

J. C. RYLE'S NOTES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
18:12-27

12. Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound him. 13. And they led him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high priest that same year. 14. Now it was Caiaphas who gave counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. 15. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. 16. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. 17. Then the damsel who kept the door said to Peter, Are not you *also one* of this man's disciples? He said, I am not. 18. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself. 19. The high priest then asked Jesus about his disciples and his doctrine. 20. Jesus answered him, I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. 21. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who heard me what I said to them. Behold, they know what I said. 22. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Do You answer the high priest like that? 23. Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike me? 24. Now Annas had sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. 25. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, Are you not also *one* of his disciples? He denied *it* and said, I am not. 26. One of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman *of him* whose ear Peter cut off, said, Did not I see you in the garden with him? 27. Peter then denied again; and immediately the cock crowed.

12.--[*Then the band and the captain, etc.*] This verse begins the story of our Lord when He was actually in the hands of His deadly enemies. For the first time in His earthly ministry, we see Him not a free agent but submitting to be a passive sufferer and allowing His foes to work their will. The last miracle had been wrought in vain. Like a malefactor, He is seized and put in chains.

The captain must mean the Roman officer who commanded the band, cohort, or detachment, which was sent to apprehend our Lord. The officers must mean the civil servants of the priests who accompanied them. The binding must mean the putting of chains or handcuffs on our Lord's arms and wrists.

13.--[*And led Him away to Annas, etc.*] This is a fact that is mentioned by no Gospel writer except John. The explanation of it is probably something of this kind. In the time when our Lord Jesus was on earth, the office of

the high priest among the Jews was filled up with the utmost disorder and irregularity. Instead of the high priest being high priest for life, he was often elected for a year or two and then deposed and his office given to another. There were often living at one time several priests who had served the office of high priest and then ceased to hold it, like sheriffs or mayors among ourselves. In the case before us Annas appears, after ceasing to be high priest himself, to have lived in the same palace with his son-in-law Caiaphas and to have assisted him as an assessor and adviser in the discharge of his duties, which from his age and official experience he would be well qualified to do. Remembering this, we may understand our Lord "being led away to Annas first" and then passed on by him to Caiaphas. So intimate were the relations between the two that in Luke 3:2 we are told that "Annas and Caiaphas were high priests." In Acts 4:6 Annas is called "the high priest." Yet it is very certain that Caiaphas was the acting high priest the year that our Lord was crucified. John distinctly asserts it.

The gross inconsistency of the Jews in making such ado about the law of Moses, while they permitted and tolerated such entire departures from its regulations about the high priest's office, is a curious example of what blindness unconverted men may exhibit. As to there being two high priests at the same time, we must in fairness remember that even in holy David's time "Zadok and Abiathar were the priests" (2 Sam. 2:25). The gross irregularity in our Lord's time consisted in making the high priest's office an annual one.

The object of the Jews in bringing our Lord before the high priest and in the Sanhedrim first is very plain. They wished to convict him of heresy and blasphemy, and then after that to denounce him to the Romans.

Augustine thinks that Caiaphas arranged that our Lord should be taken to Annas first because he was his father-in-law. He also thinks that these two held the office of high priest, each in his turn, year by year. Calvin thinks that our Lord was only taken to Annas first because his house happened to be convenient, till the high priest and council assembled. Cyril and Musculus think that Annas was the contriver and designer of all done against Christ.

Cyril here interposes the verse which in most Bibles comes in as the 24th: "Annas at once sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest." Luther, Flacius, and Beza incline to approve of this. But it is fair to say that there is great lack of authority for this change.

Most commentators think that Jesus was taken to Annas first, by way of exhibiting to that old "enemy of all righteousness" the triumphant success of the attempt to capture the prisoner, whom the Sanhedrim had agreed to slay. They think that he was just shown to Annas and then passed on to Caiaphas. But I cannot think this probable. I hold, with Alford and Ellicott, that our Lord was examined by Annas.

Cornelius á Lapide suggests that Annas was very likely the person with whom Judas bargained to betray our Lord for money; and that when the capture was effected, Judas brought the prisoner to the house of Annas and remained

there to claim his price, after Annas had seen Him. He observes with some acuteness that Judas does not appear after this in the history of the examination of our Lord.

