

SUNDAY  
SCHOOL

## The Quiet Hour

YOUNG  
PEOPLE

## RETURNING FROM CAPTIVITY

By Rev. C. McKinnon, Winnipeg.

That the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, v. 1. The Jewish rabbi, Joshua and Eliezer, saw a fox running from Zion Hill. Rabbi Joshua wept, remembering the words in Lamentations (ch. 5: 18), "Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it." But Rabbi Eliezer laughed, for he said, "I see with mine eyes that not one of God's promises will fail, and He is ever more ready to show mercy than judgment." The rabbi had reason for his joy. How much more have we, with all the glorious promises of the New Testament, as well as the Old, before us. And if we should fall into doubt of any of these promises, we have God's gift of His own Son to make us sure that He will not keep back from us any good thing.

The Lord stirred up the spirits of Cyrus, v. 1. Phillips Brooks, the famous American preacher, preached once in England, in Westminster Abbey, on "The Candle of the Lord." In closing he likened Great Britain and the United States to the golden candlesticks holding aloft the glory of the Lord. This is the noblest mission any nation or individual can have, to make God's glorious character known throughout the world. In Him is the light to illumine all dark and joyless places. Whoso obeys Him will become the bearer of a brightly lighted candle that will help to dispel the surrounding gloom.

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, v. 2. Like some skilfully contrived machine, with its numberless parts carefully placed and exactly fitted, God's plans always work smoothly and slowly. In the days of Cyrus, Egypt was becoming a great power. Sooner or later, a conflict was sure to come between this nation and Persia. It suited Cyrus to have the Jews established as a friendly kingdom in Palestine between his own empire and its coming rival. And it was just at this juncture that God had determined to bring His people back to their own land. So, above all earthly kings and counsellors sits the King of heaven, watching all their movements and using them to further His own blessed purpose. Human kingdoms speedily perish, but His kingdom endures forever, and will in the end include the whole world within its boundaries.

The Lord God of heaven, v. 2. What a glorious title! And, as our knowledge grows, it becomes more and more wonderful to us. The heavens, so the astronomers tell us, stretch away above the earth, uncounted millions of miles. Now take the best man you know or can think of, the most just and pure and loving. God is more just and pure and loving than he, as the heavens are higher than the earth. Who can know Him without trusting and loving and adoring Him?

Who is there among you, his God be with him, v. 3. The healthy man loves tasks that try his strength. The yachtsman welcomes the wind that swells the sails and calls for all his quickness and nerve. The mountain climber is eager to attempt the highest peak. To the real student hard problems are a joy. The man who loves his business of profession is never so happy as when wrest-

ling with its duties. In attaining to His heavenly kingdom, God has a task for each of us that will give exercise to our highest faculties. It will test to the utmost our resolution and endurance. It is work that will make the best of all that is in us and that will do good as no other will, to others. In this work all are volunteers. We enter upon it of our own choice. And the success of it—how gloriously sure this is, since the power for the work comes from God Himself.

Let the men of his place help him, v. 4. "When I dig a man out of trouble," said one, "the hole he leaves behind him is the grave in which I bury my own trouble." There is no way to happiness so sure as being helpful. Every word or deed that helps another is like a stone built into a beautiful mansion of bliss for our own soul to dwell in. The house in which we live may be a very plain one, and its surroundings far from desirable. But we may make for ourselves a spiritual palace lovelier than any reared for an earthly sovereign. It will get strength and beauty from the kindness we have shown, the encouragement we have given to those about us. And around it will cluster the blessed memories in human life—those of days spent in loving service.

Willingly offered, v. 6. A willing soul and the willing God—it is the meeting and the communion of these two that makes true religion. God gives freely and without reserve. And we, not compelled, but sweetly constrained by His love, give ourselves and all that we have to Him and His work. It is all simple, and yet so great.

