

Chapter 5

Naaman the general captaine of Syria is clenfed of leprofie, by washing him felf as Elifeus appointeth him feuen times in Iordan: 15. profefseth his belief in one God promifing to ferue him. 20. Giezi taketh giftes of Naaman, 25. and is ftricken with leprofie.

Naaman the General of the warfare of the king of Syria, was a great man with his lord, and honorable: for by him our Lord gaue health to Syria: and he was a valiant man and rich, but a leper. ² Moreouer out of Syria there were come forth robbers, and had led away captiue out of the Land of Ifrael a litle girle, which wayted vpon the wife of Naaman. ³ Who faid to her maiftresse: I would my lord had bene with the prophete, that is in Samaria: furely he would haue cured him from the leprofie, which he hath. ⁴ Naaman therefore went in to his lord, and told him faying: Thus and thus hath the wench of the Land of Ifrael fpoken. ⁵ And the king of Syria fayd to him: Goe, & I wil fend letters to the king of Ifrael. Who when he was fette forward, and had taken with him ten talentes of filuer, and fix thoufand peces of gold, and ten change of rayment, ⁶ he brought the letters to the king of Ifrael, in thefe wordes: When thou shalt receiue this letter, know that I haue fent to thee Naaman my feruant, that thou mayeft cure him of his leprofie. ⁷ And when the king of Ifrael had read the letters, he rent his garmentes, and faid: Am I God, that I can kil, and geue life, becaufe this man hath fent to me, that I should cure a man of his leprofie? marke, and fee that he feeketh occafions againft me. ⁸ Which when Elifeus the man of God had heard, to witte, that the king of Ifrael had rent his garmentes, he fent to him, faying: Why haft thou rent thy garmentes? let him come to me and let him know that there is a prophet in Ifrael. ⁹ Naaman therefore came with horfes and chariotes, and ftood at the doore of the houfe of Elifeus: ¹⁰ and Elifeus fent a meffenger to him, faying: Goe and be washed feuen times in Iordan, and thy flesh

shal receiue health, and thou shalt be cleane. ¹¹ Naaman being angrie departed, faying: I thought he would come out to me, and ftanding would inuocate the name of the Lord his God, and touch with his hand the place of the leprofie, and cure me. ¹² What are not Abana, and Pharphar the riuers of Damafcus, better then al the waters of Ifrael, that I may be washed in them, and be made cleane? Therefore when he had turned him felf, and went away with indignation, ¹³ his feruantes came vnto him, & fpake to him: Father, & if the prophet had fayd a great thing to thee, certes, thou shouldest haue done it: how much more wheras now he fayd vnto thee: Be washed, and thou shalt be cleane? ¹⁴ He went downe, & washed in Iordan feuen times according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was reftored, as the flesh of a litle childe, & he was made cleane. ¹⁵ And returning to the man of God with al his trayne, he came, and ftood before him, & fayd: In very deede I know that there is no other God in al the earth, but only in Ifrael. I befech thee therefore to take a benediction of thy feruant. ¹⁶ But he answered: Our Lord liueth, before whom I ftand, I wil not take it. And when he would haue forced him, he did in nowife agree. ¹⁷ And Naaman fayd: As thou wilt, but I befech thee: graunt vnto me thy feruant, that I may take of ^a)the earth the burden of two mules: for thy feruant wil no more make holocauft, or viftimes to ftrange goddes, but to the Lord. ¹⁸ But this onlie is it, for which thou shalt befech the Lord for thy feruant, when my maifter shal goe into the temple of Remmon, to adore: and he leaning vpon my hand, if I shal adore in the temple of Remmon, he adoring in the fame place, that the Lord pardon me thy feruant for this thing. ¹⁹ Who fayd to him: ♪Goe in peace. He therefore went from him in the fpring time of the earth.

^a In respect of Gods fpecial electing and factifying the land of Chanaan, by his true religion, Naaman rightly eftemed that earth fitter for an altar then the earth of his owne countrie.

²⁰ And ^{a)}Giezi the feruant of the man of God, fayd: My maifter hath fpared Naaman this Syrian, that he tooke not of him the thinges which he brought: Our Lord liueth, I wil runne after him, and wil take fome thing of him. ²¹ And Giezi folowed at the backe of Naaman: whom when he faw running toward him, he lept downe from his chariote to mete him, and faid: Are al thinges wel? ²² And he faid: Wel. My maifter hath fent me to thee, faying: Euen now there are come to me two yong men from mount Ephraim, of the children of the prophetes: geue them a talent of filuer, and two change of rayment. ²³ And Naaman fayd: It is better that thou take two talentes. And he forced him, & bound the two talentes of filuer in two bagges, and the duple rayment, & layd it vpon two of his feruantes, who alfo caried it before him. ²⁴ And when he was come now in the euening, he tooke it out of their hand, & layd it vp in the houfe, & difmiffed the men, and they departed. ²⁵ And himfelf going in, ftood before his maifter. And Elifeus faid: From whence comeft thou Giezi? Who answered: Thy feruant hath not gone any whither. ²⁶ But he fayd: Was not my hart prefent, when the man returned out of his chariote to meete thee? Now therefore thou haft receiued filuer, and taken rayment, to bye oliuetes, and vineyardes, and sheepe, and oxen, and feruantes, and handmaidens. ²⁷ But the leprofie alfo of Naaman fhall cleaue to thee, and to thy feede, for euer. And he went out from him a leper as it were fnow.

