

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XXXIV.

August 23, 1874. POWER OVER DISEASE. Mark v. 24-31.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 33, 34.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. ix. 20-22; Luke vi. 10; Luke viii. 48-49.

With v. 21 read Matt. xiv. 5; with vs. 25, 26, Ps. cviii. 12; with v. 27, Rom. x. 14; with vs. 28, 29, Ps. ciii. 3, 4; with v. 30, Ps. xv. 20; with vs. 31-34, Mark ix. 23 and Matt. xiii. 58.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Christ the great physician.

LEADING TEXT.—And as many as touched Him were made whole.—Mark vi. 56.

The whole account of the event is given as a parenthesis, by all the three evangelists, in the narrative of the miracle of our next Lesson.

One can usefully teach this Lesson by studying this woman in her sad loss; her wise venture, and her great gain. In the second and third divisions we shall "see Jesus."

I. HER SAD LOSS.—of health; for twelve years a sufferer. Her malady would now be called a "hemorrhage," or discharge of blood from broken vessels. What her circumstances were, we are not told, but she was probably comfortable, for she had been to "many physicians." There was nothing wrong in that. No reflection is intended upon the profession which has this nobleness in its idea, that it lays itself to relieve and heal human suffering, and in practice does (and often disinterestedly) incalculable good. They had done their utmost; now hope had risen, now gone down; one remedy promised much and failed, to be followed by another with the like result. There was nothing wrong in using means. When in 2 Chron. xvi. 12, Asa is censured because "he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians," the fault was not in going to them; it was "and in his disease too," as in his war with Baasha (see vs. 2, 8), he forgot God and placed undue reliance on man.

Hope had died out in her heart. She grew worse instead of better. Her case, as a Jewess, would be even worse than with us, for this disease made her unclean (Lev. xv. 19), kept her from all public assemblies, and if she had a home was cause enough to break it up. How much the suffering—suffering woman—should be pitied, prayed for, and helped, as we have means! How many of the poor toil and endure in secret untold anguish! Where once all was very good, sin has brought sorrow.

II. HER WISE VENTURE. She had heard of Jesus, "faith cometh by hearing," had struggled in her mind between exposing her misery and applying to him; at last he thought her, that she could come and touch him, without any declaration and receive the healing (v. 27). "Timid and shy, she comes in "the press," caused by the crowd—eager, curious and not over considerate, bent on seeing how he would deal with the ruler's daughter—and she touches the hem of his garment behind—the hem not the mere hem, but perhaps as being sacred and significant; for God ordered the blue fringe on the Jews' garment to remind them of being his (Num. xv. 37-40 and Lev. xxii. 12.) (Hence the pretentious enlarging of Matt. xxiii. 5.) Jesus knew her wretchedness (John ii. 25) her difficulty, the hardness of the case to her as a woman, and the faith that was in her. The healing "virtue" responded to that faith, and he had made her whole, and gave at the same time the instant feeling of restoration.

Then why did he appear ignorant, and ask the question of v. 30, "Who touched my clothes?" Because, as to the form of his words, and the language of Mark, there is accommodation to her idea of the people; because he meant to bring the woman to open avowal, for her own highest good. "But did he not affect ignorance, as if he dimly perceived some unusual touch, but did not know its meaning?" Not in any sense that is untruthful, but as Eliza said, "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" (see 2 Kings v. 25, 26), or as the Lord questioned Adam (Gen. iii. 9, 11), and Cain (Gen. iv. 9, 10). "A father when he comes among his children and demands, who committed this fault? himself conscious, even while he asks, but at the same time willing to bring the culprit to a free confession, and so to put him in a pardonable state, can he be said in any way to violate the laws of the highest truth?"

Ever ready with his tongue, Peter (Luke xviii. 45) shows the state of things, almost reproves the Lord for his question, as if it had no point; but Jesus has a point and keeps in view steadily.

