Sabbath School

BIBLE LESSONS.

Adapted from Peloubet's Select Notes

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson X Sept. 2 John 2: 13-25.

JESUS CLEANSING THE TEMPLE.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."—John 2: 16.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—Jesus has entered upon his public ministry. He has gained five or six disciples who believe that he is the promised Messiah. He has confirmed their faith and revealed his true nature to them by the miracle at Cana. After that he made a brief visit to Capernaum, which was later to be his home and the scene of many of his labors for a year and a half; and then he returned to Jerusalem in time to attend the Passover.

EXPLANATORY.

I. DESECRATION OF THE TEMPLE.—Vs. 13, 14. 13. "And the Jews' Passover," the great annual religious feast of the Jews to which all good Jews were expected to come. Sometimes, according to Josephus, as many as 2,000,000 visitors were present. "Jesus went up" from Capernaum (v 12) Jesus was particular to attend these great feasts, for however they were often perverted and misused by some, they were divinely appointed services. He himself was to be their fulfilment. And he could reach great numbers at that time, with his teaching, and scatter the seeds of truth over all countries.

14. "And found in the temple." The word translated "temple" (*iecov*) signifies not merely the central edifice, wherein were the holy place and the holy of holies, but that edifice with all its surrounding courts, including the court of the Gentiles, in which the noisy and irreverent traders were now busy. This court had an area of about fourteen acres, and was separated from the inner court by a wall breast high, and bearing intimations which forbade the encroachment of Gentiles on pain of death. "Those that sold oxen and sheep and doves." The animals used in sacrifice, very great numbers of which would be required for the Passover and other sacrifices. "And the changers of money sitting." Money would be required (1) to purchase materials for offerings; (2) to present as free-offerings to the temple treasury (Mark 12: 41; Luke 21: 1); (3) to pay the yearly temple tax of half a shekel due from every Jew, however poor. This could not be received except in a native coin called the temple shekel, which was not generally current. Strangers therefore, had to change their Roman, Greek, or Eastern money, at the stalls of the money-changers, to obtain the coin required. This trade gave ready means for fraud, which was only too common.

REASONS WHY IT WAS WRONG. Turning the temple courts into a place of merchandise destroyed the very purpose for which the temple was built, and changed its results into the very opposite. (1) For the dealers, the spirit of worship was lost. Instead of praying, they were bargaining. Instead of worshiping, they were making money. (2) The opportunities for fraud were very great. The dealers had a monopoly and could charge such prices as they pleased. They were trading with strangers who often did not know the true values of the merchandise. (3) The court of the Gentiles was the place of prayer and worship for Gentiles. "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.

II. JESUS INDIGNANTLY DRIVES THE TRAFFICKERS FROM THE TEMPLE.—Vs. 15-17. 15. "And when he had made a scourge of small cords." He seized some cords lying upon the ground, twisted them together, and with his own hand began to drive out "the sheep, and the oxen." He did not strike the men, most probably not even the animals, and such a scourge would not hurt them. The owners would naturally follow their cattle without the gates. "Poured out the changers' money," upon the marble pavement, thus stopping their traffic.

16. "And saith unto them that sold doves." The doves, being in cages, could not be driven out. "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." Thus perverting the purpose and defeating the very end for which it was ordained. It was a selling of souls for money.

17. "It was written (in Ps. 69: 9) The zeal of thine house." For thy house, inspired by thy house. "Hath eaten (R.V.) shall eat) me up." Consume me: i. e., wear me out.

THE INDIGNATION OF JESUS. Let no mistake be made concerning what is meant by a Christian spirit. Let us not, as is too often done, take one side of the character of Christ in forming an estimate of the whole. Men speak of the loving kindness and gentleness in Christ as though these virtues made up his whole life. This is a great mistake. An English writer said he had found boys enough who loved God; he wanted to find one who hated the devil. There are times when love must be indignant. He does not love righteousness who is not indignant at sin. He does not love men who does not flame and burn like a volcano against all that is ruining and destroying men. The more intense the love, the hotter the indignation. The most terrible words ever uttered against sin were uttered by incarnate love.

III. THE TEMPLE A TYPE OF THE SOUL AND OF THE CHURCH.—1 Cor. 3: 10-17; 6: 19; 2 Cor. 6: 16; Eph. 2: 19-22. (1) Rich and costly preparations have been made by others. We are heirs of all the ages. (2) The foundation is Jesus Christ, the Rock that never can be moved. (3) The soul and the church are made for the worship of God. (4) God dwells in them with his abiding presence, illumining them, filling them with his love. (5) When completed, they are very beautiful and costly far beyond the most glorious earthly temples. (6) One purpose of both is to lead others to God, to teach them of his worship, to be the gate of heaven.

