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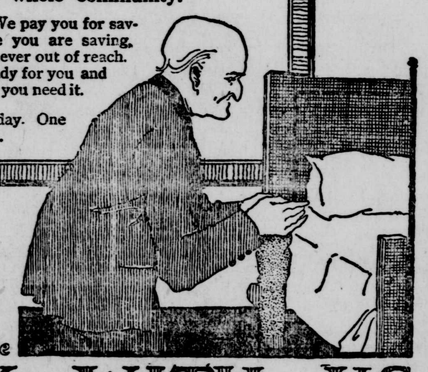

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Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

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LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 19

ELISHA AND NAAMAN THE SYRIAN

LESSON TEXT—II Kings 5:1-27.

GOLDEN TEXT—Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.—Ps. 103:2, 3.

REFERENCE MATERIAL—Luke 4:16-30; 5:12-16.

PRIMARY TOPIC—A Little Girl Helping.

JUNIOR TOPIC—A Young Girl's Service.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Elisha Helping a Foreigner.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—How to Overcome National and Racial Prejudices.

I. Naaman's Fatal Defect (v. 1).

He was a great man, but a leper. He was held in high esteem by the king, because through him the Syrians had been delivered from their enemies. He was not only a capable general, but was a very brave man—valorous. Every unregenerate man, regardless of his gifts and possessions, has this one fatal defect. He may be a mighty warrior, a great orator, a gifted writer, a man of profound learning, an honorable statesman, but if he is an unbeliever in Christ, he is a lost sinner—a leper. Leprosy is a type of sin. Note its characteristics:

Loathsome, hereditary, infectious, separating, destructive, deceitful, incurable by man.

II. The Faithful Witness (vv. 2-4).

This was a Jewish maid who had been captured by marauding Syrian troops who made frequent incursions into Israel's land for the purpose of plunder. Daniel at a later date was carried away captive, and he likewise was used of God to bless many. Joseph is another example of one who was put into a hard place, but became a blessing to others, even to the saving of his brothers, who sold him. This Jewish maid pointed out to this great man the One who could heal him. Many are the persons who have been pointed to Christ as the Healer of souls by children.

III. Naaman Seeking the Healer (vv. 5-9).

1. He goes with a letter of introduction and great gifts (v. 5). In the East valuable gifts are taken along when in quest of some favor. In this case the value was perhaps $80,000.

2. He goes to the wrong place (vv. 6, 7). The maid did not suggest that if Naaman would be with the king he would be recovered of his leprosy, but with the prophet of God. We should be very careful that we go to the right place with our troubles and sins. Neither the king's power nor Naaman's money could avail anything in this case. The prophet of God can bring greater blessing than kings and rich men.

3. Naaman at the door of Elisha (vv. 8, 9). Elisha, upon learning of the king's embarrassment, sent to him, saying, "Let him come now to me." Naaman appeared before Elisha's door in great splendor. He did not come as a suppliant, but as one who could pay a goodly sum for healing.

IV. Naaman Healed (vv. 10-15).

1. Elisha's message (v. 10). Go wash in Jordan seven times.

2. Naaman's anger (vv. 11, 12). He thought that Elisha should have shown deference to him. People today think that their rank and wealth entitle them to different treatment by God. They turn away from the humble way of the Cross, God's method of salvation. Rich and poor, high and low are alike in God's sight. Reasonings of the flesh must be supplanted by the obedience of faith.

3. Naaman's obedience (vv. 13, 14). Through the earnest entreaty of his servants his pride and prejudice were overcome, and he did what the prophet commanded. The result of his obedience was that his flesh "came again as the flesh of a little child."

4. Naaman acknowledges Jehovah (v. 15). After his cleansing he came again to the prophet and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." The vital point of teaching in this lesson is how nearly Naaman missed being healed. The three enemies which almost kept him from being healed were: (1) Pride (v. 11). He was insulted because the man of God did not come out to such a distinguished man as he was. (2) Preconceived opinion (v. 11). "I thought." Many sinners procrastinate because they have preconceived opinions as to how God ought to save. (3) Prejudice (v. 12). Rivers of Damascus are better than Jordan. Countless thousands are lost by these enemies. God has provided only one way to save men from their sins—the way of the Cross.

The Dove and Jesus.

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.—Luke 3:21-22.

The Unrighteous.

The ways of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.—Romans 3:17-18.

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"MOTHER SENT AWAY FOR THIS BICYCLE, AND IT WENT TO PIECES WHILE RIDING IT. CAN YOU HAVE IT REPAIRED?"

"I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO WITH IT BUT I AM AFRAID IT IS A BAD BARGAIN."

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MORAL—It is folly to lay our money in the purchase of repentance.

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