

was not such as to inspire the Apostles with confidence that their case would be either fairly heard or honestly considered. Its president was Annas or Hanan—"Gracious"—the aged head of the high priestly house before whom Christ had been set for examination when brought by His captors from Gethsemane,⁵ whom Josephus pronounced "the most fortunate man of his time," because for upwards of half a century he and five of his sons had occupied the highest ecclesiastical position in the country, and so had "practically wielded the sacerdotal power," but whom "the most unsuspected sources" compel us to recognise as "nothing better than an astute, tyrannous, worldly Sadducee, unvenerable for all his seventy years, full of serpentine malice and meanness which utterly belied his name."⁶ Associated with him was Caiaphas of evil fame, his bold and unscrupulous son-in-law, who first suggested the expediency of Christ's removal by death, and eventually put the crown upon his criminality by pronouncing Christ guilty of blasphemy, and handing Him over to the Roman Governor for crucifixion. Other members of that extemporised tribunal were "John and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest"—a note of the sederunt, from which it may perhaps be inferred that not only Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were absent, but also Gamaliel, Paul's celebrated teacher, who honourably figured in a later meeting. "It is indeed doubtful," says Farrar,⁷ "whether any of the more distinguished Pharisees were members of the degraded simulacrum of authority which in those bad days still arrogated to itself the title of Sanhedrim;" but in any case it must have been far from reassuring to Peter and John to find themselves at the bar of the men who had been mainly responsible for their Lord's death. Nevertheless, in neither of the two, and least of all in Peter, did there show the smallest semblance of fear. Asked by what power or in what name they had performed the alarming operation of healing a forty years old cripple, they replied substantially as they had done to

⁵ John xviii. 13.

⁶ Farrar, *The Life of Christ*, chap. lviii. p. 639.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 640.