

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS.*

(By Rev. Clarence McKinnon, B.D.)

Followed afar off, v. 58. This was Peter's first mistake and the devil's opportunity. If only by fear or awe, warmness, a distance is put between us and our Saviour, there is no telling how serious sin we may not be betrayed into committing. Put a green log beside a candle, and there is no danger of a conflagration; but place beside a candle a few shavings, then a handful of dry sticks, then some pieces of stouter fuel, and there will soon be such a fire kindled that it will quickly consume even the green log. A great sin, some gross crime, suddenly confronting an earnest soul, is no temptation. The very thought of it is dismissed with scorn. But let that soul first be betrayed into carelessness and begin like Peter to follow afar off, and gradually it will become inured to greater sins, until at length it finds itself guilty of that very deed, from whose sight it had first shrunk in abhorrence. The only safeguard for the Christian is to keep close to the Master.

Many false witnesses, v. 60. Their mouths have never been stopped. Hatred, covetousness, lust breed thousands of them to-day. When Dr. Gell, the famous modern traveller, who has covered 120,000 miles and visited more native races than any other living man, landed on an island on the Pacific Ocean, he was told a horrible story about a missionary. A little investigation showed him that his informant was a dishonest man and the story had no foundation. At another island, he was regaled by a fellow-traveller with worse stories still, in which he recognized worn-out tales that had been used against missionaries from time immemorial. He investigated again, and found, of course, that there was no foundation for the stories, and further, that the teller of them was wanted by the police of two different countries for his crimes. After a singularly wide and varied observation, Dr. Gell has come to the conclusion that charges against the character and success of Christian missions are fabricated largely by those who live sinful lives, and whose nefarious means of livelihood are menaced by the purity and power of the Christian religion. When one hears an accusation against the church of Christ or His ambassadors, he advises that he should investigate the character of the accuser.

Jesus held his peace, v. 63. Wesley was walking through St. Paul's churchyard one day, when he observed two women standing opposite to each other. One was speaking and gesticulating with great violence. But the other stood calm and silent. Just as he was passing, the angry one clenched her fist, and stamped her foot, and shouted in exasperation, "Speak, wretch, that I may have something to say." And Wesley remarked to his friend, "That was a lesson to me. Silence is often the best answer to abuse." In the presence of prejudice and anger it is useless to argue. One's opponent is not open to conviction. It is best to bear it all in patient silence. Let Jesus be our example.

*S. S. Lesson, November 18, 1906. — Matthew 26: 57-68. Commit to memory vs. 67, 68. Read Mark 14: 53-72; Luke 22: 54-71. Golden Text—"He is despised and rejected of men. — Isaiah 53: 3.

"Thy foes might hate, despise, revile,
Thy friends ungrateful prove:
Unwearied in forgiveness still,
Thy heart could only love."

The Christ, the Son of God, v. 63. In the narrow streets of old Paris a terrible fire broke out. A father arose to find the room full of smoke and the way of escape cut off. Just a narrow alley divided his house from the house across the way. He was able to leap over himself. But alas, his little children were unable to follow. Broken-hearted by their cries, the desperate father stretched his body across the alley, and thus enabled the little ones to crawl over his human bridge to a place of safety on the other side. Christ, both Son of God and Son of man, is the living Bridge that stretches from the perishing earth to the place of safety above. Only by Him can we be delivered from destruction. How important, therefore, that we make no mistake, but anxiously inquire whether Jesus be the Christ, and how happy our confidence when we receive in our hearts the reassuring answer that He is!

Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, v. 64. Men are naturally very narrow in their estimate of the limits of the divine power. Napoleon, after he had successfully achieved many victories by his extraordinary generalship, became very lofty in his remarks about God. "I have observed," he said, cynically, "that God is always on the side of the largest battalions." But like Nebuchadnezzar, his vain self-confidence was soon to learn its error. Napoleon led his Grand Army across the Niemen; he won the fearful battle of Borodino; he captured Smolensk; he dictated a dispatch from the Kremlin at Moscow. "Then," as Farrar so strikingly says, "the soft snows of God—no more—began to fall; and annihilated by the most insignificant of the powers of heaven, his Grand Army was tossed out of Russia." Those who scorn Christ's power at present, because he is so patient toward them, will one day behold Him exalted to the right hand of power and learn the humiliating truth of how sadly they had fallen short in their estimate of His might.

They spit in his face, v. 67. Never had a kinder face been seen in the world, than that of Jesus. Hardly an hour passed but He was helping some poor wretch in his sickness or his sorrow. Everywhere he planted a sunbeam where he found a shadow. He "went about doing good." And yet this was the treatment that He received from a generation that He had come to help. But if it seems very ungrateful on their part, thus to reward His kindness, must it not be still more ungrateful when, after He has been blessing the world for nineteen centuries and more, we still forget Him, or speak slightly of Him, or take His loved name on profane lips. Our indifference wounds Him as surely as the insults and buffets of the rude soldiery on the morning of His crucifixion.

Faith and prayer are golden wings
By which we mount to nobler things.

Our want of usefulness is often to be ascribed to our want of spirituality, much oftener than to our want of natural ability.—A. FULLER.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

(By Rev. James Ross, D.D.)

Caiaphas—Joseph Caiaphas was appointed high priest in 18 A. D., by Valerius Gratus, who was procurator before Pilate. His father-in-law, Annas, had held the office for nine years under the preceding governor. There were the leading representatives of the party of Sadducees, and were unscrupulous and intriguing time-servers, who are scathed in terrible language in the Talmud. The renegade Joseph calls Annas the happiest man of his time, because he died at an advanced old age, and because he and five of his sons, and his son-in-law, held the high priesthood. Caiaphas was the leading spirit in the council which first devised the death of Jesus. He advised that Christ should be put to death (John 11: 49, 50; 18: 14), before a popular rising in His favor should call down upon them the vengeance of the Romans. His conduct on that occasion illustrates his usual disregard of justice and religion, and also the adroitness with which he could cover his self-interest under the cloak of patriotism. He continued to hold office till A. D. 36, when he was removed by the proconsul Vitellius. He was regarded by all patriotic Jews as a creature of the Romans, and obtained from them only scanty respect.

THE DISGRACE OF SIN.

We have just read of a man who had been convicted and sentenced to the penitentiary. To his counsel, as he was led out of the courtroom, he cried: "I can not bear this disgrace." It was wringing his heart. While he was engaged in sinning he felt it not, but when the public punishment came, he felt it keenly.

This was in a human court. But there is another court to be held in the future. In it the Lord Jesus will sit as Judge. Then there will be a tremendous gathering of spectators; all presence of them all we shall each hear the decision of the Judge as to himself, either, "Come ye blessed or "Depart ye cursed."

Then shall we understand the words of the angel as he told Daniel that on that day "some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Then will be fulfilled the picture that is found in the sixth chapter of Revelation. It presents to us even the kings of the earth as hiding in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and saying to the mountains and rocks: "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb."

Men fear shame. The greatest of all shame is that of the last great day. The time to escape from that shame is today.—Southern Presbyterian.

By the fireside still the light is shining,
The children's arms round the parents
twining.

For love so sweet, oh, who would roam?
Be it ever so homely, home is home.

D. M. Muloch.

We know not the day of Christ's coming. We cannot hear the sound of his chariot wheels. When they come they will come softly, like the sound of a footfall in the snow, like wheels that move through wool. What he says to you and me is: "Occupy till I come."