Matthew Commentary-Joseph Alexander

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW
EXPLAINED BY JOSEPH ADDISON ALEXANDER

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PREFACE THIS volume presents the last work on which the pen of Dr. Alexander was engaged. It is complete as a commentary to the close of Chapter 16, and then, as though the author anticipated the approaching interruption of his earthly labours, it finds a quasi-completion in an analysis of the concluding chapters. It may be of interest to the reader to know, that at the commencement of his analysis of Chapter 17, the manuscript of Dr. Alexander contain this memorandum: "Resumed after five weeks' confinement and inaction, January 3d, 1860;" and that day by day pursuing the work, he records in his journal, "Wednesday, January 18th, Finished the Analysis of Matthew," and "20th, Read over my Analysis of Matthew 17–28,"—just a week and a day before his death. Of course not only is the volume deficient in the notes upon these concluding chapters, but also in the General Introduction, similar to that of his work on Mark, which he designed to have furnished. It remains only to state, that as it was Dr. Alexander's desire to make the commentary on Matthew complete in itself, without reference to that on Mark, wherever parallel passages occur, he has in general simply transferred the notes in full from the latter volume, making only the necessary alterations to adapt them to the text of Matthew. S. D. A. NEW YORK, December, 1860.

INDEX - Note that chapters 17-28 are only brief summaries.

CHAPTER 1

IN pursuance of his purpose to demonstrate the Messiahship of Jesus by showing the exact correspondence of his life to the prophecies and types of the Old Testament, Matthew begins by tracing his descent, not only from David the first and greatest of the theocratic kings, but from Abraham the Father of the Faithful and the founder of the ancient church or chosen people. This important fact is established, not by mere assertion or historical narration, but by a technical and formal genealogy or pedigree, exhibiting our Lord's descent, not merely in the general but in detail, throughout the three great periods of the history of Israel (1–17). Having thus shown, as if by documentary evidence, from whom he was descended, the evangelist records the circumstances which preceded the Nativity itself, with particular reference to the difficulties springing from his mother's marriage and the mode of their solution (18–25).

1. The two first words are to be read in close connection as forming one compound title, generation-book, descent-book, corresponding to the modern phrase, genealogical table, or to the one word pedigree, when used to denote, not the extraction or descent itself, but the written record or certification of it. The word translated book (βίβλος) has in Greek a much wider usage, being applied to any writing, and originally signifying one of the most ancient kinds of writing material, to wit, the inner bark of the papyrus plant, from which is derived our paper, although made of an entirely different substance. As here used it is nearly equivalent to document in modern English, or to paper, as denoting not the mere material but the writing, especially when it is official or authoritative, or important in relation to some special case or business, as for instance the "papers" in a suit at law. The other word (γενέσεως) in classical Greek means generation, in the proper sense of creation or procreation, but in Hellenistic usage birth (as in v. 18 below) or lineage, extraction, as in this verse. It is the genitive case of the name (Genesis) given in the Septuagint version to the first book of Moses, as containing the Origines of human history. There is no grammatical ellipsis to be here supplied, (this is) the book (Tyndale), so as to form a complete sentence. It is rather a title or inscription, either of the whole book; or, as some suppose, of the two-first chapters, which contain the history of our Saviour's infancy; or of the first alone, which contains his genealogy and birth; or, as most interpreters are now agreed, of the genealogy alone (vs. 1–17). It may then be regarded as the original inscription of the pedigree, belonging to it in the register from which some suppose it to have been transcribed. This supposition, though unnecessary, is by no means inconsistent with the inspiration of the record, since the introduction or adoption even of a human composition by divine authority imparts to it the same infallibility which it would have if written by immediate divine suggestion. As a positive argument in favour of this supposition it may be alleged, that the entire structure of the genealogy is not what might have been expected in the opening of a history, but resembles rather a document prefixed to it on which the writer then proceeds to comment, as a sort of text or theme, or from which he sets out as the starting-point of his whole narrative. This peculiar relation of the genealogy to the history in Matthew's Gospel is made still more striking by comparing it with Luke's, which is wrought into the texture of his narrative, so as to form an integral and inseparable part of it. (See Luke 3:23–38.) Jesus Christ is here used not as a mere personal designation or proper name, although it had become so when this book was written, but with distinct reference to the meaning of both titles, and to the claim which they involve, that he to whom they are applied was the promised Saviour (see below, on v. 21) and Messiah, or Anointed Prophet Priest and King of Israel (see below, on v. 16). Even regarded as a title or inscription, this first sentence is equivalent to a formal declaration of our Lord's Messiahship, as the truth to be established in the following history, beginning with his lineal descent from Abraham and David, in default of which all other proofs would be unavailing. Son is here used in the wider sense of lineal descendant. (See below, on v. 20, and compare Luke 1:5, 13:16, 19:9.) Son of David was among the most familiar designations of the Messiah in the dialect of the contemporary Jews. (See below, on 9:27, 12:23, 15:22, 20:30, 21:9, 15, 22, 42, and compare Rom. 1:3. Rev. 5:5, 22:16.) Son of Abraham may be construed with the nearest antecedent (David), but agrees more probably with the remoter (Jesus Christ), whose descent from both the Patriarchs (or founders of the royal race) is here asserted.

