

LESSON VI—February 7th, 1897.

True and False Giving. ACTS 4: 32-5: 11.

(Commit to memory verses 32, 33).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." 1 Sam. 16: 7.

PROVE THAT—God loves cheerful giving. 2 Cor. 9: 7.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Question 87. *What is repentance unto life?* A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 2, 8, 223, 85.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* True and false giving. Acts 4: 32-37. *Tuesday.* True and false giving. Acts 5: 1-11. *Wednesday.* Sacredness of vows. Eccl. 5: 1-6. *Thursday.* Warning against hypocrisy. Matt. 6: 1-8. *Friday.* Lying lips. Prov. 12: 13-22. *Saturday.* Insincere offerings. Mal. 1: 6-14. *Sabbath.* Blessing on true giving. Mal. 3: 8-12. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. A wonderful spirit of brotherliness seemed to possess the apostolic church. Their liberality was unbounded. They seemed to strive who should give most into the common fund. Hence arose a temptation to hypocrisy. Some wished to have a reputation for generosity without really possessing the grace itself. Ananias and Sapphira were not only liars, but hypocrites. Their sin was against the "Searcher of Hearts." They pretended to be what they were not.

LESSON PLAN. I. True Giving. vs. 32-37. II. False Giving. vs. 1-11.

32. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common—A better translation is "and the heart and the soul of the multitude of those that believed were one." (Lindsay). "Heart and soul" is a Hebrew mode of expression denoting entire oneness of affection, interest and aim. Our common use of it is borrowed from the Bible. In this condition of the church our Saviour's prayer was answered (John 7: 21; 13: 35). They fulfilled the "Royal Law" perfectly (Jas. 2: 8). For "neither said anyone," the R. V. has "and not one of them said," this is more emphatic and more literal. This community of goods was not the result of any law, nor does it prove that the life of monkish fraternities is a higher one than that of ordinary christians. The wealthier did not give up all their possessions, and when one did sell his property and distribute the proceeds he gave them to the poor and not into any common fund. There was no abolition of individual proprietorship. On this read 1 Thess. 4: 11; 2 Thess. 3: 10, 11.

33. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all—It was easy for the apostles to preach with such a congregation sustaining them by its enthusiasm. The grace referred to is not the favor with which the people regarded them but rather the grace of God which abounded towards them in spiritual gifts and abundant unction and rich blessing, crowning their labors with success. (Hervey). (John 17: 17, 23; Luke 2: 40).

34, 35. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need—"Lacked" *i. e.* were in need. Notice that this christian socialism had these characteristics; (1) It was voluntary (5: 4); (2) It was not universally practised; (3) No one sold all that he had; (4) Only those "in need" were beneficiaries of the common fund; (5) It led to trouble in the church (6: 1-7); (6) The principles underlying it are per-