

not withholding part of the purchase money, but, pretending at the same time, to give it all. Discuss modern forms of hypocrisy. Point out that the Greek word for "kept back" has the sense of "purloining" or "robbing."

"Peter said," v. 3. Did he speak under the directions of the Holy Spirit? "Satan filled thine heart." Contrast with the phrase "filled with the Holy Ghost," ch. 4:31. "Lie to the Holy Ghost." Bring out how completely the early church was under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was he with whom its members had to do and to whom they were answerable. "Thine own . . . thine own power," v. 4. The early Christians did not act under compulsion in sharing their goods with one another. "Not lied to men . . . God." Point the proof here

that the Holy Spirit is divine. Did not Ananias lie to men?

"Gave up the ghost," v. 5. Was this punishment too great? Discuss. Make clear that it came from God's hand not from Peter's. "Carried him out." Did this episode occur at some church gathering?

II. PETER AND SAPPHIRA, vs. 7-11.

"Tell me," v. 8. Call attention to the opportunity here given to Sapphira to make confession. "Agreed together," v. 9. How did this make the sin worse? "To tempt." What does this mean?

Encourage the scholars to discuss some forms of lying and hypocrisy to which those of their own age are peculiarly tempted. Raise the question as to whether lying ever pays. Emphasize the importance of truthfulness in all the relations of life.

FOR TEACHERS IN THE INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT

Teachers in the Intermediate Department should study carefully the scholars' materials in the *INTERMEDIATE QUARTERLY OF LEAFLET*.

The Bible faces the ugly facts of human life, so we have this sin of Ananias and Sapphira as a dark blot upon the fair page of the early church life. Have the class observe the contrast between this passage and ch. 4:32-37.

Two False Disciples, vs. 1, 2. How is the name Ananias looked upon to-day? It had an honored place in the Old Testament, for it is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew "Hananiah," meaning "favored of the Lord." The reminder of Jehovah in the last syllable "ah" should have been an incentive to righteousness to any Jew. Ask the pupils for an Old Testament reference to one who bore the name worthily. Question the class about the nature of the temptation that came to these false disciples. The act of Barnabas (4:37), plainly indicated that Ananias and Sapphira wanted to appear more brotherly than they were. This hypocrisy leads to the further sin of lying, acted on the part of Ananias and expressed in words on the part of Sapphira. Have the pupils tell how serious the spread of this sin would have been for the church.

A Stern Rebuke, vs. 3-6. Peter's rebuke shows how seriously he viewed this sin. From his own experience, he would remember how nearly he had been cut off from any con-

nection with Christ. And he would have a horror of the far-reaching effects of such sin. The sternness of the rebuke is seen when we consider Peter's terrible indictment, v. 3. The Holy Spirit is at the very centre of the church's life, and the attempt to deceive the church is thus a sin against the Holy Spirit. Ask the pupils to find words of Christ which indicate that every sin against a fellowman is a sin against him, Matt. 25:40. Seek to fasten the impression of this truth in the minds of the pupils. Note how Peter lays bare the nature of Ananias' sin, and shows to us also the folly as well as the sin of this deception; v. 4.

An Opportunity to Repent, vs. 7-10. From the question of Sapphira in v. 8 we may show an opportunity to repent. All detection serves this end, if accepted in the right way. Have the class discuss whether the old saying, "Be sure your sin will find you out," expresses a cruel or beneficent law. If sin could remain hidden would it not have a much larger place in human life? But Sapphira did not embrace the opportunity to repent of hypocrisy. She added an open lie. Does "agreed together" (v. 9) indicate deeper guilt? May it also express a sad comment on the ill-use of the sacred bonds of marriage? Instead of