

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 Ananias' 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."

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.

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.

Verse 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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."

Vs. 5. Do you think that Peter knew that this judgment was to fall upon Ananias? If not, how was it brought 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.

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,

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;

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.

Sunday at Home.

For the Christian Messenger.

Jottings for Boys and Girls about Missions 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.

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.

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.

Use every man after his desert, and who would escape whipping.

ly not attending to them, were very amusing. On first seeing themselves in the glass they would say, "Is that me?" "What a big mouth I have!" "My ears are as big as pumpkin leaves!"

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!"

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. Robertson 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 a kid. 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. Dyakatyia.....Threepence and a ewe. Zokufa's Wife.....A she-goat. Saul's Wife.....A ewe. Nolenti Kala.....One shilling and a sheep. Mause.....A bag of Kaffir corn. Nolisizi.....A rooster. Nanshe.....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.

Best in the Shade.

"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."

"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 I think he is quite cruel."

"I think you are right, gardener," said Nellie. "Though you were so careful 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. "Whoever placed me in the shade knew best," it said.—Christian Weekly.

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 Macaulay 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 Englishman 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 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 bread-and-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, explicitly 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-pan."

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 allurement 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 humor.

This, indeed, is apparent everywhere. He saw the ludicrous 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 her?" asked the gentleman. "Alas, sir!" replied the lady, "she died just after her birth, and I had a portrait painted to represent her as she would have appeared if she had lived until now."