St. Paul’s question to him, see ch. xvi. 37,  
note.

**28.**] Dio Cassius mentions that,  
in the reign of Claudius, Messalina used to  
sell the freedom of the city, and at very  
various prices at different times.

**I was free born**] literally, **But I** (besides  
having the privilege like thee of being a  
Roman citizen) **was also born one**. *How  
was Paul a Roman citizen by birth?* Certainly not because he was of Tarsus: for  
(1) that city had no such privilege, but  
was only a *free city*, not a colony nor a  
municipal town: and (2) if this had  
been so, the mention of his being a man  
of Tarsus (ch. xxi. 39) would have of  
itself prevented his being scourged. It  
remains, therefore, that his father, or some  
ancestor, must have obtained the freedom  
of the city, either as a reward for service or by purchase. It has been suggested that the father of Saul may have  
been sold into slavery at Rome, when  
Cassius laid a heavy fine on the city of  
Tarsus for having espoused the cause of  
Octavius and Antony, and very many of  
the Tarsians were sold to pay it. He may  
have acquired his freedom and the citizenship afterwards. See Mr. Lewin, i. p. 4.  
But this is mere conjecture.

**29. was  
afraid**] There is no inconsistency (as De  
Wette thinks) in the tribune’s being afraid  
because he had bound him, and then letting  
him remain thus bound. Meyer rightly  
explains it, that the tribune, having committed this error, is afraid of the possible  
consequences of it (for as Cicero says, it  
was an offence to bind a Roman citizen,  
and a crime to scourge him), and shews  
this by taking the first opportunity of  
either *undoing it*, or *justifying his further  
detention*, by *loosing him*, and *bringing  
him before the Sanhedrim*. His fear was  
on account of his *first false step;* but it  
was now too late to reverse it: and the  
same reason which leads him to continue it  
now, operates afterwards when the hearing  
was delayed. ‘The centurion *believed  
Paul’s word*, because a false claim of this  
nature, being easily exposed, and punishable with death, was almost an unprecedented thing.’ Hackett.

**30.**] It  
seems remarkable that the tribune in command should have had the power to summon the Sanhedrim: and I have not seen  
this remarked on by any Commentator.

**brought Paul down**] From Antonia  
to the council-room. According to tradition the Sanhedrim ceased to hold their  
sessions in the *temple*, about twenty-six  
years before this period. Had they done  
so now, Lysias and his soldiers could not  
have been present, as no heathen was permitted to pass the sacred limits. Their  
present council-room was in the upper city,  
near the foot of the bridge leading across  
the ravine from the western cloister of the  
temple.

**XXIII. 1.**] **earnestly beholding** seems  
to describe that peculiar look, connected  
probably with infirmity of sight, with  
which Paul is described before as regarding  
those before him: and may perhaps account  
for his not knowing that the person who  
spoke to him was the high priest, ver. 5.  
See ch. xiii. 9, note.—The purport of Paul's  
assertion seems to be this: being charged  
with neglecting, and teaching others to  
neglect the law of Moses, he at once endeavours to disarm those who thus accused  
him, by asserting that up to that, *he  
had lived a true and loyal Jew*,—obeying,  
according to his conscience, the law of that  
divine polity of which he was a covenant  
member. Thus **I have lived before God**