

For the Christian Messenger
Mr. Editor,—

If you think the following extract copied from a letter written by a beloved "sailor boy," some years ago, who afterwards came home to linger about a year and then die, may cheer the heart of some other mother, under similar circumstances, it is at your service. The christian lady referred to was written to at the time, and a very interesting and touching letter received in safety which I enclose. The Lord be praised that he has his workers in all places, and that He remembers "those who go down to the sea in ships, and do business upon the great waters," and does not forget their anxious friends at home.

Yours truly,
J. E. R.
NEW YORK, June 8th, 1876.

Dear Mother,—
I have shipped in a barkentine bound to Hamburg. We go to South America from there. I bless God I go this time different than ever before. I feel now that he will give his angels charge concerning me, to keep me in all my ways. I thought I was converted long before, but I find now I was only trying to love Jesus, and now I know I love him. I went up to Mariner's Church night before last, and they have good christian women there and the pastor too, an old veteran in the cause of Christ. While there I saw my condition, I was a sinner in the sight of God trying to believe and not believing. As I was going out a dear young lady took me by the hand and said: "Are you saved?" I told her I was afraid not, she took me into the pastor's study, so much like dear old father's, and there she led me just where I stood. She pleaded with me and prayed with me, and the first time in my life mother I prayed from the bottom of my heart. I have been praying ever since. I will pray as long as God gives me breath, and if God spares me, mother, I will come home when I make this voyage. I received your last letter. Pray for me, that I may be kept near to Jesus. Give my love to all. I told that lady who I was, and where I came from. She said she would be glad to receive a letter from you. Write to her, mother, and cheer her in her work for the interest she took in your boy. Many a wild boy has she spoken a motherly word to. You should see us in the church, mother. Old sailors, old in sin, as well as in years, shedding tears, when Miss S. brings their minds to bear on the memory of their mothers and sisters, it would melt the hardest heart. And now to conclude mother, may God Almighty bless you, and if we meet no more on earth we shall be in heaven, and shall see many an old sailor around the throne. I feel that I could write sheet after sheet, but I must stop, so good by dearest mother.

Your loving H. V. R.
N. Y. PORT SOCIETY'S MARINERS' CHURCH,
NEW YORK, Feb. 26, 1877.

My dear Mrs. R.—
I was very happy indeed to receive a letter from you two or three days since. I rejoice with you in view of the change which God has wrought in the heart of your dear boy H. I met him here for the first time the latter part of December. I became interested in his welfare and talked with him about his eternal interests. I found that he had no hope in Christ, but that he was blessed with a dear praying mother, whose counsels and loving words of advice had never been forgotten by him. He listened to me with apparent eager interest as I urged the claims of God, and spoke to him of the love of that precious Saviour. The Spirit's influences were felt in leading him to receive the truth, and to feel that he was a sinner in need of forgiveness and mercy. He came as a penitent child to Jesus, and was enabled by faith to view Him as his Saviour, and, casting himself upon the mercy of Christ Jesus, the burden of sin was taken away and his whole soul was filled with peace. He was with us for a few days after his conversion, and gave good evidence that he had "passed from death to life." His words of testimony in our meetings, his interest in the welfare of his shipmates and others, and his earnest love for Him who had become to him "the chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely," all cheered our hearts and led us to feel, "It is the Lord's own work and He will guide him henceforth." Your prayers have been answered, my dear Mrs. R. My dear son "will be faithful unto death." I believe he will be kept by the mighty power of God. I am praying earnestly for this. I do not remember the exact date of his departure. I think it was very soon after he wrote you. I have already written him, and am hoping very soon to hear directly from him. Rev. Mr. Murphy is the pastor of our church, a devoted noble man whom the men of the sea greatly love and esteem. We have been richly blessed during the past year. About 600 of these sons of the ocean have given their hearts to Christ. The Lord is still with us, and many are coming to the Saviour. We have a meeting every morning and evening at the church or mission. I enclose two circulars giving you the time of each meeting. Two other ladies and myself are engaged as missionaries of the church and Society. I hope you will pray for us. May God abundantly bless you. With kindest Christian love,
Believe me yours in Christ Jesus,
Miss R. A. SMITH.

