

What will Christ's kingdom be? **A kingdom of peace.**

What will some day be taken out of all things?

The evil.

Who will then be able to lead even wild beasts about? **A little child.**

What will the earth be then? **A holy place.**

Why will it be holy? **Because God will be every-where known.**

Who will then be sought before all others? **Christ.**

What will it be to know him? **A glorious rest.**

Words with Little People.

Christ's kingdom can be set up in a child's heart. It is a kingdom of peace and love. The child in whose heart this kingdom is is strong enough to lead about the wild beasts of ill-temper, ill-will, and obstinacy. A little child who loves Jesus is stronger than a strong man who does not love him.

Lesson Prayer.

"Thy kingdom come."

General Statement.

A little more than seven hundred years before the birth of Christ the young prince Hezekiah ascended the throne of Judah. His nation was surrounded by perils, and the hearts of the people sank within them—whenever the Assyrians appeared. In those days Isaiah the prophet was in his prime, and he used all his powers to encourage the young king and his people. One of the visions which God gave to him we study in this lesson—a vision of the approach of a King who should administer righteously, and in whose day the very beasts of the wilderness should lose their ferocity, and peace should universally reign. The goodness of Hezekiah may have been to some degree present in the mind of both the speakers and the hearers, but manifest to all was the fact that no mere mortal could fulfill the supernatural conditions which this vision presupposed. It is a wonderful portraiture of the spiritual consequences of the dominion of Christ.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. A rod. A vigorous sprout; a fresh green sapling. **The stem.** A "nucleus of root-lets" hidden under ground after the tree has been cut down. **Jesse.** The father of David. The allusion is to a "family tree" which grew from Jesse. **A Branch.** See Isa. 53. 2; 4. 2; Jer. 23. 5; 33. 15; Zech. 3. 8; 6. 12. The Hebrew word here used is *Netzer*, which closely resembled in sound our Lord's geographical surname—"the Nazarene." To this Matthew alludes (Matt. 2. 23). **Out of his roots.** A luxuriant shoot from a decayed stock. If the prophecy had stopped here we might suppose the noble young Hezekiah to have been referred to; but not even Hezekiah could fulfill the promises which follow. (1) *The brightest success often follows apparently complete failure.* (2) *Growth of moral forces always begins at the roots of life.*

2. "We would not have," says Dr. G. A. Smith, "a more concise summary of the strong elements of a ruling mind than is given in verses 2 to 5." **The Spirit of the Lord.** The Spirit of Jehovah. **Wisdom and understanding.** Intellectual and moral apprehension, the ability to perceive moral and abstract truth. **Counsel and might.** The gift of forming right conclusions, and the ability to carry them out with energy. **Of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.** "A 'knowledge' founded upon the fellowship of love; a 'fear' absorbed in reverence. It is needless to say that all these qualities existed in the greatest perfection in our blessed Lord. They 'rested upon him' from first to last."—*Canon Rawlinson.* (3) *The Holy Spirit is the true*

source of wisdom. (4) *There is no "might" so strong as the might of love; it sees how to deal with human beings, and gives prudence and practical power.*

3. **Shall make him of quick understanding.** The Hebrew word literally means "scent," which may be understood to indicate "understanding," as in our common English Bibles; or "delight," as in the Revised Version. No other human being had ever such "quick understanding"—such marvelous insight into the hearts of men—as our Lord (see Luke 2. 47; Matt. 9. 4; 22. 46; John 6. 26; 7. 21); and none could so truly say, "I delight to do thy will, O God." But Dr. G. A. Smith suggests an entirely variant translation: "He shall draw his breath in the fear of the Lord," which is the most expressive definition of sinlessness—that sinlessness which was the attribute of Christ alone. See Critical Notes. (5) *Christ has revealed stretches and eminences of life where, following in his footsteps, we also shall draw for our breath the fear of God. He shall not judge after the sight . . . the hearing.* With even the widest poetic license these words could not be applied to any earthly monarch, for human courts must depend on testimony. But Jesus "knew men's thoughts." (6) *God's wisdom is perfect.* (7) *The whole-hearted Christian will not lack adaptability.*

4. **With righteousness shall he judge.** Judges in the East have been in all ages proverbially corrupt. **The poor.** Who cannot pay a bribe. **The meek.** "Who use no adroit or eloquent words to win the ear."—*Bannister.* **The earth-**