of a new high priest, and his whole number  
of twenty-eight from Herod the Great to  
the destruction of Jerusalem agrees with  
the notices thus given. So that this interpretation is untenable. (2) Chrysostom  
and most of the ancient commentators supposed that Paul, having been long absent,  
was really *unacquainted with the person of*the high priest. But this can hardly have  
been; and even if it were, the position  
and official seat would have pointed out, to  
one who had been himself a member of  
the Sanhedrim, the president of the council. (3) Calvin and others take the words  
*ironically: ‘I could not be supposed to  
know that one who conducted himself so  
cruelly and illegally, could be the high  
priest’* This surely needs no refutation,  
as being altogether out of place and character. (4) Bengel and others understand  
the words as an acknowledgment of rash  
and insubordinate language, and render, ‘*I  
did not give it a thought*,’ ‘*I forgot:*’ and  
so Dr. Wordsworth. But this is never the  
meaning of the word here used in the  
original; and were any pregnant or unusual  
sense intended, the context (as at 1 Thess.  
v. 12) would suggest it. (5) On the whole  
then, I believe that the only rendering  
open to us, consistently with the simple  
meaning of the words, and the facts of  
history is, **I did not know that it** (or he)  
**was the high priest:** and that it is probable that the solution of his ignorance  
lies in the fact of his *imperfect sight*—he  
heard the insolent order given, but knew  
not from whom it proceeded. I own that  
I am not entirely satisfied with this, as  
being founded perhaps on too slight premises: but as far as I can see there is no  
*positive* objection to it, which there is to  
every other. The objection stated by Dr.  
Wordsworth, “If St. Paul could not discern that Ananias was high priest, how  
could he see that he sat there as his judge?”  
would of course he easily answered by supposing that Paul, who had himself been a  
member of the Sanhedrim, may have known  
Ananias by his voice: or indeed may not  
(as above) have known him at all personally. It is hardly worth while to notice  
the rendering given by some, ‘I knew not  
that *there was a high priest*.’ Had any  
such meaning been intended, it would have  
been further specified by the construction.  
Besides which, it renders Paul’s apology  
irrelevant, by eliminating from it the person  
who is necessarily its subject.

**for it  
is written**] Implying in this, ‘*and the law  
is the rule of my life*.’ Even in this we  
see the consummate skill of St. Paul.

**6.**] Surely no defence of Paul for adopting  
this course is required, but all admiration  
is due to his skill and presence of mind.  
Nor need we hesitate to regard such skill  
as the fulfilment of the promise, that in  
such an hour, the Spirit of wisdom should  
suggest words to the accused, which the  
accuser should not be able to gainsay. All  
prospect of a fair trial was hopeless: he well  
knew from fact, and present experience,  
that personal odium would bias his judges,  
and violence prevail over justice: he therefore uses, in the cause of Truth, the maxim  
so often perverted to the cause of falsehood, “*divide, and govern*.” In *one tenet*  
above all others, did the religion of Jesus  
Christ and the belief of the Pharisees  
coincide: that of *the resurrection of the  
dead*. That *they* looked for this resurrection by right of being the seed of Abraham, and denied it to all others,—whereas  
*he* looked for it through Jesus whom they  
hated, in whom *all* should be made alive  
who had died in Adam,—this was *nothing  
to the present point:* the belief was common—in the truest sense it was the *hope of  
Israel*—in the truest sense does Paul use  
and bring it forward to confound the adversaries of Christ. At the same time  
by this strong assertion of his Pharisaic  
standing and extraction, he was further  
still vindicating himself from the charge  
against him. So also ch. xxvi. 7.

**the son of Pharisees**] i.e. ‘*a Pharisee of  
Pharisees*,’—‘by descent from father,  
grandfather, and upwards, a pure Pharisee.’  
This meaning not having been apprehended,