

What was the reason for, or, if we may so say, the cause, of this causeless verdict? The golden Text answers the question: "They hated me." Inevitable, impleachable hatred made them not only reject him, but hasten to "cut him off out of the land of the living" (Matt. 23, 38). But then why this hatred? The answer is, that "they hated me without a cause." There was nothing in him to inspire or to account for hatred. He had come to "his own" on an errand of love and mercy. He brought good tidings. He "went about doing good." He had bright promises for the future for all who received and who followed him. The hatred was gratuitous. It was the outcome of their own evil hearts. They "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3, 19). Where Christ comes he comes to rule. And they said in their hearts, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19, 14).

The subject should be very solemnly applied to the class. "Christ, the Son of the Blessed," is one who can no more be ignored now than he could then. There is no such thing as neutrality in this case. On one side are his followers, on the other his enemies; the decision has to be made between the two. What have been his works in the world? What are his works now? Is there any cause for joining the ranks of his adversaries? What good reason can be given for rejecting a Saviour who laid down his life for the guilty: whose hand is full of gifts, "yea, even for the rebellion?" (Isa. 68, 19), if they will but turn? The only reason lies in the evil heart of man.

Jesus knew all this when he came down to die for the guilty. He knew the reception he would meet with from the Jewish nation. He knew the reception he would meet with now from those who prefer their own way and their own will, and hate the idea of submitting to him as Lord. And yet he came to seek the lost; and yet he seeks the lost. He was willing to bear all that he might save the lost. In which rank shall the stand be taken—"They hated me without a cause," or, "Ye have loved me, and I have believed that I came out from God?" (John 16, 27.)

Cambridge Notes.

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[These notes are based on the Revised Version.]

(Mark 14, 55-72; comp. Matt. 26, 59-75; Luke 22, 55-65; John 18, 15-27; comp. May 27, 1888.)

The mock trial of this passage is still apparently that which John calls the hearing before Hannas. It was strictly informal, and therefore the all-powerful Hannas naturally presided, though Caiaphas took the principal part. (See notes for last week.) Luke omits this, and brings into his account of the formal trial at day-break words really spoken here. We have three distinct accounts of Peter's denials, Matthew and Mark being mainly identical. The discrepancies prove nothing but the independence of our witnesses, who make different selections from the groups of questioners. The whole story may have been nearly as follows: John's influence procured Peter's admission into the quadrangle, where he left him before the fire, himself pressing into Hannas's audience-chamber. The slave-portress, afraid of censure for having let in a friend of the prisoner, leaves her post and questions Peter, receiving the first evasive denial. Restlessly trying to escape notice, he retires into a grouping of the porch and a cock crows. Meanwhile the group at the fire, including the portress and another female slave, question him in rapid succession, and the second denial follows, with an oath. An hour after, in the quadrangle, Jesus awaits the Sanhedrin's meeting at

dawn, the passive object of the servants' coarse brutality. Peter is not far off, by the fire again. His Galilean patois is commented on and Malchus's kinsman recognizes him, so the third denial bursts forth. Immediately the second cock crows, and the Lord's tender, reproachful look brings the self-confident apostle to his right mind. Ver. 55. Hitherto the Sanhedrin had cherished a tradition of extreme lenity in capital cases, every conceivable opportunity for exculpation being given the accused. *Wode.* The isolated protests drowned in the general clamor. Ver. 56. The court thus adhered to the Mosaic requirement of two witnesses (Leut. 17, 6; 19, 15; comp. John 8, 17), a good example of the scrupulousness which "strained out the gnat and swallowed the camel." They must have suggested to the witnesses the tale they were to tell, and before a unanimous court the testimony would have been sufficiently consistent. English judges in Bengal constantly have to unmask elaborate and plausible lies, bought ready-made outside their court. The breakdown of this perjured testimony proves that there were Sanhedrists who applied a cross-examination like that of Daniel in the Apocrypha. One of these was Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23, 51) and another probably Nicodemus (John 3, 1; 5, 51; 19, 39). May we hope that the great Rabban Gamaliel (Acts 5, 34, *seq.*) made his protest too? Ver. 57. *False.* "A lie that is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies." Their evidence was a distorted version of his words at the first cleansing of the temple (John 2, 19-21), revived in men's memory by the recent second cleansing. Jesus bade the Jews "destroy this temple," and they now pervert the letter to fulfill the spirit of his words. Ver. 58. Matthew and Mark report different witnesses, and we can thus see how seriously they disagreed (ver. 50). The evidence given in Matt. 26, 61, albeit false, was not damaging enough to secure a verdict. Mark shows us a more audacious perjurer, who uses the reckless exaggerations of the three years' interval to forge a definite charge of "blaspheming the holy place" (comp. Acts 6, 13). *Made with hands.* A comparison with Acts 7, 48; 22, 24; 2 Cor. 5, 1; Heb. 9, 11, 24, seems to show that in some discourse not recorded Jesus had used this phrase to contrast the material temple with the spiritual. John 21, 25 helps us to realize how vast a proportion of the words and deeds of Jesus have left their record only in the influence of the apostolic lives which they modeled. For aught we know, the Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypse may contain many phrases from his lips, but there are only two other certain examples, namely, Acts 20, 35 and James 1, 12 (comp. Rev. 2, 10). Ver. 60. It was, of course, grossly illegal to make a prisoner criminate himself, but how else could they carry out their self-appointed task of vindicating the authority of the orthodox faith? Ver. 61. The majestic silence continued, and this question too received no answer. Thus Jesus once more exposed the helplessness of his enemies before surrendering himself to their will. It was not the "adjuration" of Caiaphas that wrung from him the declaration which sealed his fate. But he had compelled the Jews to state the real case, that he was to die for claiming Messiahship, and he accepts the issue. *The Christ, the Son, etc.* It is often asserted that the titles are equivalent, but certainly without proof. False Messiahs claimed no divine nature, and if Jesus had been content with the unique human dignity assigned to the Messiah by popular belief he would not have died. The question of Caiaphas presupposes higher claims which were known to have been made. *Blessed.* Comp. Rom. 1, 25; 9, 5; 2 Cor. 11, 31, for this title of God, which, however, does not appear in this absolute form. How nauseous it

is on the lips of the blackest of the world's representative and Reman, Mill, for asserting etc. See note. Man's destiny fulfilled in the hour can see quick and does meaning throne, who while his foe appointed spy companion as chap. 6, 9, than one, as like this. Ver. probably will seem to have high-priest's their revenge this cast before nature. Be the Messiah's striker. *Of blood.* While able. Ver. duet in the round which she was the siently in plains a be *eq.* records. *Lofty manner* may p time they notice that sible for the fall. We cained him precious wa The margin excitement betraying I. The colon "porch" how the trishield him. by the two were clear ver. 72. Of most signifi self, who o clearly the phs, whose their Masto 70. A little desperate concealme palmist's viction wa as they calants of the old Jude sins. Veri tions on h Perhaps