

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, May 18th, 1879.—The Saviour's Kingdom.—Micah iv. 1-8.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 1, 6-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob."—Micah iv. 2.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Micah i. Tuesday, Micah ii. Wednesday, Micah iii. Thursday, Micah iv. Friday, Micah v. Saturday, Micah vi. Sunday, Micah vii.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Glory. Vss. 1, 2. II. Peace. Vss. 3, 4. III. Kingdom. Vss. 5-8.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vss. 1, 2.—What time is referred to by last days? What city has been the religious centre of the world?

II. Vss. 3, 4.—Of what is the Saviour the Prince? Isa. ix. 6. What legacy did Christ leave to his disciples? John xiv. 27. When was the vision of the prophet realized in Christian history? Is its realization as yet world wide?

III. Vss. 5-8.—What does Micah say the people as a whole will do? Of what words does this verse remind us? Josh. xxiv. 15. Who besides the Gentiles are to be blessed by the gospel of Christ? How does the gospel make the Jew and Gentile one? Gal. iii. 28.

Micah was a Morasthite, an inhabitant of Moresheth identified by Jerome as a small village near Eleutheropolis, twenty-five miles south from Jerusalem. His prophetic office extended over the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah a period of fifty-nine years, b. c. 756-697. The chief scene of his ministry was Jerusalem. His book has remarkable vividness and symmetry. He offsets the animosity of the nations against God by predicting the peaceful and glorious reign of the Messiah. He anticipated the question of the Wise Men of the East seven centuries after his day, and gave prophetic answer. "Glorious peerage of the two contemporary prophets of Judah" (Isaiah and Micah). "Ere Jesus was born the angel announced the birth of the Virgin's Son, God with us, in the words of Isaiah. Isa. vii. 14. When he was born he was pointed out as the object of worship to the first converts from the heathen, on the authority of God through Micah, Mic. v. 2."—Pusey. The prophecy of Micah to be studied to-day looks to the glory, peace, and kingdom of the reign of Christ.

It appears from i. 1-6, that Micah makes this prophecy shortly before the overthrow of the northern kingdom (Israel) by the Assyrians. Describe briefly, which you can do after reading 2 Kings xvii, the causes and manner of that overthrow. The people of the southern kingdom (Judah) were almost equally wicked (2 Kings xvi. 14; Micah iii. 14; 9-11); but they relied on the fact that they still kept up the outward worship of Jehovah, and so he would protect them (iii. 11, latter part). The prophet solemnly predicts that, because of their wickedness, Jerusalem and the Temple shall be utterly destroyed. (iii. 12.

But, while predicting the utter destruction of the city and Temple, Micah immediately adds (in our lesson) that, in the far future, Jerusalem and the Temple shall be rebuilt in strength and glory; shall be visited by many nations, to worship Jehovah; shall send forth the law, and establish justice, peace and prosperity far and wide. This was but very partially realized in Jerusalem after the Captivity, and we have to seek the complete fulfillment of these predictions in the spiritual kingdom of Christ.

EXPOSITION.—I. The Establishment of the Kingdom. Verses 1, 2.

Verse 1.—But in the last days.—Compare iii. 8-12, and especially vs. 12; and note the sudden transition from predicted judgment to predicted glory. "The last days" are the days of the Messiah, following the days, or "dispensation" in which the prophets lived. The Mountain of the house of the Lord [Jehovah], etc. "The house of Jehovah" was the temple which stood on Mount Moriah, which was thus the mountain of that house. That house and mountain thus represented the seat of God's redeeming reign on earth. The other mountain when compared with this in this view of

it, would represent all other powers and dominions. Hence to "establish this mountain on, or above all these others is to make the reign of God both to be, and to be seen to be, above all other reigns. As our Saviour expressly declared himself to be the true temple, that which the material temple typified and prophesied, Christ's enthronement in glory and power is the "establishment" and "exaltation" here foretold. So did he say, before his ascension, "all power is given unto me in heaven and earth." And all people shall flow unto it. Instead of "people," we should read "peoples." The idea is that of streams of different nationalities flowing from different quarters of the earth toward the one grand centre—to the one exalted temple—IMMANUEL. In the spread of the gospel and its acceptance thus far we find the beginning of the fulfilment.