The good revival work which has so stirred the cities of Geneva and Bale led a prominent worker to rebuke the lukewarm Christians of Neuchatel by giving utterance to a prophecy. "The Lord Jesus," said he, "has been at Bale and Geneva, and he will come to Neuchatel." This has become a truth, and Neuchatel will not be wanting in trophies of grace.

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson VIII.—FEBRUARY 25, 1883.

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

Acts v. 1-11.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 9-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Lying lips are abomination to the Lord."—Prov. xii. 22.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. The Lesson and Context, Acts v. 1-16.

T. Cleansing Israel, Josh. ch. vii.

W. Declension in the Church, Rev. ii. 1-7.

T. Corrupt Doctrine in the Church, Rev. ii. 12-29.

F. Spiritual Decay in the Church, Rev. iii. 1-6; 14-22.

S. Christians must be Pure, Eph. v. 1-30.

S. Reverence and Godly Fear, Heb. xii. 14-29.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN CLEANSING THE CHURCH.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Lying to the Holy Spirit, Vs. 1-4, 9. II. Punishment of Hypocrites, Vs. 5-10. III. Good Results, Vs. 11.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 1-4, 9.—What did Ananias do? For what did he wish credit? Where was the sin? How did Peter perceive the fraud? What somewhat similar detection by Elisha? What would now be lying to the Holy Spirit?
Vs. 5-10.—What is a hypocrite? In what state did Jesus want to keep his church? How was Ananias punished? What chance given to Sapphira? What had they conspired to do? Why is sin in the church worse than sin in the world?
Vs. 11, (also 12-16).—What is there new about this miracle? What good results? What saying of Jesus was fulfilled? In what manner ought persons to join the church? Are hypocrites visibly punished now? When will they be?
Scripture Searchings.—What does Paul say about covetousness? What will befall hypocrites in the Day of Judgment?

A beautiful picture is given in the intervening verses, of the early Christian communism. Brotherly love so prevailed that the church were of "one heart and of one soul," and they "had all things common." The rich voluntarily sold their lands and put the money into the common fund; and "distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." Among those who joyfully made this sacrifice, Barnabas is mentioned as a shining example. In contrast with his sincerity, the story of the duplicity of Ananias and Sapphira is related.

NOTES.—I. The Sin, (Vs. 1-4.)

Vs. 1, 2.—But, "This little word," says Arnot, "is the hinge on which great issues turn. The door that swings on this sharp pivot opens and shuts the way of life." Here it marks the contrast between the course of Ananias, and of Barnabas and other Christians. Sold a possession. There was no rule demanding this. The communism was not compulsory. Kept back part of the price. Which he had a right to do. His sin was not in reserving either a part or the whole. His wife also being privy to it. Whatever his sin, it was a concerted thing, and not the sudden impulse of an unguarded moment. It was a deliberate plan between husband and wife to deceive. Brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. By the sale of their field, and the bringing in of the money, they in fact professed to give the whole price as a gift of brotherly love to the common stock; but their aim was to get for themselves the credit of holy love and zeal by one portion of the price, whereas they selfishly kept back the other portion for themselves. They wished to serve two masters, but to appear to serve only one. It looks as if this offering of a part for the whole, were made as a solemn act of religious service, in the presence of the church gathered for worship—publicly done in order to gain the credit of a noble deed. It was a sin of vanity, of covetousness, and of falsehood, under the most solemn circumstances.

Vs. 3, 4.—Why hath Satan filled thine heart? This question reveals Satan to us as a personage; an active, vigilant enemy, and not a mere principle of evil. It shows that it is he who sows evil thoughts in the heart, and that he fills the heart of him who does not resist him. The devil is not satisfied with a corner of the heart. Once admitted, he takes full possession. To lie to the Holy Ghost. His aim was not a simple falsehood, but a deliberate effort to practise deception on the Holy Spirit. He brought his gift with hypocrisy in his heart, and a lie on his tongue.

While it remained . . . after it was sold. No constraint was put upon him to sell, or, having sold, to give either a part or the whole. Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Though Satan suggested it, Ananias could have repented it. But, instead, he put it into his heart and cherished it, making it his own. Not unto men, but unto God. The personality and Godhead of the Holy Spirit are taught, vs. 3.

