

No. 15.

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, APRIL 24, 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 Ulica 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 XV.

*Lesson from the thirteenth to the eighteenth verse of the
fifth chapter of St. Matthew.*

Mrs. Arnold.—To those persons who profess to follow him and to live according to his laws, our Saviour says, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." In order to understand properly those impressive words, we must consider to what use salt is applied, and how very badly we should be off without it. You all know that salt is used to preserve and purify things that would perish in their own corruption if they were not salted; it is used to season a great deal of our food, which we should find very tasteless and insipid if we had no such seasoning for it. You have probably never thought of its value from never having been exposed to the discomfort of not having it within your reach; but there are very few of the articles in daily use which you would miss so much, if they were taken away from you. When I was a child, I lived in a part of Canada which was, at some seasons, quite inaccessible, from the badness of the roads, and as we depended upon distant places for our supplies of many

kinds, we were often kept waiting for them for a very long time; it so happened that the settlement was left entirely without salt, from the unusually early breaking up of the roads, and the wreck of a schooner on Lake Erie which was laden with salt for that part of the country, and for many months we were absolutely destitute of it. I never before had known how very valuable a thing it was. We lived in a land of plenty, even to profusion, and were surrounded by farmers who had within their own farms all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life, but the want of salt seemed to destroy them all. The supply of meat for the winter was always killed and salted in the autumn, and as the schooner I have mentioned was daily expected at the nearest harbour for a long time, and the grain allotted to the purpose of fattening the cattle and the pigs was exhausted, they were killed; but owing to the failure in the usual supply, and the warm weather which came late in the season, all the meat in the settlement was spoiled, and great quantities were buried in the fields; then the horses and cattle, which, at a distance from the sea coast, absolutely require to be occasionally fed with salt, sickened from the want of it, and many died. The cows gave very little milk, and, in consequence, there was a great scarcity of butter, and the little we had was tasteless and unpalatable; and the bread was scarcely eatable, and not wholesome. Any one in that place would have exchanged any luxury that you could name for an ounce of salt, and the gift of a little piece of salted fish was valued far more than jewels or gold would have been under the circumstances. We were all more or less ill, from being deprived of a description of food

to which we were accustomed, and altogether, this single want was found to be sufficient to embitter all our comforts, and for a long time afterwards it was felt to have been a check to the advancement of the settlement, from the number of horses and cattle that died during the winter. Now that I have told you how my experience has taught me the inestimable value of salt, let me ask you whether we should have been any better off if we had been ever so largely supplied with salt that had lost its savour? So far from it, that we should only have been tantalised, by seeming to possess what we wanted so much, when in reality it was good for nothing. And now, do you understand why our Saviour calls his faithful people the salt of the earth? It is because they are scattered about in different parts of the world, that their example, and conversation, and labours, and prayers may, through the grace of God, restrain the power of sin and corruption, which, without such a check, would overwhelm the whole world in ruin and condemnation. Wherever they are, the knowledge and worship of Jesus Christ is not altogether lost. They may be few in numbers, and feeble in strength, like missionaries in heathen lands, where multitudes are ignorant of their faith or opposed to it; but while they continue faithful in word and in deed, and are careful to shew in all things the power of Christian principles over their own lives, they will possess a purifying and healthy influence in the community of which they are members, and may hope, by the blessing of God on his own appointed means, to deserve the character they received from Christ himself, when he said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Every true disciple of our Saviour should strive to be included in

these words, however young in years or lowly in station; no good example is ever utterly lost, and no one will be quite useless in this cause, who is consistent and sincere, though the good they do may never be known by themselves until they have passed into another life; but here you see again, my dear children, in what abhorrence an unsound and insincere profession of religion is held by our Saviour, by his comparing such professors with salt that has lost its savour; for this is the most utterly worthless of all substances, and unfit to answer any of the purposes for which it was intended; and so it is with persons who make a hypocritical and inconsistent pretension to piety and devotion, because their general conduct does not accord with the principles they profess, they are sources of grief and mortification to those who truly love and worship God, and they bring a reproach upon religion in the eyes of a scoffing and unbelieving world. Ministers of the gospel, who lead careless and ungodly lives, are guilty of these offences in a very high degree; but, happily, there are now very few who are not exemplary and pious men, and those who are not, soon lose the confidence of their flocks, and seldom remain long in an office for which they are as unfit as the "salt" which has "lost its savour" is for any of the uses to which it is commonly applied.

