

SUNDAY  
SCHOOL

## The Quiet Hour

YOUNG  
PEOPLEJESUS HEALS A MAN BORN  
BLIND.\*

By Rev. P. M. McDonald, B.D.

Who did sin, this man, or his parents? v. 2. If troubles troop to our own door, we count it our misfortune; but if others have them, we easily think they deserve them for their own waywardness or the wrong doing of some one belonging to them. Now, when such troubles come to our neighbors, our first duty is to get them removed, if this is within our power. Investigation into the primary causes of them may be all right later on: help, prompt and practical, is what the hour of trial calls for. Questions as to how the house took fire are asked by the disinterested loafers who stand around; the workers are busy trying to extinguish the flames and save life and property. An inquiry as to how the child fell into the water comes in very well after the child is rescued. Save the perishing before you account for his dangerous position.

That the works of God should be made manifest in him, v. 3. In Mrs. Browning's poem, *Perplexed Music*, "a pale musician holds a dulcimer of patience in his hand," from which he can bring out only sad, confused, melancholy music. The harmony of the notes is hidden from human ears. But "angels, smiling down the stars, whisper-Sweet." So, it may seem to some, that their infirmities or weaknesses render them useless in the work of the world, while all the time their gentle patience and cheerful endurance are bringing to God His sweetest praise and helping many others to be brave and uncomplaining.

Work...while it is day...the night cometh, v. 4. Robert Murray McChesney had on the face of his watch a picture of the setting sun, and above this the words, "The night cometh"; and he lived as does one who has no moments to lose. Every time he looked at his watch to see the hour, he was reminded of the shortness of life, and the urgent necessity for earnestness in duty and kindness to others. Life is too short and too uncertain in its span for us to idle, or allow its "slipping years" to be sullied with bitter words and bad actions. We go through life but once. If we can gather up the stones from the pathway of the children, or help a flower to grow in some dark corner, let us do it, for when the night comes an inactive silence will reign.

"Give every flying minute  
Something to keep in store;  
Work for the night is coming,  
When man works no more."

I am the light of the world, v. 5. The story is told, that an institution for the blind was being erected. It was decided that, as the building was for the blind, there would only be waste of money in going to the expense of windows. Scientific ventilation and heating systems were installed, but no windows. In due time the new blind asylum was opened, and the poor sightless people put in it. But things did not go very well with the patients. They began to droop and sicken one after another. A great languor fell upon them. They always felt distressed and restless. They craved for something, they hardly knew what, and after one or two had died and all were ill, the committee deliberated, and decided to put in windows. Then the sun poured in, and the white faces recovered their color and the white-facing spirits revived, and rest and peace

came again. Jesus is to our spiritual nature what the sun is to the earth and our bodies.

He anointed his eyes (Rev. Ver.), v. 6. The late Empress of Austria, like our late beloved Queen Victoria, was kind-hearted and unassuming. It is said that she was driving one day in the country with a friend, and saw a woman a little distance from the road acting in a strange manner. The Empress soon discovered that the woman was blind, and, further, that she was wandering near a precipice. Quickly calling to the driver to stop, she left the carriage and hastened to the poor woman, and led her from danger. We admire such an act; but in the Lesson is one more touching and wonderful still. The King of glory sees a poor blind beggar sitting in darkness, is moved with compassion for him, and gives him sight, opening up before him a new world of beauty.

But he said, I am he, v. 9. A teacher asked a student to prove a proposition of Euclid. The student began, and made some statements. "Stop," said the teacher, "are you right?" The student sat down confused and silent. Another was called upon to prove the proposition. He began as the first did, and the teacher called to him, "Stop, are you right?" "Yes, I am right," was the answer. "Very well, proceed." When he had finished, the first student said, "My proof was the same as his; why did you not accept it?" "In this college," said the teacher, "one must not only be right, but he must know he is right." We cannot afford to be less than sure of our knowledge, if we would succeed in this life. And, above all, we cannot afford to be less than sure that we have received the gift of eternal life.