III. HER GREAT GAIN. The master intended that she should receive more than a stolen blessing, and brought her to avow herself and into open contact with him. He meant to make her understand for herself, and illustrate to others that healing was not a natural property inherent in him, which flowed out as light from a candle, or perfume from a rose, or attraction from a magnet, without regard to his will, or the moral state of the recipients, but a voluntary and gracious act of power, which was done in response to a believing application. She is constrained, therefore, to open avowal. His eye—the same that rested on Peter (Luke xxii. 61), rested on her (v. 22). She saw she "was not hid," (Luke viii. 47), and so "before all the people." (Luke viii. 47, is immutably pathetic.) She declared her misery, her venture, and her cure. It was a gentle severity, a wise and tender firmness Christ employed.

What you say, "I believe in Jesus, and that is enough—why should I come forward in baptism, or at the altar, and be noticed in joining the church," study this passage. Never was there more tender consideration, more delicate grace, towards timid woman than Christ's and he required this open declaration from her, even when she was healed. Why not of you also?

She had misapprehension as to the way in which Jesus healed, but she had such true faith in his power to heal as led her to

come. So many have misconceptions as to the way in which Jesus saves, but such faith as leads them to come to him. Let us not fear to believe that he does for them, notwithstanding their loose thinking, as for her. For he said to her, without one needless moment of that publicity from which she recoiled, v. 34, "Daughter." So "He" secured in her two blessings, as it is God's way to give "for the life that now is and that which is to come." (a) It restored her to society, assured the beholders of her perfect health and ceremonial cleanness. He who could perform the act is creditable when he certifies, "thy faith hath made the whole." (b) It lays the foundation for peace of mind and full trust. Faith has done this—"Come to me for all you need and you shall get all. Go in peace." Without believing the legend of the later church, that she set up a brazen statue of Christ in memory of this deed, before her dwelling, we may well believe that she trusted Christ for all, and at length entered into the everlasting peace. In all this we may see pictures of

1. The helplessness of the race, diseased in its life, the polluted heart sending out the polluted streams, wise men, philosophers, trying to heal it in vain, till Christ appears, robes himself in the garment of humanity, and we touch him and are healed.

2. The distinction among men. Churches are thronged, crowded, multitudes are around Jesus. But how many, feeling the plague of their own hearts, are touching him. There the healing begins.

3. Faith as the electric wire along which the current of blessing flows. Wanting this, we are all unblest, however frequent or close our accidental contact with Christ, his church, or word, at table may be. We see too, that

4. None should stay away or delay, or rely on aught save Christ. They go elsewhere, try many, grow worse. Go to the physician who can and will heal you. And, finally,

5. Do not withhold the open confession of Him who heals you. All feeling is strengthened by its open expression, Romans x. 9.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

The circumstances in which this miracle wrought—why such variety in recorded miracles in mode of working them—the condition of this woman—her course—place of physicians—the result—her state of mind—her social suffering—her application to Jesus—how—why hem of his garment—the result—the Lord's question—why—how replied to—by whom—the Lord's reason—his look—its effect—the confession of woman—its results—to her socially—to her mentally—the lessons we may learn as to the race—as to the individual—as to converts to Christ—as to the value of faith and of a profession.

Chronic Grumbling.

It is getting to be the fashion to talk of summer as we do of many other things—as an affliction, as something to be endured with much dissatisfaction and grumbling and get rid of, if that were possible.

"How to Bear the Summer," "How to Render the 'Heated Term Tolerable,'" "How to Mitigate the Sufferings Occasioned by the Heat," are headings constantly met with in the newspapers, until, instead of enjoying the warmth, the sunshine, the glory of summer, we make ourselves and every one else miserable by our groanings and forebodings. The amount of really hot weather we have to endure in New York city is very little—never more, usually less than one, two or three days at a time in two or three of the summer months. By far the larger part of the time the warmth is tempered, particularly at night, with the most refreshing breezes, and through June and part of August it is usually necessary to sleep under one blanket at least.

The great part of the discomfort experienced during the summer arises from the bad habits and reckless indulgence in "drinks." Men drink upon every street corner, then fume and fret and perspire and drink again. Women sit in rocking chairs, eat heartily notwithstanding that they have "no appetite," and drink huge quantities of ice-water, which stops digestion and increases their tendency to torpid liver and dyspepsia.

