

The Quiet Hour.

Jesus and Caiaphas.

S. S. Lesson—March 10, 1901 (Matt. 26 : 57-68).

GOLDEN TEXT—Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death, v. 59. If they had called true witnesses to testify about Him, what must they have told? Here is one; what has he to say? "I was blind, and this Jesus gave me sight." Here is another—"I was a helpless cripple and Jesus made me well and active as you see me to-day." Here is a woman—"I had fallen into evil ways. I was without hope for this life or the life to come. I heard Jesus speak. He said that God cared for the like of me, that if I came back I might be forgiven and saved. These words made me sorry for my sin and gave me hope. I forsook my evil ways and ever since have tried to do the will of God." Such must have been the testimony of those who would speak the truth; that Jesus had done good and good only, and had saved multitudes from sorrow and sin.

At the last came two false witnesses, v. 60. Notice the testimony of these false witnesses. Jesus had not said what they testified, but He had said something that sounded like it. He had not meant what they insinuated but His words could be interpreted in that way. Now this is the most dangerous kind of falsehood. A whole, out-and-out lie can be refuted with comparative ease; but a half lie or a lie that has the appearance of the truth is more difficult to cope with. It is evidence of this kind that is largely adduced against Christianity to-day. Unbelievers point back to the history of the Church and call attention to the wars that have waged in the name of religion and to the frightful persecutions that have been inflicted by one body of Christ's followers upon another; and they say, This religion of Jesus has not been a blessing to the world, but a curse. Now there is a plausibility in that, but not truth. The wars and persecutions that have disgraced the history of the Christian religion have not been the result of that religion. They have been due to the perversity of men, in spite of Christianity and in defiance of its spirit.

Jesus held his peace, v. 63. It is often the best course in the face of slander. Let us so live that when we are slandered our lives may speak for us. In that case, with good men, the slander can do us little harm. If there are those who are disposed to think evil, they will give little heed to our refutation. In any case, the most effective way is to live the liebl down.

I adjure thee by the living God, etc., v. 63. It is said of the ermine, that the Russian hunters take advantage of its cleanliness to compass its destruction. So fearful is it of soiling its fur, that when filth is sprinkled on each side of the track along which it is accustomed to run, it will go straight forward into the trap rather than turn aside. So the high priest used the absolute truthfulness of Jesus to entrap Him. When Jesus was placed on oath before this well-recognized tribunal of His country, there was only one thing that He could do, and that was to speak the truth, though in so doing He sealed His own condemnation.

Jesus said unto Him, Thou hast said, v.

64. This is the claim we have to face. Is there good reason for acknowledging it? Are we justified in believing that this Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? We believe it because He said so. We believe it, also because history has vindicated His claim. God has set His seal to the testimony of Jesus concerning Himself. The prophecy which Jesus uttered here has been fulfilled. He said: "Henceforth (Rev. Ver.) ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." That prophecy forthwith began to be fulfilled. In a few days Jesus had been raised from the dead, He gave His commission to His disciples, ascended to heaven and sent forth His Holy Spirit; and from that day to this, His kingdom has marched on conquering, and will march on, until all the kingdoms of this earth become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. The centuries prove without fail that His claim was just.

Prayer.

Most merciful God, Fountain of life and truth, and the Giver of all good, we come beseeching Thee to grant that we may understand more and more fully, through the varied experiences of life, Thy mind and will and Thy holy purpose concerning us. May we have grace to turn aside from everything that makes us disinclined to listen to Thy word and to Thy will. Help us to be mindful of the things which concern our eternal welfare, and when the burdens of life rest heavily upon us, may we be able to recognize Thy presence, and experience Thy sustaining grace. May we come to Thee with humble hearts seeking Thy forgiveness for all our sin, for all that we have done that has made our hearts less responsive to Thy voice. Help us, we beseech Thee, that we may learn wherein the path of blessedness doth lie, that we may follow it with greater zeal and resolution, and inasmuch as our own weakness has often been revealed, may we cling more closely to Thy strength. Manifest Thyself to us and assist us to preserve the dispositions and desires which open the gates of our hearts for the King of glory to come in. Amen.—Selected.

At the Door of the Heart.

The Master, with the shadow of the Cross falling on His soul, was comforted by a woman's insight and a woman's love. Her own heart taught her the secret of sacrifice; her heart anticipated the longing for sympathy, and so beautiful in its grace and spiritual delicacy was her act that Jesus declared it would be told to her praise wherever the Gospels were read.

Forever this Friend of man, hungering for love and friendship, passes down the paths of life, and knocks at the door of the heart. Blessed are they who hear His voice and give Him welcome, who are not ashamed of Him or of His cause, who serve Him with their best, and pour upon His head the richest of their love.—John Watson.

We should not only see the hand of God, but the hand of our loving Heavenly Father full of mercy and loving kindness in all that befalls us, whether affliction or otherwise, and therefore we should believe it to be best for us, because it is His will.—G. W. Bethune.

By Blaming Others.

Is it courageous, when we have done something we know we should not have done, to try to excuse ourselves by throwing the blame or responsibility upon somebody else?

Two boys, brothers, were out in the vacant lot next to their house, practising with an air-gun. They had taken turns in shooting, and had tried different targets. When it came to Walter's turn again, he said to Fred, who was about two years younger,—

"Do you see that little knot-hole near the window? It's pretty close, but I'm going to see if I can't hit it."

"Yes, do," Fred said emphatically. "Go ahead, an' see how near you can come."

Walter aimed at the knot-hole, but the good luck that had been with him so far deserted him, and the shot, instead of striking the knot-hole, went through the window-pane.

"Now you'll catch it!" Fred said, screwing up his face expressively, as Walter looked at him in dismay.

"You're just as much to blame as I am," Walter said angrily.

"Why?" was Fred's resort.

"Cause you told me to do it. You said, 'Go ahead, an' I did.'"

When their mother inquired the cause of the trouble, Walter gave the same excuse.

"Fred told me to go ahead, and see how near I could come to it," he said, "an' I think he's just as much to blame as I am."

How about that? When we are old enough to know for ourselves what we are doing, and whether it is right or wrong, can we free ourselves from blame by saying that somebody else told us to do, or not to do, a certain thing?

Out of the Deep.

When thou hast suffered long enough, He will stablish, strengthen, settle thee. He will bind up thy wounds and pour in the oil and wine of His Spirit—the Holy Ghost, the Comforter—and will carry thee to His own inn, thereof it is written, "He will hide thee secretly in His own presence from the provoking of men; He will keep thee in His tabernacle from the strife of tongues." He will give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways, and He will give thee rest at last in the bosom of the Father, from which thou, like all human souls, comest forth at first, and to which thou shalt at last return, with all human souls who have in them the Spirit of God and of Christ and of eternal life.—Charles Kingsley.

The great spiritual movement in London, known as the Simultaneous Mission, has made a wonderful impression there. All branches of non-conformist churches worked together, and some of the Anglican clergy came out with them. Conventionalities were entirely laid aside, and all united in a determined effort to bring the Gospel within the reach of all. The work has discovered some excellent men, and it may be that one result shall be the release of one or two of the permanent ministers for a time that he may take up special evangelistic work.

Dr. Thain Davidson says:—"That the spiritual world is as real as the material, and being eternal, demands our first and highest attention."