



LESSON VIII.—MAY 21.

Christ Before the High Priest

John xviii., 15-27. —Memory verses 23-25.

Golden Text.

'He came unto his own, and his own received him not.'—John i., 11.

Home Readings.

M. John xviii., 15-27. — Christ before the high priest.

T. Luke xxii., 54-62.—Peter's tears.

W. Luke xxii., 63-71.—Before the council.

Th. John viii., 42-47.—A challenge.

F. I. Peter ii., 17-25.—The sinless Saviour.

S. Matt. xxvi., 31-35.—Warning to Peter.

S. Psalm cxli. — Prayer against temptation.

Lesson Story.

When our Saviour was taken captive to the high priest's palace, John, the beloved apostle, followed and went in with him, but Peter followed afar off.

Peter found himself shut out from the scene; but John went back to open the door and bring him in. The maid who kept the door asked Peter if he also was a disciple of this man who was waiting his trial before the Jewish court. Peter hastily denied having any connection with his Saviour, and went and stood by the fire with the officers and servants.

The high priest then questioned our Lord about his disciples and about his teaching. He did this simply to gain time while he was sending for the members of the Sanhedrim, that they might try and condemn Jesus. But Jesus answered that all his teachings had been in public, in the synagogue and in the temple. The Jews knew what he had taught there, and he had said nothing different in his private teaching to his disciples.

When our Saviour had thus righteously refused to be questioned, an officer standing by struck him with a rod (marginal reading) or with his hand, a cruel blow, saying, 'Answerest thou the high priest so?' Jesus rebuked this wanton cruelty, saying, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?'

Peter, who had already denied his Lord once and had gone into the company of his enemies, was now tempted again. The second time he was asked if he was one of Jesus' disciples, and the second time he flatly denied. One of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman of Malchus whose ear Peter had cut off, asked suspiciously, 'Did I not see thee in the garden with him?' Peter in terror denied again and immediately the cock crew, and poor Peter remembered the warning his Master had given him (John xiii., 38), and filled with repentance and sorrow, went out into the night and wept bitterly.

Lesson Hymn.

Jesus, and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of Thee?
Ashamed of Thee, whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine through endless days?

Ashamed of Jesus! that dear friend
On whom my hopes of heaven depend!
No, when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere His name.

Ashamed of Jesus! yes, I may,
When I've no guilt to wash away,
No tear to wipe, no good to crave,
No fear to quell, no soul to save.

Till then, nor is my boasting vain,
Till then I boast a Saviour slain;
And O, may this my glory be,
That Christ is not ashamed of me.
—J. Grigg.

Suggestions.

Jesus endured two trials:—

1. The first before the Jewish authorities, who, having decided to destroy Jesus, must

formulate some charge against him; the punishment of which was death.

2. The second before the Roman authorities, who alone could inflict the death penalty. The Jews hoped that it would be a mere formality, the Romans accepting as sufficient the decision of the Jewish court.

The first of these is the subject of to-day's lesson. This trial, as in the trial before Pilate, consisted of three separate stages or acts:—

1. The preliminary examination before the high priests (regarded by many as the trial recorded by John).

2. The informal trial before Caiaphas and members of the Sanhedrim (regarded by many as that recorded in Matthew and Mark).

3. The formal condemnation at a regular meeting of the Sanhedrim (regarded by many as the trial recorded by Luke).

In connection with these were the denials by Peter, and the mockery of Jesus.' — 'Peloubet.'

The trial at night was contrary to the Jewish law, the Talmud decrees that no trial may begin or end except in the daytime, and that if the prisoner is guilty he must not be condemned until the day after the trial, neither was a trial legal which took place on the eve of a feast. But 'he was numbered with the transgressors,' though nothing could be witnessed against him, his trial was illegal and his condemnation an awful crime on the part of his judges.

The high priest asked Jesus if he were indeed the Christ, the Son of God, and Jesus answered 'I am,' thus calling himself by the name of Jehovah (Ex. iii., 14), and bringing upon himself the charge of blasphemy. But in calm and royal dignity our Lord announced to them that he, the Son of man, should come in the clouds with a great retinue of all God's holy angels, and sitting on the right hand of God, with all his power should judge those who were now condemning him (Mark xiv., 62).

