

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, October 5th, 1879.—Our Great High Priest.—Heb. iv. 14-16.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 14-16.

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

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Heb. i. ii. Tuesday, Heb. iii. Wednesday, Heb. iv. Thursday, Heb. v. Friday, Heb. vi. Saturday, Heb. vii. Sunday, Heb. viii.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Our great High Priest. Vss. 14-16. II. The Levitical priesthood. Vss. 1-3. III. Christ's priesthood. Vss. 4-6.

QUESTIONS.—Who was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews? Where is Christ spoken of as a prophet? Luke xxiv. 19. Where as a king? 1 Timothy vi. 15. In what character is he represented in this lesson?

I. Vss. 14-16.—For upward of fifteen centuries the Jews had had priests and high priests. What did Jewish Christians have? Through what veil did Jesus pass in going into the heavens? Heb. x. 19, 20. Why must our great High Priest be a man to be of service to us? Why a sinless man? How, then, may we come to the throne of grace?

II. Vss. 1-3.—What two kinds of offering were Jewish priests to make? Why were they to offer for their own sins as well as for those of the people?

III. Vss. 4-6.—What priesthood does the writer now introduce? How was a priesthood after the order of Melchisedek far greater than that after the Aaronic type? On whose divine appointment are the Psalms and Epistles agreed?

It has ever been a matter of doubt who the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was. It wears a decidedly Pauline coloring, both in sentiment and style, except that the language seems to be somewhat purer and more ornate than is usual with this apostle. The testimony of the East—the predominant one, at least, in modern history—acknowledges its Pauline authorship; but the exact truth has ever been, and probably will ever be, in doubt.

OBJECT OF THE EPISTLE.—The Epistle was written to Jewish Christians living in Palestine. This is argued from the strong Jewish element predominating in it. It was written as a guard against the danger of going back to the bondage of the old law, and to explain the true purpose of the ordinances which God gave to their fathers. The Epistle is a doctrinal exposition, written for the practical purpose of showing the relations between the old faith and the new, between the Jewish temple and the Christian church.

I. Consider what a high priest we have.—Three points are stated in vss. 14-16, and unfolded afterwards.

1. He is "great," "the Son of God" (vs. 14): He is divinely appointed, like the first Jewish high priest, Aaron (vss. 4, 5).

2. He has "passed through the heavens" (vs. 14) into the sanctuary on high.

3. He can "sympathize with our infirmities" (vs. 15). Our High Priest has been "tempted like as we are," etc. (vs. 15; comp. ii. 17, 18).

II. Consider how we, who have such a High Priest, ought to feel and act.—1. "Hold fast our profession" (vs. 14). This is really the great practical point of the Epistle. Christianity has a great High Priest, a heavenly sanctuary, an all-sufficient sacrifice—everything we need. Therefore let us not abandon it—let us hold on. (Compare x. 23.)

2. "Come to the throne of grace" (vs. 16). God's throne is a throne of "grace" to us because of our High Priest's atonement and intercession. (compare vii. 25).

EXPOSITION.—I. Verses 14-16.—Verse 14.—Seeing then that we have a great high priest.—Notice the connection. In iii. 6, the necessity of holding on and holding out to the end is urged. Just this was the thing to urge on the readers who, as the whole letter shows, were in great and growing discouragements as to Christian faith and life, and seemingly on the point of apostasy, vi. 1-8. From iii. 7 to iv. 10, warning is brought to bear from the Old Testament. This warning is repeated in vss. 11-13, and the searching inward nature of God's law, and God's perfect insight into our most secret life, backs the