Lightfoot quotes a Jewish writer who says that "in the second temple, which only stood four hundred and twenty years, there were in that time more than three hundred high priests!"

Henry remarks: "It was the ruin of Caiaphas that he was high priest that year, and so became a ringleader in putting Christ to death. Many a man's advancement has lost him his reputation; and he would not have been dishonored if he had not been preferred and promoted."

14.--[*Now it was Caiaphas, etc.*] This verse contains one of John's peculiar explanatory comments and as such comes in parenthetically. It is as though he said, "Let us not forget that this was the very Caiaphas who, after the raising of Lazarus, had said publicly that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. Behold how he is made the unconscious instrument of bringing that saying to pass, though in a widely different sense from that which he intended!" Calvin compares him to Balaam.

Let us note how the great wicked men of this world--the Sennacheribs, Neros, bloody Marys, and Napoleons--are used by God as His saws and axes and hammers to do His work and carry out the building of His Church, though they are not themselves in the least aware of it. Indeed Caiaphas helps forward the one great sacrifice for the sins of the world!

15.--[*And Simon Peter followed Jesus.*] The first flight and running away of the disciples is passed over entirely by John. He simply mentions that Peter followed his Master, though at a distance, lovingly anxious to see what was done to Him, yet not bold enough to keep near Him like a disciple. Any one can see that the unhappy disciple was under the influence of very mixed feelings. Love made him ashamed to run away and hide himself. Cowardice made him afraid to show his colors and stick by his Lord's side. Hence he chose a middle course--the worst, as it happened, that he could have followed. After being self-confident when he should have been humble, and sleeping when he ought to have been praying, he could not have done a more foolish thing than to flutter round the fire and place himself within reach of temptation. It teaches the foolishness of man when his grace is weak. No prayer is more useful than the familiar one, "Lead us not into temptation." Peter forgot it here.

[*And so did another disciple.*] This would be more literally rendered "the other disciple." The opinion of many commentators is that this disciple was John. Precisely the same expression is used in four successive verses (John 20:2,3,4, and 8), where John is clearly referred to. This is the view of Chrysostom, Cyril, Alford, Wordsworth, and Burgon.

Chrysostom and Cyril observe that it was John's humility that made him conceal his name both here and elsewhere. Here he would not proclaim that he stood while Peter fell. Fergus suggests that the presence of a disciple is mentioned in order to show that John saw with his own eyes all that went on at our Lord's examination.

[*That disciple was known...priest.*] How and in what manner this acquaintance originated we are not told, nor is there any clue to a knowledge of it. On the face of things, it certainly seems strange that a humble Galilean fisherman, like John, should be personally known to Caiaphas! On the other hand, we must not forget that every devout Jew went up to Jerusalem at the three great feasts and on these occasions might easily have become acquainted with the high priest, and the more likely to get acquainted if a conscientious and godly man. Moreover, we must remember that John was once a disciple of John the Baptist, and that there was a time when "Jerusalem and all Judea" attended on John's ministry. Acquaintance might have been formed then. Some have thought that John's calling as a fisherman might easily bring him into communication with the family of Caiaphas, when he visited Jerusalem on business. All these, it must be confessed, are only conjectures, and it is perhaps the safest to admit our ignorance. Enough for us to read that the high priest knew John; but why and how we cannot tell.

Hengstenberg suggests an explanation so singular that I think it best to give it in his own words: "The character of John leads to the obvious supposition that his acquaintance with the high priest rested on religious grounds. Searching for goodly pearls, John had earlier sought from the high priest what, after the intervening ministry of the Baptist, he found in Christ. With what eyes he had formerly regarded the position of high priest is shown by the fact that, though a disciple of Christ, he nevertheless assigned to the word of the high priest a prophetic significance (John 11:51). John, by his internally devout nature, had so attracted the good will of the high priest that he did not wholly cast him off even after he had gone over to the true High Priest. Nor had John entirely abandoned Caiaphas. Real love cannot be so easily rooted from the heart, and it is characteristic of John to retain a pious regard to earlier relations. In the love which hopes all things, he might hope yet to win the high priest to Christ." I make no comment on this extraordinary suggestion. I cannot see the slightest warrant for it, but others perhaps, who, like the Athenians, love new things, may see more in it than I can.

