The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1876.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES. SUNDAY, May 28th, 1876.—Lying unto God.—Acts v. 1-11.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 1-4.

GOLDEN TEXT. - "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Acts v. 4.

DAILY READINGS .- Monday, Joshua vii. 19-26. Tuesday, Genesis iii. 1-5. Wednesday, Revelation xxi. 8-27. Thursday, Ephesians v. 1-8. Friday, John xvi. 7-11. Saturday, Ecclesiastes ii. 4-11. Sunday, Proverbs xxx. 1-9.

Analysis.-I. Hypocrisy enacted. Vs. 1, 2. II. Hypocrisy exposed. Vs. 3, 4. III. Hypocrisy punished. Vs. 5, 6. IV. Companion in sin. Vs. 7, 8. V. Companion in punishment. Vs. 9-11.

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA .- "The root of Ananians' sin lay in his vanity. He coveted the reputation of appearing to be as disinterested as the others, while at heart he was the slave of Mammon, and so he must seek to gain by hypocrisy what he could not deserve by his benevolence." "The second great crime which stained the profession of Christianity, the treason of Judas having been the first, and which called down a judgment as signal."—Smith.

Exposition.—There is set before us hypocrisy and its judgment. We have first, the joint deed by Ananias and Sapphira, and next, the judgment of the

two in succession. I. The Joint Deed .- Verse 1 .- But. Marking the contrast between the case of Barnabas (iv. 36, 37), and the present case, a contrast which helps to appreciate better each case, in its principles, its manifestations and its issues. The truer our appreciation of holiness, the truer our appreciation of sin also. No one can so know, and hence abhor sin as the all-holy God. Ananias [Grace of Jehovah], with Sapphira [beautiful as the sapphire stone] his wife. The two are mentioned thus because the sale of the land, and the whole transaction was a concerted, mutual affair, a conspiracy of these two. This shows how cool and deliberate and conscious was this iniquity, because such an affair involved time, reflection, and a fixed course of conduct. It came of no sudden temptation, as did Peter's denial of Jesus. It was rather like the act of Judas in betraying Christ. At the root of Peter's character was loyalty to Christ -its principle was truth. At the root of Judas' character, as also of the character of this husband and his wife, was disloyalty to Christ-falsehood. The power of evil from without led Peter, through weakness, to seem worse than he was; here the power of good from without led the two, through deliberate hypocrisy, to seem better than they were. We have in Scripture God's judgment upon both Peter and these; and that judgment approves itself to our conscience. We feel bound to look to the central, settled principle of character and conduct in our estimates of men. A possession. Consisting of land. Vs. 3.

Verse 2 .- Kept back. Literally, "separated for himself." Thus vividly picturing the division of the money while he and his wife were apart in their own room with no eye [save God's] upon them, keeping for himself one, and no doubt the larger of the two precious piles of coin. His wife also being privy to it. More exactly, "being conscious of it," that is, knowing as he did the whole nature of the transaction. It was with neither a sin of ignorance. Brought a certain part, etc. That is, into the assembly of Christians, as is apparent from what follows, and thus publicly, no

doubt ostentatiously, made the deposit. II. The Judgment upon Ananias .-3.-But Peter. In contrast to Ananias. Ananias. Personally known, not improbably in high repute thus far with both the apostles and the rest; for inspired men were not omniscient, and prophetic knowledge was given only when it was needed. Why hath Satan filled thine heart. This is virtually an emphatic affirmation that Satan has done this, and the question "why" expresses surprise, horror and rebuke. It is of course not a rebuke of Satan, but of Ananias. James iv. 7. Satan on coming to Christ "found nothing in him," that is, no common principles, no | Spirit is a person?

shelter, harbor, or home. By Ananias he was welcomed, as "a kindred spirit." This word "filled" we have found once and again used of the Holy Spirit's presence in the Christians. The completeness of possession is intended in both cases; and thus is the contrast made the greatest possible. To lie to the Holy Ghost, [Spirit]? More exactly, "to deceive the Holy Spirit;" such was their intent.

Verse 4. - While it remained, etc. Showing that, as a disciple, he might have retained his land or the money received for it in his own possession. The surrender of property for the common good was not required, but was to be purely voluntary, spontaneous. Why hast thou conceived, etc. He had no good reason-no real reasonit was from top to bottom, a -piece of iniquity. Thou hast not lied, etc. So David said, in Ps. li, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned." More manifestly was it so here, since more signally manifest was God in the new-born church. All sin, even where it is injury of a fellow man, takes its character of sin from the divine law, and hence is fundamentally against God alone.