II. The Punishment, (Vs. 5-10).
Vs. 5, 6.—Fell down, and gave up the ghost. Was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira the special sin against the Holy Ghost which Christ mentions? It certainly had in it some of its elements. Their deaths are not said to be by any sentence from Peter's mouth, it is rather as a prophet foretelling an event, that he speaks, than as a judge giving sentence. We may see a reason for this severity in the enormity of the sin, and in the need of guarding the infant church from internal corruptions, which would be far more destructive to it than all external persecutions. It was of the first importance to keep the church pure; and this event would be as a terrible warning to hypocrites for all time. The young men. The younger men of the assembly. Wound him up, or wrapped his own garment about him, and carried him out beyond the city limits, and buried him. Speedy burials are common, and, indeed, usual, in the East.

Vs. 7-10.—Three hours after. The church, or assembly, may have still been in session. The wife came in, ignorant of what had befallen her husband, and, also, that her sin was then to find her out. To Peter's test question, she gives the lie agreed upon, which seals her doom. Awful is the question which carries in it the premonition of death: How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? And terrible is the message: Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Strange, that having witnessed the powerful manifestations of the Spirit, these two should have practically denied his omniscience, and thought that they could practice a successful deception. But they had allowed Satan to fill their hearts, and he ever deceives his followers.

III. The Result, (Vs. 11.)
Great fear came upon all the church. Awe-struck, they witnessed this scene, or heard it related; and such as had identified themselves with the company of believers in profession, and not in heart, grew pale with apprehension. The result was purification to the church, whilst none dare join them with but a pretence of faith and consecration, (vs. 13); and afterwards, the addition of multitudes of believers, (vs. 14).

SUGGESTED LESSONS.

It is well to be reminded of the personality of Satan, and that he continues to walk about, seeking whom he may devour.
We are not responsible for the evil suggested to us by Satan, but entertaining and cherishing it, is the sin.
Satan, though strong and cunning, is not invincible. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
Vanity and covetousness were the parents of the lie of Ananias and Sapphira. If the offspring be so guilty a thing, let us beware of the sins from which it springs.
A lie may exist without the utterance of the lips.
The religious emotions may be stirred, when the moral sense is not purified.
He who attempts to deceive the church of Christ, is tempting the Holy Spirit, who dwells in his church.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

LESSON THOUGHT.—Lying to the Holy Spirit.
TRUTHS TO BE TAUGHT.—1. To be in the church is not necessarily to be in Christ. 2. Enormity of lying. 3. Sin of covetousness. 4. Impossibility of deceiving God.
Our last lesson was about—? (Christian Courage.) To-day we have something different. Who gave the disciples courage? They were filled with—? (The Holy Spirit.) To-day we learn of two people who allowed Satan to fill them with his spirit. Satan is called "the father of lies"; and having his spirit, these people lied to God, and suffered death. Ananias and Sapphira thought they would make a great show of giving, and when they had sold some land, brought a part of the price, and gave it to the apostles, they pretended to give the whole. Satan could not have filled their hearts if they had not let him begin to do so. These two people were members of the church; and the church was having a meeting just then. But will being members of a church