We find salt very often mentioned in the Bible, and from a passage in Leviticus it appears that it was customary to use it in the meat offerings of the Israelites, which were sacrifices established under the law of Moses to represent the one great and finishing sacrifice made by our Saviour on the cross. Find the second chapter of Leviticus, Susan, and read the thirteenth verse.

Susan.—"And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with ~~all~~ thine offerings thou shalt offer salt."

Mrs. Arnold.—St. Paul applies the same comparison to the wisdom and knowledge which he recommends to his converts in the Epistle to the Colossians. He desires them to "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time;" and continues in these words, "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Mrs. Arnold.—In the next verse our Saviour compares his Christian followers to light, and to a city which is set on a hill and cannot be hid. We all know what darkness and confusion there would be in the world if the light of the sun were taken from us, and we were left to grope our way without it. Christ is the light of the Christian world, and his people, when they endeavour to act consistently with their religious profession, reflect the light from him, and cause it to shine upon the darkness of ignorance and unbelief. In the countries where the Christian religion is not known, and the people "walk in darkness and the shadow of death," we find that the false gods that are worshipped there are supposed to delight in cruelty and crimes. Hindoo women throw their young children into the Ganges as an offering; for those poor deluded people think that the river is a god, and when they are dying are often brought to breathe their last on its banks. Widows in that country are obliged to lie down on a pile of wood,

and shavings, and pitch, and other materials for burning, and are burnt with the corpses of their husbands; and if they refuse, their own children and near relations will often force them to meet this dreadful death, for a widow who lives after the death of her husband is considered infamous, and not only herself but her whole family disgraced. In all heathen countries there are many of those barbarous practices, but all such horrors and iniquities are banished before the pure light of the gospel as soon as it is admitted. The God of Christians is merciful and kind, and has no delight in cruelty and bloodshed, or in any sacrifice except those of subdued passions and sincere obedience; but we need not go very far from home to find darkness, which nothing but the blessed light of the gospel can disperse. There are few communities, even in this Christian land, in which may not be found families and individuals greatly in need of enlightenment, as much so, in many cases, as if they had been born and bred in the midst of heathen darkness. By some the religion of Jesus Christ is openly rejected and despised; and by others, scarcely understood or cared for so much as the most common business of daily life. There are some who call themselves Christians, and who go through the outward forms of worship, but yet continue to live in as careless and worldly a manner as if their existence was to be ended with the few uncertain years they can hope for here. • Let me hope that not one of you, my dear little flock, will ever answer either of these descriptions. I will trust that, through prayer and the study of God's Holy Word, you may be so purified that you may in your own little circle of friends be as salt of the earth,

and as lights of the world, shewing forth the beauty of holiness, in consistency of conduct and humility of spirit.

Our Saviour says of those who set a good example, living according to his doctrines, that they are like a "city on a hill, which cannot be hid." It is indeed impossible to be long associated with the true servants of God without knowing by what principles they are governed. They are not selfish, nor covetous, nor violent, nor exacting; they are gentle and meek in temper, and kind and benevolent in disposition; they are "poor in spirit" and "pure in heart," and they are sure to be "peacemakers," for no contentious, or jealous, or quarrelsome and mischief-making person can be a true follower of Jesus. You may make very little display of superior righteousness, and say very little on the subject of your religion, but if it is shewn by such dispositions, and by a strict line of Christian conduct and a blameless example, it will be like a "city which is set on a hill, and which cannot be hid." There is nothing in this passage of the Sermon on the Mount which should be taken as an authority for ostentation or parade, such as the Pharisees practised. "The tree is known by its fruits," and out of the "abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," so that the natural consequence of the fear of God, which is "the beginning of wisdom," will be a consistent endeavour to serve and obey him in all things; and though no one action is performed with a view "to be seen of men," yet, without display or affectation, "your light will so shine before men, that they will see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven." Look for the fourth chapter of Proverbs, Mary, and read the eighteenth verse.