Verse 5 .- Ananias hearing, etc. "Gave up the Ghost." That is, expired at once while the last word was yet sounding in his ear. This connection betokens the connection of his sin and his death. Blasphemy against the Spirit; for the Spirit is the last, the completed, the "soul to soul," revelation and operation of God. Mark iii. 28-30. Great fear. Not terror, horror, dismay, but a salutary awe and dread in view of the righteous majesty of God in the vindicating both his holy law and the purity of his infant church.

Verse 6 .- And the young men, etc. The burial seems to us, with our customs, strangely hurried; but in those warm countries, and with the Jews, to whom a dead body was uncleanness, burial was usually on the day of a person's death, unless he died near the day's close, or had been embalmed. Custom may have required still greater haste in case of a sudden death like this. See John xi. 39; Num. xix. 11, and following. No coffin was used (Luke vii. 12-14), and the dead were usually put into tombs or caves. At present, in Jerusalem, burial is deferred only about three hours after death. It does seem still more strange that not even Sapphira was told of her husband's death till after his burial.

III. The Judgment upon Sapphira .-Verse 7 .- Three hours after. Evidently the time required for the burial, which was without the city. Vs. 9.

Verse 8 .- Tell me, etc. A close question-but Peter was speaking as moved by the Holy Spirit-who was now to vindicate his and Christ's honor and purity by the signal example which should be for all coming generations. For so much. Doubtless naming the exact amount brought in by their mutual understanding and complet. Yea, for so much. And no more. Such the meaning, if not the word.

Verse 9 .- How is it, etc. Expressing, as in verses 3 and 4, his amazed and righteous indignation at the enormity of the sin. Agreed together. See on verse 1. . To tempt. Put to the trial. Possibly, as the language here most naturally implies, and that in verses 3 and 4 also suggest, it was a part, of their purpose to test and disparage the claims of the Spirit, as he had spoken through the apostles and others. And shall carry thee out. Words of prophecy.

Verse 10.—See on verse 5. The same cause, the same effect, the same lesson -only emphasized by repetition and solemn iterations.

Verse 11 .- And great fear. As in verse 5. The lesson is for us. We too should "stand in awe, and sin not."

QUESTIONS. -- Vs. 1. What is meant by possessions? See vs. 3.

Vs. 2. Did Ananias pretend to bring all to the apostles? Could he not have acted honorably, while not professing to bring all? See vs. 4.

Vs. 3. How did Peter know that Amanias had lied? What does he mean by charging this sin upon Satan? John viii. 44; compare Luke xxii. 3; John xiii. 27; Gen. iii. 1-5. In what sense was the sin of Ananias "a lie to the

Holy Ghost?" Vs. 4. Were the early Christians under obligations to sell their property? In what sense had he not" lied unto men "? Against whom is all sin primarily committed? Ps. li. 6. What proof have we in this verse that the Holy

that this judgment was to fall upon amusing. On first seeing themselves in Ananias? If not, how was it brought the glass they would say, "Is that me ?" on? What phrase in this verse indicates separation of soul from body?

Vs. 6. Why "wound him up"? Ans. The Jews use no coffins in burial. How long is interment deferred?

Vs. 9. Whom had Ananias and Sapphira "agreed together" to tempt? In what sense tempt?

Vs. 10. Why did God punish this sin of lying so early in the apostolic Church? What does the wise man call lying lips? Prov. xii. 22. What called for the highest praise of the Son of God? Mark xii. 41-44; xiv. 3-9. What does Paul say of men who "will be rich"? 1 Tim. vi. 9, 12.

-Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, June 4th, 1876.—The Apostles in Prison.—Acts v. 12-26.

YOUTHS' DEPARTMENT.

Great and small.

A sparrow, twittering by a door, Seemed to a lark up-soaring high, His anthem at heaven's gate to pour, In rich rejoicing melody, poor dull thing, unworthy birth, A voiceless cumberer of the earth.

But by the cottage window lay A little sickly, pining child, The lark was all too far away, She could not hear his rapture wild But loved to listen all day long The sparrow's little twittering song.

Thus lark and sparrow equally Had fitted service duly given-The one to pour, in rapture high, His soul in music meet for heaven: The other by its twittering To soothe a lone child's suffering.

And, knowing this, I will not fear My song, however faint, to sing; It may be to some suffering ear Some note of mine may comfort bring; In God's great world there's room for all-For lark and sparrow, great and small.

