

## The Sunday School.

## INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

## LESSON XLII.

Oct. 19, 1879. } THE TRIUMPHS OF FAITH. { Heb. xi. 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible."—Heb. xi. 27.

## HOME STUDIES.

- M. Gen. iv. 3-15. . . . . Abel and his offering.  
T. Gen. vi. 5-22. . . . . Noah warned of God.  
W. Gen. xii. 1-9. . . . . Abraham called.  
Th. Acts xvi. 25-34. . . . . The jailer's faith.  
F. Heb. x. 32-39. . . . . The just shall live by faith.  
S. Heb. xi. 1-10. . . . . Faith and its fruits.  
S. Heb. xi. 13-40. . . . . Heroes of faith.

## HELPS TO STUDY.

There is a close connection between the last lesson and the present one, and the intervening part of the epistle ought to be attentively studied. Under the Jewish dispensation the seen was made to represent the unseen; the earthly to stand instead of the heavenly; the material to express the spiritual. Under the Gospel dispensation the Jewish nation and others, are instructed to relinquish "sight" in religious matters and to substitute "faith" in its stead—the supremely important objects connected with the Christian salvation being invisible and intangible, though not the less real on that account. There were multitudinous ordinances under the ceremonial law involving the use of material objects, but salvation was not in them. There are still two such ordinances under the new dispensation, but salvation is not in them. Although the Gospel ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are right and good in their own place, it is ruinous to look to them as means of salvation. Water, in small or in large quantities, cannot wash away sin, neither can bread and wine give spiritual nourishment. Nowhere are the ritualist and the sacramentarian more explicitly corrected than in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Paul, having shewn the infinite superiority of the spiritual and real to the material and merely representative, uses the result of his comparison between the old and the new covenants as a basis of appeal with reference to faith. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way," etc. (x. 19-21). What are the exhortations concerning faith that he grounds upon this? 1. "Let us draw near with a true heart in the full assurance of faith." With no earthly priest between us and God, and with no doubt as to our acceptance with Him. That is one of the privileges of the new covenant. 2. "Let us hold fast the profession (confession) of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised." God is faithful to His promises, but man is apt to be unfaithful to his duties. A persevering, unwavering confession of faith in God and in His Son has for its inspiration the fact that God is faithful to all of His promises. All the pledges that fill the future life with glories that sometimes make the Christian long to depart and to be with Christ as being far better. He will completely redeem. 3. "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence which hath great recompense of reward." That follows the verse that calls attention to the fact that they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had "in heaven a better and more enduring substance." There they had laid up treasures which could not be taken away from them. True faith is not only sure of a reward, but of a "great recompense of reward." The denials, afflictions, and oppressions, in the midst of which one still holds his faith in God, will be more than made up in the world to come. Whatever else is lost, let none cast away his confidence in God by which all trials are made bearable here, and more than compensated for in the life beyond this. "For we are made partakers with Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end" (iii. 14). 4. "The just shall live by faith." It is not a mere momentary experience that admits into the kingdom of God, but a grace to carry him through all the trials of life. Christians are not only born by faith, but they must also live by it. It is the Christian's vital breath. His life, from the beginning to its close, must be an exhibition of trust in the Saviour of men. From the foregoing it is plain that our chapter is a logical continuance, if not a necessary conclusion, to what has been said concerning faith. Its definition is requisite to a complete understanding of the subject, and the illustrations are needful to inspire one with a glowing desire to possess an endowment that has made other lives so heroic. The uniformity of the subject will scarcely justify a more minute division of the lesson than the following: (1) *What Faith is*, (2) *What Faith can do*.

I. WHAT FAITH IS.—vers. 1-3. The word translated substance in the first verse of the lesson is the same word that is rendered "confidence" in chap. iii. 14, and may be taken in that sense here. The reference is to an act or affection of the mind. The idea is, not that faith gives a real substance to things hoped for, but that faith is "confidence" of things hoped for, just as if they were realized. Evidence: conviction, assurance. The reference here is also to an affection of the mind. Faith is assurance to the mind of things not seen, just as if they were present. For by it—that is by faith—the elders, or those believers who were famous in the early history of the Church, obtained a good report: literally, were borne witness of. Their faith had held upon a Saviour and an atonement, unseen, hidden far in the future, but confidently hoped for. The point made by the apostle

in the third verse—through faith we understand, etc.—seems to be that we exercise faith (or belief) in acquiring our knowledge even of the material universe, and that we need not therefore be surprised to find that it must enter into our knowledge of the unseen world. It seems also to point out that the unseen is more real and permanent than the visible. There are people who say that they will not believe anything—that they must have everything proved. But this is unreasonable; for at the foundation of every branch of knowledge there is found some truth which cannot be proved, but which must be believed, otherwise the further knowledge that rests on that truth cannot be attained.

