

ashamed of the patch? I'm thankful for a good mother to keep me out of rags, and honour my patch for her sake."

CHRISTIAN
ALM BEFORE THE
ANNOT OBEY JEWS'
ANNOT DISOBEY

COURAGE.
OUNCIL.
OMMAND.
HRIST.

Feb. 25, }
1883.

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

{ Acts 5 :
1-11.

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

CONNECTION.—The great revival continued. There was great unity of love and labour. Many of those who had property sold it, and gave the money to the church. Everyone seemed to have a care for everyone else. Barnabas is specially mentioned for his benevolence.

NOTES.—Ananias, Greek for "Hananiah" "*mercy of God*." Nothing is known of him, except from this account. Sapphira, "*beautiful*," from the precious stone sapphire. The disciples were not compelled to sell their lands or possessions; this was a voluntary act of love. Ananias wished to get the credit of holy love and zeal, and of giving the whole, while selfishly keeping one portion for himself. It was deceiving the apostles and a lie to God. Satan, that is, "enemy," the great tempter and enemy of man, the devil (Job 1 : 6; Matt. 4 : 1). Community of goods, the poverty of some caused the benevolence of others to abound, and a community of goods among the early disciples. There was no forcible taking of property, nor was there any abolition of the right of personal property, as Peter's question clearly shows. "Their community of goods was no joint stock company like that advocated by communists, in which each one claims a share, but it was a free contribution, as far as was necessary to relieve the wants of the distressed." (*Hague*).

I. THE JUDGMENT ON ANANIAS.—Ver. 1.—Ananias: good names; borne by people of bad principles. There never was a revival yet, but Satan tried to work some mischief in it! If he could only get hypocrisy into the hearts and lives of the disciples, he would be quite satisfied! So he enticed this man and woman to pretend to great and unusual benevolence, but keep back part of the money for themselves.

Ver. 2.—Brought a certain part: if they had come and given a half, or two-thirds, or any portion of the price, and told the truth about it, it would have been thankfully received. But perhaps they were jealous of the praise Barnabas got. The property sold might be small, and the amount reserved insignificant; but it was the deceit and falsehood that was condemned.

Ver. 3.—Peter said: Perhaps Peter could not tell *how* he knew; but he *did* know. He was led by the Spirit direct to the truth—that this man was acting deceitfully. And he charged Ananias with having allowed Satan to fill his heart. Let us watch against Satan's entrance! Wrong thoughts—then wrong words—then wrong actions. It is like the letting out of water.

Ver. 4.—Was it not in thine own power? He might have kept his property. He might have sold it, and kept the money. He might have given a part of the money. He had no more necessity laid upon him than all men have—to enjoy God's gifts, and make others happy as far as they can!

Ver. 5.—Gave up the ghost: God punished this great deceit by a great judgment. And we may be safe in saying, that the stroke of God's hand on Ananias and Sapphira has done a world of good in keeping people from deceit and lies. It was no "fatal coincidence," or sudden apoplexy. It was God's hand in judgment.

Ver. 6.—The young men arose: the "younger" men; perhaps as opposed to "the elders." The younger brethren; accustomed to act where bodily activity was required. So it would be now—the younger and more active men would volunteer their services in any such emergency. Buried him: in the East burials are always on the same day as death. In other, or cooler, countries, it is different. In Quebec Province, the law forbids burial till the day after death.

II. THE JUDGMENT ON SAPPHIRA.—Ver. 7.—Three hours after: in their simple manner of life, probably some of the brethren lived and slept in that "upper room"—for it was, very likely, the same room as at pentecost—and all day long "the meeting" would be going on.

Ver. 8.—Tell me . . . Yea, for so much: Sapphira, who had plotted this wickedness with her husband, had another and a last opportunity of speaking the truth, and repenting of her sin. She chose to utter a solemn lie. A terrible warning to us! Liars will be shut out from Heaven. Rev. 21 : 8; 22 : 15.

Ver. 9.—Agreed to tempt the Spirit: to try to deceive God: as if to put him to the test, whether he could find out or punish this sin. Behold the feet: the younger brethren were just now probably coming in from burying Ananias. Peter was moved by the spirit to prophecy her immediate death.

Ver. 10.—Fell down straightway: she died on the spot. The young men gave her burial. And her name and character remains for a *beacon*, to warn us away from her sin!

III. THE EFFECT.—Ver. 11.—Great fear came: all felt the solemnity of being beneath the eye and knowledge of God. And those tempted to *other* sins as well as lying, would fear and repent. Hypocrites would fear to join the church.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. God provides a place for us, though we may refuse to fill it. Ananias might have stood beside Barnabas, as a benefactor and father of the church.

2. Satan is always tempting us to *keep back* something from God.

3. Evil is sure of detection. God cannot be deceived.

4. God, in punishing Ananias and Sapphira, shows that he hated the sin. Does he not hate covetousness, lying, and insincerity *now*?

5. "When Christians are afraid to *sin*, and sinners are afraid because they *have sinned*, then the Gospel will prosper."—*Peloubet*.

REMEMBER

March 4, }
1883.

PERSECUTION RENEWED.

{ Acts 5 :
17-32.

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

CONNECTION.—The apostles did many miracles. Many and large meetings were held in Solomon's Porch. From the country round about, the sick were brought in, and healed. Multitudes were converted.

NOTES.—High Priest: the chief religious officer among the Jews; he was distinguished by his dress, privileges, duties, and powers from the other priests. He must be free from bodily defect, was forbidden to mourn the death of relatives, was to enter the most holy place alone, once a year, to offer an atonement for the people. He usually presided at the meetings of the great council or Sanhedrin, and had great influence in civil affairs. The high priest at this time was Caiaphas, though Annas still retained the title. (See Acts 4 : 6). Senate: here used in its original sense of