

Lesson VI.

THE SIN OF LYING

February 9, 1902

Acts 5: 1-11. Study Acts 4: 33 to 5: 11. Commit to memory vs. 3-5. Read James 3.

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 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.

3 But Peter said, Ananias why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, and wound him up, and

Revised Version—1 Did it not remain; 2 How is it that thou hast? 3 Upon all that heard it; 4 Margin, Greek, younger; 5 And wrapped him round, and they; 6 But Peter; 7 They; 8 And she fell down immediately; 9 Gave up; 10 And they carried her out and; 11 The whole; 12 All that heard.

carried him out, and buried him.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then 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 shall carry thee out.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

EXPLANATION

Connection—Having been released by the Council, Peter and John returned to the rest of the disciples, and as they prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled, and the Holy Spirit was poured out afresh, to strengthen their faith so sorely tried by this sharp persecution (4:23-31). A new difficulty arose however, not without, but within, the Church. The early Christians were one in thought and affection like the members of a family, sharing their goods readily with one another (v. 32). The Church, too, was active in work, and all enjoyed the favor of God, and lacked nothing, those who had property selling it for the benefit of the needy (vs. 33, 34). An instance of this beautiful charity is seen in the case of Barnabas (vs. 35-37.) It is also in striking contrast to the hypocrisy of Ananias, with the sad account of which the lesson is concerned.

1, 2. But; bringing in a strong contrast. Ananias; the Greek form of Hannaniah (Dan. 1:6, 7), meaning "Jehovah pities," or of Ananiah, meaning "Jehovah protects." Sapphira; a Syriac name meaning "beautiful." Her name did not agree with her character. A possession; a piece of land (v. 3.) Kept back part; while professing to bring the whole. "Satan enters this new paradise." Privy to it; being in the secret. Brought a certain part. He wanted to be honored like Barnabas (4:36, 37), but without his self-denial, so he played the hypocrite and liar. Laid it at the apostles' feet; probably when they had met for worship. He spoke no word, but still he lied.

3, 4. Why hath Satan, etc. Instead of resisting the temptation, he allowed it to fill his heart and to overcome him. They were filled with the Spirit (4:31), but he was filled with Satan. For Satan's character see John 8:44. To lie to the Holy Ghost. In attempting to de-

ceive others, he was deceiving God. Was it not thine own? This shows that the division of property was not by command, but voluntary. After it was sold. The money was his to dispose of as he pleased. He could have given part without lying about it. Not lied unto men, but unto God. The real force of the lie was against God more than men. So the psalmist said of himself, Ps. 51:4.

5, 6. Gave up the ghost, or breath of life; expired. It was not through shame of exposure, but by a direct act of divine judgment. Peter had no blame in it. Great fear. They perceived God's hand and were filled with awe. The young men. Tristram says that a society of young men was attached to each synagogue, ready to perform any menial task. Wrapped him round; drew together the limbs and wrapped up the body for burial. Carried him out; outside the city where burial always took place. The burial usually followed within three or four hours after death.

7, 8. Three hours after. The assembly had evidently not broken up. His wife not knowing; perhaps alarmed at her husband's delay was looking for him. Tell me whether, etc.; probably naming the sum that Ananias had brought. Yea, for so much; adding a spoken lie to the one she had acted.

9. To tempt, etc.; to test whether the Holy Ghost would punish such a deception or not.

10, 11. Then fell she . . . at his feet; where the money which led to their sin was laid. All the church; the word means "assembly," and is here first used in the Acts for the assembly of believers.

(See Matt. 16:18; 18:17.) As many as heard; outside of the Church. It was a great sin and a great punishment; but it was needed to keep the Church pure and was therefore timely and wholesome and quite effective.



Masks
(Peloubet's Notes)

From Calumet