For the Christian Messenger.

Sunday at Home.

Jottings for Boys and Girls about Mission

and Missionaries. The entertaining missionary traveller, Dr. Livingstone, in his note book of travels, has recorded many facts of the greatest interest to 'the world. Facts which will influence the future of thousands, and prove a boon and blessing to Africa's millions. His brave life has been laid upon the altar of missionary enterprise, but his plans and discoveries will enable and embolden other brave Christians to follow the track he has left. After enduring many hardships, he died in the land of his voluntary exile, worn down by disease, fatigue, and want of proper food and home comforts. His faithful men had to carry their master, his disorder rapidly increased, till the 27th of April, when he made his last entry in his journal, which is copied below, that you may see how completely the brave missionary was broken down. The words are few and incomplete, " Knocked up quite, and re main-recover-sent to buy milch goats.

We are on the banks of Molitamo." They crossed the river on the 29th and built a hut in Chitambo's village, and there laid him down to die. They had not long to watch and wait. About 4 A. M., May the 1st, 1873 the end came; the coloured servants found Livingstone on his knees by the side of his bed, his face buried in his hands upon the pillow. For a minute they watched him; he did not stir, then one advanced and touched his cheek, it was cold: Thus died the man who constrained by love, dared and overcame so much. He died, some may say, alone and helpless; but we know he was not alone, the King he served was present to cheer and help, and who can tell, how soon that last prayer will bring down showers of blessing on Africa's sunny land. England has honoured the great missionary, his name is written in the list of worthies, and his bones lie surrounded by the so called great. But his reward is not here, Livingstone's rest and home was above, and now-in the great Fatherland, doubtless he enjoys the Master's

Now to make my Jottings more pleasing to you dear children, I have selected a story about the Africans and the

Looking-glass. Dr. Livingstone, tells us that the tribe of the Makololos in Africa were very concerned to know how they looked. The women, in particular, often came to him and asked for the looking-glass; and he says the remarks which they made while he was engaged in reading and apparent-

Vs. 5. Do you think that Peter knew | ly not attending to them, were very "What a big mouth I have !" "My ears are are as big as pumpkin leaves!"
"I have no chin at all!" "See how my head shoots up in the middle!" laughing heartily all the time at their own jokes.

A man who came alone, to have a quiet gaze at his own face, when he thought Dr. Livingstone was asleep. After twisting his mouth about in various ways, he said to himself, "People say I am ugly; and how very ugly I am!"

But we must not forget that this look ing into the glass is rather a dangerous thing with some young people. They are too found of looking on the reflection of their faces, and perhaps are not likely to cry, with the poor African, "How very ugly I am," but to flatter themselves that they are better looking than others.

There is, however, one glass into which they cannot look too often; it is the word of the Lord (James i. 23-25.) The more they look therein, the more clearly will they detect their defects and perceive their sins; and this will tend to keep them humble before God.

And now let us come to the practical, Bannot every reader help in this great work. Do you say how? My reply is read the following, and see if you cannot devise some way of making a collection to assist the poor heathen.

AN AFRICAN 'COLLECTION.'

During these two months back we have held two anniversary services," says Mr. Roberston of Lovedale, "the one at the Gaga, and the other at Sheshegu, both of which were well attended, the people promising to give you selection of the names of the contributors and of their contributions. This will give you a better idea of our mode of collecting church moneys: Saul...... A ewe, she-goat, and

Leya Mzimba.....Two shillings and sixpence. Nozayi Suvundthla. A he-goat. Nolenti..... A bag of Kaffir corn Xelelo's Children... A bag of Kaffir corn Zokufa's Son..... A basket of corn. Pulani.....Seven shillings. Dyakatya.....Threepence and Zokufa's Wife..... A she-goat

Saul's Wife..... A ewe. Nolenti Kala......One shilling and Mause..... A bag of Kaffir corn. Nolisizi..... A rooster. Namse...... A bag of maize.

Sebenz..... A hen and chicken. "When this money and the price of the produce are collected together (which' however, may not be done for a month or two,) the collection at Sheshegu will have amounted to about £8."

The Spring is coming, and next fall I hope every one of you will have something raised by your own special effort to sell at the market for the mission cause. If so my ink will not be used in vain, and our Editor will feel proud of those for whose special benefit he fills the Youths' Department.

> Your Friend, J. F. AVERY.

Halifax.

