

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

## INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

## LESSON XL.

Oct. 5. } OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST { Heb. iv. 14-16, v. 1-6.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."—Heb. vii. 25.

## HOME STUDIES.

- M. Ex. xxviii. 1-12. . . . . Aaron's priesthood.  
T. Ps. cx. 1-7. . . . . A priest forever.  
W. Heb. iii. 1-19. . . . . The High Priest of our profession.  
Th. Heb. iv. 1-16. . . . . The throne of grace.  
F. Heb. v. 1-14. . . . . Called of God.  
S. Heb. vii. 1-28. . . . . After the order of Melchisedec.  
S. Heb. viii. 1-13. . . . . A better covenant.

## HELPS TO STUDY.

The epistle which contains the present lesson was written to Israelites, in Palestine or elsewhere, who had embraced Christianity; and thus it is that we find it always takes for granted that its readers are well acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, with the rites of the temple service, and with the office of the Levitical priesthood. As indicated in the title in our English translation, its authorship has been generally attributed to the Apostle Paul, and although many eminent scholars, such as Erasmus, Calvin, Luther and Alford, questioned its Pauline authorship, the weight of modern scholarship seems to be in favour of the view that it was dictated by Paul and written from memory by Luke. The design of the epistle, the commentators say, is to shew the superiority of the Gospel to the Jewish covenant. It shews this, but it shews more than this. It teaches that the ceremonial dispensation—good and valuable in its own time and place—derived the whole of its value from the fact that it typified the Gospel dispensation; and that now, in the presence of the typified reality, the typical shadow was utterly useless and had no place. The great aim of our lesson seems to be to induce the Hebrews and others to turn away from the Aaronic priesthood and from all other human mediation and to accept of Christ as their great High Priest and the only Mediator between God and man. The following topical division may be adopted: (1) *Christ a Human Mediator*, (2) *Christ a Sinless High Priest*, (3) *Christ a Divine Mediator*.

I. CHRIST A HUMAN MEDIATOR.—chap. iv. vers. 14-16. The great cause of the alienation of man from God is sin. On this account, if on no other, it was necessary that the Saviour should be human. The race that sinned must make full satisfaction to divine justice either in the persons of the individuals belonging to it or in the person of a duly qualified representative. Such a representative believers have in Christ. Unbelievers cannot claim Him as their representative, just because they will not. Christ, a man, representing, or standing in the place of, all the men, women and children who accept Him as their Saviour, suffered the punishment of sin for them, and His divine nature gave the sacrifice infinite value. Thus in Christ the principal and otherwise insurmountable obstacle in the way of man's approach to God is removed. But, be it real or imaginary, there is, at least in man's estimation, another obstacle. Man—so far correctly—regards God as the infinitely exalted and unapproachable Being whose thoughts are not as our thoughts nor His ways as our ways; between whom and himself there exists an infinite difference not only morally but intellectually and spiritually; who does not need, as we do, to remember the past, to reason about the present, or to forecast the future; whose knowledge of one thing does not result from His knowledge of other things, but is always direct; who has no personal experience of what it is to be ignorant, or weak, or changeable, or tempted; and, forgetting that God is still greater than all this—so great that while He rules the universe He also takes cognizance of the fall of a sparrow to the ground, numbers the hairs of our heads (Matt. x. 29, 30), and is acquainted with all our ways (Psalm cxxxix. 3)—man thinks that God cannot sympathize with him or compassionate him in his difficulties. Even this obstacle is removed in Christ, for we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He is human. He has "a true body and a reasonable soul." He has personally experienced the difficulties, the infirmities, the trials, the sorrows, the temptations of human life, yet without sin. Perfectly holy in His own person, He lived in a world oppressed with the curse of sin and was subject to all its miseries in so far as these are not the consequence of personal transgression; He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah liii. 3). He is human still. In His person humanity is exalted to the throne of God. A man—a living, loving, thinking, reasoning, feeling man—is at God's right hand, and we are encouraged to speak to Him as we would to an elder brother—to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and grace to help in time of need.

II. CHRIST A SINLESS HIGH PRIEST.—chap. v., vers. 1-3. Under the ceremonial law it was necessary for the priest, as for the people so also for himself to offer for sins. The priest himself was sinful. The sins that were removed by the animal sacrifices which he offered were breaches, not of the moral, but of the ceremonial law. And if real guilt was removed from priest or people—as it undoubtedly was if they were true worshippers—that guilt was removed solely by the great sacrifice to be afterwards offered up by Christ, of which sacrifice the animal sacrifices of the old dispensation were but types. Even the priest was typical, and to render him a fit type his own ceremonial defilement had to be taken away by sacrifice before he should attempt to offer on behalf of the people. The removal of real sin required a sinless sacrifice and a sinless priest; in Christ we have both of these requisites; He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26).

