

2. *The sin specifically charged against Nadab and Abihu is the offering of strange fire before the Lord.* This means fire other than that which the Lord had commanded. The first victims laid upon the altar were consumed by supernatural fire, ch. 9 : 24. This was to be kept alive perpetually. Coals from the altar thus consecrated were in every case to be used in burning incense, Lev. 16 : 12. It is true that the Levitical enactment was later than this offence, but it is plain from the first verse of the lesson that the sons of Aaron must have known that they deliberately disregarded the Divine command. Their's was not a sin of ignorance. They knew the Lord's will and did it not, but did something else. Hence the inexcusable criminality of their conduct, Luke 12 : 47.

3. *The aggravations of the sins of Nadab and Abihu.* These are manifestly : (a) The distinction which they enjoyed as sons of Aaron, and the two eldest sons. This alone made them men of note in Israel. (b) They had accompanied Moses and their father to the summit of the holy mount and there they had a vision of God, Ex. 24 : 9. (c) They had just been consecrated to the priestly office, and thus were brought nigh unto God, v. 3. This was no small dignity and responsibility. It invested them with immeasurable influence in relation to the people. It is to be remembered that example descends. We instinctively imitate those who are above us in the social and religious world. When those high in church and state are godly, it is well with the community, and when they go aside from and contravene the law of God, the influence of their example is pre-eminently pernicious.

4. *The judgment of God upon Nadab and Abihu.* (a) It was swift and terrible, fitted to check presumption and wilful temerity. "God is not mocked," Gal. 6 : 7. (b) It was intended to impress the absolute need of sanctity on the part of those "who came near to the Lord", Ex. 19 : 22. (c) God was thus "sanctified" and "glorified" in the sight of the whole nation. He is sanctified in his people (v. 3) in two ways : by their conformity to His will—their reverence and obedience, and by the judgment he inflicts for their iniquities. In the latter

manner the purity of His kingdom or church has been guarded ; for example, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5 : 1-10. (d) God emphasized His displeasure against the sins of Nadab and Abihu by forbidding their father and two brothers to follow the usual custom of mourning for them and by enjoining special lamentation by the people, v. 6.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

The ground plan of the tabernacle in the Blackboard Review of last Sabbath's lesson will afford a good starting point. Run over the various divisions of the tabernacle, its altars, etc. Then have the scholars mark the spot where the awful tragedy of this Lesson occurred—the brazen altar in the outer court.

It was a sad close to a glad day. Have the events of ch. 9 well in hand—the inauguration service, the appearance of the glory (v. 23), the fire that came down upon the altar, and the reverent joy of the people, v. 24.

What a sudden eclipse ! the sin of rash and foolish men and the punishment that followed. It is a gloomy lesson ; but sin is darkness, and its punishment is black doom.

The Lesson Plan (See page 309) is simple and may be readily followed.

1. *A Great Sin*, v. 1. Ask Ques. 14 and 83 of the S. Catechism. "What is sin?" and "Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?" Then point out wherein this sin was a breach of God's commandment (See Exposition, v. 1. Be sure that the words "censer," "incense," etc., are understood). The aggravations of this sin were that they were priests, and the high priest's eldest sons ; that it was committed at the very altar of God ; and followed on God's plain demonstration of the right mode of approach, ch. 9. Impress it by pertinent illustrations that guilt is in proportion to knowledge and privilege—the few and the many stripes, Luke 12 : 47, 48.

2. *An Awful Doom*, vs. 2-7. Awful in its swiftness, in its terrible nature, in its fearful result. Compare Acts 5 : 1-10. It was awful in its justness, too—even Aaron the stricken father "held his peace," v. 3. Oh, God is holy. No wonder that Isaiah cried out, Isa. 6 : 5. Pause to notice in vs. 6, 7 how the