

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLETHE DESCENT OF THE HOLY
SPIRIT.*

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

When the day of Pentecost was fully come, v. 1 "Come, hurry!" said the minute hand. "You will not get around in time, if you don't. See how fast I am going." And so it fretted through the hour; but when the time came for each to be in his place, that the hour might be struck in clear tones, the minute hand found that the hour hand had its own pace, and its own power, and was where it ought to be, when it was needed to do the work. There is no lagging on God's part. He sometimes seems to be slow; but He will surely do what He has promised and just at the right moment. There is never any failure of His purpose.

All together in one place (Rev. Ver.), v. 1. When Lord Roberts was an officer in India, in his earlier life, he more than once saved his men from the fear that fills the jungle on a dark night. Once in particular, when he was marching a troop from one point to another in the darkness, he instinctively felt that there was something wrong with the men. The ranks seemed to be broken and disordered, and there was too much haste in their step. "Steady! my men," cried out Roberts. "Steady! Touch elbows!" The command was obeyed, and at once the step became timed and regular, and a cheer broke from the men. Afterwards, they said that they had been on the edge of panic. They could not see each other, and the sounds each made seemed strange; but when they "touched elbows," they were compacted and welded into one body, and the cheer was a cry of relief. We have but to remember that we belong to one great army, with Jesus as its victorious Leader, and fears will vanish like clouds before the sun, giving place to a calm courage that will face any peril.

Suddenly, v. 2. On the shores of the Bay of Fundy, there are vast hay lands protected by walls of earth called dykes. These dykes are watched by patrolmen, whose duty it is to repair, or report, any weakness the sea has caused in them. One stormy November day, some years ago, a high tide and a fierce wind kept the patrolman busy at a certain part of the dyke. While he was there, an inroad was made by the hungry sea at another point, and before he could do anything, the waves were roaring across the miles of level grass land. It was spoken of as a "sudden" break; but two men who had passed that point, saw, that, from some cause or other, the dyke had become too weak to stand the strain put upon it, and when they heard of the break, they were not surprised. The coming of a sudden temptation puts us to the test, as the storm tested the dyke. It will be seen then whether we have built up a defence of sound principles and habits of right doing to keep out the flood of evil. We cannot be too careful about this building of defences against the temptations that would otherwise overwhelm us.

All filled with the Holy Ghost, v. 4. Mr. Spurgeon once said, "Give me the comfort of God's Holy Spirit, and I can well bear the taunts of men. Blow,

wind of the frozen north, I have a fire of living coal within; yea de', slay me, but I have another life, a life in the light of God's countenance and a Comforter who will abide with me forever." It is the work of the Holy Spirit to stand beside us, and make us strong to do the right. Have you called Him to your assistance? He is given to the church; but we must apply as individuals for His help in our life.

"and still those lambent lightnings stream;

Where'er the Lord is, there are they; In every heart that gives Him room They light His altar day by day.

Zeal to inflame and vice consume."

They began to speak, as the spirit gave them utterance, v. 4. In a certain Canadian city, there are many foreigners. The gospel wagon of the city missionary came one evening to the foreign quarter, and hundreds of the people flocked to hear the singing and preaching. The speaker was a good man, a man with a great love for his fellow men, but he could not speak the languages of the people before him. He resolved to speak the only language he knew with all the love he could command. He held his hearers spellbound for half an hour. They knew not his words, but they got his message, and, through an interpreter, they said to him. "You did us good. We think you are kind. The good God who made and loved us all, sent you. Will you please come again and do us good?" The language of the eye, of the voice, of the gesture, is one that the Spirit of God can use and does use. The missionaries who have been pioneers among heathen peoples, spoke at first by gestures, by deeds, by looks that expressed their love and goodwill. This speech of the heart is one that all can use; and anywhere.

TO THE DOUBTING ONES.

