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No. 2.

Vol. 1.

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, JANUARY 2, 1841.

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EP 7 1933 THE CHILD'S

BIBLE EXPOSITOR.

NUMBER II.

• MRS. ARNOLD AND HER PUPILS.

Lesson from the seventh to the twelfth verse of the second chapter of St. Matthew.

Mrs. Arnold.—Repeat the first verse of your lesson, Mary.

Mary.—“Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.”

Mrs. Arnold.—The persecution which has always been carried on by wicked and designing men against the religion of Christ, began when its founder was but a new-born infant. When King Herod had heard the reply of his chief Priests and Scribes to his questions, and found how much faith was placed in the promises connected with the birth of our Saviour, he sent for the wise men, and enquired of them at what *time* the star appeared. He had already in his blindness and folly conceived a plan for getting the new-born King of the Jews within his power and destroying Him, and it was for this purpose that he sought for information relating to Him. It is probable that the wise men were not at the time suspicious of his evil intentions, and that they

gave him all the information he required. He then desired them to go to Bethlehem and seek for the young child, and when they had found him to return and let him know, that he too might go and worship him. Even to young children such as you are I should think the short-sighted folly and self-deception of Herod must be apparent; he believed that the all-seeing and all-powerful God who had so far guided the wise men on their way would continue to direct them on their journey, so that they would by His assistance accomplish the object of it—and yet he persuaded himself that his own wicked designs would be concealed from them, and that they would come back to Jerusalem and shew him where to find his victim.

When they had answered the questions put to them by the King and heard his treacherous intentions, we are not told whether they distrusted him or not, but only that they departed from Jerusalem, “and lo the star which they saw in the East went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was.” The appearance of this star is the first miracle connected with our Saviour after his birth. It was not properly called a star, but was what we still see very frequently, and call them shooting or falling stars—they are damp exhalations or vapours that rise from the ground, and when they get to a certain height in the air they take fire and generally disappear in a moment; but this meteor, which was called a star from its resemblance to one, continued to burn steadily in the way before the wise men, until it brought them to the place where they found the newborn King.

To most other people our Saviour at this time seemed

to be nothing more than a poor little feeble infant, born in a stable and laid to sleep in a manger—read, Charles, the first seven verses of the second chapter of St. Luke.

Charles.—“And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.

“And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria.

“And all went to be taxed, every one to his own city.

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David)

“To be taxed, with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

“And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

“And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapt him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the Inn.”

Mrs. Arnold.—Except to those who were taught by the power of God to know their Saviour, he must at that time have seemed only different from other children that he was to all appearance more forlorn and poor than they; but the wise men were rejoiced when they saw the star, and they followed it until it led them to the place where Jesus was, and when they came to him they knelt down and worshipped him, and offered presents of great value, “gold, frankincense, and myrrh”, to shew the respect and honour in which they held him. They acknowledged him as their Prince and Ruler, and welcomed him as the promised Sovereign of the whole

christian world; "and being warned of God in a dream that they should not return unto Herod, they departed into their own country by another way." The defeat of Herod's wicked designs upon the life of our Saviour, as well as the failure of all other human devices to overthrow the merciful intentions of God in sending a Redeemer into the world, is foretold in the second Psalm. Find it Elizabeth, and read the first four verses.

Elizabeth.—"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?"

"The Kings of the earth set themselves, and the Rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying

"Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision."

Mrs. Arnold.—It is scarcely possible for words to express more plainly the hopelessness and folly of all attempts that ever have been made or that ever can be made, to destroy the religion of Jesus Christ. Whole nations may deny its truth, and Kings and Rulers may join together to undermine it by treachery, or to injure and weaken it by violence—its friends may be discouraged by people in power, and its enemies may be received and cherished so that all its earthly strongholds may seem to fail, but "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision"; and this is not all that is threatened against the enemies of our Saviour in this Psalm; read, Catherine, the fifth and sixth verses.