THE TEMPLE IS DEFILED by all sinful habits and customs, by errors of doctrine, by worldliness of spirit, by lusts of the flesh, by selfish ambitions, by wrong temper, by sins of every kind. These not only defile the temple but keep others from worshipping and loving God.

CHRIST CLEANSES THE TEMPLE. His first work in converting a soul, in reviving the church, is to cleanse away sin. "He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap, and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver" (Mal. 3: 2 3).

The temple is the centre of religious and national life, and Jesus' great work was to cleanse and renew that life.

IV. THE SIGN OF HIS AUTHORITY.—Vs. 18-22. 18. "Then answered the Jews," through their leaders and rulers. "What sign shewest thou," to prove that you have a right to take this authority into your own hands. It looked like high-handed usurpation, unless he was a prophet sent from God. Let him show his credentials.

19. "Destroy this temple." The word used in these three verses for "temple" means the central sacred building (naos), whereas that used in verse 14 means the whole sacred enclosure (hieron). The latter is never used figuratively. "In three days from the time it was destroyed, I will raise it up," not rebuild, but raise up. "For the interpretation, see verse 21 below. It is, however, noteworthy that the resurrection is here represented by Christ as his own work."

20. "Forty and six years was this temple in building." It was begun, according to Josephus, in the 18th year of Herod, B.C. 19 or 20 (A.U.C. 734), and now it was A.D. 27, A.U.C. 780, making about forty-six years.

21. "But he spake of the temple of his body," which three years later was destroyed by the Jews, and in three days raised up.

22. "When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered." Even the disciples at the time could not understand this sign; and it was not important that they should. But when the right time came then they understood. "The Scripture." After the event they understood Old Testament prophecies of the resurrection, which they could not understand before, such as Ps. 16: 4; compare with Acts 3: 15; Ps. 17: 15; Isa. 26: 19; Hos. 6: 2.

V. MANY CONVINCED BY THE MIRACLES OF JESUS.—Vs. 22-25. 23. "Many believed in his name." Were convinced that he was the Messiah. "When they saw the miracles" (R.V. the signs). They are signs, because expressions of God's holy character: his love, tenderness, pity, good-will to men. Miracles were absolutely essential to Jesus in proving that he was son of God, the Messiah.

24. "But Jesus did not commit himself" (R.V.) "trust himself"; the same verb as in verse 23. Many "trusted" in his name, but he did not "trust himself" to them. He did not give them his confidence; he did not put himself in their power, because some at least of them were not worthy and would misuse his confidence to misinterpret him or betray him. "He knew all men." He knew who were his real disciples, and whom he could trust. He was not misled by loud professions, nor by apparent faith that dwelt in the intellect and not in the heart.

Evil That Good May Come.

Evil is never justifiable, even though good come from it. A lie is a lie, even though a happy impression is made by it. A sin is a sin, even though it converts a sinner. To invent or propagate what is not true nor just, with a view of securing some desirable end, is to pay tribute to satan for the benefit of self. Unhallowed means are not necessary to uphold the cause of God. Pious frauds are as contemptible as any other frauds. Deviltry in moral garb is as direct an insult to the God of all righteousness as open blasphemy and wilful rebellion. If we cannot compass a worthy end in any department of religion or morality or civil government or social life without relinquishing upright principles, we may be sure that Providence never intended that we should undertake it. The very circumstances which prompt us to use evil means for holy ends should render us suspicious of danger rather than eager for action.

Our conduct must be as circumspect as our motives. Shun the wrong wherever you find it. Never choose between two evils; avoid both. Never sacrifice honor for power, nor principle for emolument. Use not satan's tactics for accomplishing Christ's measures Keep your habits and customs, your activities and festivities, your religious entertainments and social gatherings, free from those schemes and devices which smack of trickery, chance, unwholesome influence or worldly-mindedness. No church is so poor that it needs to coin money by serving the god of this world. Prosperity built upon vicious schemes is a sham and a delusion. Come out from them. Make straight paths for your feet. Square your divine activities by the divine standards of rectitude. Let the world know by your collective as well as by your individual deportment that you have Christ put on. The social life of a church should be as helpful to salvation as the revival meetings.—*Michigan Advocate.*

Hold Thou my hands!
In grief and joy, in hope and fear,
Lord, let me feel that Thou art near—
Hold Thou my hands!

If e'er by doubts
Of Thy good fatherhood depressed,
I cannot find in Thee my rest,
Hold Thou my hands!

