

61. Answered nothing. Neither to the false testimony nor to the pointless question of the chief priest did he reply. He knew when to speak, and when to refrain from speaking. **Again.** Another question, but one altogether different from the first, an inquiry of the gravest import. **Art thou.** The Greek shows that he uttered the word "thou" with a kind of contemptuous emphasis. Thou, forsaken of thy disciples and standing helpless here in our midst. **The Christ.** The anointed Messiah and Saviour of Israel. To the Jews of that period the word suggested a victorious military chieftain, a heroic prince. **The Son of the Blessed.** The chief priest proudly avoids the utterance of the name of deity, whose honor he represents himself as defending. What reply shall Jesus make? Shall he refuse to ingratiate himself with the high priest? Shall he refer them, as in John 11, 30, to the testimony of John the Baptist? Shall he refer them, as in John 10, 38, to his works? Shall he evade the question, as he so well always did to do? No, for this end has he come to this hour, that he might bear witness to the truth. The cup of death which his Father has given him he will not refuse to drink. He calmly answers.

62. Jesus said. His name, instead of the simple "I said," is repeated with solemn emphasis. **I am.** For the first time a true witness has spoken. His doom is sealed. They may mock the humility which they cannot understand, and refuse to recognize the Lord's anointed in the guise of a helpless prisoner, but the time will come when they will reverence him. **Ye shall see.** The tokens of his Messianic dignity will yet appear. **The Son of man.** He uses that title which emphasizes his humble outward station (Phil. 2, 8) as contrasted to his coming glory. **At the right hand of power.** On his right, in the place of honor. Stephen says him there (Acts 7, 56; Psal. 110, 1). They may deny that he is the Son of God now, but they shall see God the Father acknowledging his Sonship. **Coming with the clouds.** As no mere man could come with signs of supernatural power. This prophecy will be fully realized at Christ's second coming at the end of the world.

III. The Condemnation (vers. 63-65).

63. Rent his clothes. A sign of horror (2 Kings 18, 37; Lev. 10, 6) or rage, which might be real or unreal (Joel 2, 13). It was the formal accompaniment of the charge of blasphemy. **Further need.** To enable them to condemn the prisoner. **Witnesses.** The dearth of witnesses had given him his greatest anxiety. **Ye have heard.** They are all witnesses as to what he has said. **Blasphemy.** Blasphemy is irreverent speech concerning God. The high-priest asserts in the use of this word that Jesus had spoken irreverently of Jehovah in saying that he, a lowly prisoner, was his anointed One and that he would be accorded divine honors in future. The characterization of Jesus's words as blasphemy, before the court had pronounced them so, was rank injustice. **What think ye?** What is your vote? How many say, "Guilty?" How many say, "Not guilty?" In his haste, the presiding judge will not wait for the prisoner to explain his words, or to ask the court if they have any questions to ask the prisoner. He seizes upon the first opportunity for obtaining an unfavorable verdict. **And they all condemned him.** A unanimous verdict of "guilty." **To be worthy of death.** John 10, 7. We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God (Lev. 24, 16; Deut. 18, 20).

65. Began. Because he was now a condemned prisoner. **Spit on him.** The sign of the most intense scorn and loathing (Num. 12, 14; Deut. 25, 9). Jesus had prophesied this (Jo. 8, 34). "He is despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53, 3). **Cover his face.** To prevent his seeing who should approach him. **Buffet him.** Strike him on the head, or in the side or chest, with their clenched fists. **To say.** In derision. **Prophecy.** Show now the near relation to God which you say you will have by and by. Tell by prophetic vision who the snailers are whom you cannot see by natural vision. The climax of cowardice. Not one of them would have hitherto dared to do such a thing in the sight of the people. The pent-up rage and indignation of long months was now satisfying itself in the most brutal way. There was one who noted the patience and meekness of his bearing, and afterward wrote "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2, 23). **9 officers.** They were the police of the Sanhedrin, and made arrests and had the custody of prisoners (Matt. 5, 25). **Received him.** Took him into their custody. The Sanhedrin could not legally pronounce formal sentence until daylight. In

the considerable interval of time, the officers would have charge of the prisoner. **With blows.** They followed the example of their superiors. They too had felt the use of his power (John 7, 45, 46), and now took advantage of what they supposed was his helplessness.

III. Application.

1. The worth of a stainless character (ver. 55). "Sought witness... found it not."
2. The Christian disciple is liable to false accusation (Matt. 5, 11). "Marvel not if the world hateth you" (1 John 3, 13). A promise (Isa. 51, 20).
3. The strength of the truth (ver. 59). "And not even so" (2 Cor. 13, 8; Acts 25, 7). "Charges which they could not prove."
4. The majesty of reticence (ver. 61; Isa. 36, 21).
5. The true type of spiritual courage (ver. 62). Elijah 1 Kings 18, 18; Daniel's, Dan. 6, 10; Paul's, Acts 23, 29.
6. The danger of rash conclusions (ver. 64). "Ye have heard the blasphemy."
7. The perils of conscience (ver. 64) associated action (ver. 64). "They all condemned him."
8. The cowardice of oppressing the weak (ver. 65).
9. Frowning infidelity is still denied a revelation, but honest doubt is permitted infallible proofs (John 7, 17).
10. Whoever refuses to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord now treats him as the officers did.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

In one sense it is a truth that there is nothing without a cause. Certain irregularities in the orbit of the planet supposed to be nearest the sun set the astronomers searching for another which should produce the effect noticed, and thus the French country doctor Lescaubault became, as he believed, the discoverer of a planet still nearer, which he named "Vulcan," but of which others have not yet succeeded in obtaining a view. But, on the other hand, there are many things which come to pass without any proper or sufficient cause to call them forth. Two nations are found arrayed one against another in deadly strife. It is not for the advantage of either. The soldiers who aim at taking one another's lives have no personal quarrel. Were one left wounded and helpless after the battle, the other would gladly assist him. Where then is the cause of the bloodshed? Something has brought it about—perhaps a slight offense or misunderstanding between two rulers—but there is no proper or sufficient cause.

Our lesson and Golden Text bring before us the most terribly causeless feeling that ever took place on earth, and the most causeless feeling that ever found room in a human heart.

The passage shows us a man standing before the great council of the Jews, a prisoner to be judged. In these days a man is not brought to the bar of justice without a reason, without some tangible, definite cause why he should be judged. But in this case, although they have carefully hunted up persons to bear witness against the prisoner, they cannot get what the law demands—the agreement of two of them. The evidence is therefore proved to be false or worthless. There is, in fact, no case against the prisoner, no cause why he should be judged and punished. They next try a personal examination, and this brings out one thing; namely, the distinct avowal that he is Christ, the Son of God. Some months before they had intimated that it was only for want of this distinct avowal that they withheld their belief in him (see John 10, 24). Yet the very confession then asked for is made the ground of condemning him, and the verdict is quickly agreed upon, "Worthy of death," although they had legally and actually found "no cause of death in him."