

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE.*

By Rev. P. M. Macdonald, B.D.

Jesus went up to Jerusalem, v. 13. "A good habit is to a character what a good road is to a carriage," the Hollanders say. What Jesus did at this time was something He had the habit of doing. His practice sets an example that men have followed and found most helpful. The sweet communion and holy joys of the house of God have been oases in life's desert for those who have been faithful in attendance upon them. "One great source of strength to me in my life," said Mr. Gladstone, "has been my habit of church attendance throughout my whole life journey. I made it a rule early in life to worship God, not only in my solitude, but also with the multitude. The habit has become a second nature, and to it I owe a feeling towards my fellow men and a sense of my duty to the needy world that I could not get elsewhere."

He made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple (Rev. Ver.) v. 15. Sometimes speedy and sore remedies must be employed by those who would do us good. Sinful practices must be stopped if the individual and the nation are to be saved; and the process of stopping may not allow any leisurely treatment. "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out." "If thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off." An artist was painting the ceiling of a cathedral. On the tall scaffold with him was his assistant, whose work it was to hand the brushes his master needed. The artist had been laying on the rich colors for some moments, and without thinking where he was, stepped back to note the effect. His assistant saw that in a second the artist would step off the scaffold and be killed, so what could he do but fling a wet brush on the figured ceiling. Enraged, the artist sprang forward, and was saved. When he learned why the brush was flung, his anger changed to gratitude.

Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise, v. 16.—There is a place for everything, and one form of right conduct is to keep things in their right places. Dirt is matter out of place. Impurity is disorder in thought and behaviour. Merchandise is not evil. The animals these men sold were required by those who wished to sacrifice to God, but the place to sell and buy them was not in the temple, but in the market. The commotion and uproar of a commercial centre does not conduce to worship, and therefore this was a subversion of the sanctuary. Holiness becometh to the house of the Lord. It is entirely set apart from traffic. It is for spiritual purposes. Let us beware of dragging down the eternal things of life to the level of the temporal. Sanctify the secular if you can, but do not secularize the sacred.

The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, v. 17. Jesus lived intensely. He had a burning heart. He was always loving, giving, serving. Living, He made it easier for men to live; and when He died, He made it blessed for men to die. And the lives that tell for good must be like His. It is better to burn out than to rust out. The burning heart helps others. When Henry Martyn arrived in India, he wrote in his journal, "I desire to burn out in the service of my God." Zinzendorf said, "I have only one passion, and that is to give Christ to men." McCheyne said, "To

Thy service, my God, I desire to dedicate myself over and over again." These were lives that counted.

His disciples remembered, v. 22. Aristotle called memory "the scribe of the soul." The description is fitting. There are engraved on enduring tablets, records of what we have said and experienced in the days that are gone, and one day they will come to us plain and palpable. This scribe writes when we are all unaware of the fact. An authentic case is given of an illiterate girl in the delirium of fever reciting passages from Hebrew and the Latin classics. Investigation showed that she had at one time been employed in the home of a scholar, and had heard him repeating aloud from the Hebrew and Latin books he read. The impressions had been made on her mind, although she did not know intelligently a word of what she had heard, and under peculiar circumstances memory called them up. The scribe is at work at all times. See to it that what he writes is of a kind that you will welcome when the books are opened.

PRAYER.

On the morning of this Thy day we ask Thy blessing. As the year closes we look back upon the days of good and evil that it has been composed of, and we thank Thee for Thy mercies displayed therein, and ask Thy forgiveness for the many and great sins we have committed in this time. Give us new hearts, O God, and put it into our hearts to examine ourselves, that we may become members of Thine everlasting kingdom. Amen.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.

Sold.—The sons of Annas, a few years before this time, had rented sections of the Court of the Gentiles to those who exchanged the Roman money into the Jewish half shekel in which the temple dues must be paid; and also to those who sold animals for the various sacrifices, and doves for the offerings of the poor. This was ostensibly for the convenience of the people who came from afar, and placed animals which had passed the official examiner within the temple precincts. But the scheme was the offspring of avarice and led to terrible abuses. The priests exacted exorbitant rents and those who obtained the privilege charged extortionate prices. It was a system of robbery which excluded many from the temple worship and made the sacred ritual an offence to good men.

Doves.—The only bird which could be offered in sacrifice in Israel. It also had a sacred character in other nations. On a Phœnician coin there is a picture of a dove standing on a globe, with wings closed and a halo of sunbeams round its head, the whole, mounted on a staff, forming a sacred ensign. Another, from a bas relief east of the Jordan, represents the dove with wings displayed, seated on a globe, with sunbeams spreading behind it and terminating in a circle of stars.

My life is a brief, brief thing,
I am here for a little space,
And while I stay,
I would like, if I may,
To brighten and better the place.

Wherever the search after truth begins, there life begins. Wherever that search ceases, life ceases.—Ruskin.

OTHER ESSENTIALS.

By C. H. Wetherbe.

In many religious papers a large amount of space is devoted to contentions in favor of what the writers regard as being sound doctrine. One class of writers keep foremost the idea that no one can enter into God's Kingdom without being baptized. They put a great deal of stress upon strict obedience to God, and especially in relation to baptism. These people make a virtue of saying that they appeal to the Scriptures for their authority to believe and act as they do. Such talk has much in fluence with the people who do not look below the surface of things. It seems to be forgotten by such ones that there are other matters which are, in some respects, even more essential than soundness in doctrine is.

I have discovered the fact that very many persons who say much in favor of obeying God are not in favor of keeping good their promises, and whose treatment of honorable people, in many instances, is decidedly unfair, deceptive, and even contemptible. And this is true of many of the leading ones. I have no confidence in them. This is a strong assertion, but it is fully sustained by the facts. And so I say that all talk about honoring God's Word amounts to nothing, unless one's own word be reliable. What do unconverted people care about the soundness of a professed Christian's belief unless it be sound in practical morals? Nothing at all. They despise the man who is all the while talking in favor of true Bible doctrine, and yet is untrue to his religious vows and to just principles.

There were thousands of Pharisees in Christ's day who showed great zeal in behalf of the religion which they maintained, and yet they treated Christ most contemptibly. They were the worst foes that he had. But how very strict they were! How careful they were to observe the fine points of their religion! What reverence they paid to the Sabbath! And yet they were too mean to be tolerated by really good people. They were dead formalists. The life of God was not in them.

CHRIST IN THE STORM.

As Christ lay asleep in the little boat, with His disciples terror-stricken at the wild tempest that had arisen, how great was their anxiety and how small their faith! And when the Lord was aroused from sleep it was not the storm that He rebuked first, but His disciples. The billows did not trouble Him. The very thing that was His disciples' worry He left alone till He had rebuked them for their unbelief.

Is not this a true parable of life to day, my sisters? The storms of life break upon us, and we invoke the aid of the Master, fearing and trembling lest some evil shall befall us. And then the loving Christ rebukes us for our lack of faith. He shows us that as followers of Him we ought not to let such things trouble us, but rather to cultivate that sense of peace and resignation which should be the portion of every true believer.

Sin is to be overcome, not so much by maintaining a direct opposition to it, as by cultivating opposite principles. Would you kill the weeds in your garden, plant it with good seed; if the ground be well occupied there will be less need of the labor of the hoe.—Andrew Fuller.

*S.S. lesson, January 26, 1909—John 2: 13-22. Commit to memory vs. 15, 16. Golden Text—Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.—Psalm 93:5.