Horace Greeley said the best way to resume specie payments is to resume; the best way to enjoy summer is to enjoy it, instead of grumbling about it and at it. People who attend to their proper business and are not always thinking of being thirsty rarely know how warm it is in summer or how cold in winter until the thermometer or daily paper tells them. The human body is made to resist and endure these gradations of heat and cold without much suffering or inconvenience, and, indeed, when properly prepared, with positive enjoyment.

Ice, which has always been considered so great a luxury in this country, is undoubtedly one of the greatest foes to health and consequent enjoyment, because of the profuseness and recklessness with which it is used. Too much liquid of any kind weakens the gastric juices of the stomach at the same time that it adds to the labor to be performed; but when the liquid is introduced into the stomach in an ice-cold condition the action is paralyzed—all the forces are brought to bear on equalizing the temperature, and thus time and strength are used, as until this is done the natural work of transmutation cannot be performed.—*Heath and Home.*

Mr. Gladstone tells his private acquaintances that he regrets having given so many years to politics. "How little," said he the other day, to an admirer, "do politics affect the life, the moral life of a nation. One single good book influences the people a vast deal more."

There is a rumor that a very rich nobleman, who became a Roman Catholic a few years ago, is about to return to the Church from whence he came, the reason assigned for his determination being the over-paternal interference with his conduct by the clergy of the creed he had adopted.

The Religion of The Laplanders.

The church was full of Lapps, and although I saw here and there as fine a young fellow as I would wish to meet, the major part of them were little, brown, weather-beaten figures, standing about five feet not 'ing, all clad in real Lapp costume. One and all seem to have been cast in the same pugilistic mould, bullet heads, high cheek-bones, low foreheads, bright sunken eyes, and flattened noses. In fact, if they had only been cropped close, and dressed in tight trousers and Newmarket coats, I would have challenged all London to pick out a bunch of more thorough-bred little blackguards than I could have collected from this congregation. The women were ranged in pews on one side, the men on the other (and this is the fashion in all Swedish churches), and, except that the former kept their high-peaked, sugar-loaf caps on during the service, you could see little difference between the two. None of these ladies could boast of much personal attraction; their countenances being exactly like those of the men, and quite as brown and knotty. But there was one face which peeped down from the gallery, from which I could hardly take my eyes, and which even haunts me to this day. It was that of a young, flaxen-haired, Lapp girl, about seven years old; and a sweeter or more cherub-looking face I never set my eyes on, and the little blue peaked cap, banded with silver, perched jauntily on her head, gave a lively kind of expression to perhaps the sweetest face I ever saw in my life. I never yet saw a child so beautiful as this wild Lapp, and a painter might have his fortune if he could only have transferred the expression of that countenance to his canvas. Certainly there can be no truth in breeding it such a little angel came from the rough stock that filled the body of the church. The services passed off quietly enough, the communion began, and a curious sight it was to see these vagabonds run along the tops of the pews, like so many rats on a plank, in hot haste to reach the altar; and now commenced a scene such as I never witnessed in a house of God, and trust I shall never witness again. It seems that within the last few years a kind of fanaticism has crept in among these Lapps, and the word of God instead of "pouring oil upon a brused spirit," as every one is taught to believe who will read the Scriptures aright, only fills them with imaginary terrors; and, far different from the creed of the real Christian, they seem to think the best atonement they can make for their sins lies in outward show. I have seen a little of this in other churches in Sweden where at certain parts of the service the women all commence groaning and sobbing so loud that you can scarcely hear the clergyman. This, however, soon passes off, and is scarcely worth notice. These Lapps, however, must have been far more susceptible or far more wicked, for all at once, when the communion service began, two or three women sprang up in different parts of the church, and commenced frantically jumping, howling, shrieking, and clapping their hands. I observed one middle-aged female particularly energetic, and who sank down in a kind of fit after about five minutes exertion. The infection soon spread, and in a few minutes, two-thirds of the congregation "joined in the cry," and all order was at an end. Five or six would cluster round one individual, hugging, kissing, weeping, and shrieking, till I really thought that some one would be smothered. One of our patriarchs in particular, who sat close behind me, seemed an object of peculiar veneration, and the Lapps crowded from all parts of the church to hug him. How he stood I cannot imagine; but he sat meekly enough, and at one time I counted no less than seven "miserable sinners" hanging about the old man, all shrieking and weeping. The religious orgies of the wild aborigines in Australia round their campfire are not half so frightful as this scene, for they at least do not debase a place of worship with their mad carousals.—*Shilling Magazine.*

