

caused the *second* denial. (Mark xiv. 70.) 3. Others of the company (Mark xiv. 70) took notice of his being a Galilean, (Matt. xxvi. 73, Mark xiv. 70.) and were seconded by the kinsman of Malchus, (John xviii. 10.) who affirmed he had seen him in the garden, (John xviii. 26.) And this drew on the *third* denial, (Mark xiv. 71).

2. PLACES NAMED IN THE NARRATIVE. BENEATH IN THE PALACE, Mark xiv. 66. WITHOUT, Matt. xxvi. 69. Down in the open court a few steps below the halls and rooms which surrounded and opened into it. THE PORCH, ver. 68. The vestibule or court-way leading from the court to the street.

Peter safer if nearer to the Master.

Palace—poor places for disciples unless they keep very near the Lord.

Never forget that we are not our own, and never go where we cannot wear our profession.

3. INCIDENTS OF THE DENIAL. ONE OF THE MAIDS, ver. 66. The damsel not like the one in Naaman's palace, 2 Kings v. 2, 3. Among the maids as an indifferent spectator rather than with the Master as a loyal disciple and defender. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." WARNING HIMSELF, ver. 67. The light of the fire revealed him to the maid and at last to the master.

Seeking warmth for his body while his soul was chilled through and through.

Better warmed by the stripes and buffetings, like the faithful Master, than warmed by the fire of coals like the faithless Peter.

HE DENIED, ver. 68. Peter in a bad state now. Worse than when he sank in the sea. Matt. xiv. 28-31. This time he completely sank into the waters of sin. But for that last look of his loving Lord he had never been saved.

Bold Peter! A rock, was his name, but what a crumbling rock when separated from the Christ whose grace gave him strength!

GALILEAN AND THY SPEECH, ver. 70. The Galilean brogue was despised in Jerusalem. He had better have used it in defending than in denying his Galilean Master. It would have sounded well enough before the Sanhedrim if charged with the love and force which characterized it when he preached in the same city a few weeks later. Acts ii. CURSE AND SWEAR, ver. 71. See the three steps, (1) "Following afar off;" (2) Denying his Lord; (3) Profanity and perjury. One never knows how far Satan will take him if he but give Satan the advantage of one step in the wrong way.

Beware of bad beginnings, for from these ensue evil endings.

"The further a man falls the heavier his fall."

Peter resolved at all hazards to hold up his head and make good his word. So he swore vehemently to support a *loud* lie, indorsing his first prevarication by final profanity and perjury.

The fall of Peter, just after the Lord's Supper and his earnest vows, is a warning against pride, self-confidence, indolence, and the fear of the world.

THOUGHT . . . WEPT, ver. 72. The LOOK of the Lord (Luke xxii. 61) must not be forgotten. "There is (1) The look of vengeance, Exod. xiv. 24; (2) The look of power, Jud. vi. 14; (3) The look of pity, Psa. lxxix. 20; Exod. iv. 31; Luke xxii. 61." In all the storm of vengeance visited upon Jesus by his enemies he does not forget Peter's pledge and denial. He looks upon him with a look of reproof and pity and tenderness.

"The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." O penetrating look. There was *purpose* in it. He "turned" and looked. There was *power* in it, for it drove Peter out. There was *suggestion* in it, for it called to mind his words.

THOUGHT THEREON, ver. 72. (1) Thought of the Lord's words of prediction; (2) Thought of his own proud words of purpose; (3) Thought of his own profane words of denial; (4) Thought of the Lord's melancholy look; (5) Thought of the Lord's marvellous lie; (6) Thought of his own mournful outlook. No wonder he *wept*.

4. LESSONS. 1. Keep near thy Lord. Don't follow "afar off." Such long-drawn cords are sure to snap; 2. Never sit down with the enemies of Jesus, Psa. i. 1; 3. Peter's fall from loyalty to Jesus was probably a fall into old habits of life—lying and profanity. It was not the first time Peter swore. Our old lives are just below us, with their atmospheres of self and sin and sorrow, and into them we drop again so easily when we let go of the Lord who lifts us up and saves us from them; 4. In the story of the denial as given in the New Testament, notice, (1) The candor that records the fact; (2) The weakness that made it possible; (3) The tender mercy that forgave it. 5. One step in sin may lead to an overwhelming flood of bitter memories and of bitter tears; 6. The power of memory. An element in the sinner's hell.