Peter, when beside Jesus, was ready to fight a whole band of soldiers for his sake; when away from Jesus he was afraid of even a slave girl's questions. Telling one lie opens the way to telling many more to hide it. Lies never go singly. Peter got into bad company (Psa. i., 1) and denied his Saviour three times, but one look from those loving eyes brought him to repentance and tears (Luke xxii., 61).

When Jesus was risen from the dead he remembered Peter, and in his infinite love and forgiveness sent a special message to him bidding him come with the other disciples (Mark xvi., 7). As Peter had three times denied his Saviour, Jesus three times asked if he loved him (John xxi., 15-17), and three times gave him the commission to feed the sheep and lambs for whom the Lamb of God had given his life.

Peter was weak and cowardly before Pentecost, but after he had received the Holy Spirit he was filled with the courage and power of God. (Acts ii., 14; iv., 8-13).

Practical Points.

John's attempt to help Peter to follow his Master was praiseworthy. What are we doing to encourage our fellow-pilgrims? Verses 15, 16.

So timorous had the once-bold Peter become that a maid caused him to deny Christ. Verse 17.

The high priest was not a follower of Jesus, and had not listened to his teaching. Verses 19-21.

They who ill-treated Jesus little knew the greatness of their sin and the insanity of their conduct. Verses 22-24.

Peter was warming himself at the fire, but his spirit also needed warming up, for his love of Christ had grown cold. Verses 18, 25.

The prophecy of Peter's three-fold denial was not remembered by the apostle until the cock crew. The sight of a flower or the singing of a hymn will sometimes waken memories that otherwise might have lain buried forever. Verses 26, 27: Matt. xxvi., 75.

C. E. Topic.

May 21.—The gift of power.—Acts i., 1-8.

Junior C. E.

May 21.—What did Christ teach by his feeding of the five thousand?—John vi., 5-14.



The Catechism on Beer.

(By Julia Colman, National Temperance Publication House.)

LESSON XIV.—WASTEFULNESS OF BEER.

'Wasted grain makes dear bread.'

Why is beer-making wasteful?

Because the grain is food when it is made into bread, and it is not food when made into beer.

What has the beer-drinker to show for it? Money gone, strength gone, time wasted, and a desire for more drink.

If a man drinks only three glasses of beer a day, at five cents each, how much food would that give him?

Enough to nourish him much better than some poor people get nourished.

Many a beer-drinker might say with every glass, 'Here goes a loaf of bread!' or, 'Here goes a pound of oatmeal!' or 'Here goes a quart of milk!' and even then he wants more beer; while the bread, milk and oatmeal would have satisfied his hunger and enabled him to earn a good day's wages.

Problems.—How much would fifteen cents a day amount to in a week? how much in a year? What could be bought with that money? How much would five glasses a day amount to in a month? in a year? What could be bought with these sums?

At the cost of one glass of beer a day, how long would it take a boy to buy a dollar book?

How could he get time to read it?

He could save the time he would spend in beer-drinking and with beer-drinking companions.

What notable case can you give of a boy that did so?

The statesman Benjamin Franklin, who was also the first great American philosopher.

Would one's choice between such things make any difference in his life?

It would, for such practices always make a difference in everybody's life.

You might not become a Franklin, but you would be better off without the beer than with it. A poor old man in a workhouse was complaining that a man at his age did not have a home of his own, when a visitor, with a pencil and paper, showed him that if he had saved his beer-money he might have had a good home.



'This is what I have left, a house of my own and no rent to pay.'



'All I have left, and they belong to the brewer.'

How much grain is wasted every year in the United States in beer-making?

About sixty-five millions of bushels, and this amount is constantly increasing.

Upon whom does this loss fall?

Upon all of us, for it makes other grain dearer.

What do the beer-drinkers of this country pay for their beer annually?

About three hundred and sixty-five millions of dollars.

They pay this over to the brewers, and then very often come upon the public with their families for support. This raises the taxes, and so makes house-rent and all merchandise higher, so that in the end we all help to pay this great beer bill, even when we do not drink the beer.

Why should not the great business of brewing be encouraged like other industries?

Because all it produces is of no value.

A man might invest much money and employ many people in making paper windmills, but no one would consider it 'a great industry' and worthy of protection, especially if the windmills were all to be burned when they were finished, whether by the maker or by those who were silly enough to buy