

## The Sunday School.

## INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

## LESSON XL.

Oct. 17, 1879 } OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST { Heb. iv. 14-16 v. 16.

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. . . . Calicé 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 Atonic 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 so far as these are not the consequence of personal transgression; He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah lvi. 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, or 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 Atonic succession. Christ did not succeed to the Atonic 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 BIBLE IN THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

It is a mistake to complain that "the Bible is not used in the Sabbath school," it is as if one complained that figs do not grow of thistles. Teachers and scholars who have no use for the Bible there will not bring it, of course, and to force it into their hands is to do nothing towards its use. The evil is in the thistle. Let us have such teachers, and such scholars, and such a use of the lesson leaf, as that we shall not be able to get along without the Bible. Let us quit pleading for the shell of the virtue when we may have the virtue itself by a little effort in that direction. (1) Supply no Bibles in the Sabbath school; let them be owned and brought; present them if they cannot be afforded by the scholars. Ownership of a Bible is almost a prerequisite to its use. (2) Expect and promote the use of the references, both to verses and to incidents, as of chief importance in the study of the lesson out of school and in it. The best questions on the lesson arise out of a study of the text itself, and the best illustrations of our lessons are found in the Bible. Besides, a single lesson should promote a study of the Bible as a whole, in which each lesson ought to be made a sort of a key. (3) Let a lesson of Scripture elsewhere in the Bible be always read for opening, either relating to the lesson or of a devotional character, thus bringing all Bibles into use regularly.—S. S. Journal.

## Around the Table.

## NAN, THE NEWSBOY.

NAN, the newsboy, is among the latest of the odd characters which spring into fame from time to time out of the varied life of the great city of New York. A year ago he formed a little band, consisting of himself and two others, to patrol the East River

docks at night and rescue persons from drowning.

Some charitable persons heard of the boys, gave them a floating station to live in, boats, neat blue uniforms, and a small weekly salary, to devote their whole time to the work.

Nan's real name is William J. O'Neil. He is a thorough street Arab in his manners, and uses the dialect common among ragged newsboys and bootblacks.

The regulations by which the association should be governed, according to his idea, are few and simple. As jotted down with other matters in his rough log-book, they are:

1. Members shall do whatever the president orders them.
2. No one shall be a member who drinks or gets drunk.
3. Any members not down in Dover Dock, and miss one night except in sickness, shall be fined fifty cents by order of the president.
4. No cursing allowed.

Spelling is not Nan's strong point, and I have taken the liberty to arrange this according to the usual custom. Nor does he keep records in a scientific manner. Case four, in his list of rescued, sets down only "A Jew boy." Case five is "A red-headed boy who fell in the water, but could not find his name."

The first meeting of the association took place one pleasant day in June, 1878.

"We was a-sittin' on Dover Dock," Nan says, "tellin' stories. We got talkin' about how a body was took out 'most every day, and some said two hundred was took out in a year. We heard about life savin' on the Jersey coast, too. So I says: 'Say we makes a' s'ociation of it boys, for to go along the docks pickin' 'em up regular.' 'All right!' they says, and they nomernates me for president. We thought we might as well be doin' that as loafin' on the corners."

Might as well be brave and humane fellows, that is, as idle and dangerous loungers! Yes, indeed they might, and this modest way of putting it is infinitely to Nan's credit.

The three have nothing very distinctive in their appearance, excepting their plain uniform. Nan has a rosy complexion and a serious manner. He has sold papers almost ever since he can remember. Edward Kelly is paler and slighter, and has quite a decided air of dignity. Gilbert Long is sunbrowned, and has a merry twinkle in his eye. He looks as if likely to be the most recklessly persistent of the lot in any dangerous strait. The three boys were all born in Cherry street. Long has been a tinsmith's apprentice, and Kelly a leather-cutter.

They have also with them five unpaid volunteers who serve at night. The force is divided into three patrols.

Cherry street and its vicinity abound in tenements, sailor boarding-houses and drinking saloons. The upper part of South Street is a kind of breathing place for this squalid