Verse 2.—The last thought vs. 1 is here repeated and expanded. Many nations. Not only "peoples" or "nations" but many of them, marking the wide sway of Messiah. Shall come and say. These words picture the interest first awakened by the gospel, and moving men to seek and serve the Lord. Come and let us go up, etc. The journey was an ascent, not only to a mountain top, but to the mountain above the mountains. "Seek those things that are above where Christ sitteth." The streams of peoples "flow" upward, celestial attraction over-matching terrestrial. Covenant names of God are used ("Jehovah" "God of Jacob,") because his prophecy is specifically of covenant mercies. And he will teach us, etc. This is to explain the vast movement toward the Lord's house. Men seek Christ in order to be and to live like Christ. He reveals himself to us to make us like himself. His life is our light (John i. 4,) and this our light, if heeded, becomes our life, which is thus the same with his life. By means of his teaching, "his ways" become our "paths." The gospel is precious to the believer, not simply for its promises, but for its commands, and he who does not love the commandments, has no part in the promises. For the law shall go forth, etc. The "teaching" of the previous statement is here presented as law and word, or revelations. Zion and Jerusalem are different names of the city where is the house of God, or for the place of Christ's enthronement. We go to this city of promise when we go to our Lord:

II. The fruits of the Kingdom. Verses 3-5.

Verse 3.—And he shall judge, etc.—"Many people" is here many peoples, or nations. The judging is, according to Oriental conception, the act of the sovereign. The best authorities give "arbitrate between," etc., instead of "rebuke," etc. The previous verses presented the enthronement of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; these words present him exercising his consequent authority. As bringing out the greatness of his sway, note the words "peoples," "nations," "many," "strong," "afar-off." These, with the verbs of sovereignty, give extreme emphasis to the thought. After the fact of this sway is thus given the effects of it are mentioned. They shall beat their swords, etc. The ploughshare was with the Hebrews a much more simple affair than with us, and the sword could be easily transformed into one, while the spear, or lance, needed but little change to make the crooked knife for pruning. See the reverse process indicated in Joel iii. 10, as following a sudden call to leave the pursuits of peace for war. The language is a vivid and impressive description of a change from war, to settled and permanent peace. Nation shall not lift up, etc. They shall have no use for weapons of war, because there shall be no wars demanding weapons. They shall be so secure as not even to learn war, a universal and perpetual peace which the principles of the gospel, when generally received, will effect.

Verse 4.—But they shall sit, etc.—The Hebrews were an agricultural people, and a more charming picture of peace, with safety and plenty, can scarcely be imagined. See its use in 1 King iv. 25; Zech. iii. 10. The independence of these freeholders, "every man under his own;" in what fine contrast with the state of society where corporations and monopolies dominate! For the mouth of the Lord [Jehovah] hath spoken it. Too incredible for belief without this reminder,

Only Jehovah, through his gospel of saying grace, can tame man's passions. "Jehovah of hosts," his name of conquering might.

Verse 5.—For all people.—Or, rather, for all the peoples—all the different nations. Will walk in the name [or power], etc. There are two antagonistic courses of life, according as men serve Jehovah, or other gods. This makes necessary the interposition of Jehovah to bring about among all people such a state as results among his people from his service. But as his word is pledged (vs. 4), his power shall execute.

III. The Relation to Israel. Vss. 6-8.

Verses 6, 7.—In that day, Messiah's time Her that halloeth. This describes the condition of Israel consequent on the sins and resulting judgments described in iii. 8-12. If there is here in mind the gathering which succeeded the captivity of seventy years in Babylon, it can only be as a type of that greater gathering under Messiah, as all that precedes assures us. Micah, like Isaiah, is carried clear over all intervening events to the reign of Christ. There is evidently in mind here the same event predicted in Rom. xi, Paul drawing from Micah.

Verse 8.—Jerusalem, as the capital of the kingdom of Israel, is mentioned here in that character, as partaking of Israel's glory, and being the centre of dominion. That there is here, as in vs. 1, 2, a reference to the seat of Christ's power as he now reigns, we need not doubt. Tower of the flock. Jesus is Shepherd—Christians his sheep, or flock, "The stronghold" was at the southern extremity of Moriah—the temple mountain. The first dominion, means first in rank, hence supreme.

