

No. 11.

Vol. I.

THE CHILD'S
BIBLE EXPOSITOR;
OR
Lessons and Records of the Sunday School.

BY MRS. LEONARD.

"When thy word goeth forth, it giveth light and understanding
unto the simple."—PSALM cxix, VERSE 130.

TORONTO, SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 1841.

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TESTIMONIALS.

From the Church, January 30.

We fear that we have been remiss in not punctually acknowledging the receipt of three numbers of "THE CHILD'S BIBLE EXPOSITOR," by Mrs. Leonard,—which have been issued, with characteristic neatness, from our Diocesan Press. We have already expressed our favourable opinion of this little work, in noticing the first number, with which we were some time ago favoured. It contains much instruction that must be peculiarly beneficial to Sunday School Teachers, and we should be glad to see a copy in the hands of every one who has engaged in this interesting department of Christian duty. The publisher will oblige us by transmitting two copies regularly to our address.

From the Christian Guardian's notice of "The Child's Bible Expositor."

A neat little Sabbath School publication; simple in its style, modest in its spirit, scriptural in its instructions, and pious in its tendency.

From the Canada Inquirer.

We have perused a few numbers of this interesting work, published in weekly numbers at Toronto. A spirit of Christian piety breathes through the work, which is distinguished by purity of style and an ingenious method of interesting children in the truths of Scripture, and of fixing them on their minds. The writer will deserve much kind feeling from those families into which her truly laudable and deserving labours may come.

From the Utica Gospel Messenger.

We have received the first three numbers of this weekly effort to be useful. It is in the 12mo. form, neatly printed, each number having 12 pages besides the cover, and issues from the press of Henry Rowsell, Toronto, U. C. We judge that this little work will prove a useful addition to the means of religious training. The instruction is imparted in the way of familiar conversation, and from the specimen before us, is aimed as well at the heart as the understanding. We tender our thanks to the excellent friend who has sent us the numbers before us, and hope the effort will be duly encouraged.

THE CHILD'S
BIBLE EXPOSITOR.

NUMBER XI.

*Lesson from the twenty-third verse of the fourth chapter
of St. Matthew to the third verse of the fifth chapter.*

Mrs. Arnold.—You have now, my dear children, traced our Saviour's history from the time of his birth to that in which he began his ministry in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim. In that land of ignorance and darkness we find him at once actively engaged in the work of his divine mission, and multitudes following him, and flocking from all parts of Judea to hear his preaching, and to witness the wonderful works which he performed, such as no man had ever seen before, and which caused them to ask, "What manner of man is this?" Read, Lucy, the first three verses of your lesson for to-day.

Lucy.—"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

"And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with

divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

“And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.”

Mrs. Arnold.—We will now search for some of the particular instances in which our Saviour's wonderful works were shewn at that time, and other records of his preaching, which confirm what you read in your lesson respecting his employment while he continued in Galilee. Find the ninth chapter of St. Matthew, Mary, and read the thirty-fifth verse.

Mary.—“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

Mrs. Arnold.—In the tenth chapter of Acts, St. Peter thus speaks of our Saviour and his ministry: “That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.” Now look, Elizabeth, for the first chapter of St. Mark, and read from the thirty-second to the thirty-fourth verses.

Elizabeth.—“And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

“And all the city was gathered together at the door.”

“And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.”

Mrs. Arnold.—In the third chapter of St. Mark several of our Saviour's miracles and some of his discourses are recorded. The scribes and Pharisees were probably indignant to find another teacher, and one so much opposed to them, so suddenly attracting immense crowds of followers, and they plotted together to destroy him. Read, Charles, from the sixth to the tenth verse.

Charles.—“And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

“But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea; and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea,

“And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

“And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

“For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.”

Mrs. Arnold.—Of the multitudes who followed our Saviour, many must have witnessed the miracles which he performed; on one occasion, when the house in which he preached was so full that no more persons could find entrance, some people brought a man who was sick of the palsy: “and when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was;

and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay.

“When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.”

Some of the envious and unbelieving scribes and Pharisees were present, and as they were always ready to put a wrong construction upon every word and act of our Saviour, they began to think among themselves that he had spoken blasphemously and wickedly, for they thought, This man professes to forgive sins, which no one but God has a right to do. Jesus however knew their thoughts, as he knows ours, even before they are spoken in words, and he said, “Why do you reason thus in your hearts? whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk?”

“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)”

“I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go thy ways unto thine own house.

“And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.”