The king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, v. 7. Like those holy vessels so long kept within a pagan temple and dishonored by use in pagan rites, all our talents and energies belong to God. These are all stamped, like the coins of the realm, with His image and superscription. Have we been using them in the service of self and sin? Then have we been robbing God of His due. It is only honest in us to bring back our powers to our Maker, and ask Him to use them for His own Glory. Doing this, we shall find a place and work a temple far more glorious than the one reared in Jerusalem—the temple of the great spiritual kingdom that shall fill the whole earth, bringing all nations under its blessed sway.

## LIGHT OF LIFE

Light of life so sweetly streaming.

Down upon life's troubled sea,  
With the love of Jesus beaming,  
Shine, shine on me.Light of life that knows no fading  
From all changes thou art free,  
Holy light that knows no shading,  
Shine, shine on me.

Light of life, in days of gladness

To thy radiance I would flee,  
Be my strength in days of sadness,  
Shine, shine on me.

—BROAD.

## A BAD DOG.

A bad dog does not see the thief. We have plenty of such dogs nowadays. Ministers will not see the error which abounds; statesmen wink hard at vice, and religious people sleep while Satan plunders the Church.

A bad dog may get a good bone. Often very unworthy men gain fortunes, offices and honors. The world is not the place of rewards and punishments, and so it happens that Satan's bullock often feeds in the fattest pastures.—Spurgeon.

## OUR MEAT AND DRINK

I know that many of you are puzzled to know in what direction to start to help Christ to help the world. Let me say this to you in that connection: Once I came to a cross-roads in the old life, and did not know in what direction God wanted men to help hasten his kingdom. I started to read the Book to find out what the ideal life was, and I found that the only thing worth doing in the world was to do the will of God; whether that was done in the pulpit or in the slums; whether it was done in the college or in the class-room, or on the street, did not matter at all. "My meat and drink," Christ said, "is to do the will of him that sent me," and if you make up your mind that you are going to do the will of God above everything else, it matters little in what direction you work. There are more posts waiting for men than there are men waiting for posts. Christ needs men in every community and in every land; it matters little whether we go to foreign lands or stay at home, as long as we are sure we are where God puts us.—Henry Drummond.

## "LIKE AS A FATHER"

The life of a beautiful girl was nearing its close. The busy father, active in legal and political life, made short visits to his office to perform the most necessary duties, and hurried home again day by day to be near her in her last days. He spent every possible moment in granting her every wish, and it was a comfort to him that his daughter was finding in her religion a source of strength that robbed approaching death of terror. He was an upright man, but one from whose busy life religion had been crowded out.

One day, as he sat by the bedside, his daughter asked him to read to her. He found a magazine, and read some bright bits of poetry and fiction. It pleased her, but she wanted something else. "Father," she asked, "will you get my Bible and read from that?"

"Certainly, my dear," he answered, and was rather glad than otherwise of her request.

He was a strong man, with clear voice and with a good degree of self-control. He had mastered his own feelings in these days of patient and affectionate ministrations, that he might bring to the sick-room every element of cheer that was possible. And now he began, calmly and quietly, to read the Sermon on the Mount. He knew where to find it, and he knew that it was good, and he read with a growing appreciation of its beauty and sublimity.

But the daughter grew more tired and restless.

"Don't you like it?" he asked.  
"Oh, father," she exclaimed, "it isn't that I want, about our righteousnesses exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees! Can't you find the place where it says, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him?'"

His voice trembled a little, but he said, "I will find it" and he turned to the concordance in the back of the Bible. But when he found the place and began to read, "Like as a father," he could bear no more.

"Oh, my child," he cried, "if God cares for you as I do—" He bent over the bed and wept. "It is the verse we both need," she said, softly, after a few minutes.

And he knelt beside the bed and said, "Yes, dear, that is the verse for us both."

Religion, if only a name, is a poor stimulant to a yearning soul.

It is not far to the gate of the heavenly kingdom when we permit the Spirit of God to take our hand and lead us.

\*R.S. Lesson October, 15, 1906, Ex. 1:1-11. Commit to memory vs. 5, 6. Read ch. 2: 64-70 and Psalm 126. Golden Text—The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.—Psalm 126:3.