## DIFFERING CONDITIONS.

All around, man's acres lie,  
Under this same brooding sky.  
There, the plowman blithely sings;  
Broadcast, there, the sower flings  
Golden grain, to die in gloom,  
Making every clod its tomb,  
Lo! a miracle is seen—  
Acres clothed in living green.

In their midst, God's acre lies,  
Under these same yearning skies.  
Here, men move with digges slow;  
Here, their tears unbidden flow;  
Loved forms, here, in earth they lay;  
Leave to darkness and decay.  
Autumns wane, and springs return;  
Still they sleep 'neath shaft and urn.

Side by side, those acres lie,  
Under this expectant sky.  
What! On God's lies death's dark spell,  
While in man's comes miracle?  
No! for love's eyes pierce the gloom!  
No! for Christ hath burst the tomb!  
God will give, by power unknown,  
Each a body of his own!

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## PRAYER.

O Lord, we bless Thee for the price-less privilege of prayer. As a beacon to the mariner in the gloom of a stormy sea, so is prayer to us, lighting our way through the darkness of life. And this great boon which Thou hast granted us as a proof of Thy fatherly care and love for us may be enjoyed by the least as well as the greatest, so that all men may say: "God is my friend." Bring nearer to us the great benefits of this sweet communication, and let the eyes of the blind be opened so that they may all be privileged to speak with Thee. Amen.

## LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D., London.

Blindness—is so frequently met with in the East, as to excite the astonishment of travellers. When Volney visited Cairo, he declared that out of every hundred persons he met, twenty were entirely blind, ten had lost one eye, and twenty more had red, purulent, of blenched eyes. This is owing to the Egyptian ophthalmia, which is peculiar to that country and to the coast of Syria. It is a highly infectious disease, aggravated by dirt in the form of dust and sand pulverized by the sun's intense heat, by the perpetual glare of light, the contrast between the fierce heat of the day and the cold sea air and heavy dew at night on the coast, where the disease is especially prevalent and where the people sleep in the open air on their roofs. This disease always leaves the eye damaged more or less, and sometimes entirely destroyed. Mohammedan fatalism also leads to the neglect of the proper remedies in time. One form of the disease attacked unborn children, and were severe enough to cause permanent opacity of the cornea. This was one of the strange things which caused the Jews to believe that a man could sin before he was born, for they thought he could not come into the world handicapped by blindness without any guilt of his own.

## ANSWERED PRAYER.

I was engaged in an effort to build Sabbath schools in the south of London. A benevolent friend promised a hundred pounds, if I could get nine hundred pounds more within a week. I did my utmost, and by desperate efforts, with the assistance of friends, did get eight hundred pounds, but not one penny more. We reached Saturday, and the terms of all the promises were that unless we obtained a thousand pounds that week we could not proceed with the building scheme, and the entire enterprise might have been postponed for years, indeed, never accomplished on the large scale we desired.

On Saturday morning one of my principal church officers called, and said he had come upon an extraordinary business; that a Christian woman in that neighborhood whom I did not know, of whom I had never heard, who had no connection whatever with my church, had that morning been lying awake in bed, and an extraordinary impression had come to her that she was at once to give me one hundred pounds! She naturally resisted so extraordinary an impression as a caprice or a delusion. But it refused to leave her; it became stronger and stronger, until at last she was deeply convinced that it was the will of God. What made it more extraordinary was the fact that she had never before had, and would, in all probability, never again have one hundred pounds at her disposal for any such purpose. But that morning she sent me the money through my friend, who produced it in the form of crisp Bank of England notes. From that day to this I have no idea whatever who she was, as she wished to conceal her name from me. Whether she is alive, or in heaven, I cannot say; but what I do know is, that this extraordinary answer to our prayers secured the rest of the money, and led to the erection of one of the finest schools in London, in which there are more than a thousand scholars to-day.

Let me give one other illustration in a different sphere. God has answered our prayers again and again by saving those

\*S.S. Lesson, March 15, 1908:—John 9: 1-12. Commit to memory vs. 10, 11. Study John ch. 9. Golden Text—I am the light of the world.—John 9:5.