For the fulfillment of this prophecy, we do well to labor and pray.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, May 25th, 1879.—"The Holy Spirit promised."—Joel ii. 28-32. b. c. 800.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."—Acts i. 8.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Will it not be a good time when every one obeys the Saviour's call? What sort of a world will we then have? The "word of the Lord" is the gospel, the story of Jesus, that which tells us how to be saved.

Christ's kingdom was at first like a little heaven, but it soon spread. Paul took the news into Europe. Speak of missionaries and their work.

A glorious time is coming when all shall know the Lord. We must do all we can to help its coming. The lesson tells us what our part is, and what the Saviour's part. Explain each of them as follows:

HIS PART.—He will teach us of his ways. He shall judge. He shall bring peace. He shall gather the weak.

OUR PART.—Come, let us go up. We will walk in his paths. Not to be afraid. Walk in the name of the Lord.

Kings enlarge their kingdoms by war, fighting, taking from others. But Jesus does not force people, he is the Prince of Peace; he draws by love.—So Jesus wishes us to say to our friends, "Come, let us go up," etc. Pray earnestly "Thy kingdom come."

Answer to Scripture Enigma

No. 19. Day-spring.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 20.

My first speaks crime, and blood, and death, and desolations. My next of railway tours and tables-d'hotel and relations. My whole's the christian life, although I be not christian, For where love dwells and reigns, I'm wholly out of question.

A sailor named Wylds was recently sentenced to two months' imprisonment at Deal for refusing to go to sea. He said he was perfectly satisfied with his engagement to the ship, but he had dreamed that his vessel would be lost, and he would not go to sea in her for any money. He had once before dreamed that a vessel in which he was sailing would be lost, and it was lost.

Select Serial.

Ponape; or, Light on a Dark Shore.

BY MRS. HELEN S. THOMPSON.

CHAPTER XVII.—Working and Waiting.

"Many weeks have passed since writing in my journal, but we have been daily expecting the arrival of the 'Star of Peace,' with its freight of mail provisions trade, and perhaps friends. Oh the dreary, sickening weight of hope deferred! We still wait and watch and long, holding our breath with expectancy, but have just learned by a chance vessel that the 'Star' has been sold and the 'Pfeil' has gone north for whaling purposes. This makes it uncertain how or when we shall hear from the world again, whether they will charter some vessel from the Sandwich Islands to come down to us, or whether we must wait until the children of America build us another 'Star.'

"We have 'need of patience,' but rejoice that all is ordered by infinite Wisdom. We are, however, getting reduced in provisions in consequence of this long delay. The beef-barrel is empty; sugar, rice, coffee, and meal are gone. We yet have flour, but very poor. We shall always be able to procure yams, which are a tolerable substitute for potatoes, and at some seasons of the year we could live comfortably on the products of the island; but now the time for bread-fruit, pigeons, and pine-apples is past, and pigs and chicken are very scarce.

"It is not well for us to be without meat or a good variety of food, for we need all possible helps for the preservation of health and strength. Dear Mrs. Hart looks frailer and weaker than ever, and her little girl droops sadly. We fear she is not well, as she refuses almost all the food we can provide. There are cows on some of the islands, but none here. Milk would be such a blessing and comfort to us. It would set baby Kate on her feet, I am sure. We use the expressed milk of the cocoonut for cooking, made by bruising the nut, but it is not good for drink. Our shoes, also, are giving out, and Dwight's hat is gone almost. We are also nearly out of 'trade'—calico, knives, crockery, and flannel, which we exchange with the natives for their food, etc.

"But I value this new experience because of the lesson it teaches in the proofs of our Father's loving care. Sometimes a string of fish is brought in, or a basket of clams, or some chief sends us at a time of need an extra turtle, which makes a delicious soup; or when really out of everything, the Father sends a chicken into the trap, or one is brought to the door for sale. It is very sweet to be so dependent on our Master, and to be so conscious of his love and care. We cannot fear that he will permit us to want any good thing.

"Tuesday, 6th.—We are all very much interested just now in the new church-building, which we hope soon to see completed. It is to serve for both church and school-house. Since the heathen party burned the nice chapel which Mr. Hart had built with so much labor and care, all meetings have been held in the large hall of our house. But now he has gathered up courage to try again, although he does not feel at all sure that this will not meet with a similar fate. It has been decided best for us—Dwight and myself—to have a home on the opposite side of the island, in order to advance the work more rapidly, and Dwight has already begun to get out the timbers for our house. When it is remembered that a missionary here must be his own carpenter, smith, and mason, with only the aid of ignorant natives, with but few tools and no horses, a slight idea of the difficulties of house-building on Ponape can be inferred. Dwight and Mr. Hart go to the swamps themselves to hew and get out the heavy timber—this, too, without sustaining food.