warning. That view of Christ developed in i. ii. and iii. 1-6, shows how it just meets our wants, and is a ground of hope, where, without it, we must despair. On the character and duties of the Hebrew high priest, see Ex. xxviii., and Lev. xvi. The true real High Priest is Christ, of whom the other was only a type. The high priest of the nation acted for the nation in securing the removal of the curse of the broken law, and a restoration and perpetuation of God's favor. That is passed into the heavens. Or rather, passed through the heavens. vii. 26; Eph. iv. 10. "The heavens" here are conceived as constituting a separation between the earth and God. Christ passed clear through these to God himself, to be with the Father, at his right hand, no separation, perfectly accepted, so that he effects for his people a perfect reconciliation. As a type of this, the Hebrew high priest went once a year, on the great day of atonement, into "the most holy place" "through the veil." Lev. xvi. 13-15. The Son of God. Hence by nature able to take and hold such a place. Let us hold fast our profession. 2 Thess. ii. 15. The "confession," that is, the gospel confessed and the life required by it. The "Hebrews" or Jews to whom the words were addressed, tempted and tending to fall back upon the Jewish ceremonial, would see and feel the force of this appeal; would see that their ceremonial was only the shadow of which Christianity was the substance.

Verse 15.—For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.—More exactly, cannot sympathize with our infirmities. "Infirmities" here consist of all that in us and of us, whether of body or soul, which impedes our Christian walk, makes it hard to do and be what God wills and we would. But was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. vii. 27; 2 Cor. v. 21. Our infirmities bring us into and under sin. Christ had all the infirmities consequent upon a genuinely human nature, and these were a constant temptation to him. ix. 7; Comp. Num. xv. 22-31; 1 Tim. i. 13.

Verse 16.—Let us therefore come boldly, etc.—Faith, clear and firm, will give a holy, humble assurance. "Grace" and "mercy" imply that we have, as Christ had not, sin with, and in, our infirmities. The "throne" implies a royal supply. The "time of need" is the whole of our life-time on earth, though special seasons bring special needs.

II. Verses 1-3.—Verse 1.—For every high priest, etc. All high priests except Christ, in so far as they are truly such, are types, shadows of him. Christ represented his fellow-men, and acted in their stead and behalf, a mediator. When the Hebrew high priest went once a year into "the most holy place," he went in the name of the whole congregation and atoned for the whole. His act thus became and was theirs. That he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. "Gifts and sacrifices" were all offerings voluntary and prescribed. Our Christian service presupposes our reconciliation by Christ's atonement.

Verse 2.—Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.—More exactly, can sympathize with the ignorant and erring. "The ignorant and erring" are thus presented as one single class. See above on iv. 15; Com. Num. xv. 28; 1 Tim. i. 13. Is compassed with infirmity. This infirmity, unlike Christ's, is partly moral and sinful, or sin. Christ had all purely constitutional human infirmity or weakness.

Verse 3.—And by reason hereof he ought, etc.—Not so the Great High Priest. iv. 15. He alone was by nature the true anti-typical priest. Who could draw near to God for the sinful high priests taken from men? So did their sacrifice for their own sin forever testify that they needed a priest who could atone for them, and that all their priestly service pointed to something other and higher.

III. Verses 4-6.—Verse 4.—And no man taketh this honor, etc.—The emphatic words are to himself. The reason is that we can have no confident boldness (iv. 16) in approaching God, unless we are sure that God himself has opened the way of approach. There is good reason to believe that sacrifices were instituted of God for man immediately after the fall, and certainly

the whole priestly constitution for worship among the Hebrews was determined even to minute details by the divine commands.

Verse 5.—So also Christ, etc.—See Psalm ii.

Verse 6.—Thou art a Priest, etc.—See Ps. cx. 4; Gen. xiv. 18-20; Heb. vii. —Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, October 12th, 1879.—The Types Explained.—Hebrews ix. 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."—Hebrews x. 14.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

First, tell what a high priest was. One of his duties was to teach. Read Mal. ii. 7. Jesus taught all the time, and even now teaches through the Bible, through the Holy Spirit. The high priest had to atone for the sins of the people. Try to make clear what atonement is. If we have offended anyone, we try to turn their anger away, by doing something which will please the one we have offended, and which will go towards making good what we have done, and at the same time asking their forgiveness. We have offended God by our sins; we cannot put the guilt away ourselves; but Jesus "Came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Once a year there was a special day of atonement. Study Lev. xvi. 11-16, until you can picture, both briefly and clearly, these four things that the priest was to do. 1. To kill the animals. 2. To enter with the blood into the holy of holies. 3. To sprinkle the blood over the mercy-seat. 4. To kindle the incense, and with the smoke of it to cause a cloud to arise over the mercy-seat. Then show how Jesus, our high priest; 1, instead of killing animals, offered himself; 2, has gone up into heaven, which is holier than the holy of holies; 3, shows his own blood-stained hands to his Father, instead of sprinkling it over the mercy-seat; 4, prays to his Father to forgive us for his blood's sake, which is better than the cloud of incense.

