

that we are tried to the utmost. It is then that we require the swift, secret prayer to hold us from impatience and anger.

The silence of Jesus is full of meaning. It is possible to imitate Him in this. Sometimes we serve Him best by refraining from speech. It is a mistake to think that He wants us to be always talking, even about Himself. A noisy, boastful, bold demeanor does not recommend us to Him, nor Him to the world. This does not mean that we are to shelter our cowardice behind this excuse. There is certainly the duty to speak out. But it means there is also a time for silence, when we speak to better purpose by refraining from words.

They ridiculed Jesus! Think of it! If the weeds by the roadside should jibe at the elms and maples of the forest or mice sneer at the courage and strength of lions, it would be less strange. Ridicule is a very cheap

and tawdry thing. It has very little power to do harm. It never breaks bones, nor ruins fortunes, nor changes one hair black or white. Yet the fear of ridicule is a terrible force in human life. If we could write down all the things people do, and then all the things people do not do, for fear of being thought odd, we should fill two prodigious volumes. A word of praise will make us unreasonably happy. A word of criticism will make us unreasonably miserable. We know that these words, of either praise or blame, are carelessly spoken, yet they effect us profoundly. He is not a bold warrior who flees from shadows. It is not a wise man who turns aside from his purpose at the first trivial difficulty. Our lives should be so firmly founded upon truth and right that whispers and sneers will not annoy us. Let us build upon Jesus our Saviour and example, and we shall possess His fortitude.

THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

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There were two parts to Jesus' trial, the trial before the Jewish authorities and that before the Roman authorities. John describes the trial before Annas, John 18 : 12-27. The other three Gospels describe that before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin at which He was formally, but illegally, condemned. The Lesson deals with the latter. Take up :

1. *The eagerness of the Jewish leaders to put Jesus to death.* Emphasize : (a) That the Sanhedrin had been in session waiting for the return of the guard with Jesus. Treat v. 59 as an account of those assembled, indicating that there was a deliberate plan to rush the matter through before the people could be fully aware of what was being done. What does such a meeting show of the moral attitude of the rulers? (b) Their readiness to accomplish Jesus' death by summoning false witnesses. Get the lesson from Bruce's comment, "Jesus was apprehended to be put to death, and the trial was only a blind form rendered necessary by the fact that there was a procurator to be satisfied." Consider the

blamelessness of Jesus' life when His enemies could not get enough of even false evidence to bear the face of decency. (c) Pay special attention to the testimony of the two. The testimony of two was necessary under the Jewish criminal procedure. See ch. 27 : 63, 64 to show there was a popular account of what Jesus said, which was a perversion of His actual teaching, given in John 2 : 19. (d) The feverish haste of the high priest who snatched at false testimony for his ends. The witnesses failing, he adopted the illegal course, forcing the prisoner to testify against Himself.

2. *The testimony of Jesus.* Bring out the fact that when the false witnesses failed, Jesus was put on oath concerning His Messiahship. Take up His answer in v. 64. Bruce gives four reasons why Jesus answered : "First, the whole ministry of Jesus made the question inevitable. Second, the high priest was the proper person to ask it. Third, it was an important opportunity of giving expression to His Messianic self consciousness. Fourth, silence would have amounted to denial." Show that Jesus was condemned for claiming He was the Christ.

3. *The rage of the heathen.* Such treatment presupposed Jesus was a condemned criminal.