

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON VIII.

Feb. 25, 1883. [Acts 5: 1-11.]

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 9-11.

(Revised Version.)

But a certain man named Ananias with Sapphira, his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost; and great fear came upon all that heard it. And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him.

And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much. But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out. And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost; and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.—Prov. 12: 22.

TOPIC.—Lying unto God.

LESSON PLAN.—1. A TERRIBLE SIN, vs. 1-4. 2. A TERRIBLE JUDGMENT, vs. 4-10. 3. A MIGHTY EFFECT, v. 11.

Time.—A. D. 30-34, same time after the last lesson. It is impossible to determine the exact date. Place.—Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTORY.

The disciples were bound together in the closest sympathy and love. They were of one heart and one soul. Those that had houses or lands sold them, so far as was necessary to meet the wants of the poor. This was not done by all, nor was it obligatory upon any. Some did this, and all who had money, even when they did not lay it down at the apostles' feet, held it subject to the need of others. A bright example of one who gave up all is recorded at the close of chapter 4. In our lesson-day we have, in dark contrast with this, an example of pretended sacrifice and deceit, and the swift punishment with which it was visited.

LESSON NOTES.

V. 1. A POSSESSION—a piece of land (see v. 3). V. 2. KEPT BACK—bringing apart, as if that had been the whole. BEING PRIVY TO IT—knowing of the fraud and consenting to it. V. 3. WHY HATH SATAN—the devil is a liar and the father of it. John 8: 44. TO THE HOLY GHOST—in trying to deceive the apostles, who were filled with the Holy Ghost and acted under his guidance. V. 4. WHILE IT REMAINED—he had perfect liberty to keep the land, and when sold to keep the money. He had not been required to bring any of it. WHY HAST THOU—though the lie was of Satan, it was also of Ananias. The devil can fill no heart without that heart's consent. James 1: 7. UNTO GOD—the Holy Ghost is a person and God. V. 5. FELL DOWN—God took the case into his own hand and inflicted upon him a terrible judgment. It may seem to us severe, because men do not always receive the punishment they deserve. V. 6. WOUND HIM UP—wrapped his garments about him. V. 8. SHE SAID—if Ananias only acted the lie, it was none the less a lie; we may be guilty of falsehood without speaking a word. But Sapphira boldly put it in words. V. 9. TO TEMPT—to try whether the Spirit could be deceived by a lie—a direct and impious affront to God the Holy Spirit. V. 10. SHE FELL DOWN—an awful punishment for an awful sin. V. 11. GREAT FEAR—first upon those who were present, and afterward upon all who heard of it. Doubtless it taught a needed lesson and kept others from repeating the sin.

TEACHINGS:

- 1. We should hate and shun a lie.
2. We may lie in act as well as in word.
3. God abhors a lie, and lying lips are his abomination.
4. God knows and sees every secret deed and thought.
5. Sin will most surely meet its punishment.

LESSON IX.

March 4, 1883. [Acts 5: 17-32.]

PERSECUTION RENEWED.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 27-29.

(Revised Version.)

But the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy, and laid hands on the apostles, and put them in public ward. But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said, Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard this, they entered into the temple about day-break, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison-house to have them brought. But the officers that came found them not in the prison; and they returned, and told, saying, The prison-house was found shut in all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. Now that when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning them whereunto this

would grow. And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in the prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, but without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, We straitly charged you not to teach in this name; and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things: and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—We ought to obey God rather than men.—Acts 5: 29.

TOPIC.—We must obey God rather than men.

LESSON PLAN.—1. THE WRATH OF MAN, vs. 17-18. 2. THE POWER OF GOD, vs. 19-23. 3. THE CHARGE OF THE PRIESTS, vs. 24-28. 4. THE ANSWER OF FAITH, vs. 29-32.

Time.—A. D. 34, not long after the last lesson. Place.—Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTORY.

After the terrible judgment recorded in our last lesson the apostles continued their ministry with great effect. Many miracles were wrought by them, and multitudes were added to the number of believers. These things roused the Jewish rulers to arrest the apostles and cast them into prison. Our lesson tells us what followed the arrest.

LESSON NOTES.

