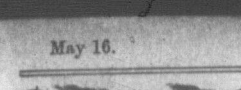

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Lesson IX. May 27. Matt. 26: 67-75.

PETER'S DENIAL.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."—1 Cor. 10: 12.

I. THE MOCK TRIAL BY THE LEADERS.—After the preliminary examinations before the high-priest (John 18: 19-24), the Sanhedrim, many of whose members had assembled in anticipation of the arrest of Jesus, gathered together in the council hall. (1) *The Court* consisted of chief priests, that is, the heads of the twenty-four priestly classes; scribes, that is, rabbis learned in the literature of the church; and elders, who were chosen from amongst the most influential of the laity. Jewish tradition puts the number of members at seventy-one. The high-priest usually presided. (2) *Their Authority.* The Sanhedrim had power to try those charged with capital offences, but it had no power to execute the sentence of death (John 18: 31). (3) *The Trial.* He was arrested in the night, bound as a malefactor, beaten before his arraignment, and struck in open court during the trial. He was tried on a feast-day, and before sunrise. He was compelled to criminate himself, and this under an oath of solemn judicial adjuration; and he was sentenced on the same day of the conviction. *In all these particulars the law was wholly disregarded.* (4) *The Accusation.* The crime for which Jesus was condemned before the Sanhedrim was his alleged blasphemy (Matt. 26: 65). But when he was brought before Pilate they changed the accusation to one of treason against the Roman government, as the only one of which Pilate would take cognizance (Luke 23: 2). (5) *The Verdict.* Jesus was condemned to death; but according to the Roman law, a sentence pronounced before dawn was not valid. This test vote, however, they considered as settling the question. (6) *The Council now adjourned,* to meet at daybreak, when they could legally pronounce the sentence. In the mean time occurred the maltreatment by his lawless enemies described in the lesson, and the denials by Peter, at least the last of the three.

II. THE MOCKERY BY THE SUBORDINATES. This took place in the interior court of the palace, after the adjournment of the court, and may have lasted till five o'clock, or near sunrise.

67. *Then did they spit in his face.* Luke uses the imperfect tense, apparently as denoting a continued series of insults, not a single act. Spitting in the face was regarded by the Jews as an expression of the utmost contempt (Deut. 25: 9; Numb. 12: 14), "a mark that the convicted is deemed as having degraded himself below claims to treatment as a member of society; as being utter filth and offscouring." *And buffetted him:* struck him with their fists. *Smote him with the palms of their hands:* slapped him, viz., on the side of the head. And it was such a head!

68. *Saying, Prophesy unto us.* Mark informs us that they first blindfolded him. Then some one struck him; and then if he were the Christ, the great prophet, to whom God revealed secret things, he could easily name the one who struck him.

III. PETER THRICE DENIES HIS LORD. The time was during the preliminary trial, and during the first part of the mockery; two o'clock and after.

FIRST DENIAL. 69. *Now Peter sat without* (the judgment hall) *in the palace* (of Caiaphas, in the central open court). He had followed Jesus afar off as he was taken by the soldiers to the city. John also followed, and being known at the palace, he was enabled to gain admittance, and when Peter arrived, to have him admitted also (John 18: 15, 16). He was sitting with the servants and others around a fire, on account of the cold (Luke). *And a damsel:* one of the maids of the high-priest (Mark); the doorkeeper who had admitted him (John). *Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.* The words were a free and easy exclamation. The "also" implies that they had been speaking of some other disciple, as Judas, or John, who was known to them.

70. *But he denied before them all:* who were gathered around the fire. *I know not what thou sayest:* I do not even understand what you mean; I have nothing to do with the affair. He practised evasion, which leads to direct lying, often to perjury.

SECOND DENIAL. 71. *And when he was gone out into the porch:* the outer entrance to the court. He had retreated there, either to avoid observation, away from the light of the fire, or to be ready to escape if necessary. *Another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there.* Luke says "another" (masculine), and John "they." Probably several spoke, some to him, and some to their companions. *This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.* Some of them very probably saw him in the garden, when the arrest was made; and others had seen him with Jesus in his labors.

72. *And again he denied with an oath.* His first lie is "whirling him into a vortex of meanness and sin." *I do not know the man.* Another rapidly downward step into a more positive lie and unblushing perjury.

