

in question left them without a Bible—without an Old Testament, and consequently without a New Testament. Articles such as that were taking away all the pillars on which the confessional doctrine rested, and if the statements in the article were true they might believe the Confession if they pleased, but they had no reason in Scripture for doing so.

Principal Rainy declared that none of the motions satisfied him, but at the same time he declined to frame another and consequently did not vote. The motion of Sir Henry Moncrieff was carried by forty to fifteen against that of Mr. McNeil, which proposed to give Mr. Smith time to see whether he would follow out the decision of the Assembly, and by forty-two to nineteen against that of Mr. Poirer or McGregor, which simply declined to move in the case at present.

In the Free Presbytery of Lockerby the following motion has been carried:

"That this Presbytery views with deep regret and dissatisfaction the doctrinal bearings of the position assumed by the last General Assembly, in the terms of the deliverance by which Professor Robertson Smith was reposed in his chair in Aberdeen College. Further, that the Presbytery memorialize the Commission to instruct the College Committee carefully to examine the statements published by Professor Smith in his articles on 'Hebrew Language and Literature' and 'Haggai' in the last-issued volume (the eleventh) of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' and confer with him fully and faithfully on the views therein expressed, and to report thereon to the November commission."

In the Presbytery of Inverness the Rev. Mr. McTavish has given notice of a motion calling on the Commission of the General Assembly to take steps to remove Professor Smith from his position until the General Assembly shall have an opportunity of considering the views expressed in his recent article.

MISSIONARY NOTES.

SAMOA.

The following letter from a group of islands in the Pacific, which were hardly known to the world until within a few years, tells a story of the effect of missions upon the character of the native population quite as wonderful as that which has taken place in the Sandwich Islands:

Perhaps the work of Christian missionaries in Samoa has only been exceeded by that of those on Hawaii, who had a larger field and were in it earlier. The results accomplished by the Samoa Mission will prove my statement when I say that out of a population of 40,000 about 35,000, or seven-eighths, of all the inhabitants, are connected with Christian Churches. The last census, taken five years ago, shewed a native population of 34,265, divided according to Church statistics as follows: Belonging to the London Mission Society, 26,493; Wesleyans, 4,794; Roman Catholics, 2,852; Mormons, 126; total, 34,265. The census taken in 1853 gave a native population of 33,901; in 1863, 35,107; 1874, 34,265, an increase of 364 in 21 years, notwithstanding two or three long wars in the meantime. There are probably about 300 Europeans and Americans on the islands, 300 Polynesians, and about 2,000 labourers from the various islands of the Pacific, employed here mostly by Germany. The London Mission Society, which was first in the field, and has done most for the Christianization of the islands, also claims 187 native pastors, distributed on the three principal islands as follows: Tutuila, 22; Upolu, 101; and Saraii, 54.

The islands are districted under missions sent out from England. At present Rev. Charles Phillips, appointed in 1877, is on Tutuila; Rev. Geo. Turner, LL.D., President of the native college at Malua, Upolu, twelve miles from Apia, was appointed in 1840; Rev. Thomas Powell, F.L.S., residing at Falsalili, Upolu, was appointed in 1844. He is quite a botanist, and has collected nearly 300 varieties of Samoa ferns, and given names to several of the species, since adopted by the scientists. Rev. G. G. Turner, M.D., was appointed in 1868, and resides at Apia, Upolu. He is the only medical missionary on the islands, though all the missionaries keep simple remedies for simple diseases with which they may be familiar, and deal out drugs daily to applicants. Rev. Dr. Turner, of Apia, is a first-class physician, and an expert, skilful, and successful surgeon, besides being an able preacher, in charge of the Foreign Chapel at Apia, in addition to his ordinary missionary labours. He is a graduate of Glasgow University. In November he will return *via* Sydney to England, on a prolonged absence of two years, having now been here ten years without a vacation. The missionary ship "John Wil-

liams," in which he and his family will leave for Sydney, is now cruising among the islands in these seas, with supplies for the missionaries and native teachers. She is a fine, staunchly-built vessel, fitted up for the express accommodation of the missionaries. Capt. Turpie, her commander, has been in the missionary service twenty-five years and is a very successful navigator and agreeable Christian gentleman. On Saraii, Rev. George Pratt was appointed in 1838, and Rev. S. H. Davies in 1866. The former is the author of a grammar and dictionary of the Samoan language, the best, if not the only one, extant.