"In regard to the school, there have always been difficulties and discouragements peculiar to this island, the central point of the mission being among the most hostile tribes. Then the natives are so irregular in attendance, and we who are teachers are so needed in a dozen other places. I wonder what a teacher in one of the graded schools at home would think of the promiscuous

group who sit daily at my feet? We have all ages, from three months to sixty years, and the babies are the most trying part. But they cannot be banished without depriving the mothers of their highly-prized privileges.

"Then we have all grades of advancement, from those who have not yet learned their letters to those who have mastered the limited literature of Ponape, and for whom we must contrive ways of study in absence of books; and all grades of capacity, from hopeless dullness to those who astonish us with their quickness, and prove that the native mind is not inferior to ours, cultivation being equal. To keep this mixed company all profitably employed and interested enough to hope to maintain a hold on them is often a very perplexing task, and one that must be constantly resolved, as there are never two days in succession without comers and goers.

"Wednesday, 7th.—Let me sketch for my home friends the experiences of one of my busy days, and that will give an idea of all. Yesterday will do for a specimen day. Up at the first break of dawn, for that is the only time that may be surely mine to seek the strength and grace so needed for the duties of the day. With this heavenly armor I venture forth. Breakfast in charge, and also two hours of cooking for the day. Then a sewing-woman that must have my attention early and often. Many days we have this care, as the native women are very anxious for work, it being almost their only way to get their own dresses; besides, our clothes wear out so rapidly here that it makes much sewing necessary. Now comes the bell for prayers. The room is half full of natives, and some time is required in order to give them the spiritual food they need. Next comes breakfast.

"Yesterday I had planned to do much writing, as a vessel in the distance gave us hope of an opportunity to at least send off some letters. But as soon as seated with my portfolio, I was interrupted by the entrance of some natives bearing a sick man who must be ministered to. Many are sick of dysentery, and if left to themselves are sure to die. They are so ignorant and helpless in regard to disease that their first cry when attacked with sickness is for the missionary. This adds to our cares, but also gives us a hold upon them. Last week our house was full of the sick, and one poor man was laid under the porch to die.

"When I had finished doing for the sick man, then came my native teacher an hour for study of the language, which we feel must never be postponed. This over in rushes our Charlie with his books, and I must attend to his lessons. Missionaries must not neglect their own children. I take my basket of sewing, as this is almost my only time for mending. Before Charlie has finished, Mrs. Hart calls me to sing with some stranger natives who have given her a morning call, and are very anxious to learn new tunes. Then some want a lesson in reading. They must be attended to, because they have come from a distance. What would my home friends have said could they have taken a sudden view of those gathered about me? Can I describe them? A yard square of cloth, stained a dirty yellow color, takes the place of the flowing skirt at home; a large handkerchief, with a slit in the middle for the head to pass through, forms the covering for the upper part of the body.

"This dress, compared to pure native style, is quite decent, I assure you, when clean, but the amount of filth which these few rags can be made to absorb is quite astonishing. Their use of the cocoa-nut oil is one of their most filthy habits, for they put such quantities on their heads and persons that the clothing is soon saturated. One of my pupils today had been newly anointed, and the oil was dripping from her body in a style far from pleasing to the beholder. One other had her little naked baby in charge.

"Another disagreeable habit is the use of a root with which they stain the flesh a vivid yellow, and as a consequence everything touched bears their mark. Having on a clean light dress, I was thoroughly marked with the bright yellow stain, as they are very affectionate and like to be near their teacher. Of course I would not push them away. "But to return: By the time my

teaching served, circle looking nest ha you.' again, a At three weekly ber of n delight Hart's stand. moment the mar for the So Mrs. to our c lovely a whether have be pleasant am just when fir and swin bottom. in earne she is ve my swim water fo the steep "After hour.' wh great h hardly h last nigh your Ali seen Ch with lon him gen game of hour is in ren, and that we a and rest Ah, how the great our world mother, s wait and "After p natives, t afterward baste som waste som. ten o'clock "Thur making n and bindi printed—to be sent portunity. parations account of in trying i fill her pla her absen perfect co