THIRD DENIAL. In the court, to which Peter had returned, opposite to the door into the judgment hall, so that Jesus could look upon him (Luke 22: 61).

73. *And after a while:* about an hour after (Luke 22: 59). *They that stood by.* The main charge was prominently made by one,—a kinsman of Malchus, who had seen Peter in the garden, and was known to St. John from his acquaintance with the high-priest's household (John 18: 26). *For thy speech bewrayeth thee:* "betrayeth"; shows that thou art a Galilean (Mark), and therefore one of his disciples, or why else art thou here?

74. *Then began he to curse; or* "to call down curses on himself," if what he said was not true. He now lost all self control. *And to swear:* to call God to witness that it was true.

IV. THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO PETER'S DENIAL. 1. A certain distance or separation from Christ in his feelings. Peter's self-love was wounded by Christ's rebuke (vers. 52-54). 2. Ignorance was another cause. Peter failed to comprehend the teaching which Jesus had repeatedly given of the necessity of his sufferings and death. 3. It was because his piety, at that period of his history, was fashioned more by feeling than by principle. The grand doctrine of the cross must be wrought into the very fibre of one's soul, as the granite soil and the winter tempests of the mountains are wrought into the gnarls of the oak which the shipwright loves. 4. Peter's courage was great; but as yet it was too much outward and physical, and too little the courage of faith, of principle, of duty. 5. Peter followed afar off. Had he kept nearer to Jesus, he would have been safer from sin. 6. Peter was also separated from his brethren. Had the disciples kept closer together, they would have been bolder and stronger. 7. Peter's self-sufficiency was another step to his fall. He was sure he would never fail, and made the strongest assertions of his steadfastness.

V. PETER'S REPENTANCE. 74. *And immediately the cock crew;* while he was denying Jesus with cursing. Mark mentions two cock-crowings, the first being earlier. In Matthew only the main one is mentioned.

75. *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus;* ver 34. This awakened Peter to a sense of what he was doing. It made him think thereon (Mark 14: 72). Another thing made him remember. "Just then, according to Luke (22: 61), our Lord 'turned and looked on Peter.'" And remembering the Saviour's own words at the table (Luke 22: 31). *And he went out (of the palace), and wept bitterly.* He went out, not as Judas, into the night of despair, but, as has been beautifully said, "to meet the morning dawn."

The sincerity of his repentance and restoration was proved by a long life of devoted service to his Master; as for instance, Acts 4: 8; 12: 19. "We find, in tracing Peter's career, that his zeal was mixed with many inconsistencies. But Christ saw that he had in him the noble material of a vital and victorious apostleship. He retashioned him into a self-commanding, as well as an eager, champion, and at last made him first and foremost of the twelve companions of his Lord."

Prince Bismarck.

It was all but two and twenty years since I had seen Prince Bismarck. In 1866 he was fifty-one; he is now seventy-three, wanting some days, and they are years that make a difference. They have left a mark even on this man of iron. He is grayer and stouter, and the lines in his face are as if burnt in; the scars that corroding time has left. They are visible even in his photographs; his scorn of insincerities is far too deep for such flatteries as artists in black and white are wont to practise. They are visible even from the box where I sit, as the light from the ceiling falls full on his upturned face. He strides heavily in; it is but a step from the door to the spot where the scarlet portfolio is waiting for him, but the weight of the step is what first strikes you. It is not lassitude; it is sheer physical bulk. He stands six feet two, and his frame is the frame of a giant. He is broad and square in the shoulders and deep-chested; the arms are big; the legs are big; and that part of the body which is intermediate between legs and chest is big, yet not gross. He is as heroic in his physical proportions as in his character. The head is set on the shoulders and almost into them with a singular solidity and closeness. The man is all of a piece; body and mind, as it were fused and welded together. Faithful as are many of the photographs, I remember none which brings out strongly the helmet-shape of the head. It is the head of Pericles; dome-like in its amplitude as well as in its curve, with a breadth at the temples which its towering height cannot disguise; and far over hanging the steel-gray eyes, which look out as from caverns, deep fringed with gray eyebrows. There is no regularity of feature or of contour. The nose is short and carelessly moulded; the mouth you must imagine, for a gray mustache shades it; the jaw is the jaw—well, of Prince Bismarck, and of him alone. The stamp of power, of irresistible force, is on face and figure; into this one human form has Nature for once collected all her irrepressible energies, and subdued them to his overmastering will.