Dress in College.

It seems probable that education will solve the problem of dress for women. It is only empty heads and unoccupied hearts that are satisfied to make dress the absorbent of their lives and activities. According to the reports of correspondents, Vassar College has broken the spell of fashion which formerly held the even graduating class under its potent influence, and this year distributed its degrees to students in black and gray as well as the traditional young lady in white.

Now there is no objection to white, as white, on the contrary, is capable of being made very pretty, and simple, and becoming. But it is the necessity for having a white dress whether you have got it or not, and the additional necessity not only of having it made in the fashion, but of supplementing it with sash, and fan, and shoes, and ribbon, and laces, and all the other accessories of a modern full dress toilet. This, to many, has become a matter of serious difficulty, and occupied their attention, to the detriment of their scholarship, for many months before graduation day came. It is therefore a matter of the very greatest importance that no obligation should be felt to get up a special outfit for the occasion, but that graduates and students generally, should be free to wear whatever is most convenient and suitable.

The ordinary school-dress would, in our opinion, be the fittest for the purpose, and we are glad to note that the majority of the dresses were plain, untrimmed, and that the wearers employed little or no false hair, and no ornaments upon their heads. The higher value young women learn to put upon the inside of the head the less will they care to decorate the outside.—*Heath and Home.*

He who teaches men the principles and precepts of spiritual wisdom, before their minds are called off from foreign objects, and turned inward upon themselves, might as well write his instructions, as the scribe wrote her prophecies, on the loose leaves of trees; and commit them to the mercy of the inconstant winds.—*Leighton.*

Shake Hands.

"Do tell me the name of that sweet-looking old lady who sits behind us at church. She has spoken to us several times so pleasantly, and it is so unusual." Thus said a friend to me not long since. Her family had attended that church for several years, not only were they regular attendants, but, at the stated periods, they came to its communion table, they were members "in good and regular standing"; their faces were familiar to most of the congregation, yet it was "unusual" for any to speak to them. They were strangers in the church, through no fault of their own, and they felt as such. There are many, no doubt, who "believe in the communion of saints," without pausing to see whether any particular meaning attaches to their belief; they do not forget to assemble together; but they do forget to follow after the "things wherewith one may edify another." We may not all be so placed as to admonish, or exhort, or to provoke our brethren to good works, but we may sometimes show them, by a cordial word or two, that we remember they are our brethren, that we love them. Ceremony is undoubtedly to be observed in this world; it is often necessary, but may not church members sometimes venture to speak one to another, even without a formal introduction? There are few of us who have not an intuitive sense to whom we may speak without hurting our dignity. That "sweet-looking old lady" preached a little sermon to our friends, which warmed their hearts for several weeks after. "I maintain," says Dr. John Hall, "that the shaking of hands, rightly administered, is a means of grace. So shake hands at the market, on the street, and, above all, at church. Some people quit church for want of this means of grace." And no doubt some have been helped in the church by it. Friendliness goes a long way with some. With some persons, a kind word may strengthen "him that is weak in the faith." The heart of the writer warms while recalling the pleasant Sunday greetings of a Christian family, whose gentle courtesies were greatly instrumental in bringing at least one into the visible church. The fervor awakened by a sermon full of love to Christ and good will to man will not be at all cooled by a cordial word, or hand-shake, meeting one on the way to the door. There should not be strangers of "regular standing" in the church. Then, speak kindly every opportunity you have; shake hands if you will. How do you know which is "the least of these?"—*Christian Observer.*

A Plea for Good Singing.

