

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XLVIII.

JESUS BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 63, 64.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Mark xiv. 58, 59; John ii. 19-21 and xiv. 7; with v. 59 read Ps. xlv. 11, 12; with vs. 60, 61, Dent. xvii. 8; with vs. 62, 63, Isa. lvi. 7; with v. 64, Heb. i. 3; with 65, 66, Lev. xxiv. 16; and with 67, 68, Isa. i. 6.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—They "condemned and killed the just, and He did not resist them." James v. 6.

INFERENTIAL TEXT.—For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Heb. vii. 26.

Our Lord had two separate trials, one before the Jews' court, one before the Roman. Charges that would lie in the Jews' court would not be received in the Roman; so a new case had to be made out there. It is important to remember this, in order to see clearly the nature of the persecution inflicted on the Son of man. The Jews' court cared nothing as to his making himself a king. The Roman ruler cared nothing as to his "blasphemy." So one charge is brought in one court, a different accusation in the other. In this lesson we see our blessed Master at the bar of the Jews, and undergoing the form of a trial to justify an act already resolved upon, at any cost, namely, his death.

A thoughtful reader of the lesson would have such questions as the following, raised in his mind:—

(a) Who tried Jesus, and where? (v. 69.) (b) Why go through the forms of justice, when they meant to put him to death? (vs. 59, 60.)

(c) Why was not the high priest answered? (v. 62.)

(d) What is the purpose of the adjuration (v. 61), and of the Lord's reply.

Teacher and scholars having studied the passage, should look back for clear replies to these questions.

If you entered a court of justice you would look at the judge, the prisoner, and the witnesses, inquire as to the charges, and evidence, and wait for the sentence. So let us do here.

I. THE JUDGE. Caiaphas the high priest, v. 61. His father-in-law was Annas (John xviii. 13) and probably they lived together, for it was to the house of Annas Jesus was led. The "scribes and elders" were assembled, as prosecutors; and the "chief priests" on the bench also sought (but secretly) false witnesses against Christ (v. 49). What greater mockery of justice could there be?

II. THE PRISONER. A humble man, over thirty years of age, in a long, seamless robe. He has been cross-questioned by Annas without witnesses, in a private way (John xviii. 18, 24), and is now formally put on trial. He is alone; no advocate, no friend! On his way into court he heard the most forward of his disciples deny him. His true character you may see in Heb. vii. 26.

III. THE WITNESSES. Many had offered, but they could allege nothing "worthy of death," though it was made their interest to speak against him. Two were required by the law, Dent. xvii. 6, and two at length were found who had a color of truth in their testimony. Why called "false?" (v. 60.) Because they were there from no love of truth, but from corrupt motives, and they put their evidence so as to deceive and mislead. It was true in form, false in fact. It was a half truth and a whole lie at the same time. For listen to the evidence. "This one said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and build it in three days." Now see the facts in John ii. 19-21; words slightly altered, and put in a different connection from the speaker's. The smallest allowable number of witnesses, and this the worst they can allege!

Now what are the exact charges? So far only this, that he spoke of the destruction of the temple. Whether it was "against the temple," since he spoke also of rebuilding it, is a question; but the Jews made out any such language to be blasphemy. See Acts vi. 13. Still this would be too little ground for a death-sentence, and Caiaphas, though judge, becomes prosecutor, and adjures Christ as to his Messiahship, v. 63. Christ's silence as to the other charge, was as much as to say, "You know this is no real ground of condemnation," and so Caiaphas took it, and tried to draw from Christ's own lips, sufficient evidence against him.

Jesus, thus adjured, and, as men are, on oath, replied ("for this was the Jewish form of oath, and the best we know), in effect, "Yes." He was before the lawful court, and he obeyed the law. This was not inconsistent with Matt. v. 34. He adds (in a way not made clear in the English), "Besides, I say unto you, ye shall see," i.e., "Not only do I say this, but I tell you ye shall see," &c., as in Ps. cx. 1.

If, therefore, Christ be rejected and condemned, it is as the Messiah and Son of God. Now let us hear

IV. THE SENTENCE. Annas is the real high priest, in the Jews' opinion. So he examines Christ at length privately. Caiaphas, his son-in-law, is the high priest set up by the Romans, and his sentence only would be recognized by them. By their being in one hall (called here palace), they probably avoided difficulty. This explains the seeming difference of the gospels. Caiaphas had already given an opinion on the case (John xviii. 14).

Now he ronds his garment (not his priestly robe) in horror and rage, according to ritual founded on 2 Kings xviii. 37. The rule was to tear it down the front a palm length.