The impression I get as I gaze from a distance only recalls the impression of twenty years ago, when I sat in his study and listened to him till long past midnight, and mentally noted down features and the fleeting, flashing expressions that lighted them up. The changes are many and they are scathing; age has brought with it increase of strength; he looks more like a giant than he did then. He is in uniform, but not in the white of the cuirassiers, which is still, I believe, his favorite costume. He wears a single-breasted dark blue frock, reaching halfway from the waist to the knees, silver-buttoned to the throat; collar and deep cuffs of what, from this distance, looks like tarnished silver lace, gray in tone, with broad edges of bright yellow. The star of the Black Eagle glitters on the blue coat, and a whole tier of other orders stretches clear across the breast. As he opens with his right hand the scarlet portfolio, which contains the royal message, the left rests on his sword hilt; an attitude that gives rise to reflections. Never, that I heard of, did the Chancellor enter Reichstag or Landtag in any but a soldier's dress; once, at least, I saw him arrive in jack boots, and even to lay he wears spurs.

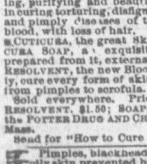
It is for the Chancellor that the House had been waiting. As soon as he was in his place the President rang his bell; some brief formalities were briefly got through, and Prince Bismarck was at once on his feet. A murmur of cheers greeted him. With a bow to his audience and another to the President, he began reading, holding the message on a folio sheet in his hand. He read in a strong voice, audible everywhere, I judged, throughout the hall; deliberately, with marked emphasis on some sentences. It was the Emperor's first message to the Imperial Parliament; the hand of the Chancellor who counter-signed and now delivered it to its destination visible in every line. What could be more like him than these thanks—"imperial thanks"—offered in the name of the late Emperor to the Reichstag, which had voted those last millions of money and men while the Emperor was still living? The voice rang out clearest of all the final words, "Trusting in the tried love of the whole people and their representatives for the Fatherland, we leave the Empire's future in God's hand." Cromwellian hypocrisy? Cromwellian if you like, but hypocrisy, no. For if anything be true of this stern statesman, as of his dead master, it is that both of them ever had a simple faith in the God of whom they avowedly stand in fear. "We Germans fear God, and nothing else in the world beside." The confession, and perhaps also the boast, seem to belong to a past age, but of the genuineness of both I, for my part, have no doubt.

The message ended, the scene changed. Prince Bismarck sat down, and the President rose; the Deputies still all upstanding as while the imperial message was reading. The Prince sprang up too, and the President spoke briefly. All at once, in the middle of his speech, as he mentioned the Emperor, there came a cry from the body of the hall which seemed like a signal. The President took it up and called, German fashion, for cheers. The whole assembly, raising each man his right arm to its full length, shouted out the deep, guttural "hook" which does duty for our hurrah. "Again," cried the President, and then, "again," so that the three cheers were duly given, and given with a solid heartiness of voice and manner that befitted the place and occasion—German to the core. I cannot remember to have looked down ever before on a Parliament thus expressing itself in cheers; still less with these strange but fine salutes.

As this scene and the President's brief harangue ended, once more Prince Bismarck rose and, to everybody's delight, began to speak. To everybody's astonishment, also, this minister of the German Empire appeared all at once as a mouthpiece of Parliaments. He asked leave, in quiet tones, to consider himself charged by the House to communicate the thanks of the Reichstag to foreign Parliaments who had expressed their sorrow and sympathies in the grief that had fallen upon the German Nation. He spoke for not more than three or four minutes, but it was a very different business from the mere reading of the message. Orator, perhaps he is not, but no man excels him in the faculty of so saying what he wishes as to impress his thought and will—there is the real point—on his audience. Words are to him weapons. In great crises, they are words which three millions of soldiers are ready to enforce. On an occasion like this, hardly more than ceremonious, there is still the trace of the master of many legions. Nothing can be said or done at such a time in an ordinary manner. The blackness of death still hangs over Berlin—her streets and the hearts of her people still in mourning; the shadow of a coming tragedy blending with that which is not yet past.