Catherine.—"Then shall he speak to them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure.

“Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.”

The death of Herod soon after this period, and the heavy calamities which soon after fell upon the Jewish nation, seems to be alluded to in this passage, but we are not to suppose that those consequences of irreligion and rebellion against the authority of God are confined to any particular period or country—neither our own nation nor any other having once been favoured with the light of the Gospel can hope for any long continued prosperity, when the Word of God is slighted and religion falls into contempt. This Psalm is mentioned in the fourth chapter of Acts as having a direct reference to our Saviour, and to the powerful enemies who banded themselves together against Him; two of the apostles, St. Peter and St. John, had been imprisoned and treated with great severity in consequence of their faithful preaching, which gave great offence to the Jews; upon their release and when they were again addressing the people, they made use of these words, applying them to the period of which we have been reading. “Lord, thou art God, who hast made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is therein.

“Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, ‘Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things.

The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.’

“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

“For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

Mrs. Arnold.—You have been reading the lives of Female Missionaries lately, Harriet, can you tell me any particular verse in this Psalm, that justifies the most confident hopes of success in the efforts that are now making to christianise the heathen?

Harriet.—“Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”

Mrs. Arnold.—Much has been done within the last thirty years, since the civilised world has been comparatively at peace, to carry the light of the Gospel into distant lands, where the inhabitants, in the strong language of Scripture, “sit in darkness and the shadow of death.” Many self-devoted and pious men and women have left their own homes and all that was most dear to them on earth, in order to fulfil the commands of our Saviour, who desired that His Gospel should be preached to every creature, and who has promised never to forsake them who devote themselves in this manner to his services. Read, Lucy, the two last verses of the Gospel of St. Matthew.

Lucy.—“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;

“Teaching them to obey all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Mrs. Arnold.—Too much praise can scarcely be given to those devoted and self-denying Christians, who have sacrificed every worldly prospect, and all the indulgence

of home, and have left all that was most dear to them on earth, to carry these "glad tidings" to the destitute and ignorant in far-distant lands; but the Missionary spirit need not slumber in those who never leave their own homes, for the want of a field of action; the plain path of duty will not, in all probability, carry any one of you beyond your own circle to fulfil this command of your Saviour, yet you cannot be justified if you neglect it altogether. Every one of you, even the very youngest child in this school, may aid in establishing the kingdom of Christ upon earth; none of you are so ignorant that there may not be found within your influence some one still less informed than yourselves in the truths and duties of religion; and young as you are, the influence of your characters and example, if you are consistent in your conduct, and sincere in your desire to do your duty, cannot fail to be useful even now, and will continue to be more extensive and important with every year that you live; and do not forget, my dear children, that it is the same with the contrary view of your characters, for if you are idle, or careless, or indifferent to the religious instructions that are given you, and neglect to profit by them,—if you look upon your Scripture lessons merely as tasks, and shew that you are not in earnest in your endeavours to learn the Word and will of God,—you are not only endangering your own souls, but, as far as in you lies, are hindering the progress of others, and setting your own little thoughts and wills against the kingdom of Christ, and doing that in childish levity and thoughtlessness, which Herod did in his wicked and deliberate rebellion against the Most High. Now read, Charles, the two last verses of the second Psalm.

Charles.—“Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

“Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

Mrs. Arnold.—At the time when the wise men came to worship our Saviour and acknowledge Him as the promised Redeemer, there were in the same country Shepherds, who were watching their flocks by night in the fields, and it pleased God to announce to them also the birth of Jesus Christ: turn to the second chapter of St. Luke, Mary, and read from the eighth to the sixteenth verses.

Mary.—“And there were in the same country Shepherds abiding in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night.

“And, lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

“And the Angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

“For unto you is born this day, in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

“And this shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the babe wrapt in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

“And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the Highest; and on earth peace and good will toward men.

“And it came to pass as the Angels were gone away from them into Heaven, the Shepherds said

one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

“And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.”