Many more of these acts of power and benevolence we read of in the Gospels, which we have not time now to search for; but when we find that our Saviour publicly performed such works as were far beyond the power of man to accomplish, and that they were done in the presence of the many who followed him from place to place, it seems strange to us that the number of

those who adhered faithfully to him should have been so few, and we naturally think that if he was now on earth, and we could see him and hear his voice, we should be ready to serve and to worship him, and to leave every thing else for his sake; but do not deceive yourselves, my dear little flock; the same pride of heart, and love of the world, and the same spirit of opposition and unbelief, and the same carelessness and indifference about eternity, and the same culpable presumption on the mercy of God, which led the Jews to pay little attention to our Saviour's words when he was on earth, are at work in our hearts at this day, and make us cold and heedless of his written word, and forgetful of all he has done for us. The scribes and Pharisees persecuted and opposed our Saviour during his life; they would have silenced his preaching if they could, and they did all they could to prevent its effects upon the hearts of others who listened to it, while all the time they affected a high regard for religion, and a more than ordinary share of piety; but I have told you that there are very few offences against God recorded in the Bible which we may not find lurking in our own hearts if we search diligently for them; and we are guilty of this sin of the Pharisees if ever we lay claim to a character for religious feeling and observances, and are not careful in every particular to act consistently with our profession. And when we read of the miracles, and of the exemplary and much enduring life of our blessed Saviour, and treat his holy word with neglect and indifference, not allowing our hearts or actions to be influenced by his Gospel, we are like the stubborn and faithless Jews, who heard his preaching and witnessed his miracles, and yet were

unconverted. Jesus still lives for us, but not on earth; but he sees and knows as much of your thoughts, and of what is passing in your hearts, as if he were here in his bodily presence. He does not now call you by name as he called his twelve disciples to follow him; but every lesson you learn in the bible, and every sermon you hear from the pulpit, is a call from him to become his children, and to be his followers, and not children and followers of the Prince of this world. There is something cheering and encouraging to Christians when they find as we do in almost every page of the Gospel instances of the mercy and benevolence of our Saviour, which shew that he who is unchanged and unchangeable can look with compassion and pity on the sorrows of poor mortals, and is ready to relieve them. Read, Harriet, from the eleventh to the fifteenth verse of the seventh chapter of St. Luke.

Harriet.—"And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

"Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

"And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother."

Mrs. Arnold.—Many such incidents are recorded in the bible, which I hope we shall come to in the course

of your lessons. At present we must go on to the remaining verses of your lesson to-day, and this brings us to our Saviour's sermon on the mount, which I wish you to learn and to listen to as if the voice which first spoke these words were now addressing them to you. Read, Hannah, the three first verses of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew.

Hannah.—"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

"And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Mrs. Arnold.—Do you remember, Elizabeth, what was said of the "poor in spirit" in the book we were reading yesterday?

Elizabeth.—"The poor in spirit are those who seek for no earthly distinction; court no worldly wealth; are thankful for what they have, and think it more than they deserve."

Mrs. Arnold.—You will find, in studying the Bible, that in no portion of it are we promised peace, happiness, or any other blessing, except such as arise from our obedience and humility. There is no promise of happiness arising from worldly wealth or high station, or gratified ambition. These blessings, if such they are, depend upon our steady adherence to Christian principles, in the love and fear of God. Wealth is only one of Satan's most dangerous snares, if it render us proud, or covetous, or hard-hearted, and lovers of pleasure and ease rather than faithful servants of God. High station only makes us more deeply responsible for our actions,

since many more look to the rich and great for an example than to those who live in humble obscurity, therefore the extent of evil done by people in an exalted station, is greater in proportion to their means of doing either good or evil; so that however successful you may be in life and in worldly pursuits, your success will add nothing to your happiness, but rather take away from it, unless all your advantages are held in subservience to the commandments of God, and received as talents given by him to be used in his service and for the benefit of your fellow-creatures, not in selfish indulgence, or a covetous and grasping spirit. You will see that in the address of our Saviour to his disciples, he describes those who are blessed in a very different way from that in which a worldly-minded person would describe them. He does not say blessed are the rich, or the great, or the powerful, or the successful, or the wise, or the learned. None of those things seem to him even worth mentioning as any portion of the blessings promised to his followers; but he says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." To be "poor in spirit" is to be of an humble, meek, gentle and teachable disposition. We are all poor in the sight of God, whatever we may think of ourselves: the very best of us have no righteousness, nor wisdom, nor goodness, nor strength of our own to boast of; in ourselves we are all under condemnation as sinners, and are, in respect of heavenly things, poor, and naked, and blind, and miserable; and those only are blessed who know this to be their state, and, feeling their poverty and helplessness, come to Jesus Christ for help, and trust to him for safety. Find the thirty-fourth Psalm, Lucy, and read the eighteenth verse.

Lucy.—"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

Mrs. Arnold.—"We have but a few minutes more on our hands, but we will employ them in finding such passages of Scripture as further explain the nature and advantages of the "poverty of spirit" which our Saviour has pronounced to be blessed. Look for the fifty-seventh chapter of Isaiah, Hannah, and read the fifteenth verse, and then go on to the sixty-sixth chapter, and read the first and second verses.

Hannah.—"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

Mrs. Arnold.—"The whole of the fifty-first Psalm is descriptive of that sorrow for sin and humiliation in the sight of God which is sure to arise from the poverty of spirit approved and blessed by our Creator and Judge. Find it, Mary, and read the seventeenth verse.

Mary.—"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Mrs. Arnold.—"And now, as our time is expired, and we must close the lessons for to-day, let us conclude

with a portion of the Proverbs of Solomon, and see what was the opinion of the wisest man in the world on the subject of pride and humility, and their several advantages. Find the sixteenth chapter of Proverbs, Charles, and read the eighteenth and nineteenth verses.

Charles.—"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

"Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud."

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