Then he gives his opinion, which had all the weight of a sentence, though perhaps formally put afterwards. The crime is blasphemy; the evidence, the confession of Christ; and the sentence, v. 66, "death," from the approving council. This would be founded on Lev. xxiv. 16 and Dent. xviii. 20, and though it could only be put in force by the Romans, the Jews treat Jesus as al-

ready a doomed convict, and renew the contemptuous violence already used in the house of Annas (John xviii. 22). The spitting was in scorn, Dent. xxv. 9, Numb. xii. 14 and Isa. i. 6, and the manner part of his persecutions followed up the insult by blows with their hands on their rods, and mockery of his prophetic character. So "the (Jewish) people imagined a vain thing against the Lord and his anointed," Ps. xi. 2. So was fulfilled Ps. xxii. 12, 13. So chief priests and council, and afterwards the people (John xix. 15) denied the Holy One and the just, and rejected the Saviour, Acts iii. 13, 14.

The following points (if there be time) may be emphasized.

- 1. Christ, when it was proper, fearlessly witnessed to his own messiahship and divinity (Luke xvi. 70). He is the "faithful witness" (R v. i. 6).
- 2. The steps of this awful transaction have a fixed order and meaning. See Acts iv. 28.
- 3. The deed was a national one, rulers and people concurring. Acts iii. 17.
- 4. The whole bearing of Christ is in keeping with his life. Study with this lesson Isa. iii.

ILLUSTRATION.

FALSE WITNESSES AGAINST CHRIST.—Buxtorf, a Jewish scholar, in his Talmudic Lexicon, cites the following rabbinical testimony, admitting the subordination of false witnesses against Christ for His crucifixion, and vindicating it by law. "Against none of those guilty of death by the law are snares to be laid, except against one who has endeavoured to pervert another to idolatry and strange worship. And then it is done thus: They light a candle in an inner room, and place the witness in an outer, so that they may see him and hear his voice, without his seeing them. And so they did to the son of Sada (Mary). They placed men privately in the next room, as witnesses against him in Jud (Jud or Judea), and hanged him upon the cross, on the evening of the Passover."—Lange.

FALSE ZEAL.—Jehu had a good zeal, which he called zeal for the Lord of Hosts. His fault was not that he was too zealous, but that his zeal was really directed to his own advancement. The Jews, in the days of Christ, had a zeal for God; but it was so misdirected as to fire them with a frenzy to destroy the Son of God, and extinguish the Light of the world. There are countless forms of false zeal now at work; but, in all cases, they sin not by excess, but by misdirection. Some are flaming with a zeal to spread some of the corruptions of Christianity, and to carry men away from its great and cardinal truths. Some are equally zealous to build up a sect or a party on other foundations than those which God has laid in Zion; and that which taints their zeal is the purpose to which they employ it, and not any excessive fervour of their zeal itself.—Donar.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

The two courts at which Christ was tried—the reason—the difference in charges—the high priest—why two at this time—their relationship—the standing of Annas—the witnesses—how false—their testimony—allusion to what—the supposed crime in the words—the judge's appeal—its purpose—the silence of Jesus—its meaning—the reason for his confession—form of Jewish oath—the judge's conduct—meaning of rendering the garment—the sentence—the authority for it—why not final—insults to the Saviour—their meaning—the Scriptures fulfilled—the act national—forms of justice observed—the claim of Christ—the refusal of it with scorn—the Scriptures thus fulfilled, and the whole Jewish Church apostate.

A Fisher of Men.

Many years ago the good, sound, sensible rector of an Irish village found some boys playing marbles in the ball-alley. He was too much interested to be deemed an intruder; besides, his benevolent countenance easily purchased the youngsters' good will. One of them, a "little ragged apprentice to every kind of mischief," full of mimicry and winning manners, was firing off his jokes with a reckless practicality, and the gentleman's keen eye saw, as he thought, the sparks of genius flashing from beneath the owner's rags and dirt. Taking a fancy to the little homely bundle of wit, he bribed him home with a few sweetmeats, and there teaches him the alphabet and grammar, and the rudiments of the classics. After exhausting his own fund of instruction, he sends him to a neighbouring school, and thus gets him mounted and started upon his life work.

Five-and-thirty years later, this boy, having risen to eminence at the bar, and obtained a seat in Parliament, discovers, upon returning to his house one day, an elderly gentleman seated alone in his drawing-room, his feet on each side of the Italian marble chimney-piece, and his whole air that of a man quite at home. As the visitor turned around the lawyer recognized him as his old friend and patron of the ball alley. "You are right," he exclaimed, rushing to his arms; "this room is yours; you gave me all these things; you made a man of me." Of course the old rector remained to dinner, and that evening he moistened his eyes at the sight of his former pupil rising in the House of Commons to answer an honorable lord.

