

SUNDAY  
SCHOOL

## The Quiet Hour

YOUNG  
PEOPLE

## THE CHARACTER OF THE MESSIAH.

By Rev. C. McKinnon, B.D., Winnipeg.

There shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish (Rev. Ver.), v. 1. Sometimes the sorrows and trials of life come upon us thick and fast, like the drops of a pelting rain storm from which there is no shelter. But we know how the sun shines upon the rain drops and forms the beautiful many-colored bow that spans the heavens. In watching the exquisite rainbow, we forget the discomfort of the storm. And so in the brightness of God's presence, with His love shining full upon us all the darkness flees away from our souls, and they are illuminated with a sweet and heavenly radiance.

In the former time contempt in the latter time glorious (Rev. Ver.), v. 1. In these words may be written the history of Christ's kingdom. Pilate despised it, and thought he had stamped it out when he sent its Founder to the Cross. The proud Romans looked with infinite scorn upon the few poor fishermen who went out to bring the world under the sway of the gospel. In the eyes of Festus, Paul seemed to be a madman when he spoke of the power of the risen and living Christ. But every Christian century has seen that kingdom grow in extent and influence over men. It never was so glorious as to-day, and its glory and greatness will increase until the whole world is brought under the rule of its mighty King.

Walking in darkness, v. 2. Travelers tell of the strange conduct of Arab guides in Eastern tombs and temples. When, by some mischance, their lights go out, they begin to clap their hands and make all sorts of strange noise. They are afraid in the dark, believing the air around them to be full of demons, whom they thus try to scare away. Deeper and more dreadful is the darkness of those who are away from Christ. Their pathway is full of fears. They are afraid of life's perils and trials, for they have not His strength in which to meet them; of death, for they are not united with Him who vanquished the grave; of judgment, for they have not made Him who sits on the throne their friend; of the future, for it promises them nothing but woe. How foolish to walk amid these terrors, when in a moment they may be scattered through simple trust in the Saviour!

Upon them hath the light shined, v. 2. Upon whom? Upon those who were in the shadow and looked toward the light. Those outside the cathedral cannot see the richness of the colors or the beauty of the figures in the pictured window; neither will those within who will not look. But he who in the gloom of the great building looks toward the painted glass, will see nothing else worth gazing at. So with us. Only when we stand in the shadow of our sins do we fully realize the beauty and radiance of the Saviour, who died for our sins and became thereby the Light of the world.

Joy in harvest, v. 3. Ninety million bushels of wheat and more of golden grain were garnered in last autumn from the fertile prairies of the West. Plenty and prosperity are the pleasant results, bring gladness of heart to the people of the land. There is another harvest. It belongs to God. It is made up of precious human souls. We may have a share in

the blessed work of gathering it in. And no joy of earthly reaping time can compare with theirs who, at the last, shall have sheaves to bear into the presence of the Lord of the harvest.

All the armour of the armed man for fuel of fire (Rev. Ver.), v. 5. War is doomed. Its weapons shall be consumed. It has drained the nations of the earth more than any curse. The four wars from 1702 to 1814 cost the British people \$9, 100,000,000. The wars of Julius Caesar destroyed about 2,000,000 men; those of Napoleon nearly 4,000,000. The number killed or who died of wounds and disease in war from 1853 to 1877 was: in the Crimea 750,000; American civil war 800,000; Franco-German war 225,000; smaller wars and massacres 175,000. The mind cannot estimate the loss and suffering that has been entailed. But all this energy that has been used to destroy men will be directed to the work of saving them. Then what glorious results may we not look for? Before the great army that fights under the Captain of our salvation every foe will be vanquished, every evil will be overcome.

His name, v. 6. The name of Jesus has ever been potent for good. Uttered by the lips of the apostles, it healed disease, opened the eyes of the blind, mastered devils, and even breathed warm life into the cold form of death. Nor have the centuries robbed it of its power. Never has it been more effective than to-day, not indeed to startle the world with physical wonders, but to work moral miracles in the lives of thousands and to win ever increasing homage from the lips of mankind.