Another duty of the priest was to bless. The high priest after praying for the people, used to come out from the tabernacle, and stand in their midst, and bless them in the words of Num. vi. 24-26. But, after all, he could only use that as a prayer, but Jesus can himself give the blessing for which he asks.

Contrast the grand ordination of Aaron, and that of Jesus, at his baptism. When Aaron died, his son took his place, and so on. Now there is no Jewish high priest. But Jesus ever lives to pray for us. No one can take his place. What he does now, he will keep on doing forever.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 39.

MIZPAH.

GEN. xxxi. 49.

1. M. arah....Exodus xv. 23.
2. I. dolatry. Gal. v. 20.
3. Z. oar....Gen. xix. 22.
4. P. aul....Eph. vi. 20.
5. A. holiab....Exodus xxxv. 34.
6. H. eber....Judges iv. 21.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 40.

The initials of the subjoined give the scene of the most terrible and majestic revelation of the Almighty to mankind.

1. The mother of the Hebrew race.
2. The child born when the glory had departed from Israel.
3. The minor prophet who penned these beautiful words: "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him."
4. One of the sons of the Cyrenian who was compelled to bear the cross of Christ.
5. The father of the Arab race.

Seven good Rules for a Teacher.

1. Never tell a pupil what you can get the pupil to tell you.
2. Connect what you do tell your pupil with something which he already knows.
3. Never undertake to teach when your pupil is not paying attention.
4. Thoroughly master your subject.
5. Never consider that you know a thing until you can say it in more than one way.
6. Remember that you teach by what you are.
7. Teach under Divine inspiration.

Youths' Department.

A Bear Story.

In the middle of a clearing in the woods of northern Michigan, stood a little board house, which was built in just one week.

In this queer little home, five miles from any neighbors, lived Harry Scamman, his brother Thayer, and his sister Sadie. Harry was ten years old, Thayer was eight, and Sadie was five. Their father was a lumber-dealer, and was obliged to be in the woods a great deal, cutting and shipping his lumber. So he built this house, and brought his family to live there. In the woods about the house were bears, wolves and deer, and squirrels and rabbits could be seen any time from the windows. The children had not seen any of the larger animals, but the boys had set traps for the rabbits and squirrels, and caught several. They caught one beautiful gray squirrel alive, which their father made a cage for, and Sadie had him for a pet many months. They had plenty with which to amuse themselves. It seemed to them that in town they hadn't half as much. They went down to the "logging-camp," a mile away, to see the men fell the trees; they learned by name the different kinds of lumber, and the various purposes for which they were used; they looked with awe at the bear and wolf prints, and wished more than anything to see the animals that made them; they watched the birds, and learned the habits of many of them; they made bows and arrows, and played they were Indians; in fact, it seemed to them as if the days were not long enough for them to do half they wanted to.

As for dear little silver-haired Sadie, her cup of happiness was full. She trudged in and out among the stumps, picking berries and bright mosses, and gathering pretty pine-cones by the apronful. She kept house in little nooks among the underbrush, with acorn-cups for dishes. She talked busily to the squirrels and rabbits that peered down at her from the trees and out from under the bushes, as if they were her playmates, and could understand all she said. Sometimes she would pretend she had seen a bear, and come running in to her mother, who would hurriedly open the door, and look anxiously out into the dim woods, for the mother's heart was not without anxiety lest one of these wild animals should attack her little ones at their play. She cautioned them to keep on the edges of the woods, so that she could see them from the house, and this they usually did.

