

## Sabbath-School Lessons.

February 21st, 1864.

## THE BOWED WOMAN HEALED.

Read *Luke* xiii. 1-17.\*I. *Christ teaches repentance*, ver. 1-5.

Christ had just been urging, in the last verses of the 12th chapter, the importance of immediate reconciliation with God, when some of his hearers told him of the sudden slaughter of the Galileans. It is supposed that these Galileans, in some insurrection of the Jews, of which they were innocent, had been slain while worshipping at the temple by Pilate's soldiers. The Galileans being Herod's subjects, their death might occasion the quarrel between him and Pilate, chap. xxiii. 12. The tower of Siloam was at the south-east angle of the wall of Jerusalem.

Evidently the Jews thought the sudden death of these men a token of divine wrath. Christ wished to impress on them that it was not so, but that the unrepentant sinner would surely perish, and perhaps as suddenly, his blood mingling with his sacrifice.

II. *The barren fig-tree*, ver. 6-19.

*A fig-tree in a vineyard.* Pecuniary favoured and cared for. *Three years* was the time usually allowed to try such trees. Christ's ministry among the Jews was just such a period. *Cumbereth.* Not only useless, but injurious. Other fruits might grow there. *The dresser of the vineyard* represents Christ. He acknowledged the justice of the sentence, but pleads that he had still one other expedient to try.

III. *The bowed woman healed*, ver. 10-17.

Christ was teaching in one of the synagogues of Perea, when this woman, probably old and poor, attracted his eye. She came to worship—her feeble frame and bent back could not keep her away from God's worship. *She glorified God*—shows her heart was right.

The ruler of the synagogue openly charged Christ with Sabbath breaking, and warned the people not so seek cures on the Sabbath. *Thou hypocrite.* Christ's anger was kindled; before all he exposes the hypocrisy. On the Sabbath they thought it right to care for their oxen. It was envy against Christ, not love for the Sabbath, that made them blame him for caring for this poor but good woman.

## APPLICATION.

1. *Affliction is no mark of God's displeasure.* The wicked often prosper in this world and the good suffer. So Joseph, Job, Lazarus, *Luke* xvi. 20; Christ himself, *Isa* liii. 4. You may be God's child though sorely afflicted, *Heb.* xii. 6; *Rev.* vii. 14.

2. *Prosperity is no mark of God's favour.* Asaph found out this, *Psal.* lxxiii. 12-28. The people of Melita fell into this mistake, *Acts* xxviii. 4-6. Beware of such a mistake; if prosperity makes you confident and proud, it may cost you your soul!

3. *Repent or perish.* Your Judge on "that day" says so! He says it now in kindness to you! Cease doing what is wrong—try to do what right—cleanse your hearts and your hands. Christ will help you. Have you ever thus repented, or are you just now what you have always been? If you repent not you *perish*—no escape, no excuse—how awful! *Mark* ix. 44.

4. *Are we like the barren fig-tree?*

Highly favoured by God. It grew in a vineyard. How many are our privileges? Sabbaths, Bibles, teachers.

Long spared, though fruitless. Year after year the fig-tree was spared. God has sought "fruit," that is, obedience, love, and holiness, in us for many years, and found it not; yet at Christ's intercession we are spared. Still it may be only for a very little longer. The axe may be laid at the root. Once more God waits another year, another month, another Sabbath, to see if you will turn to Him! Oh, turn now! *Matt.* xxi. 19; *Daniel* v. 26, 30.

5. *How good, how glorious Christ is!* He looks at the most wretched. His eye rested on this poor, friendless, hopeless woman in pity and love. "The chief of sinners" he loves to save, *1 Tim.* i. 15. Even those who seek him not, *John* xv. 16. The poor woman sought no cure for her body.

He is able to save to the uttermost. No enemy can stay his hand, *Daniel* iv. 35. No body or mind so weak that he cannot make it strong, *Deut.* xxxiii. 25; *Zech.* ix. 11; *Isa.* xl. 29, 30.

Do you know this Saviour? Has he healed you?

6. *Is your religion like Christ's, one of love?* That of the ruler was not, it was one of formality. Christ's was full of love to all. Is yours such? You may keep the Sabbath, and not be better than the ruler was.

## SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. Do you see more sin in yourself than in any one-else? ver. 2. It should be so; you see no heart but your own.

\*This passage is one where most teachers should confine themselves to two of the sections it contains. Some teachers may find from ver. 10-17 enough.