ANNOTATIONS

19 Goe in peace.) Schifmatiques, as they are commonly (but improperly) now called in England, which being in mind and iudgement Catholiques, goe fometimes to Proteftantes common prayers, or fermons, draw an excufe of their fact, from this warrant of the Prophet, permitting a Nobleman of Syria to goe and ferue

The cafe of going to heretical feruice, and Naamans going to the temple of an idol differ in diuers refpectes.

^a Giezi prefigured Iudas the falfe Apoftle of Chrif, and al thofe that buy or fel fpiritual thinges for money who by their auarice lofe Gods grace, and gaine infamie in this world, and eternal damnation in the next. *S. Aug. fer. 208. de tempore.*

his king in the temple, when he adored an Idol. But whofoeuer wil duly confider this example, fhall find great difference in respect of the times, places, perfons, and of the very doubtles propofed, between this mans cafe and ours. For before Chrifts Gofpel was promulgate, neither al Articles of faith were fo exprefly taught, nor the external profeffion therof fo ftrictly commanded, as now they are in time of more grace, which geueth more ayde to mans weaknes, wherin alfo more perfection is required, and therefore our Sauour exacteth of al *to confefle him*, and his Religion, *before men: els he vvil denie them before his Father*. Likewife in the

Difference of times.

Mat. 10.

place, where this Nobleman dwelt, his prefence in the temple, and feruice to the king, could not be accounted a reuolt from true religion, which was neuer profefed there, nor be fcandalous to anie man being al Infidels: but in a chriftian cuntry, where al beare the name of Chriftians, efpecially where men are at controuerfie about the true Chriftian religion, al that frequent, or repaire to the fame affemblies, for publique feruice of God, are reputed to be of the fame religion; or els diffemblers, as it were to haue no care of religion, knowing God, and not glorifying him as God, and reuolting from the truth which they had lerned. The difference alfo of perfons is great. For this Nobleman hauing before his conuerfion ferued his king, in the office of fuftayning him, when he bowed to the Idol, if he fhould haue refused to do the fame, it would rather haue bene fuppofed, that he difdained his Maifter, or fhewed difloyaltie, then thought, that he refrayned for religion: wheras in our cafe, verie few do fuch temporal feruice, about the king in the church: and fuch as doe carrie the fword, fcepter, or the like, are accounted of that religion, which is there practifed; except they manifeft the contrarie, as this man did, and our men commonly do not. Yea if anie do fay they are Catholiques, and yet goe to the Proteftantes church, they are counted of that rank,

Of places.

Rom. 1. 2. Pet. 1.

S. Paul fpeaketh of, which confefle they knovv God, but denie him in their deedes. And thofe which refufe fuch an office, can not be iudged difloyal, becaufe it is fufficiently knowne, that Catholiques refufe of mere confcience. An other moft efpecial difference is in the things demanded. This Syrian promifing exprefly before the Prophet, and his owne great trayne, that he would neuer againe ferue falfe goddes, and that he would ferue the onlie true God, and for that purpofe caried earth with him, to make an Altar for Sacrifice, and returning home preached the miracle wrought in himfelf, defired not to doe anie thing, wherby he might feme to ferue an Idol: but that when the king leaning vpon him, fhould adore Remmon, he might bow with his maifter, not adoring the Idol, for he refolued and promifed the contrarie, but adoring God Almighty, in whom now he beleued. And this the Prophet approued, in that time, place, and perfon to be lawful. But thofe that now in England goe to Proteftants feruice, or fermons, do neither publikly renounce al herefies, nor profefle to frequent Maffe,

Of perfons.

Tit. 2.

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The things demanded differ much.

D. Bristons Motino. 23.

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Perfonal prefence at heretical feruice in England, a diftinctiue figne of conformity to herefie.

the true Sacrifice of the Chrifian Church, nor auouch the erecting of an Altar, but goe to church, to fhew them felues obedient to the Parliament law, which abandoned the true Diuine Seruice, and in place therof appointed & commanded al to be prefent, at a new forme of common prayer, thereby making it a diftinctiue figne of conformitie, and participation in that religion, which thefe diffemblers in their confciences know to be falfe.

This example therfore doth in no forte warrant their going to the heretical church, but contrariwife admonifheth al to take refolution in our cafe (as Naaman did in his) of our Elifeus, or fpiritual Superior, and if he should fay: Goe in peace, then might they pleade an excufe, but he fayth: None can goe without incurring greuous finne, and eternal damnation. The cafe being fo much different from Naamans. It is in deede more like to that of Eleazarus, and other Machabees, who were commanded *by eating fvvines flesh, to depart from the lavv of God, and their fathers.* VVhich by no meanes was lawful to doe, nor to make fhew of doing it, but rather to dye, as they did moft glorioufly.

2. *Machab. 6. 7.*

A cafe very like to ours.