Hold Thou my hands—
These passionate hands too quick to smite,
These hands so eager for delight—
Hold Thou my hands!

And went at length,
With darkened eyes and fingers cold,
I seek some last loved hand to hold,
Hold Thou my hands!
—*William Canton, in N. Y. Tribune.*

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OUR OBJECT.

The unification of Baptist young people; their increased spirituality; their stimulation in Christian service; their edification in scriptural knowledge; their instruction in Baptist history and doctrine; their enlistment in missionary activity, through existing denominational institutions.

OUR FELLOWSHIP.

All Young People's Societies of whatsoever name in Baptist churches, and Baptist churches having no organizations are entitled to representation. We depend for our unity not upon any young people's name or method. Our common bond is in the New Testament, in the full affirmation of whose teachings

WE ARE ONE PEOPLE WITH ONE MISSION.

Correspondents to this department should address their communications to REV. J. J. BAKER, St. John, N. B.

For the Week Beginning Aug 26th.

C. E. THEME:—Jno. 15: 1-11. "The joy of the Christian life."

We call the attention of the young people to the meeting of the Maritime Convention. Each union is entitled to representation in the meetings. You have agreed to do your work through existing denominational organizations. By all means then let there be a good rally at Bear River.

Narrow sectarianism is about the poorest kind of commodity you can have in your possession. Intelligent denominationalism is one of the best things you can have. B. Y. P. U. stands for denominationalism. We are growing a generation of Baptists that will know that the Baptists stand for something, and why they are Baptists.

If you want to be abreast of the times you cannot afford to miss the series of articles on the struggles for Baptist principles, which will appear in the *Baptist Union*, beginning in the autumn.

No one lives better than his ideal. To have a low ideal will sooner or later bring ruin to any individual, church, or denomination. Push up the standard.

Is you Union a mutual admiration society or is it a company of organized workers?

Look upon this scene: Six thousand young Baptists stand up to pledge themselves to seek to win at least one soul this year. Let the pledge be passed on to every member in our Unions. We may have a great consecration meeting all over the provinces.

Wolfville knows how. Where is Truro? What about Amherst? St. John? We are back here, but we are coming. It is well to make the echo as loud as possible even if there is only one to "echo." Where is Windsor with its "young people" who were at Toronto. We hope that Toronto '94 will bear good fruit in all the provinces. We didn't have a "Centurion band", but we had a good delegation, that had a good time, and that will be helped to do better work.

The Wolfville representation at the Toronto convention numbered twelve, six of whom were delegates. The report of the proceedings took the form of an "echo meeting" on Wednesday evening, Aug. 8th. The programme consisted of papers and addresses, and was as follows:

1. "Toronto: Its Baptists, and Convention Committees," Miss Alice Fitch, M. A.
2. "The Trip," Miss Faye Coldwell
3. "Workings of Convention," Mrs. Crandall.
4. "Our Motto: Rallies: Canadian and Maritime Convention Sabbath," Miss M. E. Chipman.
5. "B. Y. U. A., President and Secretary," Mrs. Geo. Wallace.
6. "Massey Hall: Founding Fund: Calef Speakers," Prof. A. E. Caldwell.

Each phase of the Convention was thus interestingly and ably taken up, and the whole comprised a concise comprehensive report of the Toronto meetings. The returned party gave an unanimous verdict that the Convention was a most enthusiastic and inspiring one, and the trip very delightful. L. E. A.

About a month ago the young people at Lower Canard met and formed a Baptist Young People's Union. This union is in connection with the First Cornwallis church, of which Rev. C. H. Martell has lately become pastor. The prayer-meetings have been of great interest during the last few years; but it was thought that by an organized effort greater work could be done. The pastor and Mrs. Martell have been very energetic in their efforts to form this B. Y. P. U., and much encouragement and assistance were also rendered by Dr. W. B Boggs and Mrs. Boggs, who are spending the summer in this place. Since our organization a deep interest has been taken in the work, and the meetings have been largely attended. We already have 34 active and 16 associate members enrolled, and we expect more to join us.

The officers appointed are: President, H. G. Harris; Vice-President, Miss Jennie McLatchey; Secretary, Miss Mabel I. Eaton; Corresponding Secretary, Miss Avora B. Dickey; Treasurer, L. H. Eaton; Organist, Mrs H. S Dickey.

On Sunday evening, Aug. 5th, we had our first missionary conquest meeting. Trials and Triumphs in Japan was the assigned subject. Excellent and instructive addresses were delivered by Mrs. Boggs, returned missionary, and by the pastor and Mrs. Martell. Two papers were prepared and read by the Corresponding Secretary and the President. We have great hopes for the future of our Union.