After all, it is only fair to remember that Augustine, Gerhard, Calovius, Lightfoot, Lampe, and many others, think it quite uncertain who this disciple "known to the high priest" was. Grotius and Poole think it may have been the master of the house where Jesus had the Lord's Supper. Toletus thinks it was one of those to whom the garden belonged. Bengel thinks it was Nicodemus. One German commentator suggests that it was Judas Iscariot. Calvin thinks it most improbable that a proud high priest would have known so mean a person as a fisherman. Yet, singularly enough, Gualter and others lean strongly to the theory that John's business as a fisherman may have made him acquainted with the high priest. It certainly is rather remarkable that when John was brought before Annas and Caiaphas shortly after, they do not appear to have known much of him, except that he was unlearned and ignorant and had been with Jesus (Acts 3:13). The question, "who it was," is one that will probably never be settled.

[*And went in...palace...priest.*] This sentence would seem to indicate that John went together with our Lord, either by His side or in the crowd around

Him, from the garden where He was taken to the house of Annas and Caiaphas. We can hardly doubt that at first he fled (when we read "All forsook Him and fled"), but we must suppose that he soon turned back and mixed with the multitude escorting our Lord, which he might easily do by night, and amidst the confusion of the whole event.

It is noteworthy that some think the houses of Caiaphas and Annas were adjacent, and that "the hall" was common to both of them. I am strongly disposed to think that this is a correct view, and a remembrance of it may help us over several difficulties in the narrative of the four evangelists when compared.

16.--[*But Peter stood...outside.*] This seems to indicate that at first Peter stood outside the door of the palace, not daring to go in. It is a little detail in the story of his fall that the three other Gospel writers omit to mention. Again we see in him the mixture of good and bad feelings, cowardice and love contending for the mastery. Happy would it have been for him if he had stayed outside the door!

Rollock remarks that when Peter found the door shut, he ought not to have stood there, but gone away. "It was by God's providence the door was shut. He got a warning then to leave off, but would not. These impediments, cast in our way when we purpose to do a thing, should not be idly looked at, but should make us carefully try the deed, whether it be lawful."

[*Then the other disciple...brought*

Peter in.] Here we see how Peter got inside the palace. It was through the mistaken, though well-meant, kindness of John. He must have seen through the door, when it occasionally opened, the well-known figure of his brother disciple, and with the best intentions got him admission. It is plain that John must have been well known to the household of the high priest, or else we should not be told that he had only to speak to the doorkeeper to get admission for Peter.

Let us mark what mistakes even the best believers make in dealing with their brethren. John thought it would be a kind and useful thing to bring Peter into the high priest's house. He was perfectly mistaken, and was unintentionally one link in the chain of causes that led to his fall. People may harm each other with the best intentions.

Quesnel remarks: "Men sometimes imagine they do a considerable piece of service to their friends who are clergymen by introducing them to the great; and thereby they undesignedly expose them to sin and eternal damnation."

17.--[*Then...said to Peter.*] Those who are best acquainted with Jewish customs say that it was a common practice to employ women as doorkeepers. Thus a damsel named Rhoda went to the gate when Peter knocked at the door of Mary's house in Jerusalem, after his miraculous escape from prison (Acts 12:13). It is the same in large houses in Paris to this very day.

