

distance to be able to purchase the necessary sacrifices so close to the altar; and that those coming from foreign parts could get the strange money which they brought with them more readily exchanged for that current in Jerusalem. Besides, the rent, charged for the stalls and the privilege of doing business in the temple, went into the sacred treasury. But no considerations of this kind could justify a sacrilegious act. The spirit of devotion was banished and that which was meant to be a place of prayer for gentiles was converted into a scene of noisy traffic, cheating in exchange and overcharging in bargains, (Matt. 11: 17). The place where prayer is wont to be made should be kept as free as possible from all disturbing associations. Also find a rebuke here for those who adopt questionable methods of raising money for religious purposes. **15. Scourge of small cords**—lit. "of rushes." Ropes were called "rushes," probably because this was the material out of which they were anciently made. He picked up a handful of the rushes used for bedding the cattle and twisted it together. It was a symbol of authority, but would hurt nothing. **All... both the sheep and the oxen** (R. V.)—The scourge was used for driving out the animals, not the men. It was an outburst of honest indignation, which would have been excusable in any zealous Jew, but was fully justified by Jesus' claim that the Being worshipped there was his Father. He certainly had a right to vindicate the honor of his Father's house. When questioned as to his authority he points to the crowning proof of his sonship, his resurrection. (Rom. 1: 4; Acts 13: 33.) Our Saviour's action scarcely needs justification. It was abundantly sustained by the example of the prophets in reforming popular abuses; the hearty approval of all pious Jews gave him ample moral support; the consciences of the subjects of his righteous wrath were on his side; and the corrupt temple authorities who had connived at these irregularities would shrink from appearing as their defenders. His manner too overawed everyone like a lightning flash from Sinai and he spoke of himself as the Son of God, a well known designation of the expected Messiah. **16.** The doves were in cages and could not be driven out. **My Father's house**—See R. V. Luke 2: 49. A distinct announcement that he was the Christ. See John 10: 30-36. **An house of merchandise**—"An Emporium." Ps. 93: 5. At the second cleansing he said "My house shall be called the house of prayer" quoting Isa. 56: 7, and added "but ye have made it a den of thieves." Read the account of the second cleansing in Matt. 21: 12-13; Mark 11: 15-19; Luke 19: 45-48. What these people were doing was not wrong in itself, but they were destroying sacred associations and profanely interrupting worship. The place where God is worshipped should be treated with reverence for His sake. **17.** See Ps. 69: 9. R. V. "shall eat me up." This Psalm is often quoted in the N. T. See

John 15: 25; 19: 28-30; Rom. 15: 3; 11: 9; Acts 1: 20. Here for the first time the terrible life-staking earnestness of Jesus met in conflict the spirit of the age. (Lange). It was the first clash of swords in the battle which was to end at Calvary. The remembered passage may have awakened prophetic forebodings in the minds of the disciples.

## II. PROPHECYING HIS RESURRECTION.

**18.** "We meet here a fact, which will repeat itself at every manifestation of the Lord's glory; a twofold impression is produced, according to the moral predisposition of the witnesses; some find in the act of Jesus nourishment for their faith; for others, the same act becomes a subject of offence. It is the pre-existing moral sympathy or antipathy that determines the impression." (Godet). **Then answered**—The act of Jesus and his even more startling claims, were a challenge which demanded a reply. Compare similar "answers" in Matt. 11: 25; John 5: 17; Job 3: 2. (Marg.). **The Jews**—The temple authorities. "The name has most frequently in our gospel a religious coloring. It designates the nation as an unbelieving community, which, in the majority of its members and through its authorities, had rejected the Messiah." (Godet). **What sign**—What proof that you have the authority which you claim, namely, that you are the Son of God? They rightly understood his words to imply that he claimed to be the Messiah. He did not need to give any authority for driving out the sacrilegious profaners of the temple. Any Jew might have done that. The deed was its own justification. But they wished a sign, or evidence of divine sanction, for his course of action as based upon the claim that he was the "Son" of Him to whom the house was dedicated. The same demand was made after the second cleansing (Matt. 21: 23). It was frequently made (John 6: 30; Matt. 12: 38; 16: 1) and always refused in the sense that they intended. He wrought "signs" abundantly, but not as answers to demands from those already determined to reject any proof. Instead of acknowledging their sin in tolerating abuses, and asking Jesus to help them in correcting them, and commending him generously for his zeal and courage, they at once took up an attitude of resistance. Sin pointed out to us often determines character by our mode of reception of the rebuke. (Reith). Had they approached him in a proper spirit the evidence they asked for would no doubt have been given. Compare Christ's answer to the disciples of John. (Matt. 11: 2-6). **19. Destroy this temple**—The word for temple is properly "the shrine," or most sacred part of the building. (See Mat. 12: 38, 39; 16: 4; John 6: 30; 8: 28.) These words were made a charge against him at his trial (Matt. 26: 61; 27: 40.) but they knew what he meant. (See Matt. 27: 63.) The crucifixion of Christ involved, as a necessary consequence, the destruction of the temple and the Old Testament worship;