If the visit of Messrs. Moody and Sankey were to have no other result, it would not miss of doing good, should it be the means of elevating the only part of worship in which the people take an audible share into the proper place—not an expedient for giving the minister a breath till he resumes the next part of his duty, but an integral and important part of the service. Of course the singing at our religious meetings, even at best, is a different thing from Mr. Sankey's singing. As the old woman excused herself for hearing Dr. Chalmers reading a discourse by saying, "Ay, but it was fell r-a-d-i-a-t-i-o-n," so we may say of Mr. Sankey's, it's fell singing. Mr. Sankey has a magnificent voice, clear, sweet and melodious, and his feeling of the truth and beauty and solemnity of what he is singing communicates an indescribable pathos and tenderness to his utterance. Then he has learned to perfection what is so carefully attended to in American schools, and is so little regarded here—distinct utterance. Most vocalists, unless you know what they are singing, might as well be warbling "lal-lal-lal" all through the piece. You can follow every syllable of Mr. Sankey's singing. Any prejudice there may be against "singing the gospel" will thaw and dissolve itself into a pleasant dew as soon as he opens his mouth. Why should there be any prejudice? For generations most of the Highland ministers, and some of the Lowland ministers, too, have sung the gospel—sung their sermons, ay, and sung their prayers, too. The difference is that they sang very badly and Mr. Sankey very beautifully. He accompanies himself on "the American organ," it is true, and some of us who belong to the old school can't swallow the kind of whistles yet. It may help us over this stumbling-block if we consider that, with the finest voice and ear in the world, nobody could maintain the proper pitch of a melody, singing so as Mr. Sankey does. And then the American organ "is only a little one." When a deputation from the session waited on Ralph Erskine to remunerate with him on the enormity of fiddling, he gave them a beautiful tune on the violoncello, and they were so charmed that they returned to their constituents with the report that it was all right—"it wasn't we sinners' fiddle" that their minister operated upon, but a grand instrument, full of grave, sweet melody. I'm afraid some good true blue Presbyterians will be excusing Mr. Sankey's organ, and themselves for listening to it, by some such plea as that.—*Correspondent Edinburgh Review.*

Worth Remembering.

Benzene and common clay will clean marble. Castor oil is an excellent thing to soften leather. Lemon juice and glycerine will remove tan and freckles. Lemon juice and glycerine will cleanse and soften the hands. Spirits of ammonia, diluted a little, will cleanse the hair very thoroughly. Lunar caustic, carefully applied so as not to touch the skin, will destroy warts. Powdered nitro is good for removing freckles. Apply with a rag dipped in glycerine. To obviate offensive perspiration, wash your feet with soap and diluted spirits of ammonia. The juice of ripe tomatoes will remove the stains of walnuts from the hands without injury to the skin.

A Plant of Brazil.

In the forest of Brazil grows a curious plant, about as high as a man, with a twisted stem, covered with knots. This is the mandivo, and from its roots come two things, bread and poison—the sweet white flour which forms the bread of the people, and the deadly poison in which the Indian dips his arrow points. The white flour is farina, and it goes all over the world as a delicacy for sick people and well people; but you never would guess that when the mandivo roots were crushed to prepare it, the juice that flowed out was deadly enough to arm the Indian's arrow against the great beasts of the forest.

That is not all. The natives know how to make from this same juice, a liquor that will make them as tipsy as any of their white brothers can get on whiskey. The women do the work, of course. Your savage is too much of a gentleman to serve himself; so the women gather the mandivo roots, and slice and boil them quite soft. When the roots are cool, they are ground quite fine; in a mill, do you suppose? Not at all. These useful women chew them and spit them out in a vessel of water; when they have chewed them all up, the whole contents of the vessel are boiled and stirred, and finally poured into jars, and buried in the floor of the hut, with the mouths tightly stopped. When the liquor is sufficiently fermented, the drinking-feast begins, and the crazy Indians go from house to house, dancing and singing until all the jars are emptied. Then they go to sleep to get sober, and wait for the women to make some more liquor.—*Little Corporal.*

The chief secret of comfort lies in not suffering trifles to vex one, and in prudently cultivating an undergrowth of small pleasures, since very few great ones are let on long leases.