save us? No, not if our hearts are not right. Who must be in our hearts to make us safe? Jesus must be in the heart, and we must be in Jesus. (Make this truth clear and emphatic.) These two people wanted to make a show; they were proud. Perhaps they thought they could serve God a little, and love money and what money would bring, a great deal. Ananias and Sapphira brought a part of their money, but claimed that it was all. Perhaps they did not say it was all; but they acted as if it were. What would you call this? (Telling a lie.) But was it a lie, if no word was spoken? Ananias fell down dead! It was very dreadful; but the lie was worse than the death, and the lie caused the death. When Sapphira, the wife of Ananias, came in, Peter asked her about the price for which the land was sold; and the lie was now spoken. Death came also to Sapphira. They had agreed together to deceive. They loved money more than they loved truth. They coveted the money, and yet wanted the good opinion of the church. First, they thought a lie; then they agreed to a lie; then they acted a lie; at last the lie was told in words. God wants our hearts to be right, and then our acts will be right. In all this, did they deceive God? No, no; for God knew their most secret thoughts all the time. We never can deceive God.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- No. 14. New Testament Historical. 1. Cæsar Augustus, Luke ii. 1. 2. Herod the Great, who held the sceptre of Judea merely by the courtesy of the Roman emperor. 3. Under Tiberius Cæsar, Luke iii. 1. 4. Judea was then reduced to a Roman Province of which Herod Antipas was tetrarch, but was called king. The "Sceptre had departed from Judah"—"Shiloh," the Messiah, had come (Gen. xlix. 10). The Jews acknowledge that they "had no king but Cæsar," John xix. 15. 5. Pontius Pilate, Luke iii. 1. 6. Under Titus, Tho was afterward emperor in Rome. 7. History says that the Christians in the city—seeing the "sign" given them by the Saviour, Luke xxi. 20—fled to Pella beyond Jordan, and not one Christian perished in the overthrow of the doomed city.
- No. 15. "Early to bed and early to rise, Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."
- No. 16. 1883.
- No. 17. Pine, dine, fine, line, mine, vine, wine, tine, sine, nine, kine.

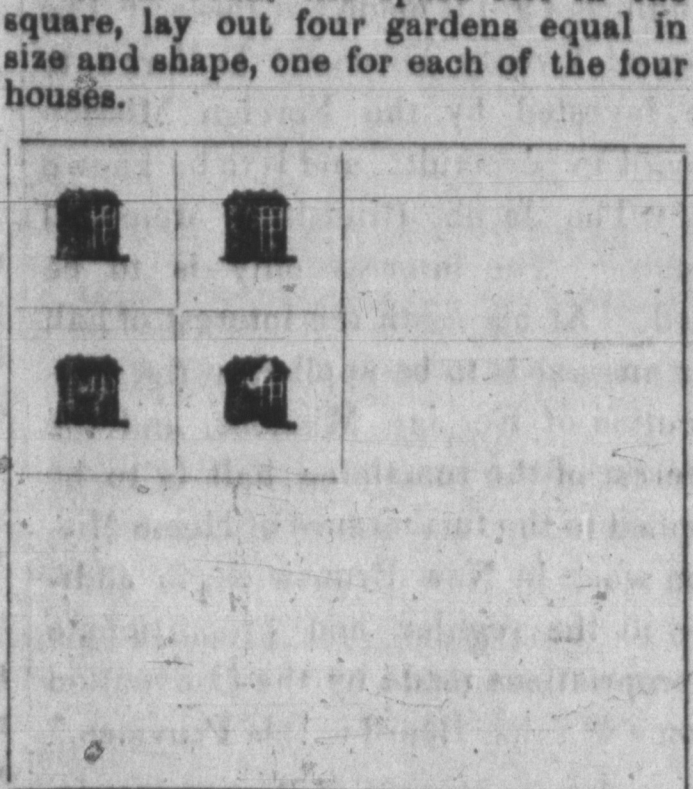
Fiction.

A GAME FROM "HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE."

This is a very entertaining game and especially adapted to winter evenings when families and friends gather about around tables and open fires. One of the party selects and writes down a half-dozen short phrases and sentences, of as varied character as possible, indiscriminately mixing sense and foolishness; the others copy the list.
The game consists in writing a short sketch, anecdote, poem, or any species of composition, in which all of the selected sentences are included, and in the precise order in which they were given. The sentences, and also the sketches, should be short, and the diverse results from their combination are often very funny. There is ample scope in the play for the exercise of keenness and wit, and it can be made to afford a number of persons a very pleasant evening's amusement. As an illustration, the following were given out to a family circle a short time ago: "Blackwell's Island." "A buzzing mosquito." "A coal-black negress." "A frolicsome pup." "It's a pleasant evening."