Mary.—"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Mrs. Arnold.—We will conclude this portion of your lesson with a passage from Isaiah. In this you will find what were some of the good works required as proofs of Christian sincerity, and here we have another proof of how little value outward observances and pretensions are in the sight of God, if they are performed in any other spirit than that of obedience and humility; but that works of charity, and benevolence, and love to our fellow-creatures, whether shewn in relieving their wants or instructing their ignorance, will be accepted as service to God, when they are offered in singleness of heart, as a portion of our duty to him. After describing the self-righteous observances of a fast, such as we may suppose to have been customary with the Pharisees in the midst of their violence and extortion, the prophet goes on to explain what is the fast which will be acceptable to Him who sees the heart. Find the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, Harriet, and read from the fifth to the tenth verse.

Harriet.—"Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?"

"Is not *this* the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward.

"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

"And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day."

Mrs. Arnold.—There seems to have been a general expectation among the Jews, who looked for a Messiah, that when he came great changes would take place in the law as established by Moses, and that the religion of the prophets would be entirely set aside, and a new one set up in its place. Repeat the fifth and sixth verses of your lesson, Amy.

Amy.—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

Mrs. Arnold.—The commandments which were given to Moses are still as much in force as when they were first delivered to the Israelites. Our Saviour honoured them himself, and has taught his people to honour and obey them also, and not only according to their mere form of words, but to their deep and spiritual meaning, which we shall find to be much more comprehensive than appears at first sight on a careless reading of them. He has also assured us, that to the end of time, when all things shall

be fulfilled, not the smallest particle of that law can ever be dispensed with. The jot and tittle were little marks used in the Jewish writings, something similar to the points and commas now in use, and by mentioning them, our Saviour gives us to understand that even in what might appear to us the most trifling and unimportant, the Law and Word of God remain unchanged and unchangeable. There was enough already revealed in Scripture to have preserved the Jews from so gross an error, if they would have studied and faithfully believed their prophecies, for they abound in assurances that the purposes of God and his word can never be changed or destroyed. Find the hundred and second Psalm, Lucy, and read the twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh verses.

Lucy.—"Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

"They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:

"But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

Mrs. Arnold.—Turn to the first epistle general of Peter, Hannah, and read the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of the first chapter.

Hannah.—"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

"But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

Mrs. Arnold.—Find the fifty-first chapter of Isaiah, Harriet, and read the sixth verse, which contains a

beautiful comparison between the perishable nature of all earthly things and the stability of God's word, and the unchangeable and endless salvation which is the inheritance of his people.

Harriet.—"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished."

Mrs. Arnold.—The Law of God, which has been provided for the government of his people, while in this life, is not to be destroyed, and no part of it can be changed until the time comes when, as our Saviour tells us, "All shall be fulfilled." What that fulfilment is to be we also learn from other passages in the Bible. Find the third chapter of the second epistle of Peter, Susan, and read the tenth, twelfth and thirteenth verses.

Susan.—"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Mrs. Arnold.—Turn now to the twentieth chapter of Revelation, Lucy, and read from the eleventh to the thirteenth verse.

Lucy.—"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Mrs. Arnold.—How strange it appears that mortals, with such assurances as this set before them of a judgment to come, should still trifle, as too many do, with their own eternal safety, and seem to think any pursuit or interest, however small, that is connected with their worldly prosperity, of more importance than a preparation for such an awful period, which is sure to come to all, sooner or later,—every human soul must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Now read the last verse of the same chapter, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth.—"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Mrs. Arnold.—We must now conclude your lesson for to-day, my dear children, and I think I cannot close it in a more appropriate manner than in the words of St. Peter in the chapter you were reading just now. Look for it, Catherine, and read the eleventh verse.

Catherine.—"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

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