The lawyer's name was John Philpot Curran. The name of the rector was Boyce, forgotten long since by the world at large, but still living in the reputation of his scholar. With no more effort than he employed, we might start a soul on the way of life; the work would not be much, merely the picking up of a pod that would otherwise be crushed in the highway, and opening it to find the seeds of immortal glory. There is no cant in such deeds; they would silence even a cynic's mouth, and the good they might do eternally alone can tell.—Congregationalist.

It is said that an ancient Christian church—in good order and preservation, though, of course, long unused—has been discovered in the interior of Japan.

Temperance.

Brownie's Work.

A difficult lesson had been perfectly recited by only one member of a large class and a complicated problem in arithmetic had been solved by the same boy, while all the others had failed. This boy, the teacher had praised generously, at the same time severely censuring those who deserved censure.

"I'm real sorry I didn't get my lesson," exclaimed a young girl with dark brown eyes and a profusion of wavy hair. "I studied and tried that horrid old sum a dozen times, but I was thinking most all the time about something else."

"Well, Mr. Varney needn't scold so dreadfully," said another. "Twas an awful hard lesson, any way."

"So it was," replied the first speaker, whom all the children called "Brownie," without fully appreciating the fitness of her name. "Twas just the hardest we ever had, so 'twould have been all the grander to have learned it; I wish I had. I should think Ned Loughton would feel real proud; I should if I was in his place."

"Proud!" repeated a scholar, scornfully; "I don't see anything he has to be proud of; he's nobody but a drunkard's boy."

"Hush!" half-whispered Brownie, "he'll hear you."

"What if he does? Who cares? I don't. I tell you he's nobody but a drunkard's boy."

Alas! for the warning and the boy. Ned Loughton heard the cruel words. In his happiness at having gained the approbation of his teacher, he had forgotten that his father was a drunkard. No wonder he hurried away, and in a secluded spot gave vent to his tears.

Here, as Brownie was on her way from school, she found him, and, knowing well the cause of his grief, said cheerfully: "How can you cry when you had such a splendid lesson? I shouldn't if I was in your place."

"Wouldn't you if your father was a drunkard?"

"I guess not," she answered, with some hesitation. "I'd try and not have him be a drunkard."

"How would you try?" asked the boy, looking up with a pitiful smile. "I'd ask him to sign the pledge, and keep it. Then, if he did, you see he wouldn't be a drunkard. Can't you ask him?"

"No. I can't, Brownie. You ask him, won't you? Seems as though he'd do it if you ask him. Won't you?"

There was a short silence, but at length Brownie said, "Yes, I will."

Mr. Loughton was a new comer into the village, a blacksmith, and a good workman when free from the influence of liquor. The day after the conversation above narrated, he was obliged to remain in the shop much later than usual, so that the glowing light of the forge was in striking contrast to the darkness without. From that darkness came a child, who seemed fascinated by the weird shadows on the blackened walls, and the titling leaping of the flames up the wide-mouth chimney.

"Well, my little lady, what can I do for you?"

This question recalled to her the fact that she was not in fairy-land, as she had half fancied; and extending some papers she held in her hand, she said, "Please, sir, will you sign the pledge?"

"What pledge?" was asked.

"The pledge not to drink anything that will make you drunk."

"Who are you, child?"

"My name is Miriam Way, but they call me Brownie."

"I thought so," responded the man absently. "You look like a brownie. What sent you here?"

"I come because I'm sorry for Ned."

"My Ned?"

"Yes, sir. One of the scholars said he was nobody but a drunkard's boy and he felt so bad about it that he cried, and I found him hid away by himself. You see, sir, he had his lesson just splendid, when the rest all missed; but he didn't care about that, he felt so bad because his father was a drunkard. And—and—please sir, won't you sign the pledge?"

"But if I do, I can drink just the same if I'm in a mind to."

"Yes, sir; but that would be telling a lie, and I don't believe you'd do that if you were sober."

"No, child, I wouldn't, I ain't so far gone as that, if I am a drunkard. Sit down in that chair, and I'll think about it."

Brownie coated herself and watched Mr. Loughton at his work, while he seemed wilyly unconscious of her presence. At length he said, "You can read the pledge. Let a see what you want me to promise."

"I've got two. I'll read them both." One was a simple pledge against the use of intoxicant drinks; the other included tobacco and profane language.