[*Are not you...I am not.*] This was the first trial of Peter's faith and

courage. A woman asks him a simple question. There is nothing to show that she does it in a threatening manner, as if she desires to harm him. But at once the Apostle's courage breaks down. He answers with a direct lie: "I am not." How little we know our own hearts! Twelve hours before Peter would have told us this lie was impossible. "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" Why this doorkeeper should have asked the question, we know not. Perhaps Peter's dress and appearance, like a Galilean fisherman of the very same stamp and style as John, made her guess that, like John, he was a disciple. Perhaps Peter's manner and demeanor made her guess it. There may have been agitation, anxiety, fear in the apostle's countenance. Perhaps the woman may have seen him in Jerusalem in company with Jesus. Perhaps the mere fact that John knew him and asked her to admit him made her assume that he was a friend of John, and like John a disciple of Christ. Perhaps the Galileans were marked men, not often seen in high priests' houses, and known to be specially favorable to the cause of Jesus of Nazareth. Any one of these solutions, or all, may be correct. In any case, the woman only asked a simple question, and perhaps from no other motive than curiosity, and at once the great apostle falls into sin. How weak we are when left to reap the consequence of self-confidence, and laziness, and neglect of prayer. Even an apostle, we see, could tell a cowardly lie.

Chrysostom observes: "What do you say, Peter? Did you not declare but now, 'I will lay down my life for You'? What has happened then that you cannot endure the questioning of a doorkeeper? Is it a soldier who questions you? Is it one of those who seized Him? No, it is a mean and abject doorkeeper. Nor is the questioning of a rough kind. She does not say, 'Are you a disciple of that cheat and corrupter,' but '*of that man,*' which was the expression rather of pitying and relenting. But Peter could not bear any of these words. The expression, 'Are you not *also*' is used because John was already within."

Augustine remarks: "Behold that most firm pillar of the Church, touched but by one breath of danger, trembles all over. Where is now that boldness of promising, that confident vaunting of himself?"

Brentius remarks how the impulsive, unstable character of the apostle Peter comes out here. One hour he draws his sword against a whole multitude of armed men. Another hour he is frightened out of his Christian profession and driven into lying by one woman.

18.--[*And the servants and officers stood there.*] This seems to indicate that when Peter entered the hall he found the common servants and the higher attendants of the high priest standing round a fire. It is the pluperfect tense, "they had stood," or "had been standing there" some little time.

[*Who had made...warmed themselves.*] It is remarked by all travelers in Palestine that the nights in that country about Easter time are often so extremely cold that a fire is very acceptable. The servants and officers were in the act of warming themselves when Peter entered.

It is worth notice that the Greek word rendered "a fire of coals" is only

used here and at John 21:9, in the marvelous account of Jesus appearing to the disciples at the sea of Galilee. Some have thought that the "fire of coals" on that latter occasion was purposely intended by our Lord to remind Peter of his fall.

[*And Peter...warmed himself.*] The Greek words here would be more literally rendered "and there was among them Peter, standing and warming himself." The tense is imperfect, and conveys the idea of continuous action for a little time. The apostle stood among the crowd of his Master's enemies and warmed himself like one of them--as if he had nothing to think of but his bodily comfort--while his beloved Master stood in a distant part of the hall, cold and a prisoner. Who can doubt that Peter, in his miserable cowardice, wished to appear one of the party who hated his Master and thought to conceal his real character by doing as they did? And who can doubt that while he warmed his hands he felt cold, wretched, and comfortless in his own soul? "The backslider in heart is filled with his own ways."

How many do as others do and go with the crowd, while they know inwardly they are wrong!

Cyril suggests that Peter wished to conceal his discipleship by warming himself and trying to look comfortable among the high priest's servants.

19.--[*The high priest then asked...doctrine.*] This verse describes the first judicial examination that our Lord underwent. He was questioned concerning "His disciples;" that is, who they were, how many, what position they occupied, and what were their names. And concerning "His doctrine;" that is, what were the principal points or truths of His creed, what were the peculiar things He called on man to believe. The object of this preliminary inquiry seems manifest. It was meant to elicit some admission from our Lord's mouth on which some formal charge of heresy and blasphemy before the Sanhedrim might be founded. There are two grave difficulties growing out of this verse, both of which require consideration.

(a) Who was the "High Priest" in this verse? Most commentators think it was Caiaphas. He alone is called by John "the high priest" that same year in which Jesus was crucified. Some few think it was Annas, because John says Jesus was brought to him (ver. 13). This at first sight seems the plain meaning of the narrative and is confirmed by verse 24. Yet this theory is open to the serious objection that it makes John call Annas the high priest and that it makes John omit altogether our Lord's examination before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim. Yet notwithstanding all these difficulties, I own to the opinion that this is the true view of the history. Augustine, Chrysostom, Casaubon, Ferus, Besser, Stier, Alford, and Ellicott maintain this view, but most of the commentators do not. We must remember that Annas is distinctly called "the High Priest" in Acts 4:6, and this probably before the year of the crucifixion had completely run out. Even in David's time Zadok and Ahimelech are called "the priests" (2 Sam. 8:17), as if both were high priests.