As before, the voice easily filled the hall, and it had that vibration which comes from the direct appeal of one man to many before him. There are hard tones, as you might guess, in Prince Bismarck's register, but it is a full, deep voice, rising and falling not too abruptly, capable of expressing emotion. I have heard it when it sounded like a command for a cavalry charge. When he used to speak to a hostile Parliament, as often befell in old days, it was the hoarse summons of an angry sovereign to his rebellious subjects. To-day, of course, everything goes smoothly. The Prince concerns himself little about gesture or any purely oratorical act. He stands erect behind his closed portfolio. The right hand swings carelessly, almost continually, by his side, the arm at full length, the fingers sometimes contracted, more often loose, and the hand quite open. The left again, all unconsciously, finds its way to the sword hilt. The head is thrown well back. The face is in profile from where I sit, and he looks for the most part straight forward, but turns once or twice to our box, and then the light from his eye, with the light from above glancing on it, is opalescent. Of fatigue or illness I could see no trace. I heard afterward that the Prince was really ill, and that the doctors had given him tonics, or whatever it may have been, to brace him up for this afternoon's work.

He is cheered from time to time. When he sits down a few Deputies go up, some of them timidly, to congratulate him. He shakes hands with some of them. One who comes from near the door bows almost to the ground. With him the Prince, who bows in return rather stiffly, omits to shake hands. He tarries a moment in his seat. As he rises the group about him divides swiftly and leaves him an open road to the door. He bows again; one rapid inclination of the head to either side in response to all the salutes, and strides off, still erect, the step firm, but not less heavy than when he came; the steel scabbard of his long cavalry sword ringing sharp against the brown oak. The door opens, as a door opens on the stage, wide before him, with invisible hands. He fills it as he passes through; the broad shoulders, the towering form, the kingly head of this king of men are set in a frame for one instant, then vanish. He has done what he came to do; does it in that rapid, workmanlike, decisive way of his, with energy; with authority; done it, though no great matter, once for all, and with the dignity befitting the occasion. Everyone feels that in this first message from an Emperor, so soon to be an Emperor no more, there is something solemn, and it has been solemnly delivered. In all, Prince Bismarck has not been twenty minutes in the chamber, but as he passes out it is as if another chapter in history had been transacted—another leaf turned in the book of fate.—*G. W. S., in New York Tribune.*



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2. That the general nature of the business intended to be transacted by such partnership, is the buying and selling at wholesale of Dry Goods and other merchandise, and generally a wholesale Dry Goods and General Jobbing and Commission business.

3. That the name of all the general and special partners interested in such partnership are as follows: Ward C. Pitfield, who resides at the City of Saint John, in the City and County of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, is the general partner, and Samuel Hayward, who resides in the said City of Saint John, is the special partner.

4. That the said Samuel Hayward has contributed the sum of Ten Thousand dollars as capital to the common stock.

5. That the period at which the said partnership is to commence is the twenty-third day of March, A. D. 1888, and the period at which the said partnership is to terminate is the twenty-third day of March, A. D. 1889.

Dated this twenty-first day of March, A. D. 1888.

(Signed) WARD C. PITFIELD.
(Signed) SAMUEL HAYWARD.

City and County of Saint John to wit: Be it remembered that on this twenty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight, at the City of Saint John, in the City and County of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, before me, John Russell Armstrong, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, in and for the said City and County of Saint John, personally came and appeared Ward C. Pitfield and Samuel Hayward, parties to and the signors of the annexed certificate, and in the said certificate mentioned and severally acknowledged, the said Ward C. Pitfield, that he signed the said certificate and the said Samuel Hayward that he signed the said certificate.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, at the said City of Saint John, the said twenty-first day of March, A. D. 1888.

(Signed) J. R. ARMSTRONG.
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Pictou Accommodation,	12.20
Truro Accommodation,	7.00
Express for St. John and Quebec,	17.1

A Sleeping Car runs daily on the 17 train to St. John.

On Monday, Wednesday and Friday a Sleeping Car for Montreal will be attached to the Quebec Express, and on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday a Sleeping Car for Montreal will be attached at Moncton

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT HALIFAX.

Truro Accommodation,	8.15
Express from St. John and Quebec,	8.10
Pictou Accommodation,	12.30
Day Express,	18.30

All trains are run by Eastern Standard Time.

D. POTTINGER,
Chief Superintendent.

Railway Office, Moncton, N. B.
Nov. 22nd, 1887.

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