The native college at Malua, in charge of Dr. Turner, is a most important institution. It numbers about 100 students, preparing for the Gospel ministry and other useful callings among their countrymen. This is doubtless the fountain whence flows most of the regenerating influences for Samoa. There are about 200 acres of land belonging to the college (which of course belongs to the London Missionary Society), and each married student is allowed to cultivate three acres, which in this tropical climate furnishes ample provision for him and his household. The college buildings, though unlike those of more civilized communities, are suitable for the purposes for which they are intended, and the grounds are well laid out. The institution occupies a slightly elevated position overlooking a beautiful bay, along the shore of which the students have constructed a coral break-water frontage. Dr. Turner is a genial, active, energetic hospitable gentleman, and is doing a good and great work for Samoa. The Rev. I. Marriott has arrived from England within a few months as a colleague to Dr. Turner at Malua, and takes the place of Rev. H. Nisbet, LL.D., who died at Malua three years ago, after thirty-five years of constant mission service.

The standard of native Christian character here is quite as high, so far as I can judge, as that of Hawaiian Christians. The people are faithful church-goers, and as strict in their religious observances as the ancient Jews. Every evening at eight o'clock, and early in the morning, I can hear them in their tales (or houses) all around me singing and praying. They say grace over their meals, though consisting of bananas, breadfruit, and taro, and eaten with their fingers off banana leaves, on the ground. I believe they are as sincere as Christian people generally. They are intelligent, and nearly all read the Bible in their own language, an excellent edition produced by the missionaries and published by the London Mission Society. The people are liberal, and contribute largely, according to their means. They practise, as they did before the advent of the missionaries, the rite of circumcision, which some think they derived from the Jews, to whom their origin is traced by son, though they are most likely from the Malays. The people have no superiors on earth for fine physical appearance, and are of mild and amiable disposition.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXXIII.

Aug. 15. } ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK. { Gen. xiv. 1880. } 12-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Jesus, made a high priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."—Heb. vi. 20.

HOME STUDIES.

M. Gen. xiv. 1-11....The Battle of the Kings.
Tu. Gen. xiv. 12-24....Abram and Melchizedek.
W. Ps. cx. 1-7.....After the Order of Melchizedek.
Th. Heb. vi. 1-14....Called of God.
F. Heb. vi. 1-20....A Priest for Ever.
S. Heb. vii. 1-16....Abide with a Priest Continually.
Sab. Heb. viii. 1-13....A Better Covenant.

HELPS TO STUDY.

A brief notice of the circumstances which led to Lot's being taken as a prisoner of war is all that is necessary to connect our present lesson with the last. As to time, not more than five years could have intervened.

A few years before Abraham and Lot had reached the Land of Canaan four eastern kings or chiefs had joined their forces and subjugated several western tribes, among which were the inhabitants of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim and Bela or Zoar, all in the neighbourhood of what is now called the Dead Sea. After paying tribute for twelve years these latter tribes revolted; this revolt caused their former conquerors to return, and plunder their towns, taking many of the more wealthy and respectable inhabitants as prisoners; and Lot had to share the fate of his chosen companions. This was the first unhappy result of his selfishness and worldliness, but by no means the last. Those who wish to avoid Lot's troubles should not make Lot's choice.

The following arrangement of the lesson topics will prob-

ably be found as convenient as any: (1) *The Capture*, (2) *The Rescue*, (3) *The King of Salem*, (4) *The King of Sodom*.

I. THE CAPTURE.—Vers. 12, 13. In 1 Tim. vi. 19 we are told that "They that will be rich fall into a snare;" and according to Prov. xiii. 20 "the companion of fools" is in a very dangerous position.