II. WHAT FAITH CAN DO.—vers. 4-10. Four of the earliest and most prominent believers are brought before us in the lesson—Abel, Enoch, Noah and Abraham. There was something distinctive—not in itself but in the way it was exercised—about the faith of each one of these ancient worthies. We find, then, four things that faith can do:

1. *Faith can make people speak after they are dead.* Abel, being dead yet speaketh. What he says is that we ought to give to God what God wants from us, and not what is most suitable to our own convenience. If it is true of Abel, who has been dead a longer time than anybody else, that he yet speaketh, it is also true of the other characters mentioned, as well as of many more good people who have lived and died since.

2. *Faith can make people walk properly.* By our walk the Bible generally means the way in which we conduct ourselves. If Enoch "walked with God," as we are told in Genesis v. 24, then God and Enoch must have been going in the same direction. Enoch's faith bore excellent fruit. It brought his character and conduct into conformity with God's law. Those things which God called good, Enoch called good; and those things which God called evil, Enoch called evil also. He was of the same opinion with God—"How can two walk together except they be agreed?" God would like every man and woman, every boy and girl to walk with Him as Enoch did; He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him—the best part of the reward being that they shall find Him.

3. *Faith can sometimes save people from drowning.* It saved Noah; and for want of it Peter, on one occasion, came very near being drowned. But the essential point brought before us in this part of our lesson is that we ought to believe what God tells us though the whole world should say the contrary. Noah's faith could make him say with Paul "Let God be true but every man a liar" (Rom. iii. 4). What God had told him seemed not only improbable but impossible, and still Noah believed it and prepared an ark to the saving of his house. God warns us of a still more terrible doom and instructs us how to escape. If we neglect His warning and refuse to follow His instructions we are more foolish than Noah would be if he had refused to build the ark and met the flood without as much as a plank to float him.

4. *Faith can prove the world's fool to be God's wise man.* This may be seen in the case of Noah; but it may also be seen in the case of Abraham. At God's command he left his country and his kindred and his father's house—his property, his worldly prospects, his hopes of influence among his tribe—and he went he knew not whither. The world would probably call him a fool and say that his faith ruined him. But no one ever really lost by his devotion to the cause of God or by obedience to His commands. Any apparent loss they sustain is but temporal; their reward is eternal. Abraham did not himself actually receive the land of Canaan as an inheritance; he was but a stranger and sojourner in it; and had only the promise that it should be given to his descendants. But he looked for a better inheritance. With the eye of faith he could see the "land that is very far off." His tents had no foundations; but he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

## Official Notices.

LABRADOR MISSION.—Ladies' Association, Zion Church, Montreal, \$11; a friend, New Mexico, \$5; Athol Sabbath School, \$4; Liverpool, N.S., infant class, \$5; Rev. R. McKay, \$1; Milton, N.S., (Congregational Church, \$19.59, juvenile class, \$4), \$23.59. The above amounts are all that have been received toward the Labrador Mission since June. And if friends would remember that the autumn supplies have been sent and a bill for these supplies to be paid immediately to the amount of \$249, the Treasurer feels sure that more adequate funds would be forthcoming.

B. WILKES.

Montreal, 3rd October, 1879.

## CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. SHERMAN, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

## Around the Table.

## EACH DAY ITS VERSE.

IN a Gorman village in the heart of Bavaria, in a queer old house, that looked as if it had never been built, but had sprouted and grown and had never been pruned, one day sat by her sunny deep window, an old frau who herself looked as if she had not only grown but ripened, and then been preserved like a prune or a fig, into something sweet and good, that would keep for ever.

She was knitting now and had been knitting always, and it seemed that she might continue to knit, as well, if not a little better than not, till the end of time. I dare say she had covered miles of hands and feet in her lifetime, and made them warm. How much of her had gone into needle and yarn who can tell?

But other things are knitting and are knitted day by day. Heads and hearts and souls are knitted all the time.

So, as the needles flashed in the light, old Mathilde said, "No day without its verse."

Before her sat a young girl as fair of face as apple bloom; white and pink and red blended from cheek to brow, and yellow strands of hair lay down her waist. A great Bible lay in her lap, from which she was about to read. Now she paused and listened, and lifted her clear, blue, untaught eyes.

"They are Master Luther's words," said Mathilde, "and good words they are, my Madchen, true as the sun.

"Stitch by stitch,  
Minute by minute,  
Verse by verse,"

that is the way all good work comes."

"No day without its verse," turned the Gospel of our Lord into the German, for every soul to feed upon and be made strong."

The woman paused. The young girl went on reading the wonderful old words of inspiration that have thrilled millions of hearts down through all the centuries to this day. She read, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Ye believe in God believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. . . . Whither I go ye know and the way ye know."

At every added sentence the old frau swayed back and forth and muttered, "Yes, yes, yes. That is enough my Madchen, for to-day—enough and enough, and more than enough. To-day we will have, 'Let not your hearts be troubled,' and our hearts will not be troubled. —They will be quiet as the warm sunlight falling in the window, untroubled as the birds flitting hither and thither through the vines without. We children of the Christ may not be afraid, or dismayed, or discouraged, when He saith, 'Let not your hearts be troubled.' Ay, 'tis a precious verse, for He stands on the other side beyond our seeing, and sees the things we may not see, and knows the things