"The last is the best; I'll go for the whole figure or none." And again Mr. Loughton resumed his work. A few minutes had elapsed, when he asked, "Were you afraid to come in here to-night?"

"Just a little," answered Brownie frankly, "but you see I wanted to help Ned."

"Bring me the last paper you read." Under the comprehensive pledge, Edward Loughton wrote his name in bold characters and then nailed the paper over his desk. From that month he took a huge quid of tobacco, and from his pocket, enough for twenty quids of equal size, and threw them into the fire.

A Major-General in the Gutter.

To day there is a man going about the streets of this city, ragged, dirty, and penniless, subsisting on free lunches and the charities of gamblers, and has not slept in a bed for months, who, during the war, was one of the most distinguished cavalry officers in the Union army, and was promoted from the rank of first lieutenant to full brigadier and brevet major-general for brilliant exploits on the field of battle, and who for a long time had a large and important command.

He has been here for two or three months under an assumed name, being ashamed to dim the brilliancy of his former record in the service of his country by an exhibition of his degradation under his former honored name. He is generally very reticent, having little to do with any one, or talking but little, save when "engineering" for a drink, at which he is remarkably successful.

Night before last, while lying helplessly drunk in the rear part of a Third-street saloon, some men thought to play a joke on him by stealing his shirt, and proceeded to strip him. Underneath his shirt, and suspended by a string from his neck, was a small canvas bag, which the men opened, and found it to contain his commission of brevet major-general, two congratulatory letters, one from Grant, and one from President Lincoln, a photograph of a little girl, and a curl of hair—a "chestnut shadow"—that doubtless one day crept over the brow of some loved one.

When these things were discovered, even the half-drunken men who found them felt a respect for the man's former greatness and pity for his fallen condition, and quietly returned the bag and contents to where they found them, and replaced the sloop's clothes upon him.

Yesterday a News reporter tried to interview the man and endeavor to learn something of his life in the past few years, but he declined to communicate anything. He cried like a child when told how his right name and former position were ascertained, and, with tears trickling down his cheeks, said: "For God's sake, sir, don't publish my degradation, or my name, at least, if you are determined to say something about it. It is enough that I know myself how low I have become. Will you promise that much? It will do no good, but will do my friends a great deal of harm, as, fortunately, they think I died in South America, where I went at the close of the war."

Intemperance and the gaming-table, he said, had wrought his ruin.—Kansas City News.

Preaching Christ.

The preaching of Christ is, I believe, the great mission of the gospel ministry. "These are the servants of the most high God that show unto us the way of salvation." He is God's servant who preaches the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. Now I desire to preach to you, and all people, not a doctrinal Christ—not a controversial Christ—but a personal Christ. Christ Jesus, my Lord and Master, came down from heaven with a desire for the salvation of men. He became a man—a man in suffering, in woe, in toil, in poverty, and at last he did hang upon the tree, and die in torments extreme, that he might redeem his enemies from going down to the pit. Friend, I hear you say, "I don't care for religion." I don't ask you to. One thing I ask you, don't despise Jesus. The crucified one stands before you to-night. Will you despise him? "Ah!" said a young man to me the other evening, "when first I heard the word of God, I wondered if Christ died for me; at last I came to this thought, if he did not die for me, I must love him for his disinterested love in dying for others: when I see the misery he endured for the very men who spit on his face—who did mock him—I must love him."—Spurgeon.

An Analogy.

The old adage of the butterfly and the chrysalis I never thought a very forcible one, so far as it is used as an argument of proof of another world; but take it in another view, and I think it is one of the most astonishing proofs of immortality you can furnish. The sages of the ancient world had about as many natural arguments for immortality as we have. The human intellect struck at an early period upon the great points of analogy. And when they took up this beautiful simile of the butterfly, they taught a great truth; though, I repeat, they did not prove the existence of another world by it, but of another state. Look at it: the butterfly is in the same world as the worm from which the butterfly is evolved; but O, how changed, because of the new capacities unfolded in its own being! So the resurrection of man may be regarded as the unfolding of inner capacities, the development of his spiritual being, rather than a translation to some distant sphere. The wings may be growing in his soul all the while, which shall spread when he bursts the chrysalis of his mortality, and when that chrysalis bursts he may find himself in no strange place, but moving with larger powers among familiar scenes.—Rev. E. H. Chapin.

Each of us is a distinct flower or tree in the spiritual garden of God—precious, each for his own sake, in the eyes of him who is even now making us—each of us watered and shone upon and filled with life, for the sake of his flower his completed being, which will blossom out of him at last to the glory and pleasure of the great gardener. For each has within him a secret of the Divinity; each is growing towards the revelation of that secret to himself, and so to the full reception, according to his measure, of the diving. Every moment that he is true to his true self, some new shine of the white stone breaks on his inward eye, some fresh channel is opened upward for the coming glory of the flower, the conscious offering of his whole being in beauty to the Maker.