One afternoon the boys had gone to the "camp" to wait until their father should come home at night, and Sadie, as usual, was playing about the clearing. Her mother was busy in the house, but every few minutes she glanced out, to see that Sadie did not stray into the woods. But getting absorbed in a piece of work she was trying to finish before dark, she had neglected for some time to see what the child was doing. Suddenly, she heard her shout, "Mamma! Oh! mamma, come quick and see! See my little doggie!" Her mother hurried to the door, and what was her astonishment to see Sadie coming across the clearing, hugging close to her breast a little bear. But before she had time to say a word to the child, her attention was called to another direction by a low, angry growl. She looked up, and there she saw, coming with great strides towards them, the mother bear, in pursuit of her cub. She had just time to seize Sadie, with the little bear, and pull them both inside the door and draw the bolt, when she heard the old bear scratching outside. She was almost paralyzed with fright, for she was not sure but that the bear, in her anger, might scratch through the door with her sharp claws, as the noise which she was making seemed terrible to her. Suddenly, a new horror took possession of her. Supposing the boys should decide to return before their father, as they sometimes did, or supposing, even, their father should be with them, especially if he hadn't his rifle! She looked behind the door to see if the rifle was in its place, and there it was! Oh, what should she do! Every minute her situation seemed more terrible. Sadie and the little bear seemed very composed and happy, on the rug in front of the

stove, but the two mothers, one in the house, and the other outside, were in great distress—each on account of her young.

At last, after exhausting every device she could think of, a new plan suggested itself. She wondered why she hadn't thought of it at first. She had heard that bears liked honey. Perhaps, thought she, they like molasses. So she set a large milk-pan in the middle of the room, and poured the entire contents of her molasses jug into it. Then she put the little bear on the floor, and placed Sadie close to the window in the bedroom, which opened on the opposite side of the house from where the bear was, and in the direction of the "camp," and told her not to move from the place. She then looked to see if the fastenings of the window were removed, so that it would go up easily. Then charging Sadie again not to move, she hurried into the front room, threw the window wide open, then darted back into the bedroom, shut the door quickly behind her, and waiting only a minute to be sure that the bear had climbed in after her cub, she opened the bedroom window, took Sadie in her arms and scrambled out. Not a word could she speak, for her heart was almost choking her with its rapid and violent beating. Every dark-looking object she saw in the woods her terror-shaped at once into a bear, but she kept on and on. Part of the way she was obliged to let Sadie run by her side, but I guess no child was ever pulled over ground so rapidly before. Neither stumps, underbrush, fallen limbs or spreading roots seemed to hinder her progress. Over, through or around them, the faithful mother sped, and at last the sound of the wood-cutters' axes struck her ear. Breathing a silent prayer of gratitude, with renewed strength she went on, and reached the "logging-camp" in safety. There she told her story, and then her strength gave out. A band of the men quickly armed themselves with rifles and axes and started for the house, after being told many times by Sadie not to kill her little doggie. They cautiously approached, crept stealthily up to the open window and peered in. The molasses in the pan was gone, the old bear was gone, and Sadie's little doggie was gone. Mrs. Bruin never called on her neighbor again.—Congregationalist.

Henry asking a Blessing.

Henry had never heard his father pray. A Christian friend while visiting the house, was invited to conduct family prayers, and also to ask a blessing at the table. Henry wished his father would do so every day.

One evening, only Harry and his little brother and his aged grandmother sat at the table, the rest of the family taking tea with a neighbor.

"Grandma," said Henry, "may I ask a blessing?"

"Yes," she replied, her eyes filling with tears.

"O God, bless our bread and milk! Make us good children. Bless pa, ma, grandma. Amen," said Henry. He thought no more about it; but dear grandma told his father when he came home. The father's heart was touched by the example, and he resolved to follow it and have a prayerless house no longer.—Youth's Companion.

The Motherless.

Sitting in the school-room, I overheard a conversation between a sister and a brother. The little boy complained of insults or wrongs received from another little boy. His face was flushed with anger. The sister listened awhile, and then, turning away, she answered, "I do not want to hear another word; Willie has no mother." The brother's lips were silent, the rebuke came home to him, and stealing away, he muttered, "I never thought of that." He thought of his own mother, and the loneliness of "Willie" compared with his own happy lot. "He has no mother."

Do we think of it when want comes to the orphan, and rude words assail him?

The man who goes fishing and sits in a cramp-inviting posture on a narrow thwart from early morn till dewy eve, and calls it fun, is the same man that never goes to church because the pews are not comfortable.