

surrender of all their property was the option of the Christians—but his sin lay in his desire to secure credit from his fellows for a sacrifice which he had not made. Such a quality of

heart cannot be concealed from God, although no Peter's eye may discern it in our lives. We cannot deal fast and loose with sacred things.

### FOR TEACHERS IN THE ADULT DEPARTMENT

Teachers in the Adult Department should study carefully the scholars' materials in the HOME STUDY QUARTERLY or the PATHFINDER.

In order to understand the lesson to-day, it is necessary to relate it to the closing part of the previous chapter, ch. 4 : 32-37. What remarkable development of Christian brotherhood had come about in the church at Jerusalem? What ground for its growth is suggested in v. 32? Point out that it was a noble idea springing from unselfishness. Point out, too, that the whole scheme of communism was voluntary. Perhaps the teacher might encourage a short discussion regarding such community of goods. What would be its advantages? What its defects? Have we any evidence that it was practised by any of the early Christians outside of the church at Jerusalem? Call attention to our introduction to Barnabas, one of the finest characters in the New Testament. Can the class suggest any reasons why his generosity is specially mentioned here? Now take up our lesson passage :

1. *The apparent generosity of Ananias and Sapphira*, vs. 1, 2. Show the force of the introductory word, "but," as suggesting that what we are to be told is a contrast to what has just been said. Barnabas sold his possession, and gave the whole price to the Christian community. Wherein did the action of Ananias and Sapphira differ from his? Point out that the spirit of generous giving was in the air. Barnabas had re-

sponded to it. Ananias and his wife had felt the power of it too, but in a different way. Is it unfair to them to say that the chief thought in their minds was the thought of the credit and praise they would receive for their generosity?

2. *The sin and punishment of Ananias and Sapphira*, vs. 3-11. Make it clear wherein the sin of these two lay. It was not in the fact that they had kept back part of the price, had they frankly said so. It was in the fact that they were seeking to give the impression that they were dedicating the whole to God. Show how Peter, with keen insight, reads their hearts, and condemns their hypocrisy. Remind the class of the suggestive remark of Montaigne that the man who lies is playing the coward toward men, but is willing to brazen it out with God. In this case, Peter accuses Ananias and his wife of lying, or trying to lie, to God himself. What tragic punishment overtook the two hypocrites?

3. *The sin of hypocrisy*. Point out that all lies are bad, but that the lie that is acted is the worst of lies. Show how truth is not simply a matter of speech, but of life. It looks as if Ananias and Sapphira had not told any lie, what they did was to act one. Remind the class that the thing which more than any other aroused the anger of Jesus was sham, insincerity, hypocrisy.

### FOR TEACHERS IN THE SENIOR DEPARTMENT

Teachers in the Senior Department should study carefully the scholars' materials in the HOME STUDY QUARTERLY or LEAFLET.

The teacher, in presenting this lesson, should be careful to get before the minds of the scholars, its background in the spirit of brotherhood and generosity, which marked the early church (see ch. 4 : 31-37). Ananias and his wife wished to get credit for a spirit of the same kind without making the sacrifice to which it moved others. The Senior Topic, MODERN FORMS OF HYPOCRISY, should be

kept in view in a study of the two parts of the lesson.

#### I. PETER AND ANANIAS, vs. 1-6.

"But," v. 1. This word marks the contrast between the selfishness and hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira and the generous self-sacrifice of the early church in general. "Kept back part of the price," v. 2. Get the scholars to see clearly what is to be condemned here,—