, and the maid was wiser than the monarch. She was not so bigoted and conservative as Jonah, who refused to go to Ninevah, or Peter even, who at first declined to go to Cæsarea to preach to the Roman centurion. So, in a simple, childish way, she told her mistress of the great prophet, whose name she did not seem to remember. Her environment had not corrupted her faith, nor made her ashamed of God. How this rebukes our unfaithfulness in this noonday of Gospel privilege!

The late Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes divided men into three classes: One-storey intellects, fact collectors, who have no aim beyond their facts; two-storey intellects, who reason, compare, and generalize; and "three-storey intellects, with skylights," their best illumination coming from above. As Daniel kept his window open toward Jerusalem, this maid kept her "skylight" open heavenward. The teaching she had received in her native land had anchored the principle of righteousness deep in her soul, otherwise, she might have lived and died an unknown slave. The word of the maid came to the ears of Benhadad, who was ready and anxious to do anything for his favorite. So he wrote a letter to the king of Israel and sent his general to him with suitable presents. He "reasoned" and "compared," but he had no "skylight" illumination. He thought the prophet was the head of an order of magi, who would be influenced by a word from his sovereign. Joram was in despair and rent his clothes. He had no "skylight" illumination. He could "reason" and "compare," and remember how unreasonable this same king had been with his father (1 Kings 20: 7). He thought this was a diplomatic trap the king of Syria was setting for him. Elisha heard of the king's dilemma and sent to him (v. 3).

Naaman was anxious to be cured, but he had gone to the wrong physician. How many make the same mistake in seeking soul cure! They apply at the palaces of pleasure, power, and influence, or of the kings of society, and, like Naaman, find no healing. When Naaman went to the right place he went in the wrong mood—proud, conceited, and full of prejudice, forgetting his leprosy in the remembrance of his earthly greatness. Man loves forms and ceremonies; God loves simplicity. So the servant of the King of kings sent his attendant with a message (v. 10). Patriotism and prejudice roused Naaman's anger against the prophet, the message, and the means (vs. 11, 12).

The general had good servants. They had more "skylight" illumination than he had. As the shepherds of Bethlehem knew more than the wise men of the East, and more than the doctors of Jerusalem; as the maid knew more than her mistress, in one matter at least, the servants saw things more clearly than their master (v. 13). Their suggestion was common sense (v. 14). "He stooped to conquer and conquered by stooping."

Is there a *but* that discounts your religious life? It