

Rest.

My feet are wearied and my hands are tired—
My soul oppressed,
And with desire have I long desired
Rest—only Rest

'Tis hard to toil, when toil is almost vain,
In barren ways,
'Tis hard to sow and never garner grain
In harvest days.

The burden of my days is hard to bear,
But God knows best,
And I have prayed—but vain has been my
prayer—
For Rest, sweet Rest.

'Tis hard to plant in spring and never reap
The autumn yield;
'Tis hard to till and when 'tis tilled to weep
O'er fruitless field.

And so I cry a weak and human cry,
So heart oppressed,
And so I sigh a weak and human sigh,
For Rest—for Rest.

My path has wound across the desert years,
And cares intense
My path, and through the flowing of hot tears
I pine for Rest.

'Twas always so: when still a child I laid
On mother's breast
My weary little head—even then I prayed,
As now, for Rest.

And I am restless still; 'twill soon be o'er,
For down the West
Life's sun is setting, and I see the shore
Where I shall Rest.

—Father Ryan.

LESSON NOTES.**FIRST QUARTER.****STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.**

A. D. 30-33.] **LESSON VIII.** [Feb. 25.

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

Acts 5. 1-11. *Commit to memory verses 9-11.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

Lying lips are abomination to the Lord.
Prov. 12. 22.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The hope of the hypocrites shall perish.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 4. 29-37.
T. Acts 5. 1-17.
W. Matt. 23. 18-39.
Th. Joshua 7. 1-26.
F. Acts 8. 13-23.
Sa. Rev. 21. 1-8, 27.
Su. Psalm 51. 1-19.

TIME.—A. D. 30-33. Within two or three years of the last lesson.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—After the release of Peter the Church prospered. The Christians lived together as brethren, preached, taught, helped the poor, rejoiced in the Lord. Many sold their property to give aid to the poor. Among the number was Barnabas, who afterwards became the companion of Paul. In contrast with him, and with the holy life of the Church, an instance of hypocrisy is given in the case of Ananias.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *Ananias*—(grace of God) nothing is known of him but what is related here. *Sapphira*—(a sapphire, or beauty). *Sold*—Ostensibly to give to the poor. 2. *Kept back part*—While pretending to give it all (v. 8). *His wife being privy to it*—Mentioned to show that the sin was deliberately committed. *Laid it at the apostles' feet*—In public, at a meeting, thus seeking to gain notoriety as a generous man and a saint. 3. *Lie to the Holy Ghost*—Because the offering was made to God, rather than to man. 4. *What is remained*—Undedicated to God. No one compelled him to give away his money. 5. *Gave up the ghost*—His spirit, life. Peter did not kill him. It was the direct act of God. 6. *Buried him*—The Jews usually buried their dead the same day they died. 7, 8. *His wife*—Peter gave her an opportunity of confession. But he did not wait for her to know how her husband had died, for then her confession would have been insincere. 11. *Great fear*—Or awe. *On the Church*—They feared to do wrong and to be hypocrites. *As many as heard*—Others feared on account of their sins. And they feared to join the disciples unless they were real Christians.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The state of the Church at this time.—Barnabas.—Ananias and Sapphira.—Their motive.—Their sin.—Lying.—Hypocrisy.—Lying unto God.—Their punishment.—The effect upon the Church.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—When did the events of to-day's lessons occur? What was the state of the Church at this time? (Acts 4. 31-35.) What would have the effect been if only such a picture had been handed down to us? Give one example of heroic self-sacrifice. (4. 30, 37.) What do you know of this Barnabas?

SUBJECT: HYPOCRISY.

1. **AN EXAMPLE OF HYPOCRISY** (vs. 1-4).—Who are mentioned in contrast with Barnabas? Meaning of their names? For what purpose did they sell their property? (4. 34, 35.) What did they do with the money? Meaning of "laid it at the apostles' feet"? What was their motive, or what did they seek to gain by this course? What was their sin? How was it "lying not unto men, but unto God"? What shows that the sin was deliberate? (vs. 2, 7-9) Was the sin worse on that account? In what ways do people commit this sin in our time? If we try to be Christians, but are not willing to give up all to Christ, do we keep back part of the price? Why is hypocrisy one of the worst of sins? What other sins are almost always joined with lying? Is lying a common sin? In what ways is this sin oftenest committed by young people?

2. **HYPOCRISY PUNISHED** (vs. 5-10).—How was Ananias punished? Was this Peter's act? Was the punishment too severe for the sin? What was done with Ananias? How long after this did his wife appear? What did Peter say to her? Her reply? What betel her? What is the punishment threatened against hypocrisy? (Job 8. 13; 15. 34. Matt. 24. 51.) What is the punishment of lying? (Rev. 21. 8, 27.) Why is the punishment so severe?

3. **THE EFFECTS OF THE PUNISHMENT** (v. 11). What was the general effect of this sudden punishment? What upon the Church? (v. 14.) Why this result? What upon those outside of the Church? (vs. 13, 17.) Why is such a story as this related of the early Church? How is it a warning? How a comfort?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. We must be either examples or warnings to others.
2. In the best of wheat there will be some chaff.
3. Lying proceeds from malice, cowardice, or vanity.
4. Hypocrisy is sure to be detected.
5. Sometimes the greatest severity is the greatest mercy.
6. Christians should be afraid of sin, but afraid of nothing else.
7. Sinners should be afraid because they have sinned.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in Concert.)