Scandalous Scene with Confessors in Rome.

According to the Roman correspondent of the Manchester Evening, very scandalous proceedings have taken place in the Eternal City consequent on the assembling on the square of the Capitol of 10,000 children, the boys and girls taught in the city public schools. The immense majority of the children never received any schooling whatever, either religious or secular, before the occupation of Rome by the Italians. Those who did receive an education in the "Scuola Pie" and in the city workhouse school here a scandalously small proportion to the poor children who were left without any training. What the training was in the workhouse school the events of the last week have shown. When the municipal authorities intimated to the monks and nuns who had the charge of the workhouse children that they must bring them to the square of the Capitol, there to receive the prizes with the other children, the monks and nuns flatly refused. The municipal assessor specially charged with the education department went to the city workhouse, and, accompanied by some of the first ladies in Rome, conducted the boys and girls to the Capitol square. But when the children returned to the workhouse with their medals with the figure of Victor Emmanuel on the same, the monks and nuns tore the medals off, trod on them, spat on them, and then gave to the children other medals bearing the figure of the Pope. On these facts being reported to the Municipal Council at its Monday evening's sitting, the Council unanimously resolved that all the monks and nuns employed as teachers in the workhouse schools should be paid whatever amount of salary was due, and then immediately removed, and their places given to lay schoolmasters and mistresses. The order was carried out next day. Count Carpagna, with a staff of lay teachers, repaired to the schools. No opposition was offered by the monks, but the nuns and the workhouse girls appeared utterly ungovernable. The nuns heaped every species of abuse on Count Carpagna and the new teachers, and the workhouse girls exhibited such a proficiency in slang that Count Carpagna asked the head schoolmistress where her pupils had learned a style of language not much in accordance with moral and religious training. But the worst was yet to come. When the older workhouse girls had fully realised the appalling fact that they were to be separated from their father confessor, their fury knew no bounds. They dashed at Count Carpagna with the rage of wild cats, raising at the same time frantic shrieks of "Leave us to our confessors!" "We will not be separated from our confessors!" "We cannot live without confessors!" There was, however, no help for it; all the monks and nuns, excepting one nun, who was in bad health, and could not be moved, were put into so many omnibuses and cabs, and conveyed to the destination which they had themselves selected. From the first inquiries made by the new masters, but still more by the new mistresses, the change did not take place a day too soon. The state of filth—one can call it by no other name—both physical and moral, of the workhouse girls was beyond description.

The Infidel Converted.

A faithful minister had often been sorely tried by unprofitable and fruitless debates and discussions with a boasting infidel who resided within his parish, and who took occasion to assail his teachings and doctrines whenever they met; and the more public the place and the larger the number of listeners, the better was he pleased. At length the infidel was brought to a sick and dying bed. In great distress of mind he sent in the night for the minister to come at once and visit. The good man hesitated. Calling to mind the many unprofitable controversies he had had, and fearing the result of another interview would be attended with no better results, and knowing that the man was not ignorant of the way of salvation, he at first decided not to go. Upon reflection and after prayer for divine guidance, he concluded to go, but with a determination to enter into no debate or controversy, and to use no other than the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth.

He found the infidel in great distress of mind, his refuge of lies having been all swept away, and his anxious, earnest inquiry being, "What shall I do to be saved?" The answer was promptly given. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "That is nothing new to me," he said, "I have read it a thousand times. I want to know what I am to do." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "I know that passage as well as you, and have known it from a child; but I want to know what a poor dying sinner must do who has scoffed at these words, rejected the Bible, and hated the truth?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "But that promise was not intended for such as I am. I want you to give me directions adapted to my peculiar case." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Thus the inquiries, however varied, all met the same answer. The day began to dawn, but no light dawned upon the dark and gloomy soul of the infidel. At length as the sun began to tip the mountain tops with his first rays, after a few moments of silence he suddenly exclaimed, "I see it now! I see it! I do believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart." Love and joy unspeakable beamed from his countenance, and his remaining hours were spent in preaching the faith he once destroyed. The Holy Spirit had honored his own words with a human wisdom to aid. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."—N. Y. Observer.

Happiness is like manna; it is to be gathered in grains, and enjoyed every day. It will not keep; it cannot be accumulated; nor have we got to go out of ourselves or into remote places to gather it, since it has rained down from heaven, at our very doors, or rather within side of them.