(b) What was the examination recorded in this verse? It seems to be one entirely passed over by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They only record what

took place before Caiaphas, which, on the other hand, is a part of the history passed over by John. It seems a kind of preliminary inquiry intended to prepare the case for the Sanhedrim. In spite, therefore, of the common opinion, I decidedly hold the theory that the examination here related is only described by John. It seems, moreover, to have been an examination conducted by Annas only, and quite of a separate character from that which took place at "day-break" before the whole Sanhedrim. This, at any rate, seems to my mind by far the most reasonable account of the passage, and the difficulties in the way of any other interpretation appear to me insuperable.

Ellicott remarks: "It only requires the simple and reasonable supposition, that Annas and Caiaphas occupied one common official residence, to unite their testimony and to remove many of the difficulties with which this portion of the sacred narrative is specially marked. Be this as it may, we can scarcely doubt, from the clear statement in St. John's Gospel, that a preliminary examination, perhaps conversationally, about His followers and His teaching, and which the brutal conduct of one attendant present seems to show was private and informal, took place in the palace of Annas. There too, it would seem, we must place the three denials of St. Peter."

20.--[*Jesus answered him, etc.*] This verse contains a calm, dignified statement from our Lord of the general course of His ministry. He had done nothing in a clandestine or underhand way. He had always spoken openly "to the world," and not confined His teaching to any one class. He had always taught publicly in synagogues, and in the temple where the Jews resorted. He had said nothing privately and secretly, as if He had any cause to be ashamed of it.

The verse is mainly remarkable for the strong light it throws on our Lord's habit of teaching throughout the three years of His ministry. It shows that He was eminently a public teacher--kept back no part of His message from any class of the population--and proclaimed it with equal boldness in every place. There was nothing whatever of reserve about His Gospel. This is His own account, and we therefore know that it is correct. "I have spoken in the most public manner, and taught in the most public places, and done nothing in a corner."

Calvin remarks: "When Jesus says that He spoke nothing in secret, this refers to the substance of His doctrine, which was always the same, though the form of teaching it was various."

We should observe that our Lord did not refuse to use the synagogue and the temple on account of the corruption of the Jewish Church! Four times we read in St. John of our Lord being at Jerusalem at the feasts (John 2:13, 5:1, 7:14, 10:22), and each time speaking in the temple.

21.--[*Why do you ask Me, etc.*] This verse is a remonstrance against the gross injustice of Annas' line of examination. Our Lord appeals to him whether it is reasonable, and just, and fair to call upon a prisoner to incriminate himself, and to supply evidence that may be used against himself. "Why do you, the judge, ask information of Me, the prisoner, about my disciples and my doctrine? Ask rather of those who have heard Me

teach and preach, what I have said to them. These know well, and can tell you what things I have said."

Cyril thinks there may be a reference here to those servants of the priest who were sent on a former occasion to take Jesus, and returned saying, "Never man spoke like this Man" (John 7:46).

The boldness and dignity of our Lord's reply to Annas in this verse are very noteworthy. They are an example to all Christians of the courageous and unflinching tone that an innocent defendant may justly adopt before the bar of an unrighteous judge. "The righteous is bold as a lion."

The wide difference between the language of our Lord here and that which He uses before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim, as recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is very remarkable. It affords strong additional evidence that we are reading an account of an examination of a more private kind before Annas, quite distinct from that which took place before Caiaphas. The careful reader of the other three Gospels cannot fail to observe that not a word of all this is recorded in them.

Bengel and Stier think that the word "these" points to the people there in the court, hearing and standing by.

22.--[*And when He had thus spoken, etc.*] This verse mentions an event that John alone has recorded. One of the attendants standing by rudely interrupts our Lord by striking Him and coarsely taxing Him with impertinence and disrespect in so speaking, as He had spoken to the high priest.