Ask thy soul these questions: 1. Whether there be any gain by doubting? Faith purifies the heart. 2. Whether there is anything more pleasing to God than to trust Him in and by Jesus Christ, when all comforts are out of view, and when you see nothing but what is contrary to the promise? 3. Whether you must not venture upon Christ at the last, why not now? When a man has to go over a river, though he ride once and again into the water, and comes out saying: "I fear it is too deep for me," yet, considering that there is no other way for him but to resolve to venture. "For," saith he, "the longer I stay the higher the water will rise, and there is no other way for me. I must go through at the last, why not at the first?" and so he ventures through. Thus it is with you. You say, "O, but my heart is not humble;" "O, but I am a great sinner, and how can I venture upon Christ?" Will thy heart be more humble by keeping from Jesus Christ? and wilt thou be less a sinner by keeping from Him? No, certainly; for the longer you stay from Christ, the harder it will be to venture on Him at last. Wherefore, if there be even a poor, drooping, doubting, fearing, trembling heart reading these words, knowing that I do here in the name of the Lord call out to you, and say, "O soul—man or woman—venture, venture, venture upon Christ now! for you must come to trusting Him: at last; why not now?"—Sword and Trowel.

Little things are little things, but faithfulness in little things is something great.—St. Augustine.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.

"From Every Nation" (Rev. Ver.)—Two causes produced the Dispersion, as the foreign settlements of Jews were called; the fortunes of war, and the rewards of commerce. Some remained in the East when the captivity returned. Others spread up the Nile and were among the first settlers of Alexandria, where they occupied two out of the five quarters of the city. There was a small colony in Damascus from early times, and it increased to 10,000 in the first century. They had special rights in Antioch, and scattered settlements can be traced by inscriptions throughout Greece. They carried on a brisk trade in Rome; 8,000 came out to meet a deputation from Jerusalem in the days of Augustus; and they obtained a recognized legal standing throughout the empire. An anti-Jewish agitation led Claudius to an ineffective attempt to expel them. The synagogue and the Septuagint, that is, the Greek version of the Old Testament, both rose out of the Dispersion. It was not possible for the dispersed Jews to maintain sacrificial worship abroad, so the synagogue was established for Sabbath-services. They found they could not get on with Hebrew alone in the synagogues or in their courts, hence the Greek Bible. Two things bound them to Palestine; they all paid the temple tax, and they all occasionally, at least, joined in a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, at the time of the great annual feasts.

"COME AND SEE."

Wiser counsel than this it would be impossible to conceive! If Philip had reproved Nathanael's unbelief, he might have driven him back for many a day, and given offence, if he had reasoned with him, he might have failed to convince him, or might have confirmed him in his doubts. But by inviting him to prove the matter for himself, he showed his entire confidence in the truth of his own assertion, and his willingness to have tested and proved. And the result shows the wisdom of Philip's words. Nathanael owed his early acquaintance with Christ to that frank invitation, "Come and see."

If we call ourselves true Christians, let us never be afraid to deal with people about their souls as Philip dealt with Nathanael. Let us invite them boldly to make proof of our religion. Let us tell them confidently that they cannot know its real value until they have tried it. Let us assure them that vital Christianity courts every possible inquiry. It has no secrets. It has nothing to conceal. Its faith and practice are spoken against just because they are not known. Its enemies speak evil of things with which they are not acquainted. They understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm. Philip's mode of dealing, we may be sure, is one principal way to do good. Few are ever moved by reasoning and argument. Still fewer are frightened into repentance. The man who does most good to souls is often the simple believer who says to his friends, "I have found a Saviour, come and see him."—Ryle.

Pride is as loud a beggar as want, and a great deal more saucy. When you have bought one fine thing, you must buy more, that your appearance may be all of a piece; but it is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it.—Franklin.

S. S. Lesson, January 10, 1909. Acts 2: 1-11. Commit to memory vs. 2, 4. Study Acts 2: 1-21. GOLDEN TEXT—I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth.—John 14: 16, 17.