And they took Lot. They—that is Chedorlaomer and his allies. It appears that these raiders found Lot living in Sodom, although at the first he only "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (chap. xiii. 12). It is thus that people gradually familiarize themselves with evil. In examining ourselves as to our moral and spiritual condition, the question, *towards what?* is still more important than the question, *where?*

II. THE RESCUE.—Vers. 14-16. A good many people, in Abram's place when the news of Lot's capture was brought to him, would have said "Serve him right," "As he has made his bed so let him lie," or repeated some other of the world's heartless phrases; but when Abram heard that his brother (his kinsman by blood and his co-religionist) was taken captive, he armed his trained servants ("trained to war; trained also to lead more lives, and therefore much better soldiers than the rowdies of Sodom"). "Of these house-borne servants," says the "National S. S. Teacher," "he had three hundred and eighteen, which indicates that he must have had a total following of over a thousand people, men, women, and children. Also it shows that, while a man of peace, he was at all times prepared for war. Besides, he had an alliance with three tribal chiefs—a fact that shows his influence, as well as his readiness for conflict. No one at that time could have hoped to retain any property unless he was ready to defend it. Many a time those trained servants may have been called upon before to repel some nomadic Canaanite robber, or to compel a right of way. He was prompt in his action. Indisposed as he might have been to assert his own rights with Lot, his kinsman, still it was not from any lack of courage or strength. Though he would have no contest with him, he was willing enough to fight for him. Lot, to his advantage, found that he who was all gentleness towards himself, even in the midst of provocation, could be a lion towards his enemies. The truly righteous are the really brave."

III. THE KING OF SALEM.—Vers. 18-20. The name Melchizedek means *King of righteousness*. Salem was the ancient name of the site of Jerusalem, and the word means *peace*. See Psalm cx. 4, and Heb. vii. A great deal too much has been said about the words "without father, without mother," etc., in the latter passage. These words have reference to Melchizedek, not as a man, but as a priest; or at the furthest they refer only to the fact that his genealogy is unknown. The writer of the epistle seems to anticipate the objections of some punctilious Jew in relation to the priesthood of Christ. Such an objector might say that Christ could not be a priest, because a person could only prove his claim to that office by shewing his genealogy as a descendant of Aaron; and he is answered by calling attention to the fact that a priest (Melchizedek) had already existed, without such genealogy, which priest, though greater than Aaron, was himself but typical of Christ, the Great High Priest. "The points of comparison," says the "Westminster Teacher," are briefly these: (a) Both were kings and priests. Christ was "a priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 13). (b) Their several kingdoms were righteous and peaceful. (c) They were superior to Abram, and therefore their priestly office was superior to that of Levi and Aaron, Abram's descendants. (d) As a priest, neither had any sacerdotal genealogy; none went before or came after them in the succession. (e) Each was sole priest, during all his time, forever; Melchizedek through his whole life on earth; Christ through His eternal existence.

Brought forth bread and wine. These, though ordinarily used for mere refreshment, are, under the New Testament dispensation, sacramental elements; and as Melchizedek came to meet Abram as priest of the most high God, and Abram paid him tithes as such, it is supposed that the employment of these elements has a peculiar religious significance.

He blessed him. Authoritatively, and in the execution of his office as priest, Melchizedek blessed Abram and thanked God for giving him the victory.

He gave him tithes of all. Abram gave Melchizedek one-tenth of all that he had taken from the enemy. "Now consider how great this man was unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils."

IV. THE KING OF SODOM.—Vers. 17, 21-24. A successful man is sure to have friends, and the respect that never would have been paid to the God-fearing patriarch was readily yielded to the victorious warrior. Further, it was proper that the King of Sodom should acknowledge the great service rendered to him and to his neighbours by Abram, for he had defeated their enemies and placed them in a position once more to assert that independence for which they had been struggling. Further still, the King of Sodom seems to have had an eye to the spoils.

Give me the persons and keep the goods to thyself. The general opinion seems to be that by the rules of war, at that time, Abram had a right to both.

I will not take from a thread to a shoe-latchet. The shoe-latchet was the thing that bound the sandal to the foot. Abram was most happy to deal with the King of Salem, both in giving and in taking, but he would have no dealings with the King of Sodom. He seems to have given careful consideration to this matter beforehand, and resolved to do nothing that could by any possibility be distorted so as to make him appear to be under any obligation to the wicked inhabitants of Sodom or to their king. In following this course he acted wisely for himself and at the same time administered a sharp reproof to his less scrupulous nephew.

To add to the complications in Turkey, an English missionary—Dr. Parsons—and his two servants have been murdered at Ismidt. The particulars are not as yet known.