V. 17. THE HIGH PRIEST—probably Annas, WITH HIM—in sympathy with him in this persecution. SADDUCEES—a Jewish sect which denied the resurrection and future life. If Christ had indeed risen, as the apostles declared, this doctrine of the Sadducees was false; hence the bitterness of their opposition. V. 19. OPENED THE PRISON DOORS—the eyes and ears of the keepers being supernaturally dulled. V. 20. GO—they were released, not for concealment and flight, but to go back to the very spot where they were arrested. THE WORDS OF HIS LIFE—salvation through the crucified and risen Christ—the very doctrine that had roused the wrath of the priests and Sadducees. V. 21. CAME—to the place of meeting. THE COUNCIL—the Sanhedrim. SENATE—the elders of the people, men of age and influence. V. 22. THE OFFICERS—the attendants who executed the orders of the Sanhedrim. V. 23. SAYING—these particulars showed that the prisoners had not escaped by the neglect of the guard. V. 24. CAPTAIN OF THE TEMPLE—of the temple guard. WOULD GROW—what the result would be. V. 25. BEHOLD—the apostles had not fled, nor were they skulking in silence, they were at the work. V. 26. WITHOUT FEAR—their peace of mind was on the side of the apostles. V. 28. SVAINTLY—strictly, expressly, IN THIS NAME—the name of Jesus. THIS MAN'S BLOOD—ye mean to fix on us the crime of putting to death an innocent man. V. 29. OBEY GOD—God commanded them to preach Jesus, the rulers forbade it. Revised Version, "We must obey God rather than men," expressing not mere duty, but necessity. V. 31. EXALTED—lifted up to honor, as ye lifted him up to shame. WITH HIS RIGHT HAND—by his power. PRINCE—as having authority, and so to be obeyed. SAVIOUR—as using his authority to give salvation—"able to save to the uttermost." Heb. 7: 25.

TEACHINGS:

- 1. God can easily deliver his servants from any danger.
2. Angels are God's messengers to minister to his people.
3. What God commands we should do, even if it bring trouble or danger.
4. Christ gives penitence, as well as pardon to the penitent.
5. We should always be witnesses for Christ.

HOI MU'S STORY.

AS TOLD BY HERSELF.

Hoi Mu is now the matron of an orphanage sustained by the American Methodist Episcopal mission in Foochow, China. Here is her story:

"Hoi Mu, your face always looks happy. Have you had such a cheerful face all your life?"

She answered, "Alas, no! A happy face is the result of a happy heart, and my happy heart only came to me fourteen years ago. Before that, from the day I was born, an unfortunate girl-baby, my life was full of sorrow. My father died before I was born, and left my mother with two little daughters and no son. The neighbors comforted my mother by telling her I would be a son; but, when I was born, my mother's disappointment and vexation were so great that she sank in a swoon, and lay as one dead for a day and a night.

"When I was three months old, my mother gave me away to a woman who wished to raise me to become a wife for her little son. In this new home they were not unkind to me; but, when I was only a few years old, there was great scarcity of food through all the province, on account of drouth, and for months and months I never knew what it was to have enough to eat. I was often sick and all my recollections of these childhood years are of almost constant misery and suffering.

"When I was fourteen years old, the boy

I was to have married died. Then there was no more need for me in that family; and they, being very poor and greatly in need of money to procure food for themselves, were glad to dispose of me for \$50 by betrothing me into a family in the mountains. The son in this family, whose wife I was to become, was a tailor, and twenty-one years older than myself. I was married to him when I was eighteen years old, but, oh! I was very unfortunate. Our children, one after another, were born and died, only living to be a few months or a year old. The neighbors all said I was possessed of an evil spirit, whose blighting influence was seen in the destruction of my children. I worshipped the idols with more zeal than ever. I hired a woman to embroider a pair of shoes for the mother goddess; and, with incense and candles to burn before her, I carried them to the temple where she sat, and put them upon her feet, and took in exchange the older pair she had been wearing, and carried them home and hung them in my bedroom, thinking I would thus curry her favor and protection into our home. We were poor, and could ill afford this expense for incense and offerings; but I would go without food rather than fail to fulfil my vows.

"At that time I had only one child, a boy, the only one of eight who lived. Another daughter was born, but in a few days died; and I took a neighbor's little girl-baby, and nursed her to be a wife for my boy. She was three years younger than he. When she was four years old, my last baby was born, and three months afterward my husband died. Then followed such a struggle for food, for I was weak and all broken down in health.

"I worked hard from daylight till dark, cutting wood, and carrying it in bundles several miles down the mountain-side to the north gate of the city, where I sold it for a few cash, with which I bought rice for my three precious little ones depending on me. As time passed on, they were well and thriving, and I was hopeful and contented. But when my girl was three years old, she took small-pox and died, and again I bewailed my unhappy lot; but I had no time to give up to grief. Two little boys were still calling to me for food, and the rainy season was coming on, when I must have a peck of rice ahead or suffer hunger. Indeed, many times I had nothing but a drink of the watery gruel off the boiling rice to satisfy my hunger, that I might leave the rice for my children.