AVORA B. DICKEY,
Cor. Secretary.

England expend annually on pictures at least £3,000,000.

A statute of Marshal de MacMahon will be erected at Autun. It is to be 30 feet high.

The pictures, books, furniture and relics of the late Ford Madox-Brown will be sold ere long in London. The collection contains many items of unique interest on account of their connection with the greatest names in English art during the last fifty years.

An Open Letter.

To the Maritime Baptist Convention.

The undersigned send Greeting;

DEAR BRETHREN,—It is with regret and alarm that we learn that the several associations of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward's Island have passed resolutions advising your body not to make the changes in your constitution to meet the basis of organization agreed to last year, (viz: "to take out of the convention the control and management of academic education and home missions; and let each province care for these interests by separate provincial convention, or in any way it might elect.")

Why any of the associations should take such unfair proceedings; and advise your body to break faith with what was then accepted as a final settlement of the then existing agitation, (viz: to divide the Maritime Convention,) is to us somewhat enigmatical; as is also the course pursued by the President, Rev. D. G. McDonald in sending circular cards to the churches asking them to take a vote without discussion on the matter, which is virtually acting on Bro. White's amendment that was rejected by an overwhelming majority; and so far as our New Brunswick churches are concerned it will amount to nothing, for many of them will take no notice of it, knowing that his action is without authority, and contrary to the vote of the convention last year, and because our associations had by large majorities indorsed the New Brunswick convention as outcome of the vote of the Maritime convention at its last meeting; before these cards came to their notice. And furthermore the replies of many will be of doubtful character, and will admit of disputation, and therefore will be valueless.

Now we do hope that for the honor of the denomination, and to maintain the good faith and fellowship of the whole brotherhood, you will stand by the agreement so amicably reached by your committee and us at St. Martins last year, which was accepted by the convention in open session. None of us thought for a moment that the basis of organization which we all signed, (see year book page 27) as our report; and was carried eventually without a a dissenting vote, was at all dependent on the changes to be made in the constitution; but the changes were to be made to agree with the bases, and we agreed not to do anything with the working of the convention boards during the convention year, but to be ready at the end of the year to take over from the convention board the work of home missions for this province; by being organized and incorporated so as to legally assume our share of its indebtedness; and in the meantime to do all we could to get the deficits paid off. The New Brunswick Baptist convention has been organized to carry out our part of the contract. This convention has been as constitutionally formed as any Baptist organization was ever constituted. We had a year in which to be prepared to take over the work assigned us by the vote of your body, consequently, in pursuance of the call of the president and secretary of the adjourned meeting of May, '93, in the Brussels street church, the churches were notified through the columns of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR to send delegates to meet on the 5th of October, to hear the report of their committee; and to take steps toward the foundation of a New Brunswick Convention to carry forward the work falling into our hands to do. That meeting assembled as per call, and after hearing and receiving the report, and after some discussion they voted by majority to form a New Brunswick Baptist Convention to forward the work of Academic education and home missions in this province. A preliminary organization was formed; and the officers authorized to apply to the N. B. Legislature for an Act of incorporation, which was subsequently secured; and under its provisions another meeting was called by the secretary on the 20th June last, to complete the organization as required by the Act of incorporation, before there could be any business done at the annual meeting provided for in the Act. Notices of this meeting were given in the MESSENGER AND VISITOR for several weeks previous, and circulars were sent to all the churches to represent themselves by sending delegates to that meeting. That meeting opened in due form; and it was there and then voted to complete the organization; which was done in accordance with the provisions of the Act. And now, the N. B convention is ready to take over the management of home missions for N. B. at the close of your approaching session, according to last year's agreement. As for Academic education, the officers of the N. B. convention have already begun that work in making arrangements for the purchase of the Seminary at St. Martins, and will open it on the 18th Sept. for the beginning of their first term. So now, brethren, honor bright,—stand by your agreement, for you have more to lose than to gain by going back on your agreement.

Fraternally yours.

Signed by the committee appointed to meet with you last year.

REV'D A. B. MCDONALD.
" W. E. MCINTYRE.
" J. E. HOPPER, D. D.
" THOMAS TODD.
" GEORGE HOWARD.
" J. H. HUGHES.
BRO. M. S. HALL.
" N. B. COTTLE
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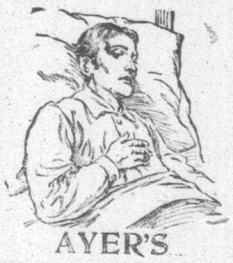

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