Stephen would lead us to infer, that there  
was something remarkably striking in his  
appearance and demeanour, which over-awed his adversaries. But both from the  
plain language of our text, well understood  
among the Jews to signify supernatural  
brightness, and from the fact that in St.  
Luke’s own narrative we have supernatural  
brightness associated with angelic appearances more than once (see Luke ii. 9; ch.  
xii. 7), I should be inclined to think that  
the face of the martyr was *lighted up with  
a divine radiance.* That the effect on  
those present was not such as to prevent  
the examination proceeding, is no argument against this view: in the very mildness of the question of the High Priest  
which follows, I see the trace of some unusual incident exercising an influence over  
him. Chrysostom explains well the effect  
on the council: “God seems to me to have  
made him beautiful to look at, perhaps to  
prepare the way for his speech, and that  
he might immediately strike them with  
his look. For there is, yea there is, in  
faces full of spiritual grace that which is  
lovely to those that love them, and strikes  
awe and fear into those that hate them.  
Or perhaps the Evangelist mentions it to  
account for their tolerating his speech.  
For what answer does the High Priest  
make? Do you see, how mildly and unreproachfully he puts his question?”

**CHAP. VII. 1.**] On the High Priest’s question, see Chrysostom just quoted.—It is  
parallel with Matt. xxvi. 62, but singularly  
distinguished from that question by its  
mildness: see above.

**2–53.**] STEPHEN’S  
DEFENCE. In order to understand this  
wonderful and somewhat difficult speech,  
it will be well to bear in mind, (1) that  
the *general character* of it is *apologetic*,  
referring to the charge made against him:  
but (2) that in this apology, forgetting  
himself in the vast subject which he is  
vindicating, he every where mixes in the  
polemic and didactic element. A general  
synopsis of it may be thus given: (1) He  
shews (*apologetically*) that, so far from  
dishonouring Moses or God, he believes,  
and holds in mind, God’s dealings with  
Abraham and Moses, and grounds upon  
them his preaching; that, so far from  
*dishonouring* the temple, he bears in mind  
its history and the sayings of the prophets  
respecting it; and he is proceeding,—when  
(interrupted by their murmurs—or   
inattention? but see note, ver. 51) he bursts  
into a holy vehemence of invective against  
their rejection of God, which provokes his  
tumultuary expulsion from the council, and  
execution. (2) But simultaneously and  
parallel with this *apologetic* procedure, he  
also proceeds *didactically*, shewing them  
that a future Prophet was pointed out by  
Moses as the final Lawgiver of God’s  
people,—that the Most High had revealed  
His spiritual and heavenly nature by the  
prophets, and did not dwell in temples  
made with hands. And (3) even more remarkably still does the *polemic* element run  
through the speech. “*It is not I, but* YOU,  
*who from the first times till now have rejected and spoken against God.*” And this  
element, just appearing ver. 9, and again  
more plainly vv. 25–28, and again more  
pointedly still in ver. 35, becomes dominant.  
in vv. 39–44, and finally prevails, to the  
exclusion of the apologetic and didactic, in  
vy. 51–53.—That other connected purposes have been discovered in the speech,  
as, for example, that so ably followed out  
by Chrysostom, of shewing that the covenant and promises were *before the law*,  
and sacrifice and the law *before the temple*,—is to be attributed to the wonderful depth  
of words uttered like these under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit,  
presenting to us, from whichever side they  
are viewed, new and inimitable hues of  
heavenly wisdom. Many of these will be  
brought out as we advance.—The question,  
*from what probable source St. Luke derived his report of this speech*, so peculiar in its character and citations as to  
bear, even to the most prejudiced, decisive  
evidence of authenticity, can be only conjecturally answered: but in this case the  
conjecture can hardly be wrong. I have  
discussed the point in the Introduction to  
the Acts, ch. i. § ii. 12 (a).

**2. Brethren** (men who are brethren), **and fathers**]  
So Paul, ch. xxii. 1, before a mixed assembly of Jews. The **brethren** would embrace  
all: the **fathers** would be a title of respect  
to the members of the Sanhedrim, in *this  
case*, but hardly in ch. xxii. 1.

**The  
God of glory**] Not equivalent to *the glorious  
God*, **but the God of** (i.e. who possesses  
and manifests Himself by) **glory**, viz. the