The Greek words literally rendered mean, "gave a blow on the face;" but whether with the palm of the hand or with a stick cannot be determined. The marginal reading renders it quite uncertain. Some see in the action a fulfillment of the prophecy, "They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek" (Micah 5:1).

Stier remarks that this was the first blow that the holy body of Jesus received from the hands of sinners.

We may learn from this circumstance what a low, degraded, and disorderly condition the Jewish courts of Ecclesiastical law must have been in at this period when such a thing as publicly striking a prisoner could take place, and when violence could be shown to a prisoner in a full court of justice for answering boldly for himself. It supplies strong evidence of the miserably fallen state of the whole Jewish nation when such an act could be done under the very eyes of a judge. Nothing is a surer index of the real condition of a nation than the conduct of its courts of justice and its just or unjust treatment of prisoners. The sceptre had clearly fallen from Judah and rottenness was at the core of the nation when the thing mentioned in this verse could happen. Our Lord's assailant evidently held that a prisoner must never reply to his judge, however unjust or corrupt the judge might be.

Theophylact suggests that the man who struck our Lord was one who had heard

our Lord preach and was now anxious to free himself from the suspicion of being one of His friends.

There is a striking resemblance between the treatment our Lord received here and the treatment that Latimer, Ridley, Rogers, and other English martyrs received at their examination before the Popish bishops.

Hutcheson remarks, "Corrupt masters have generally corrupt servants."

23.--[*Jesus answered him, etc.*] Our Lord's reply to him who smote is a calm and dignified reproof. "If I have spoken wickedly, bear witness in a just and orderly way becoming a court of law, but do not strike Me. If on the contrary I have spoken well, what reasonable cause can you allege for striking Me either here or out of court?"

Let us note that our Lord's conduct at this point teaches that His maxim, "If any one slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39), is a maxim that must be taken with reserve and is not of unlimited application. There may be times when in defense of truth and for the honor of justice a Christian must firmly protest against violence, and publicly refuse to countenance it by tame submission.

Augustine observes: "Our Lord here showed that His great precepts of patience are to be put into practice, not by outward show of the body, but by preparedness of heart. Visibly to present the other cheek is no more than an angry man can do. How much better, then, that with mild answer he speak the truth, and with tranquil mind endure worse outrages."

24.--[*Now Annas had sent Him...Caiaphas...priest.*] This verse undoubtedly contains a difficulty. Most commentators seem to think that it states a fact that ought to come in after the 13th verse; and that the questioning and smiting of the last four verses took place before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim, and not before Annas. Some think that up to this point John only describes what took place before Annas; and that he entirely passes over all that took place before Caiaphas, as being well known to his readers. The question is undoubtedly rather a puzzling one, and there is much to be said on both sides.

On the one hand, it seems curious that the examination of our Lord before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim should be so completely omitted by John in his Gospel, as it must be, if we take the high priest of the 19th verse to be Annas.

On the other hand, we cannot see why John should so carefully mention our Lord being "led to Annas first" if, after all, Annas did not examine Him at all and sent Him at once to Caiaphas.

If I must give an opinion, I must say that I agree with Stier, Ellicott, and Alford, and consider that this 24th verse describes our Lord's first appearance before Caiaphas; that for some wise reason John entirely omits and silently passes over our Lord's examination before the Sanhedrim; and that the examination of the 19th and four following verses was a kind of private, preliminary examination before Annas that Matthew, Mark, and Luke

entirely omit. My grounds for this conclusion are as follows:

(a) The whole tone of John's narrative would make any ordinary reader suppose that Annas, and not Caiaphas, was the examiner and high priest of the 19th verse. The story reads straight on upon this theory, while upon the other it is most awkward and seemingly contradictory, and the 24th verse seems to come in at the wrong place.

(b) The tone of the high priest's examination in John is entirely different from that of the other three Gospels, and so also are our Lord's answers.

(c) There is nothing uncommon in John omitting something that is fully recorded in the other three Gospels. The institution of the Lord's Supper is an example. His Gospel was eminently supplementary. Writing later than the others, he was specially inspired to dwell at great length on the examination of Jesus before Pilate the Gentile ruler, and to say comparatively little about the proceedings in the Jewish courts.

