

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, May 11th.—The Saviour's call.—Isaiah lv. 1-11 B. c. 712.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 1, 6-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."—John vii. 37.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Isaiah lv. Tuesday, Isaiah lix. Wednesday, Isaiah lx. Thursday, Isaiah lxi. Friday, Isaiah lxiii. Saturday, Vs. 1; John iv. 1-14. Sunday, Vs. 7; 1 Timothy i. 12-17.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The invitation. Vss. 1-3. II. A Saviour furnished. Vss. 4, 5. III. Pardon for the worst. Vss. 6, 7. IV. God's infinite plan. Vss. 8, 9. V. His infallible promise. Vss. 10, 11.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vss. 1-3.—What does thirst, in spiritual matters, symbolize? To what are the thirsty invited? How are the blessings of the Gospel free? How are they adapted to all? How are they everlasting?

II. Vss. 4, 5.—In what sense was Christ a witness? In what sense "a leader and commander"?

III. Vss. 6, 7.—Is the grace of God limited to any degree of guilt? Who called himself the chief of sinners? 1 Tim. i. 15.

IV. Vss. 8, 9.—What is God's mercy to sinners unlike? What does the plan illustrate? Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 21-25.

V. Vss. 10, 11.—What guarantee of success has God given to those who preach or teach his Gospel?

EXPOSITION.—The title given to the lesson is, "The Saviour's Call." More exactly, it is, *The Father's Call*. It divides itself into two sections. The call is presented under two aspects, with reference to men as conscious—first, of need; second, of guilt.

I. TO THE CONSCIOUSLY NEEDY.—Vss. 1-5. 1. Concerning the salvation needed.—Vss. 1-3. 2. Concerning the Saviour.—Vss. 4, 5.

II. TO THE CONSCIOUSLY GUILTY.—Vss. 6-11. 1. Concerning the removal of the guilt.—Vss. 6, 7. 2. Concerning God's purpose in saving the guilty.—Vss. 8-11.

The Scripture of the last lesson set before us Christ sacrificing himself for the sins of the world, and closed with the assurance that he should see such fruit of that sacrifice as to be satisfied. At once, in chapter liv, there is a magnificent burst of praise in view of that gathering and abounding fruit, with such vast and grand promises as make the very language to stagger and fall under their glorious weight.

I. To the Consciously Needy. Verses 1-5.

Verses 1-5.—Ho, every one that thirsteth.—The exclamation, "Ho!" is to startle into an attention befitting the call. The persons called are only the thirsty, yet all the thirsty. Thirst is a conscious need. In thirst, one not only needs drink, but he feels the need. The thirst here meant is man's conscious need of God's love and fellowship. Ps. xlii. 1. Come ye to the waters. To man in life's desert, this call to partake of God's love, brought to us through Christ's sacrifice, is eternal life. See John iv. 10, 13, 14; vii. 37. But in order to drink, one must "come"—each for himself. This coming is accepting, trusting, believing Christ. And he that hath no money, etc. Here is the same call, but emphasized and enlarged so as to include, with the water, food and wine—"refreshment, nourishment, and enjoyment." See this additional emblemism also in John ii. 7-9; vi. 35, and context.

Verses 2.—Wherefore do ye spend, etc.—God's expostulation with men who try to satisfy the soul's thirst and hunger for God with merely creature good, or with the idol vanities of their own imaginations. Man's nature, as constituted for God's love, can be filled and satisfied with nothing else. With that love, it can be "satisfied," in a measure, here in time; fully in eternity.

Verses 3.—Incline your ear, etc.—Referring to the "hearken diligently" of vs. 2, and recognizing the disposition not to hearken. The address is not to be limited to the Jews, though having a first reference to them. To "come unto God," is to turn to him in faith and love. To "hear," is here to heed, an obedient hearing. And your soul shall live. The promise which goes with the call and command. The "soul" has in Christ "eternal life." 1 John i. 2. Comp. John iv. 13, 14. And I will make

an everlasting covenant, etc. This covenant is explained here as being the "sure mercies of David; that is, the mercies or blessings promised to David, and made sure of fulfilment by that promise. That promise was of a perpetual kingdom perpetually ruled by David's descendants and successors (1 Chron. xvii. 11, 12; Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4), which promise had its true fulfilment in Christ, the true King of the true Israel. By coming to God, in Christ, one becomes a member of that Israel; is born into it, spiritually, when "born again." Rom. ii. 28, 29; iv. 16, 17. The covenant of God with his people, sealed with Christ's blood, becomes a covenant with each man, of whatever nation, when he becomes a Christian.