III. CHRIST A DIVINE MEDIATOR.—chap. v., vers. 4-6. A mediator is one who comes in between two parties who have been at variance, not to separate them, but to bring them together—to reconcile them. It is always an advantage that the mediator should be in some way connected with both parties; the more closely he can identify himself with both of them the more likely it is that his mediation will be successful. Christ, as we have seen, is man, and He can therefore speak to God on man's behalf; He is also God and can therefore speak to man on God's behalf. In the first part of the lesson we found that He had a human heart to feel for us; now we find that He has Divine power to relieve us: Thou art my Son. This is quoted from Psalm ii. 7. Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. This quotation is from Psalm cx. 4. There is now no earthly mediating or sacrificing priesthood authorized by the Word of God. If there is any shadow of a claim at all to exercise the functions of such an office it ought to be founded not on apostolic succession but on Aaronic succession. Christ did not succeed to the Aaronic high-priesthood, neither did His apostles. The office is vacant, and could only be filled, with any shew of right at all, by a person descended from Aaron. All his underlings also would require to belong to the tribe of Levi. There are in the present day those who call themselves ministers of the Christian religion and who also call themselves priests, and pretend to mediate and to offer sacrifice; but they are usurping an office to which the Word of God gives them no claim—an office which, under the Gospel dispensation, is not only utterly useless and out of place, but which leads inquirers away from the only way of salvation. We have a great High Priest. That is all we have and that is all we need. After giving Himself as a sacrifice for sin, He has passed into the heavens, or through the heavens—as the Jewish high priest used to pass through the outer courts of the temple into the holy place—into the presence of God, "not without blood," and, like the congregation of Israel, we are waiting till he comes out again. If Christ has been appointed "a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec," then there is no other priest or mediator; He is like Melchisedec, without a predecessor and without a successor in the office (Heb. vii.). His sacrificial work is finished, but "He ever liveth to make intercession" for us, and sinners are directed to come to God through Him and neither through saints in heaven nor through priests on earth. He is the only being who is qualified for the office of Mediator. He is God and man. Not partly God and partly man. He is as much God as if He were not man; and He is as much man as if He were not God. The fact of his being God does not take away from his manhood; neither does the fact of His being man detract from His divinity. We may, therefore, with the fullest confidence, count upon His human sympathy with us and His intense interest in us; and we may, with equal confidence, depend upon His divine power to keep that which we commit to His trust, and to overcome all enemies.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

BY THE REV. EDWARD F. HUMPHREY, D.D.

*The Author.*—This Epistle, like the three of John, is anonymous. The titles in our version are no part of the inspired text. Although the authorship of the Hebrews is not wholly free from doubt, yet we may safely ascribe it to Paul, on the authority of persuasive external and internal evidence; the prevailing consent of the church; the judgment of the great majority of the soundest and most orthodox scholars; and the conspicuous failure of every effort that has been made to ascribe its authorship on good grounds to any writer except Paul.

*To whom addressed.*—Undoubtedly to all Jewish Christians, with special reference, perhaps, to those in and about Jerusalem.

*It was called for* by the sore temptations to which the Jewish Christians were exposed, urging them to renounce Christianity and go back to Judaism. They were exposed to fierce persecutions from their unbelieving brethren. Besides, it might be plausibly argued: "Our own religion is of divine authority. It was given from Sinai by the mediation of angels and through the ministry of Moses. Consider its holy priesthood; its magnificent temple; its imposing ritual; its awful mysteries; its inspired and soothing psalmody. Judges, prophets and kings have adorned its history. Mighty miracles have attested its divine original. Thousands have found salvation in its worship. The dispensation is glorious. Why should we abandon it? Why renounce the faith of our fathers?" Now, in order to resist this tendency to reaction and apostasy, Paul prepared this Epistle. He wrote for the benefit also of the Church in all ages; furnishing it with an inspired commentary on the ceremonial law, and showing how Judaism flowered out into Christianity, the glorious old into the more glorious new. 2 Cor. iii. 7-11.

*The plan of the Epistle.*—Very simple. Paul demonstrates, in a compact and unanswerable argument, the superiority of the new dispensation over the old; and he weaves into the substance of the argument the most fervid exhortations and warnings against apostasy. This is his whole plan.

*The train of thought* may be reduced to four arguments:

1. Christ, the author of Christianity, is infinitely superior to all the angels of God. Chap. i., ii. Christ is the Lord and Creator of all; the express image of God. He is enthroned on high; He is the Son of God; all the angels worship Him; and God Himself ascribes to Him supreme and eternal dominion. Such is the majesty of Christ; but the angels are no more than ministering spirits. i. 1-14. The human nature of Christ takes nothing from His majesty, but adds to it. For, He is in that nature crowned with glory and honour. ii. 7-9. In that nature, also, He made expiation for sin. ii. 10-15. And, again, He is able to succour us, He having been tempted as we are. ii. 16-18.
2. Christ our Head is superior to Moses the head of the old dispensation. Moses was only a servant in the household of God, but Christ is the Son over the household. Chap. iii. 1-6. See also Eph. i. 20-23.
3. Christ as a High Priest was superior to the Jewish high priest. Chaps. iv. 14 to vii. 28. Like the Jewish priests,