(d) Last, but not least, the Greek of the 24th verse cannot fairly and honestly bear the same sense that our translators have put upon it. They have really strained the words to make the sense square with their evident interpretation. The word "sent" is not a pluperfect at all in the Greek! The verse literally translated is, "Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest." It is rather "did then send Him," than "now had sent Him." The natural sense that any ordinary reader would put on it is, that "Annas having asked our Lord about His disciples and His doctrine, and having found by His reply that he could make nothing of Him, did then send Him bound to Caiaphas. As to what THEN took place before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim, John tells us NOTHING, and leaves us to learn it from Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Such are my reasons for the view which I adopt. If the reader does not think them valid, he must regard the 24th verse as one of John's parenthetical explanations or comments, and carry the true place of the fact mentioned backwards to verse thirteen; and he must suppose that the examination of our Lord in the 19th and four following verses is the examination before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim, and only another part of what Mathew, Mark, and Luke describe! Not least, he must suppose that "did send" in the 24th verse means "had sent" some time before!

Chrysostom says: "Annas questioned Jesus about His doctrine; and having heard Him, sent Him to Caiaphas; and he, having in his turn questioned Him and discovered nothing, sent Him to Pilate."

25.--[*And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself.*] This would be more literally rendered, "was standing and warming himself." The expression seems to indicate that all the time during which Annas was questioning and examining our Lord, Peter was standing by the fire in another part of the hall and warming himself comfortably among the enemies of our Lord, like one of them. May not the light of the fire, as it burned up, have made Peter's face and appearance more easily recognizable?

[*They said...one of His disciples?*] Here comes Peter's second trial.

After a time, when the fire had burned up and men could see better and felt more warm, they looked at Peter standing among them, and recognizing either by his dress and talk that he was a Galilean, or suspecting by his anxious manner that he was a friend of our Lord, they asked him plainly, "Are you not one of this prisoner's disciples?" We see what trials people bring upon themselves by going where they ought not.

[*He denied it...I am not.*] A second time we find the unhappy Apostle telling a lie, and this time it is added emphatically, "he denied it." The further a backslider goes, the worse he becomes. The first time he seems to have said quietly, "I am not." The second time he flatly "denies." Even an apostle can fall into being a liar!

Bloomfield suggests that Peter heard our Lord's examination and was terrified at hearing inquiry made about His disciples. This, he supposes, hastened his fall.

26.--[*One of the servants, etc.*] Here comes Peter's last trial. Attention seems to have been roused by his strong denial, and eyes were fixed on him. And the one who had seen him in the garden and marked him as a forward man among the disciples by his using the sword, presses home the painful question, "Did not I see you?"

[*Peter then denied again.*] From the other Gospels we know that this denial was more loud and emphatic than any, and was made with cursing and swearing! The further a man falls, the heavier his fall.

Calvin remarks on the course of a backslider: "At first the fault will not be very great. Next it becomes habitual. And at last, after the conscience has been laid asleep, he who has accustomed himself to despise God will think nothing unlawful, but will dare to commit the greatest wickedness."

Henry remarks: "The sin of lying is a fruitful sin, and therefore exceedingly sinful. One sin needs another to support it, and that needs another."

[*And immediately the cock crowed.*] There was nothing uncommon in this, of course. Everyone knows that cocks crow at night. But the bird's familiar crow no doubt sounded in Peter's ear like a clap of thunder, because it awoke him to a sense of his sin and his fall.

It will be noted that for wise reasons John says nothing about Peter's weeping, or about our Lord turning and looking at him, or about Peter going out. He seems to have left the hall when the cock crowed, without any attempt being made to detain him. This too MAY have been the overruling work of his gracious Master.

As long as the world stands, Peter's fall will be an instructive example of what even a great saint may come to if he neglects to work and pray, of the mercy of Christ in restoring such a backslider, and of the honesty of the Gospel writers in recording such a history.

Let it never be forgotten that Peter's fall is one of those few facts that all four Gospel writers carefully record for our learning.