Verses 4.—A witness.—See John xviii. 37. Christ bears the same name in Rev. i. 5; iii. 14. He is the Word; the Light; the Truth; the Master, that is, Teacher; the Prophet, revealing salvation, and also bringing it—nay, being it. A leader and commander. See Acts iii. 15; Heb. ii. 10. Christ is Head of his Church, giving to it its law, commanding and demanding obedience, which he makes a test of discipleship. He is not only Prophet, but King. The people. His own redeemed people—the true Israel.

Verses 5.—Behold, thou shalt call, etc.—This verse (1), states a fact; (2), gives a reason for the fact. It predicts that Christ shall make up his people, not from the Jews only, but from all mankind, Jews and Gentiles.

II. To the Consciously Guilty. Verses 6-11.

Verses 6.—Seek ye the Lord [Jehovah], There is added as a motive, to seek while there is now opportunity; it will speedily be gone.

Verses 7.—Let the wicked, etc.—The word translated "wicked" refers rather to an open transgressor; the word rendered "unrighteous," to a man of corrupt character. That the call to such persons should be to "seek," rather than simply to "come," is at least in part because the sense of sin may make one timid, as the power of sin holds one back, while the sense of "thirst" impels one forward to the fountain. Repentance and reformation are here insisted upon—God saving, not in, but from sin. He will have mercy. Two names of Deity are given; the first Jehovah, the covenant name; the second, "our God," which also implies covenant relation. Thus each name carries a pledge of the promise made, which is first of mercy, or the gracious removal of a curse; and second, of abundant pardon, which explains both the nature and greatness of that act of mercy.

Verses 8.—For my thoughts, etc.—This comes in to explain why the previous promise should be complied with. God's thoughts and ways are not as the thoughts and ways of the wicked. Vs. 7. (1.) As holy, they are the exact contrary; so that not to repent is to be against God, and to have God against us, which is ruin. (2.) As divine, they comprehend purposes and deeds of saving power, that go far beyond our understanding, and call us to trust God's word, where it promises seeming impossibilities. Compare Matt. xix. 26. The convicted man says: "I am lost." God says to him: "I will save."

Verses 9.—For as the heavens, etc.—See this impressively illustrated in Ps. ciii. 11.

Verses 10, 11.—For as the rain, etc.—A comparison equally beautiful and instructive. Rain and Gospel, both from heaven; both for earth; both to make life and beauty; both God's gifts; both destined of God to accomplish their work; both working for all the earth; both in the end returning to heaven.

(1.) The Feast to which we are invited.—In every human soul there is a deep-seated consciousness of need, set forth under the figures of hunger and thirst. Man may not know just what he needs, but he keenly feels that he needs something.

God never meant that man's great soul should be filled with earthly things. Other creatures here below are satisfied here, because they belong here. Man does not. He was made in God's image, and his destiny reaches beyond the stars. But God has made provision for him in the gospel of his grace, and very rich and full it is. It is not a funeral, but a festival; not a fast, but a feast, to which we are invited.

(2.) The Door through which we are admitted to the Feast. The sure mercy promised to David was a Son to sit upon his throne for ever; even Christ the Lord.

(3.) The Effort by which we are admitted to the Feast.—God does not ignore our free agency and responsibility, and we must not.

(4.) The large Encouragement to those who wish to enter.—The Lord, foreseeing how many real penitents would be likely to despair on account of conscious guiltiness, declares not only that he will pardon all sincere and earnest comers, but he will "abundantly pardon."—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

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

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.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

This lesson is like a chime of bells, ringing out sweet music, and calling us to something which is good for us. Talk to-day of three of these. 1. The first is a bell of invitation. The words it rings out are, "Come and drink; come and eat." We must eagerly wish for the Saviour, be hungry and thirsty for him to feed our souls, and make us stronger to do right. The Saviour pities such, even more than he pitied the hungry crowd; and waits to give us bread and water of life. Tell the story of the woman at the well, and apply.

2. The next is a bell of warning. Speak now of fire-bells, locomotive-bells, that warn of danger, and say "Take care;" "Keep away."