17. What trouble now arose in the church? **ANS.** Some hypocrites joined them. 18. What did Ananias and Sapphira do? **ANS.** They brought some money, pretending it was all, while they kept back a part. 19. What was their object? **ANS.** That they might seem better than they were. 20. How were they punished? **ANS.** They fell down dead. 21. What was the effect? **ANS.** Great fear upon all, so that the Church was purified and grew, and many others repented of their sins.

A. D. 30.] **LESSON IX.** [March 4.

PERSECUTION RENEWED.

Acts 5. 17-39. *Commit to memory vs. 27-29.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

We ought to obey God rather than men.
Acts 5. 29.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

In vain do men oppose the Gospel of Christ.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 5. 1-26.
T. Acts 5. 27-42.
W. Acts 4. 1-21.
Th. Psalm 142. 1-7.
F. Acts 12. 1-19.
Sa. Acts 16. 16-40.
Su. Phil. 2. 1-18.

TIME.—A. D. 30-33. Soon after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Jerusalem. Solomon's Portico and the Hall of the Sanhedrin, both being within the Temple area.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—The sudden punishment of Ananias and Sapphira not only filled the people with awe and increased the growth of

the Church, but all this excited the rulers to stronger opposition, the results of which are told in to-day's lesson.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—17. *Then the high priest*—Annas. *Rose up*—From his inactivity into action. *They that were with him*—In sympathy. He was a Sadducee, and the Sadducees joined with him in this attack. For all that the apostles had done was in direct opposition to their doctrines that there is no future life, no spirit, no angel. 19. *The angel opened the doors*—This was (1) a direct overthrowing of the Sadducees' belief; (2) Encouragement to the disciples, (3) A warning to the rulers. 20. *In the temple*—The temple area, probably Solomon's Porch (v. 12.) 21. *Sanct*—Same as council, all the council. 24. *Captain of the temple*—Chief of the band of Levites who guarded the temple. *Whereunto this would grow*—What would be the result, how many people would believe, and what might become of their religion. 28. *Strictly*—Strictly. *Filled Jerusalem*—A testimony to the success of the apostles. 32. *We are his witnesses*—They bore witness to what they had seen and heard.—Christ's words, miracles, resurrection, mighty works, changed lives, experienced blessedness. *So is also the Holy Ghost*—By the wonders of Pentecost, and miracles of healing and conversion of souls by the power of the Holy Ghost.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The Sadducees.—Why opposed to the apostles.—The apostles' release.—The Sanhedrin.—Peter's defence.—The exaltation of Christ.—The witness of the apostles.—The witness of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What event had just made a great impression on all classes? Its effect on the people? (5. 13.) Its effect on the Church? (5. 14.) Its effect on what classes do we study to-day?

SUBJECT: VAIN EFFORTS TO OPPOSE THE GOSPEL.

1. **THEY ARE VAIN BECAUSE GOD IS ON THE SIDE OF THE GOSPEL** (vs. 17-24).—Who was high priest? Of what sect was he? Why were the Sadducees especially opposed to the truths of the Gospel? How did they show their indignation? Where were the apostles imprisoned? How were they released? How did this very Act confute the Sadducees? How does it show that God was on the side of the Gospel? What argument did Gamaliel use of this kind before the Sanhedrin? (Acts 5. 34-39) Were they fighting against God? Was it possible for them to succeed? Who were gathered together early in the morning? What did they find? What were the rulers afraid of? (v. 24.)

2. **BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WANTED AND NEEDED THE GOSPEL** (vs. 20, 21, 25-28).—Where did the apostles go as soon as they were released? What would the rulers think of this? What did they preach? Why? Do the people need the Gospel? What has it done for them? How does the fact of this need give confidence in the success of the Gospel? Why were the rulers afraid of the people? How had the apostles "brought this man's blood upon the rulers"? What testimony to the success of the Gospel at that time is found in verse 28?

3. **BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST IS A PRINCE AND A SAVIOUR** (vs. 29-32).—How did Peter reply? Was he right in obeying God rather than man? Why? With what did he charge the rulers? What had God done in opposition to them? In what sense is Christ a Prince? Phil. 2. 9-11. Eph. 1. 19-21. Rev. 17. 14. Dan. 7. 13, 14.) What does he do as a Saviour? How does Jesus "give repentance"? Can we be forgiven without repentance? Of what were the apostles witnesses? Of what are we witnesses? How did the Holy Spirit bear witness to these things? (Acts 2. 1-4, 41-46; 4. 14, 16) How does he bear witness now? (John 16. 8. Rom. 8. 14-16. Acts. 2. 4. Gal. 5. 22, 23.) To whom does God give the Holy Spirit? (v. 32. John 14. 16, 17.) What was the result of this trial before the Sanhedrin?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. God is ever ready to defend and deliver his people.
2. God is wiser and stronger than all our enemies.
3. God delivers us from trouble that we may serve him more faithfully.
4. True religion does right, regardless of the consequences.
5. "If a man will take care of the right, God will take care of him."
6. "There is no having Christ for a Saviour, unless we are willing to take him as our Prince."
7. Where there is repentance, there is also forgiveness.

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