However many the characters of men, however various their experience, at one time and place all are alike. There is but one step at heaven's gate, there are no inequalities of ground before the mercy seat.—*Anna Warner.*

God's livery is a very plain one; but its wearers have good reason to be content. If it has not so much gold-lace on it as Satan's, it keeps out the foul weather better, and besides, it is a great deal cheaper.

God is said to harden the heart when He withholds restraining grace—to harden when He does not soften. He is said to make blind when He does not enlighten, as freezing and darkness follow upon the absence of the sun, the source of light and heat.—*Salter.*

The highest motive to urge man towards a better life, away from selfishness, is love for the Supreme Being. It cannot be an abstract love, a too reverential love, or a too awful love, but a near, trustful, trusting love. A whole heart love. And the sequence to this is love for mankind. Both are connected.

This solicitude is reasonable, if you consider that the eternal loss of the soul is not a rare but a very common occurrence. It is so tremendous a catastrophe, that if it happened once in a year, or once in a century, so as to render it barely possible that it should happen to you, it would be unpardonable carelessness not to feel some solicitude about the matter. How much more, then, when, alas! it is an every-day calamity. So far from its being a rare thing for men to go to hell, it is a much rarer thing for them to go to heaven. Our Lord tells us that the road to destruction is through the way to life is travelled by few. Hell opens its mouth wide, and swallows up multitudes in perdition. How alarming is the idea, and how probable the fact, that you may be among this number! Some that read these pages will very likely spend their eternity with lost souls. It is, therefore, your wisdom, as well as your duty, to cherish the anxiety which says, "What shall I do to be saved?"—*Rev. J. A. James.*

A return has just been issued by order of the House of Commons which shows that on the 31st September last there were in this country 2522 common brewers, 69,948 licensed victuallers, and 48,742 persons licensed to sell beer. In Scotland there were 75 brewers, 12,592 licensed victuallers, and 120 victuallers who brewed their own ale. In Ireland there were 75 brewers, 16,521 licensed victuallers, and but one person who brewed his own ale. There were, therefore, in the United Kingdom 2671 common brewers, 99,061 licensed victuallers, 48,748 persons licensed to sell beer; and 18,686 victuallers, and 8572 beerhouse keepers who brewed their own beer. The bushels of malt consumed by the common brewers amounted to 45,533,976; by victuallers, 7,570,585; and by beerhouse keepers, 4,141,176 bushels. The bushels of malt made in the year 1873 amounted to 59,194,988, and the duty charged to £8,027,408. The total amount received as duty on brewers' houses was £448,356 18s. The number of barrels of beer exported from the United Kingdom during the year under consideration was 533,602, and the value £2,285,806.

The report of the Registrar-General for Scotland on the 8th decennial census, which has just issued, states that the total population of Scotland at the last census, in 1871, was 3,360,018; ten years previously it was 3,062,294. This shows a net increase of 297,724—153,295 males, and 144,429 females. During the ten years, 1861-1871, the total number of births in Scotland was 1,120,791, and of deaths 706,098. The increase of births over deaths, 414,693 during the ten years, has therefore been much greater than the actual increase in the population. The difference, 116,969, represents the number of persons who have, during the ten years, emigrated and removed from Scotland. Of the total population in 1871, 1,603,143 were males, and 1,756,875 females. According to the report, of the 1,603,143 males living in Scotland, 1,050,544 are unmarried, and of the remainder, 493,810 are husbands, and 52,789 are widowers. In like manner, of 1,756,875 female, 1,104,198 are unmarried, 504,436 are wives, and 148,241 are widows. To every 100 marriageable women, 129 are widows in Scotland, against 116 in England.