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- A contribution to the Youths' Department by Rev. John Brown:
No. 1. If the B m put: If the B putting:
No. 2. The season is.
No. 3. Stand take to taking I you throw my
No. 4. I am composed of six letters. Cut off my head, you will see what all men have; cut off my tail, you have an eastern tree; cut off my head and tail, you have what all men try to do; reversing this you have what all men try to avoid. My whole is a Christian name of a modern poet.
No. 5. I am a word of five letters, meaning to secure. Reverse my third and fourth and my meaning is reversed.
No. 6. I am a word of five letters; and the name of a newspaper. Give five different words containing all the letters.
No. 7. I am a word of four letters, and am much admired. Give four different words containing all the letters.
No. 8. I am a word of six letters, of one syllable. Behold me twice and I am a word of two syllables, and the name of a painful disease.
No. 9. I am a word of six letters found in Isa. lili. Behold me, I am a verb; behold me again, I am a kitchen utensil; behold again, I am a beam of light; again, I am an affirmative; again, I am a vowel sometimes.
No. 10. I am a word of four letters, meaning a place of concourse. Read me backward I am useful in large towns.
No. 11. Same number of letters, I am admired by all; read me backward, I am admired by none.
No. 12. The same number of letters again meaning to divide, backward a necessary article in the pantry.
No. 13. The same again, meaning to glide along, backward I am a beast of prey.
No. 14. From the space left in the square, lay out four gardens equal in size and shape, one for each of the four houses.



Find answers to the above—write them down—and see how they agree with the answers to be given next week.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

- No. 210.
1. E agl e. Jer. xlix. 16; Obad. i. 4.
2. L emue l. Prov. 31.
3. I sh i. Chron. iv. 42, 43.
4. J ame s. Acts xv. 13, 19; xxi. 18.
5. A bimelch h. Judges ix. 56. [23, 24.
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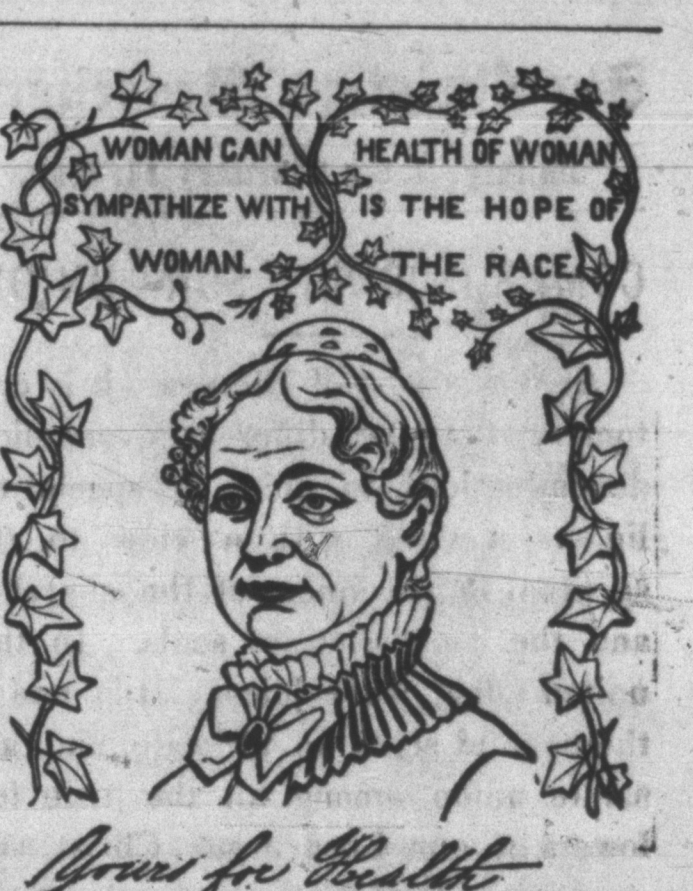
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ELIJAH—ELISHA.



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EDITORIAL NOTICE

FROM THE CANADIAN BAPTIST.

"J. F. AVERY, of Halifax, editor of BUDS & BLOSSOMS, sent us a copy of his magazine. We are very much pleased with it. It is a nearer approach to the English magazines of the same class than anything published here. Its ILLUSTRATIONS are good and its reading matter such as must do good. We wish it success."
THE PRESBYTERIAN WITNESS in its last issue had a word for "Buds & Blossoms." It is a good family magazine.
A Baptist Minister writes: "Buds & Blossoms is nearly perfect in get up, the quantity and price is also a great temptation and surprise. If known it must gain subscribers."

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