



LESSON,—SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1908.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple.

John ii., 13-22. Memory verses 13, 16.

Golden Text.

Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever. Psa. xciii., 5.

Home Readings.

Monday, January 20.—John ii., 1-12.
 Tuesday, January 21.—John ii., 13-25.
 Wednesday, January 22.—Matt. xxi., 12-25;
 xvi., 23-27.
 Thursday, January 23.—Luke ii., 40-52.
 Friday, January 24.—11. Cor. xxix., 3-11, 15-19.
 Saturday, January 25.—Matt. xxiii., 34-24, 2.
 Sunday, January 26.—1. Kings ix., 1-9.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Who can tell me where the beautiful Jewish temple was? Yes, in Jerusalem, on the top of a high hill, and, as it was built with polished marble and much gold it shone in the light of the sun and looked very beautiful. Does any one remember when Jesus was first in the temple? (Speak here of the presentation in the temple, Luke ii., 22-39). Then the next time we hear of Jesus being in the temple he was a boy twelve years of age (Luke ii., 41-50). In our lesson to-day Jesus is a man over thirty years old and again he comes to the beautiful temple. It was at the time of the feast of the passover, the same feast to which he had come with Joseph and Mary when a boy of twelve. There were crowds of people there. Josephus, a great Jewish historian, says about two million, and they came from all over the world of that day. The streets, of course, were very noisy, people were talking all sorts of languages, friends perhaps who had not seen each other for a year were calling out greetings just as we do to people at Christmas time. But then, when you got up to the temple, you would expect everything to be quiet and solemn. You know how, when you go to church you don't speak unless you have to, and then only in a whisper, because it is God's house, and you go there to worship him. Well, when Jesus came to Jerusalem this time he started of course to go up to the temple where God, his Father in Heaven was supposed to be worshipped, but when he got there after passing through all the noisy crowded streets, what do you think he found? Was it all quiet and solemn in the temple courts as it ought to have been?

FOR THE SENIORS.

We have in our studies from John so far seen in Christ something of the glories of his character as this disciple wished to portray him; a suggestion of his power (John i., 3), his patience (Chap. i., 5, 11), his voluntary humility, his evident divinity, his 'grace and truth' (verse 14), his sufficiency for all (verse 16), his public consecration to his work (verse 33), his tact and authority in dealing with the various types of men among his first disciples (John i., 35-51), and his quiet recognition of the fact that in him prophecy was fulfilled (verse 51). All this in the first chapter is merely touched upon; it is now John's aim to elaborate and establish his Master's claims. In the first part of the second chapter is the story of Christ's first miracle, in Cana, where we not only see that power exhibited which clinched his disciples' belief (verse 11), but we see Jesus naturally at home in the popular customs of the day, a favored and privileged friend among those

who knew him as a man alone. He had time, in spite of the greatness of his mission, which he fully realized, for the common courtesies of life, the genial meetings with friends. This miracle was the first public assumption of his power, and after the short rest at Capernaum with his mother, brothers, and disciples, he went, as was customary, to Jerusalem for the passover. Here occurred a remarkable incident. Christ was venturing out of comparative obscurity on his public mission to the people. The traffic in the temple courts was an established custom not only acquiesced in but approved of for its convenience. Undoubtedly, the many foreign residents would require to know where their foreign currency could be changed for the Jewish money alone acceptable in the temple treasury. Again it would be impossible for these foreigners to bring with them their sacrifices or to drive the animals far through the crowded city streets. To render the services of this feast possible it was necessary for the money changers and dealers to establish themselves near the temple. The abuse came when they overstepped their privilege. It would have seemed human wisdom in Christ's case to have overlooked this popularly approved custom since it was not in essence wrong, only perverted, as they might have argued. But the wrong was there, Christ could not have suffered it to pass unnoticed and still have been himself. His authority came full upon him, and, one man against many though he was, it was unquestioned by the astonished dealers, the dishonest money changers, or the people about. The dumb animals, too, to which as the revised version makes plain the 'them' in verse 15, refers, gave him instant obedience. This is the first recorded instance where the divine anger of the gentle Jesus burst forth against the evils of his day and in this lesson also he first publicly claims to be divine (verse 16). It should be noticed that the reform effected was not complete, as again at the close of his ministry (Matt. xxi., 12) Jesus felt called upon to cleanse his Father's house of this sacrilegious traffic.

