

will come and take away our place and nation." The chief priests and Pharisees—the rulers—feared the loss of their power and influence, and they seemed to think if their powers, &c., were gone then all would be gone. Judea was already under the Roman Government but the hierarchy ruled. And it was the fear of losing their authority that led them to speak and act against Jesus. They were jealous of his growing influence. Hence they say among themselves, something must be done. A council was called, or the Sanhedrim was convened—a court consisting of 71 members, the highest tribunal of the Jews. At this time it was divided into two parties, (1) the Pharisees, (2) the Sadducees; but they both were hostile to Jesus.

At this meeting suddenly called, but called for a particular purpose, viz.: to see what could be done to hinder Christ's work, Caiaphas is the first to speak. It is added that he was high priest that same year. This seems to conflict with Acts iv. 6, and also with Luke III. 2. The explanation is that Annas was ex-high priest, Caiaphas was actually high priest, and perhaps Caiaphas had been placed in office by the Romans, who debased the priestly office at that time by removing and installing at will whom they would. The speech of Caiaphas is a very remarkable one, whether you consider the speaker or that which he said. The speaker, the high priest, the president of the Sanhedrim, a leader of the enemies of Christ, and yet he uttered words prophetic of the sacrifice that Christ was soon to offer, (V. 50). But as these words fell from the lips of Caiaphas they were words of hatred. The feeling of Caiaphas was, Christ must be got rid of; he must be put to death. The only question was how can it be done? Suddenly it occurs to him that it is a recognized maxim that the welfare of the nation is to be preferred to the welfare of one man, and as the nation was in danger it is better that one man die for it than that it perish. So by the death of Jesus their purpose will be served, and, as they imagine, the nation saved. Caiaphas uttered these words with great boldness and authority, because he knew they expressed the inmost wishes of those around him.

V. 31.—There was more in the words of Caiaphas than he was aware of. Unwillingly and unconsciously to himself he had spoken the truth of God, the great truth that salvation is to be provided for men through the death of another—even Jesus. *Thus he spake not of himself, &c.* God spake through and by him, and yet Caiaphas uttered his own views and feeling concerning Jesus. But his own words were so ordered by God that they expressed the mind of God.

V. 52.—Here the Evangelist explains that the words of Caiaphas were not intended to limit the benefit of Christ's death to the Jews.

Vs. 53, 54.—The effect of the speech was that the death of Jesus was determined upon, and frequent meetings were held to consult as to the manner of his death. Hence it

became necessary for Christ to conceal himself till his hour was come.

LESSONS.

1. The more, and the more mightily Christ works, the more his enemies are stirred up to oppose him.
2. Wicked men sometimes carry out their own intentions and yet fulfil God's purpose. "God makes the wrath of man to praise him."
3. Prophecy is here fulfilled. See the Second Psalm.

A Dying Child's Message.

Speaking to parents, Mr. Moody related an incident of a precious word of a dying child:

"There was a man living in New York city as elder in one of the Presbyterian churches there. His little boy had been sick some time, but he had not considered it dangerous. He came home one day, and his wife was in great trouble. When he came into the house he found her weeping. 'What is troubling you?' he said. 'Why,' she said, 'there has been a great change in our boy since you left this morning. I am afraid he is dying; I wish you would go in and see him, and if he is, tell him so.' The father went in and took his seat at the head of the bed, he placed his hands on the forehead of the little boy, and he could see that death was stealing over him. He said to his boy, 'My son, do you know you are dying?' and the little fellow looked surprised, and he said, 'Am I, father? Is this death that I feel?' 'Yes, my son, you are dying.' 'Shall I die to-day?' 'Yes, you cannot live until the night.' And the little boy smiled and said, 'I will be with Jesus to-night, won't I?' 'Yes, my son, you will be with the Saviour to-night,' and the father turned away to conceal a tear; and when the little fellow saw the tears rolling down his father's cheeks, he said, 'Don't you weep for me, father; when I get to heaven I will go right straight to Jesus, and tell him that ever since I could remember, you tried to lead me to him.'

THE Rev. Dr. Ellinwood, who has recently returned to America after a voyage "round the world," tells the story of a very little Chinese boy who came to the missionary and said, "I want to love your Jesus." "Then just tell him so," was the answer. The child went away; next day he came back, and said, "I do love Jesus, and now I want to be called a Christian." "But how," said the missionary, "have you found him?" "I just did as you told me," said the child; "I knelt down, and said, 'O Lord Jesus, come into my heart, and make me love thee always,' and now I do love him, and want to be his child forever."