



LESSON VI.—NOVEMBER 18, 1906.

Jesus Before Caiaphas.

Matt. xxvi., 57-68.

Golden Text.

He is despised and rejected of men.—Isa. liii., 3.

Home Readings.

- Monday, November 12.—Matt. xxvi., 57-68.
Tuesday, November 13.—Matt. xxvi., 69-75.
Wednesday, November 14.—Matt. xxvii., 1-10.
Thursday, November 15.—Matt. xiv., 46-64.
Friday, November 16.—Mark xiv., 65-72.
Saturday, November 17.—Luke xxii., 49-62.
Sunday, November 18.—John xviii., 13-24.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

Even to those who believe only in the 'manliness' of Jesus, His base betrayal, His ignoble desertion, illegal trial, and superlatively cruel death, are enough to touch their hearts to deepest pity.

It is past midnight, but the devotees of an imperial ecclesiasticism are alert. With murderous jealousy they anticipate the delivery into their hands of one for whom they had just paid a goodly price—one who must be immediately put out of the way, or their honors, powers, and emoluments be the forfeit.

The chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees are anticipating with venomous pleasure their retaliation upon one who has publicly denounced them as serpents and vipers; who, with bold hand, has snatched the mask from their unparalleled hypocrisy, and has likened them to whitened sepulchers.

be had for a price in the lobby of almost any Oriental court.

There sits the Sanhedrim in form of a horseshoe, the high priest at the 'toe,' and a scribe with inkhorn and parchment at either 'cork.' In the space between the scribes stands the accused, in full view of the semicircle of venerables, who sit cross-legged upon their crimson cushions.

As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so the Lamb of God opened not His mouth. Silence is His best defense. The suborned witnesses demolished each other's fabric of lies. Any tribunal not bent upon conviction would have thrown the case out of court with contempt.

But before the vociferating judge, with his soiled ermine, Jesus maintains His imperturbable silence. A last expedient occurs to the fertile mind of Caiaphas. He will put Jesus in the dilemma of denying His Messiahship by persisting in His silence, or affording ground of conviction for blasphemy by affirming it.

Thus Jesus, His hour having come, surrenders Himself into the hands of sinners, and voluntarily lays down a life which no man could have taken from Him.

KEY AND ANALYSIS.

- I. Ecclesiastical trial of Jesus. (1) Sanhedrim unlawfully convened. Suborned witnesses. Jesus' silence. (2) Jesus adjured to answer. High priests' sacred oath. (3) Jesus' significant answer.
II. Ecclesiastical condemnation. (1) Death penalty passed. (2) Personal indignity to condemned.

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

The canons of the Sanhedrim court were that the accused was to be esteemed innocent until proven guilty; it was an axiom. The Sanhedrim was set to save, not to destroy life; the president was to admonish witness of the value of a human life; counsel was to be provided for the accused; the youngest judges were to vote first, in order that they

might not be prejudiced by the voice of the elders; condemnation could only occur the day after the trial had concluded; a capital trial could not begin the day before a Sabbath or a feast; no criminal trial could begin or be continued at night; no one could be executed on the same day on which sentence was pronounced.

To retrieve the odium of the legal homicide of Jesus, his enemies invented an 'ex post facto' law, and incorporated it in the Talmud; to wit, any one who gave himself out as a false Messiah could be tried and condemned on the same day or in the night.

Silence on the part of a defendant in an Oriental court is a complete anomaly. Profuse protestations of innocence, dramatic appeal, wild gesture—copious tears—these are the rule.

The Sanhedrim thought it was condemning Jesus. In point of fact it was condemning itself. The Supreme Court of the Hebrew nation stands convicted at the bar of history of the foulest crime of all ages.

Infidelity is like the Sanhedrim, in that it is on the search for evidence against Jesus. It is an effort to impeach His character and claims. It is bent on conviction. Where there is this palpable insincerity, the believer does well to imitate his Master's silence.

What occurred in Caiaphas's court has been occurring ever since in the age-long arraignment of Jesus. The witnesses do not agree. One impeaches the other. Each new generation of skeptics presents a new hypothesis, thus denying the sufficiency of the former.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Nov. 18.—Topic—How the Bible condemns intemperance: a review of all temperance passages. Hab. ii., 5-15.

Junior C. E. Topic.

EZRA'S LIFE.

- Monday, November 12.—Ezra's family record. Ezra vii., 1-5.
Tuesday, Nov. 13.—From Babylon to Jerusalem. Ezra vii., 6-9.
Wednesday, Nov. 14.—Ezra's heart. Ezra vii., 10.
Thursday, Nov. 15.—The king's decree. Ezra vii., 11-26.
Friday, Nov. 16.—Ezra's thankfulness. Ezra vii., 27, 28.
Saturday, Nov. 17.—His arrival at Jerusalem. Ezra viii., 21-32.
Sunday, Nov. 18.—Topic.—The story of Ezra. Ezra vii., 6-10.

Do This in Advance.

In every lesson there are a few great truths which should be framed by the teacher in advance in the simplest and fewest words, and then drilled upon over and over by repetition, first by the individual scholar, then by the entire class.

The Methodist Conference Picture in the October 'Canadian Pictorial' is well worth securing.

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