

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 Anani as 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, wound him up, and 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.

THE LESSON PLAN

I. Peter and Ananias, 1-6.

II. Peter and Sapphira, 7-11.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Peter stands up for truth and honesty, Acts 5 : 1-11. T.—A citizen of Zion, Psalm 15 : 1-5. W.—Sincere worship, Matt. 6 : 1-8. T.—Putting away evil, Eph. 4 : 25-32. F.—Telling the truth, 1 Sam. 3 : 10-18. S.—Warning against hypocrisy, Matt. 23 : 1-15. S.—God hates falsehood, Prov. 6 : 16-23.

Primary Catechism—*Ques. 60. What is the danger*

in using images or pictures in the worship of God ? A. We may come to worship the image or picture instead of God.

Shorter Catechism—Review Questions 82-84.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise : 216, (483), 108 (278), 252 (551), 248 (580), 530 (770), 304 (781). (The numbers of the Praise Selections in brackets are those of the new Book of Praise.)

Special Scripture Reading—Rom. ch. 12. (To be read responsively or in concert by the whole School.)

Lantern Slide—For Lesson, B. 1675, Death of Sapphira. (Slides are obtained from PRESBYTERIAN PUBLICATIONS, Church and Gerrard Sts., Toronto.)

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—A.D. 30 ; Jerusalem.

Connecting Links—In vs. 32-37 of ch. 4 a vivid picture is given of the inner life of the Christian brotherhood in Jerusalem. The author lays special emphasis on the divine power manifested in this life. To-day's lesson further brings out the working of this power by a startling episode.

I. Peter and Ananias, 1-6.

Vs. 1, 2. *But.* The selfishness and hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira are placed in striking contrast with the unreserved self-sacrifice of Barnabas, ch. 4 : 36, 37. *Ananias*; the Greek form of the Hebrew Hananiah, meaning "Jehovah has been gracious." *Sapphira* ; "a sapphire" or from the Aramaic (a form of Hebrew) word for "beautiful." There does not seem to be any special significance in the names. *Sold a possession* ; property of any kind, including lands and buildings. *Kept back part of the price* ; professing, at the same time, to be bringing the whole sum into the common fund of the brotherhood (see ch. 4 : 34, 35). The Greek word for "kept back" is translated "purloining" in Tit. 2 : 10, and has frequently the meaning "to rob." *His wife also being privy to it* ; showing

deliberation and set purpose. *Brought a certain part*, etc. The deceitful pair professed equal devotion with all the others who were making sacrifices for the common faith. They were ambitious for a high reputation in the church, and their ambition blinded them to the greatness of their offense in God's sight.

V. 3. *Peter said.* It would seem that the Holy Spirit had given Peter knowledge of Ananias' attempt at deception. *Why hath Satan*, etc.; making thee bold enough. People may be inspired by the evil one, as well as by the Holy Spirit. *To lie to the Holy Ghost* ; to try to cheat the Holy Spirit. It is presupposed that the Holy Spirit is a person, like the Father, and the Son. Ananias lied to God before he lied to man. He attempted to win a reputation for a more absolute devotion than he really felt,—*"in fact, to serve two masters."* *To keep back* ; in the sense of fraudulent concealment and purloining.

Vs. 4, 5. *Remained . . . thine own . . . sold . . . in thine own power ?* The question deprived Ananias of all excuse ; there was no sort of compulsion laid on the Christian brethren to sell their property for the common good. *Why*