"Sometimes when it rained many successive days, a kind neighbor gave me work to do indoors; and often he hired me in planting and harvest time, paying me three cents a day and my food. When my boy was sixteen years old, he was no longer a child, and under the protecting care of the mother goddess; so, with incense and thank-offerings, I carried to her another new pair of shoes, and also returned the old ones, placing them by her side, that some other unfortunate mother might carry them home with her.

"It was about this time that I first heard of Christianity. A missionary came to my village and preached the 'Jesus doctrine,' and two of my neighbors believed, and told me that this Jesus religion was what I needed; and I no sooner heard it than I believed, and immediately took down and destroyed those worthless idols on which I had leaned so long in vain. Happiness came to my poor heart, and I was the first woman in the village to ask for baptism and admission to the church. That was fourteen years ago, I have had many trials since, but I have had the joy of the Lord in my heart all the time. Only about thirty adults of our village are Christians, and during my vacation I want to do all I can to get them to leave their idols and learn of Jesus.

"I am joyful in prospect of my heavenly home. I am trusting the Lord in everything, and trying to do all the good I can. My family all love the Saviour."—Mission Dayspring.

THE NORTHERN MESSENGER.

The Messenger has done very well this year and shows a fair advance in circulation. But we look to the spring and summer time for a still greater advance. Our pictures are taking very well this year. One is given for each new subscriber sent us. The names and descriptions of these pictures are given in the last column on this page. We give

below portions of some of the letters we have had concerning them.

MILLSTREAM, Kings, N.B., Jan. 22, 1883.

DEAR SIR:—The pictures duly received and I have pleasure in stating that I consider them very beautiful—that the trouble taken in getting up the club has been fully repaid. The paper is all that can be desired. FRED P. GOOD.

PARIS, Jan., 20, 1883.

DEAR SIR:—I received the pictures you so kindly sent me. I am well pleased with them, for which accept my sincere thanks. WM. J. GRAHAM.

LENNOXVILLE, Jan. 18, 1883.

DEAR SIR:—I received the pictures safely, and I am well satisfied with them. NELLIE BOWK.

HOUGHTON CENTRE, Jan. 17, 1883.

DEAR SIR:—I am highly pleased with the pictures thanking you kindly for them. CHARLES MILLARD.

1.—THE INFANT MOSES. This beautiful and celebrated picture by De La Roche shows in the foreground Moses, a chubby little baby, lying in his cradle made of bulrushes. He is a beautiful, lively, little fellow with eyes wide open, and looking seriously, as if before them were passing all the events of his future history. If the original Moses were but half as interesting in appearance as this picture represents him to be, it is no wonder that Pharaoh's daughter took such an interest in him. Just behind the cradle and half hidden in the reeds that are growing on the bank, stands his sister Miriam looking earnestly across the river.

2.—THE BUGLE CALL AFTER THE BATTLE. In a scene of a different nature. On an eminence in the field where the battle had been fought is the bugleman on horseback sounding the call to form into line. The horses of a cavalry brigade hearing the call, of themselves respond and gallop into line, some of them wounded, some of them unwounded, but all valorous. It is a touching picture—and an animal counterpart of the Roll Call.

3.—LASSING WILD HORSES. This is another exciting horse picture. The herd of wild horses are dashing down a slope pursued by the Mexicans, who are throwing the lasso around the necks of some of them. There is life in every line of this picture.

4.—SIMPLY TO THY CROSS I CLING. This is an old favorite. Most of our readers have seen it in one form or another. The cross surrounded by a flood of light, the figure clinging to it with upturned face full of hope, the waves dashing against the rock on which the cross stands, and the dark hand pulling away the piece of wreck that might have been a support. But holding to the cross she is secure—safe above the dashing waves.

5.—HARBOR SCENE AT NIGHT. This is one of the most striking of all. It cannot be described. The play of light and shadow is exquisite.

6.—A BOY IN A JUNGLE. This is a picture of a boy in a jungle as ferocious an animal as well can be imagined. In his cage in the menagerie having a grand frolic. This pair of pictures will just suit the boys.

7.—AFTER DUCKS. This represents an Irish spawnt dussling through the reeds after a duck and makes a very pretty picture.

8.—GOING TO SCHOOL. A very pretty picture of a Normandy peasant girl dressed in the picturesque costume of her country with books and basket going to the school.

9.—PORTRAIT OF ROBERT BURNS. This excellent portrait we presented last year to subscribers of the Witness on certain conditions.

WHO CAN GET THESE PICTURES? Everybody who sends one new subscription to the Messenger will receive one of these pictures neatly done up in a roll so that it will not be creased or in any way injured, and a picture will be sent for every new subscriber obtained. The subscriptions of Two Old Subscribers in addition to one's own will count as one new one.

CLUB RATES.

THE CLUB RATES for the "MESSENGER," when sent to one address, are as follows:—

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