"Only a wild flower," said a primrose, "I suppose I am nothing better, and the shade is quite good enough for me. Yet-I think I am as pretty as many of those in the flower-beds, that have so much attention. If I only had the chance they have I should be worth looking at."

Best in the Shade.

"I think gardener," said little Nellie, "I should like my primrose in a better place; it is not seen much there, and it is so very pretty and has such fine blossoms."

"They would not be fine long, Miss, if they were taken out of the shade." .

"Do try them please." And so the primrose plant was carefully removed to a more conspicuous place in the garden. It was very pleased, and put forth as many blossom eyes as possible, to gaze at the sun the better, but they were very weak ones that soon grew tired of the sight.

"I wish I were back again," said the primrose. "It is grand here," but I often feel thirsty and faint as I never did before. The sun does not look so kindly as it did, with a gentle soft light through the bushes; sometimes think he is quite cruel."

"I think you are right, gardener," said Nellie. "Though you were so care ful not to disturb the root, my primrose has altered strangely."

So the primrose plant was taken back. The next spring found it stronger and wiser. "Whosoever placed me in the shade knew best," it said .- Christian her?" asked the gentleman. "Alas, sir!" Weekly.

who would escape whipping.

Lord Macaulay.

He was one of the Scotchmen who have conferred great lustre upon England, for that name includes all the islanders. Burns and Scott and Carlyle and Macau lay are among the great names in English literature during the century, and they were Scotchmen-Macaulay at least on the father's side. But it would not be easy to find a more characteristic Englishmen in literature, and in temperament and character. But yet he had none of the characteristic manly tastes of the English, as they are called. He never played games at school, nor shot, nor swam, nor rode, nor drove, nor fished. He liked books and men, and wanted nothing more. The first clear glimpse we have of him is lying flat upon his stomach on the floor before the fire, reading, and holding a piece of breadand butter in his hand. And this practice, which became a habit, ludicrously recalls Emerson's description of him in the English Traits. "The brilliant Macaulay, who expresses the tone of the English governing classes of the day, explicity teaches that good means good to eat, good to wear, material commodity *** It was a curious result in which the civility and religion of England for a thousand years end in denying morals and reducing the intellect to a sauce-

But however that may be, the story of Macaulay is singularly entertaining. He was full of life from the start, overflowing with it—loud, jovial. His father, the heroic Dissenter, Zachary Macaulay, of Clapham, hears with pain of his son's strident tones in college, and "Tom" ? plies with respect, that he has no more voice than a healthy youth ought to have And there are charming domestic scenes where he blows horns with the children up and down the stairs and spouts droll impromptu parodies, and caps verses, screaming his triumph back into the house, holding the door open for the purpose, as he goes to his chambers, and then, in the explosion of laughter, slamming it after him. He was an "adorable" Tom, and his sisters worshipped him. His mother was proud of him. But father Zachary rather shook his head, and feared the allurements of the world. Some of Tom's early letters would certainly be called those of a "prig" by the boys who did not go to Clapham Academy, but they show how curiously mature was his mind from the first, while they have a great deal of

This, indeed, is apparent everywhere. He saw the ludicious aspect instinctively, and he made grotesque little parodies and rhymes, which are not very important, but which are the evidence of lively companionship.*** His first speeches were very successful, and it is easy to imagine that a fine declamation of the Macaulay rhetoric must have been very effective. But his literary and political successes were simultaneous, and soon made him the London "lion" that he never ceased to be. - EDITOR'S EASY CHAIR, in Harper's Magazine for June.

LITTLE CHILDREN .- People who habitually put children out of their hearts, and close their doors upon them, have no idea how much comfort they set aside-what pleasures, what amusement. of course the little creatures meddle with things, and leave traces of their fingers on the wall, and cry, and "bother," a little; but when one gets into the way of it, as mothers and other loving relatives do, those things become of minor importance. Children say such pretty things and do such funny things, the touch of their little hands is so soft, the sound of their little voices so sweet, their faces are so pretty, their movements so graceful and comical, the whole family goes baby-mad-and it is no wonder. No book was ever written that was half so interesting as a little child who is learning to talk and to think, that is developing from a tiny animal into a being with conscience and a heart.

A gentleman in Paris paid a visit the other day to a lady, in whose parlor he saw a portrait of a lovely woman of say five and twenty. Upon the entrance of the lady her visitor asked her if the picture was a family portrait, and was told that it represented her deceased daughter. "Has it been long since you lost replied the lady, "she died just after her birth, and I had a portrait painted to Use every man after his desert, and to represent her as she would have appeared if she had lived until now."

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