The next rings out joyfully, for it is a Bell of Promise, and say, "I will give." Jesus don't sell the bread and water of life, he gives it without money and without price. Suppose he wanted money, what would the poor and the children do? Explain the other gifts named—A leader. How much children need some one to lead them into the right way; we need never be afraid if we follow where Jesus leads.

Answer to Scripture Enigma No. 18.

- "The Messenger of the Covenant."—Mal. iii. 1. 1. T irshatha.....Neh. viii. 9. 2. H ananiah.....Jer. xviii. 15-17. 3. E unuchs.....2 Kings ix. 32. 4. M edes.....Dan. vi. 12. 5. E thiopian woman.....Num. xii. 1. 6. S heshbazar.....Ezra v. 14-17. 7. S taff.....Judges vi. 21. 8. E nvy.....Prov. xxvii. 4. 9. N oadiah.....Neh. vi. 14. 10. G ibeah.....2 Sam. xxi. 1-6. 11. E liakim.....2 Kings xviii. 18. 12. R ing.....Esther viii. 8. 13. O bservation.....Luke xvii. 20. 14. F oxes.....Cant. ii. 15. 15. T rumpet.....Judges vii. 19. 16. H ospitality.....1 Peter iv. 9. 17. E at.....1 Cor. xv. 32. 18. C hest.....2 Kings xii. 9. 19. O beisane.....Gen. xxxvii. 7. 20. V oice.....Isa. xxx. 21. 21. E gyptian.....1 Sam. xxx. 11-15. 22. N oon.....1 Kings xvii. 26. 23. A lms.....Matt. vi. 1-3. 24. N ets.....Mark i. 18. 25. T ool.....1 Kings vi. 7.

Scripture Enigma No. 19.

In joyous list and busy life my first gives welcome birth. My next with budding verdure decks the everpounteous earth. My whole night's sable curtain lifts with swift but gentle hand. And bids celestial radiance leap o'er each benighted land.

The rapidly with which the great West is filling up with immigrants is wonderful. Long trains of cars are crowded to overflowing, and canvas-covered wagons dot the plains as far as the eye can reach! Work for Christ to do abounds out there—rearing work.

The planting of a Church of Christ in the Capital City of Missouri, is being successfully done. That important center had been neglected too long, to make the work easy matter now; but the brethren are hopeful, and the Lord is blessing their efforts.

Select Serial.

Ponape; or, Light on a Dark Shore.

BY MRS. HELEN S. THOMPSON.

CHAPTER XVI.—A Tour around the Island.

"Tuesday Morning.—We are up betimes to avail ourselves of the morning's tide, but it proves a low one, and we find our canoes grating harshly on the rocks. The natives wade, dragging us along till we are off the flat and in deep water again.

"Dwight had contrived for me a very comfortable little house on the canoe by propping up the kotouk, which makes a curved roof, and by dropping the curtain I find myself sheltered from the tropical sun and frequent showers. Here I lie and write, read, think, and dream a great deal, when I want to steal away from everybody for a little while. I am thinking of the new lessons I have learned during the time that has elapsed since leaving America. Is it I? This staid and matronly woman whom Dwight calls 'wife,' and his ten-year-old 'mother'?"

"I began my new life feeling that I had some strength, wisdom, grace, and my first lesson was to learn that I had none. I believed that I could endure sickness and trial bravely, but at the first touch of real pain and trouble, where was my boasted strength? I fancied in my blind conceit that I could steer my little boat of life safe through the roughest seas; but ah, how often have I found myself at the mercy of the waves with only strength to cry, 'Lord, save, or I perish!' I think that I had especial confidence in my patience, but found that I had absolutely none, that even a child's hand had power to disturb my boasted peace and equilibrium. Thus I have been drawn out of self—for I can but loathe it—and forced to cast myself into the arms of our gracious Lord as my only righteousness.

"Dear mother and sisters, I am at the 'confessional' now, so let me tell you how I have learned to love and sympathize, not only with my own dear circle of loved ones, but with all who are in any trouble, sorrow, and pain. How often, when I have made some new discovery of the weight of the burdens of life, have I thought of you, my mother, and you, my suffering Fleda, and longed to ask of you forgiveness that I could have indulged in a secret condemnation, believing that I could have endured all more patiently!

