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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

January 26
JESUS CLEANSETH THE TEMPLE.

John 2: 13-22. Memorize verses 14, 16, 18, 22.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Cleanse thy house, O Lord forever.—Psalm 93: 5

EXPLANATIONS.

"The seal of this house hath eaten me up," 13. Jesus was an obedient Son of the law and went up to the passover according to the commandment (Deut. 16: 16; Luke 2: 41). He found in the Temple selling oxen, sheep and doves, and also changers of money. A similar state of affairs can be found in many churches today. All these things had something to do with the temple services, but it was being carried on for private gain, and Jesus was greatly displeased. The defense of buying and selling in the house of God often made to-day is that all this has to do with the support of worship. But this does not make it right in God's sight, as is plainly taught by this lesson. Jesus put it all out of the temple in no gentle manner. If he were to go to-day to our places of worship with our fairs and festivals and auctioneers of pews, etc., etc., doubtless he would put them out also and would be no more gentle than he was with these ancient dealers of the house of God. It was not the force

of the muscular energy that Jesus displayed that drove these dealers out. It was the majesty of His presence and the consciousness on their part that they had no business there. Gentleness and thoughtful consideration for even the birds were mingled with His severity; He did not drive out those who sold the doves, but simply made their owners carry them out. He gives a reason for His action, namely, that God's house should not be made a house of merchandise. How many that profess to be followers of Jesus have forgotten these words of their Master. In the use of the words, "My Father's house," He shows His right to act as He did. It was His Father's house and it was His business to cleanse it. The cleansing of the temple was only temporary. All these things were brought back again (Luke 19: 45). All religious reforms among men are temporary. Man is prone to backsliding, and we cannot live today in the power of a reformation wrought twenty years ago. Every new generation must have its own reformation and every new year must have its own revival. When Jesus cleansed the temple a second time He was even more severe. He said that they had made the house of God a den of robbers. Instead of a house of prayer (Luke 19: 46, R. V.) Men in their defiling of God's house thus go from bad to worse. At a latter date the disciples in recalling this incident saw in it a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy regarding the Messiah (v. 17; cf. Ps. 69: 9). It was zeal for his Father's house that constrained Jesus to the present action. It is zeal for God's house or it is zeal for our own idea that constrains some of us to attacks upon the modern defilement of the house of God.

The sign that Jesus was the Messiah, 18-22. Both the disciples and the Jews recognized in Jesus the assumption of authority and in his words, "My Father's house" (v. 10), a claim to be the Messiah. The Jews at once demanded a sign to back up this claim. Jesus gave them a sign, a sign which they did not understand at the time, the sign of the resurrection (v. 19; cf. Matt. 12: 38-40; 16: 1-4). His resurrection from the dead is God's seal to all the claims of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is one of the best proven facts of history, and it verifies everything that is essential to Christianity. It is God's seal upon Jesus' claim to be a teacher sent from God who speaks the very words of God (ch. 7: 10; 12: 10; 14: 10, 11, 24). It is God's seal upon Jesus' claim to be a divine person in a unique sense (ch. 5: 22, 23; 10: 30; 14: 9; Mark 12: 6, R. V.). It is God's seal upon Jesus' claim that He was to be the Judge of the world (ch. 5: 22, 23, 29, 20). Not even the disciples of Jesus understood His words at the time, but after His resurrection they remembered them and they served to confirm their faith, as well as they might. The final outcome was that the disciples believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said, i. e., they believed the Old Testament Scriptures which prophesied these things and the words of Jesus upon which God had set the stamp of His own endorsement. Happy is the man to-day who believes in the Old Testament Scriptures and the word which Jesus speaks. Jesus' miracles at this time led many people to believe in Him, but Jesus saw the superficial character of their faith and did not believe in them (v. 23-25, R. V.). When men believe in Jesus with that true and saving faith which leads them to commit themselves to Him then, and only then, does He commit Himself to them.

hat there was in the scourge of cords, or the muscular energy that Jesus displayed that drove these dealers out. It was the majesty of His presence and the consciousness on their part that they had no business there. Gentleness and thoughtful consideration for even the birds were mingled with His severity; He did not drive out those who sold the doves, but simply made their owners carry them out. He gives a reason for His action, namely, that God's house should not be made a house of merchandise. How many that profess to be followers of Jesus have forgotten these words of their Master. In the use of the words, "My Father's house," He shows His right to act as He did. It was His Father's house and it was His business to cleanse it. The cleansing of the temple was only temporary. All these things were brought back again (Luke 19: 45). All religious reforms among men are temporary. Man is prone to backsliding, and we cannot live today in the power of a reformation wrought twenty years ago. Every new generation must have its own reformation and every new year must have its own revival. When Jesus cleansed the temple a second time He was even more severe. He said that they had made the house of God a den of robbers. Instead of a house of prayer (Luke 19: 46, R. V.) Men in their defiling of God's house thus go from bad to worse. At a latter date the disciples in recalling this incident saw in it a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy regarding the Messiah (v. 17; cf. Ps. 69: 9). It was zeal for his Father's house that constrained Jesus to the present action. It is zeal for God's house or it is zeal for our own idea that constrains some of us to attacks upon the modern defilement of the house of God.

Christ's claim to be a teacher sent from God who speaks the very words of God (ch. 7: 10; 12: 10; 14: 10, 11, 24). It is God's seal upon Jesus' claim to be a divine person in a unique sense (ch. 5: 22, 23; 10: 30; 14: 9; Mark 12: 6, R. V.). It is God's seal upon Jesus' claim that He was to be the Judge of the world (ch. 5: 22, 23, 29, 20). Not even the disciples of Jesus understood His words at the time, but after His resurrection they remembered them and they served to confirm their faith, as well as they might. The final outcome was that the disciples believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said, i. e., they believed the Old Testament Scriptures which prophesied these things and the words of Jesus upon which God had set the stamp of His own endorsement. Happy is the man to-day who believes in the Old Testament Scriptures and the word which Jesus speaks. Jesus' miracles at this time led many people to believe in Him, but Jesus saw the superficial character of their faith and did not believe in them (v. 23-25, R. V.). When men believe in Jesus with that true and saving faith which leads them to commit themselves to Him then, and only then, does He commit Himself to them.

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Chartered Accountant.
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