

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS.

(See frontispiece.)

"Behold the hour is at hand and the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners." And as he yet spoke Judas came and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs sent from the chief priests and the ancients of the people. Laying hands on Jesus they bound Him and led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the high priest of that year.

The high priest questions Him concerning His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus answered : "I have spoken openly to the world ; I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the Temple, whither all the Jews resort : and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why asketh thou me ? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken into them : behold, they know what things I have said."

And when he had said these things, one of the servants standing near gave Jesus a blow saying : "Answerest thou the high priest so ?" Jesus, "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil ; but if well, why striketh thou me ?"

Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas the high priest. This blow was the beginning of Jesus passion. After submitting to this first outrage He will meekly endure all the others. Here the high priest is preferred to Jesus, a few hours later it will be Barabbas : another blow. Amidst the ruins of what was formerly the house of Annas, in the court yard where still stands a hollow knotted old olive tree to which Jesus might have been bound, a lamp unceasingly burns on the spot where tradition tells us Jesus was struck by a servant.

O Jesus, in memory of this humiliating outrage, I shall try to accept and bear all that humiliates me, whether publicly or privately, and especially when the blow is from those even more unworthy and lower than I am.