Mrs. Arnold.—You now have, my dear children, the first events of our Saviour's life, and that His birth, though to appearances, mean and lowly, was celebrated in reality with a pomp and magnificence greater than was ever exhibited on the birth of any prince or babe of the earth, for a multitude of the Heavenly Host descended from on high to give honour to the new born Prince of Peace, and to confirm, beyond the possibility of doubt, that He was the promised Redeemer, who was to reconcile sinners unto their God, and open a way for them to escape eternal punishment. These appearances, and the peace and good will which they proclaimed, taught the Shepherds the nature and object of the Saviour's mission on earth, and they, we are told, “made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

“And all they that heard it, wondered at those things which were told them by the Shepherds.”

The announcement which was heard at that time from a whole chorus of the Angels of Heaven, was as much addressed to us as if there had never been any other but ourselves to listen to it, for such is the inestimable value of a single soul, that our Saviour would rather have suffered all His trials on earth than have permitted *one* to be eternally lost. Let us, therefore, endeavour to understand and be grateful for our share in the peace and good will that was then proclaimed.—

That Jesus Christ came on earth expressly to be a peace maker, both the prophets that foretold His coming, and Himself, while in the world, and the Apostles, who bore witness of Him, have given us repeated assurances. Find the ninth chapter of the Prophet Isaiah, Susan, and read the sixth and seventh verses.

Susan.—“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the Government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of *Peace*.

“Of the increase of His Government and *peace* there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.”

Mrs. Arnold.—The words of our Saviour himself, as well as the whole tendency of his example, shew him in this character. In comforting his disciples before he was taken from them, he makes use of these expressions: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

“These things have I spoken unto you that in me you might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

We have now been employed for nearly two hours of our Sunday morning, in studying your lesson and a few of the many passages in Scripture that are connected with it, but I hope that our time has not been wasted or misspent for any of us. You must try to remember all you read and learn in this place, as well as in the Church,

to which we are now going. When you are at home, and have leisure to study your bibles, you must find as many texts and passages as you can that support what you learn in the school, and that shew you the truth of it. I wish you to take the bible for your teacher rather than me. All this you may learn for yourselves, if you will read and try to understand it; but always, when you open it, pray earnestly to God that He will enable you to understand and profit by His own book, and you may be sure that he will listen to your prayers, for you must remember this :

“God is so good that He will hear
Whenever children humbly pray;
He always lends a gracious ear
To what the youngest child can say.”

Let us now, before we separate, pray to our Father in Heaven, that He will keep us all under His care and protection for the week to come, and we need not fear that He will refuse to hear us, for we ask in His name to whom nothing is ever refused.



Prayer to be used before the School is dismissed.

Oh, Merciful God, who hast in thy great goodness preserved us through the past week, and hast permitted us once more to meet in peace and safety, have mercy upon us, and grant us yet further time on earth, that we may have space for repentance, and help us, that we may strive to be more profitable servants for the time to come.

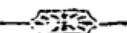
Oh, Gracious Lord, we are very sinful and miserable creatures, and our hearts are by nature so entirely evil, that nothing but thy saving and restraining grace can keep us from all manner of crime and wickedness, such

as nothing less than infinite mercy can forgive. Oh do thou take us into thine own hands, and save us, lest we perish eternally. Take from us, Oh Lord, the love of sin, and contempt of thy word and commandments, and teach us to love whatever is pleasing in thy sight, for thou art full of mercy and kindness, and thy patience and long suffering with thy sinful creatures is marvellous in their sight. Let thy Holy Spirit, Oh Lord, be with us all for the week to come; and let thy Word, which has been learned and read in this place, take effect upon our hearts and minds in the great power of thy strength and goodness, and at the great day of Judgment, when we stand before thee and plead that we have not been ashamed of our Saviour or of his words in this sinful and rebellious generation, do thou acknowledge us and accept our imperfect service, because it is offered in His name who has taught us thus to pray:

“Our Father,” &c. &c.

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