"But we are nearing Metalaine, where the greatest work of the Spirit is manifested. The good chief has put away his many wives, and is sitting at the feet of Jesus. Waiting at the foot of the hill, we send a messenger, but the Uajai is lame, and has to be carried; so he begs that we will climb the hill and stay long enough to rest, eat, and advise in regard to ways and means for a new church-building. A new one, just built with great labor and pains has been blown down by a hurricane. But the people are thoroughly in earnest about the work of the Lord, and are not daunted. We rode up the long hill in the chief's little carriage—that is, on the shoulders of kindly natives. They served us with comfortable food at table, and we had a plate apiece, which luxury we duly appreciated, after many days' eating with our fingers off the floor, or in every imaginable way. We found the chief's wife ordering her household as nearly as possible after those of the missionaries; everything was neat, orderly, and comfortable, and a most refreshing sight it was to the laborious missionary to see her in neat dress and smooth hair sitting in a low rocker darning her husband's socks. We were indeed delighted.

"How eager the people were to learn and receive books! They pressed about me so that I could hardly get a chance to eat from dawn till dark; on the day following and at night I was too tired to sleep. It reminded me of the days when the people thronged about our

Lord and his disciples till they were fain to hide away for rest. But we do not mind the weariness, we are so glad and thankful. Oh for the tongue of angels to praise our God for the good work begun! For, surely, the long night of sin and woe on Ponapé is almost past; the day breaketh, and soon the Sun of righteousness shall rise.

"Wednesday Evening.—I have not described the canoes that have carried us so safely. They are made from a single tree, hollowed out, and are from twenty to thirty feet long, and so constructed as to be almost impossible to upset. But here—I wish you could look at the magnificent garden spread out below us, the many-tinted corals, burnished with the setting sun mirrored in the placid sea, which looks like a sea of gold at this hour, and at our right the mountains veiling themselves amid bright clouds or hiding in rain and mist. Oh for the pen of a ready writer or the painter's brush!

"And now we are climbing up, up, up, to the very peak of a tower-shaped mountain. The Uajai lives here in only one room on the very point where there is but room for one house. Did not the wind blow up there in the clouds! We felt like holding on to each other to keep from being blown off into the sea. But we were received most kindly. We found His Royal Highness sweeping out the house in honor of our coming, and the ladies of royalty were busy in preparing the 'iron pot,' which is the general name here for any kind of a stew. This chief has made large strides toward civilization, indicated by a table, chairs, calico curtains and spread, tablecloth, a set of plates, iron spoons, tumblers, mugs, and a pitcher. The Uajai sat down with us at table, and reverently asked to be taught how to 'ask a blessing.' Dwight married two couples here, the brides in neat calico dresses and the grooms wearing white shirts. When it is remembered that all articles of civilized life are procured only from the mission-vessel or chance whalers, it is most gratifying to see these attempts at a higher life.

"The Ponapéans are naturally a musical people, and are delighted with the melodies we teach them, set to translated hymns. At noon of the next day we went to the 'feast-house'—a large rude building formerly used for their idolatrous feasts—to hold a general meeting; but the chief's wives may not attend, as they would thus lose caste by mingling with the common people. Thus you see that the islands of the sea are not free from those distinctions which prevail in so-called Christian lands. But the hour spent in prayer at evening with these 'chief'-women was to me the most precious I have ever known on the island of Ponapé. We cannot doubt that God's Spirit is with us, and the softened, subdued expression on some of their faces is most touching. How can I be thankful enough for the privilege of laboring for them!

"Again on the water. We have stopped our canoes, first to visit a poor sick woman, and then to hold a meeting, according to appointment, on the water's edge. Our next station is 'Jekoiti,' and we are almost there. How much I would give if the home friends could view some of the charming scenery which we behold here in the heart of the Pacific! Ponapé is a pile of mountains, and the richness of these tropical growths can be nowhere surpassed. We are passing the 'Gibraltar of Micronesia,' immense perpendicular rocks covered with moss and crowned with vines. On the other side, as we sail around, it is terribly grand in its bareness, and we hold our breath with awe as we pass under.

"I have just enjoyed a very original ride. The tide is getting low, so that canoes cannot land. Mrs. Hart is so light that her husband had no difficulty in carrying her across to the rocks in his arms. But what to do with your Alice? A dozen brawny natives soon solved the problem by taking the canoe on their shoulders, and thus I rode to shore in state.

"We are to spend the night in a wee bit of a house, twelve by sixteen, with a native Christian and family. The house has a lofty foundation of rocks to be above water at high tides; we therefore climbed in by a ladder. The cooking is done out of doors on heated stones, but in the centre of the house is