(SELECTIONS.)

Human anger resents the hurt; divine anger resents the wrong. Human anger is wounded in its pride; divine anger is wounded in its heart. Human anger laments the injury to self; divine anger laments the injury to God. Human anger cries out for revenge; divine anger cries out for atonement.—George Matheson.

There are thousands of instances in which it is better to suffer wrong than to resent it. But in all cases where a man would, by his example, take out of the community a bold and manly spirit to resist injustice and wrong, and make men craven, he has no right to that example.—Henry Ward Beecher.

Meekness has its uses, but meekness may easily drift into mere cowardice, into connivance with evil, into complaisance toward wrong.—W. J. Dawson.

Verse 19. Destroy this temple. 'The word used in these three verses for "temple" means the central sacred building (naos), whereas that used in v. 14 means the whole sacred enclosure (hieron). The latter is never used figuratively.'—Cambridge Bible.

As Sadler observes, 'On two other occasions he held out to them this sign, and this sign only: (1) "When ye have lifted up the son of man, then (by the resurrection) ye shall know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself" (John viii., 28); and (2) when the Pharisees desired a sign from heaven, he said, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah," i.e., of his own resurrection (Matt. xvi., 4).'

BIBLE REFERENCES.

I. Cor. iii., 16, 17; vi., 19, 20; Eph. ii., 21, 22; Jer. vii., 11; Psa. cxvii., 1; Mal. iii., 1-3; Lev. xix., 30; Psa. xxvii., 8; Isa. lvi., 7.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, January 26.—Topic—The home-mission work of our denomination: a survey. Isa. lviii., 1-14.

C. E. Topic.

Monday, January 20.—The Golden Rule of missions. Luke vi., 31.

Tuesday, January 21.—Our brothers in need. I. John iii., 17.

Wednesday, January 22.—The sons of the stranger. Isa. lvi., 6, 7.

Thursday, January 23.—Thy neighbor as thyself. Mark xii., 33.

Friday, January 24.—Show mercy and compassion. Zech. vii., 9.

Saturday, January 25.—Helping by prayer. II. Cor. i., 11.

Sunday, January 26.—Topic—Children in Alaska. Matt. xxv., 40.

Teaching Christian Stewardship.

A Splendid Exercise for the Big Boys.

The Rev. H. H. Berry, of Ord, Neb., chairman of the state stewardship committee, has sent out a leaflet of questions and answers for use in Sunday schools which is of such excellence in covering the whole question of Christian stewardship that we give it place here. Its brevity, directness and scripturalness commend it to the use suggested. The exercise could and should be used in every Sunday school:

Superintendent, Question 1: Who owns the earth?

Answer by the school. 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.'—Psalm xxiv., 1. 'The sea is his, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.'—Psalm xcvi., 5.

Question 2: Does God have any claim upon the cattle of the earth?

Answer: 'For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountain, and the wild beasts of the field are mine.'—Psalm i., 10-11.

Question 3: But surely God has nothing to do with our money. If we earn it, it belongs to us, does it not?

Answer: 'The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts.'—Haggai ii., 8. 'But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.'—Deut. viii., 18.

Question 4: What then is our position toward God, and all the things God has made and owns?

Answer: 'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.'—1. Peter iv., 10. 'Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.'—I. Cor. iv., 1-2.

Question 5: Then if we are stewards how should we do the work we are expected to do?

Answer: 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all in the glory of God.'—I. Cor. x., 31.

Question 6: How should we give money?

Answer: 'Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.'—I. Cor. xvi., 2.

Question 7: Will God bless those that are faithful to him?

Answer: 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.'—Malachi iii., 10.

Question 8: To whom are we responsible for how we use things?

Answer: 'So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.'—Romans xiv., 12.

That is a bad state of affairs in any school when, if any question is to be settled, the pulpit Bible must be appealed to because the only one available. No teacher should think of going before his class without a Bible and every scholar should be urged and encouraged to carry one. A little notice of those who respond will help matters wonderfully.