He offered sacrifices for sin, and was compassionate towards the erring. v. 1, 2. But He was higher than they, because He had passed into the heavens (iv. 14), and He took the office from the direct appointment of God v. 4, 5. Next, Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedec, and Melchisedec is superior to the Levitical priests. v. 6 and vii. 1-21. Christ also was appointed by an oath. vii. 21, 22. Because Christ never dies, He has an unchangeable priesthood, and is an ever-living intercessor. vii. 23-25. Holy, also, harmless and undefiled is He, not needing to offer a daily sacrifice first for His own sins. vii. 26-28. How inferior, in all these respects, was the Jewish priest to Him!

4. The priestly office of Christ is exercised in a heavenly sanctuary. Chaps. viii. 1 to x. 18. The heavenly temple far exceeds in grandeur the earthly. Indeed, this latter temple, its beautiful implements of worship and the most holy place itself, were mere copies and types of the true sanctuary, into which Christ has entered. To His covenant the old is subservient. The blood of bullocks and goats would not take away sin; but Christ has carried His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary. And He has made an atonement once for all which need not be repeated.

These four arguments for the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, are enforced by the most solemn and persuasive warnings against apostasy. Many of these are interwoven with the several arguments. See ii. 1-4; iii. 7-19; iv. 1-16; chaps. v. and vi.; x. 19-30. Chapter xi. shows the nature of faith in the unseen future, and its power to protect the child of God from the danger of falling away. Chapter xii. sets forth the consolations offered to those who suffer afflictions. Chapter xiii. contains practical cautions and counsels.

The whole Epistle, considered as an inspired and wonderfully lucid exposition of the ceremonial law, as a description of the glory of Christ, and as a persuasive to steadfastness in the Christian profession, is one of the most precious parts of Word of God. To which we may add, although it is far less important, this Epistle contains passages which for pathos, eloquence and sustained power of thought and expression, are unsurpassed in all literature—ancient or modern. See vi. 1-8; xi. 32-40; with xii. 1, 2; xii. 5-13; and xii. 18-29.

PAPAL blessing has been given in the past to all sorts of objects and enterprises. And now we learn that M. de Lesseps' Panama Canal scheme has been favoured in this way. We shall see by and by if the blessing is worth anything. What can it do anyway to unite the Atlantic and Pacific? Will it make it easier to dig the soil and to blast the rocks? Who will enlighten us on this subject?

WE rejoice to see that our American friends have succeeded in forcing the Oneida Community to adopt an important reformation. This body has applied the principle of communism to everything, to marriage as well as to business arrangements. The moral sentiment of the American people has long felt itself outraged by the connotation of things which existed, and some time ago a Committee was formed to inquire as to what action should be taken in the case. Now, Noyes, the leader of the Community, proposes to give up the practice of free marriage, in "deference to the public sentiment which is rising against it." The Community now will allow marriage, but will prefer celibacy. The result which has now been reached might have been reached years ago with a little energy and interest on the part of a few prominent American Christians.

## MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY.

- KINGSTON.—Quarterly meeting in St. Andrew's Hall, Kingston, on Tuesday, Sept. 30th, at 3 p.m.  
MONTREAL.—In St. Paul's Church, Montreal, on Wednesday, 1st of October, at 11 a.m.  
WHITBY.—In St. Paul's, Bowmanville, on the third Tuesday of October, at 11 o'clock a.m.  
HURON.—At Brucefield, on the second Tuesday of October, at eleven a.m.  
OTTAWA.—On Tuesday, Nov. 4th, at three p.m.  
PETERBORO'.—In Cobourg, on the last Tuesday of September, at 10.30 a.m.  
BARRIE.—At Barrie, on Tuesday, 30th Sept., at eleven o'clock.—Presbytery's Home Mission Committee, at Barrie, on Monday, 29th Sept., at seven p.m.  
TORONTO.—Tuesday, 30th September, at eleven a.m.  
LONDON.—In First Presbyterian Church, London, on Tuesday, November 18th, at two p.m.

## Births, Marriages and Deaths.

NOT EXCEEDING FOUR LINES 25 CENTS.

## BIRTH.

At 19 St. Luke street, Montreal, on the 19th instant, the wife of the Rev. Prof. Campbell, M.A., of a daughter.

## MARRIED.

At Spring Bank, the residence of the bride's father, on the 16th inst., by the Rev. W. S. Ball, assisted by the Rev. Dr. Wardrope, the Rev. D. L. McCrae of St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church, Osnabrock, to Mary W., eldest daughter of James Little, Esq., Guelph.

## DIED.

On the morning of the 1st September, at his residence, Harryville, Ballymena, Ireland, James Fleck, father of the Rev. James Fleck, pastor of Knox Church, Montreal.