## CONSTANT CHRISTMAS.

O never-failing splendor!  
O never-silent song!  
Still keep the green earth tender.  
Still keep the gray earth strong.  
Still keep the brave earth dreaming  
Of deeds that shall be done.  
While children's lives come streaming  
Like the sunbeams from the sun.  
O angels, sweet and splendid,  
Throng in our hearts and sing  
The wonders which attended  
The coming of the King.  
Till we, too boldly pressing  
Where once the shepherds trod,  
Climb Bethlehem's hill of blessing,  
And find the Son of God!  
Phillips Brooks.

## GLIMPSES OF THE INFINITE.

What we see is a very small part of what is. One realizes this with new force as he pushes through the underbrush of a forest or piece of woodland, and comes at every step upon new and unsuspected beauties of God's creating. Here is a tiny flower hidden beneath a leaf; no man ever looked upon it before, and perhaps never will again; yet it is perfect beyond Solomon's glory. For every such glimpse given us of God's infinite creative and beauty-loving power, there are ten thousand times ten thousand manifestations of it, here in this world, that man has never seen. In the depths of the sea, in the arctic regions, in the heart of the earth, and close to us on every side, his works are going on unseen by any of his children. And if this is so of his infinite, material world, what of the spiritual world beyond, when we shall have entered there? It is such suggestions of the infinite that reveal how little we really know of our Father's love. What a Love to trust, while awaiting that time when we shall know even as also we were known!—Sunday School Times.

## CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

Christmas means to him who regards it as a Church festival, the day on which was ushered into the world the blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Nay, even if the day of Christ's birth cannot be exactly fixed, one day in the year he allots for a thankful, devout celebration of the event. To him the religious is the dominant idea, and the sweetest song of the sacred carols is that of the Evangel: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

And what higher or holier view can be taken of Christmas than that here set forth? Christmas with its religious associations ought to be helpful in deepening religious feelings, and in reminding anew of the everlasting love of God for man. But the true Christian celebration of the Festival is not by any means confined to personal devotion and public worship. What is good, what is Christlike in man comes to the surface in various ways. The sunshine of God's grace will be diffused. Men and women, experiencing the love of Christ in their hearts will try to communicate it to others, and will be stimulated in doing so by the thoughts of the Christmas season. Mindful of God's goodness, the poor and needy will be remembered. Charity, the loveliest of the graces, is never more gracious than when sharing the bounties of Providence with those upon whom misfortune has cast a Christmas shadow. Good cheer in the mansion and good cheer in the lowly dwelling; that is the Christmas motto.

The courtesies of life are quickened at Christmas time. In this way alone, were there no other, the advent of the happy season would be propitious. In this work-a-day world, what with rush and bustle, the poetry is being sapped out of life. Christmas joys, its sacred family memories, its social friendships, are a seasoning to life's care and canker. Long may it continue to be so, a buffer between the world-from worldliness; and homely pleasures are allies of spiritual joy. Then let the former be cultivated as well as the latter; and the joy, the sunshine of life—how can it be better preserved than by imparting of what we possess, as we can, to those not as fortunate as ourselves. When the Christmas chimes are ringing forth their merry peals, let our bounty reach some fireside where without it Christmas would be cold and cheerless, but with its help, happy and contented.

Comfort one another  
With the hand-clasp close and tender,  
With the sweetness love can render.

## PRAYER.

Almighty Father, with the opening of a new year, we look forward to the future—a future wholly void to us, except as it may be peopled with creations by our hopes or fears. To Thee, O Thou Omnipotent, the future is not a void. It is wholly known. We adore Thee that, certain as this may be, Thy word abounds in assurances that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Hear us, O Lord, as we beseech Thee to prepare us for all that may be awaiting us. May no burden come upon us that we shall not be able to bear. May no temptation assail us that we shall not be able to resist. Hear us, good Lord, as we pray Thee to prevent us by Thy goodness. Merciful Father, remember our weakness. We are but dust. May every trial that comes upon us be so tempered that we may be able to pass through it in the spirit proper to Thy children. In all our times of special need may Thy grace be sufficient for us.

\*S.S. Lesson—Isaiah 9:1-7. Commit to memory v. 6. Read Isaiah 11:1-10. Golden Text—Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.—Matthew 1:21.