2. The form of expression here used and throughout the table (γέννησε) is a literal translation of the one employed in Jewish genealogies, (יָלַד) the oldest specimens of which are those contained in Genesis (4:18), particularly that in the fifth chapter; where we have substantially the same title or inscription as in this case, "the book of the generations of Adam" (Gen. 5:1), and the same technical formula (begat), denoting not so much an act as a relation, and meaning simply that he was his father. A trace of the same genealogical usage may be found in Ps. 2:7, where the words, "This day have I begotten thee," do not fix the date of the Messiah's sonship as beginning in time, but express a filial relation which existed from eternity. What is here affirmed is that Abraham was the father or progenitor of Isaac, Isaac of Jacob, Jacob of Judah, and so on, to the end of the whole pedigree. Judas, the Greek form of the Hebrew Judah (Jehudah), here distinguished from his brethren (or brothers), the other sons of Jacob, as the one from whose line the Messiah was to spring. (See below, on 2:6, and compare Gen. 49:10. Heb. 7:14. Rev. 5:5), though the rest were entitled to be named, at least collectively, as being Patriarchs or founders of the twelve tribes (compare Acts 7:8, 9), each of which possessed a sort of royal dignity, and all of which together constituted the Theocracy or chosen people. (Compare Ps. 122:4. Acts 26:7.) As if he had said, 'Jacob was the father of the twelve, to whom the tribes of our theocracy trace their origin, and among these of Judah, who was the lineal progenitor of Christ himself, as shown in the detailed genealogy which follows.'

3. In the original narrative (Gen. 38:29, 30), these names are written Pharez, Zarah, and Tamar. Of (out of, from, by) Thamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah (Gen. 38:6). As this was an incestuous connection, and intentionally so on Tamar's part, it seems

extraordinary that it should be prominent in the genealogy of Christ. But this only serves to prove the genuineness of the genealogy itself, as the same thing is apparent in the Jewish books, which undertake to account for it by representing the sins of Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba, as virtuous acts committed under the divine direction. But this solution is not only morally detestable, but far less probable on other grounds, than that which supposes these names to be introduced to humble Jewish pride and illustrate the divine sovereignty in choosing “base things of the world, and things which are despised.… that no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Cor. 1:29). Esrom and Aram, called in David’s genealogy appended to the book of Ruth (4:19), Hezron (compare 1 Chron. 2:5) and Ram, which last may be only a contracted form of Aram (compare Job 32:2, with Genesis 22:21).

4. These names occur also in Ruth 4:20, with a slight difference of orthography, (Amminadab and Nahshon.) The latter was a brother of the wife of Aaron (Ex. 6:23) and the hereditary chief of Judah in the wilderness (Num. 2:3, 10:14.)

5. In 1 Chr. 2:11, Salmon is called Salma (Salmah), as another person is, in the same chapter (vs. 51–54). Booz is the Boaz of the Old Testament (Ruth 2:1, 4:21), and might have been conformed to it as Jesse (Jessai) is, in the translation. Of Rachab, of Ruth, the same form of expression as in v. 3 and there explained. There is no reason to doubt the identity of the former with the Rahab of the book of Joshua (2:1, 6:23, 25), which agrees well with the chronology, as Salmon, the son of Nahshon, was a man of mature age at the fall of Jericho. The difficulty which arises from the length of the interval, is not peculiar to this table, but common to it and the one in Ruth, which may also be abridged by the omission of some less important names (see below, on v. 17), as the verb (begat) does not necessarily denote immediate succession, but the genealogical relation of progenitor and descendant, like the nouns son and daughter. (See above, on v. 1, and compare the passages there cited.)

6. David the king, by way of eminence, not only as the first but as the best and greatest of the theocratic sovereigns, who represented the Messiah’s royalty and as it were kept his throne for him till he came (compare Ezek. 21:27). The reign of Saul, although divinely authorized, was not theocratical but secular, designed to teach the people by experiment the natural effect of having a king like the other nations. (See 1 Sam. 8:5, 20.) The reigns that followed, not excepting that of Solomon, are treated in the history as mere continuations of the reign of David, filling up the interval between him and the Great Deliverer, of whose Messianic royalty he was the constituted type and representative. This special relation between Christ and David is implied in the comparative frequency with which the latter is referred to in the later Scriptures, and his name sometimes applied to the Messiah himself (Ezek. 34:23, 24, 37:24, 25), while Solomon is never named in prophecy, and very seldom in the New Testament, and even then rather with disparagement than honour (see below, on 6:29, 12:42). These comparisons will throw light on the emphasis with which the evangelist (or genealogist) twice in this one sentence speaks of David the king. This repetition at the same time indicates that David was the close of one and the beginning of another cycle in the history of Israel. The theocracy which culminated in him begins to decline even under his successor. From Abraham to David all moves upwards, and from David to the Advent downwards. All idea of intrinsic merit, even in the man thus highly honoured, as a ground of the divine choice, is excluded by the mention of Bathsheba, suggesting the great complex crime of David’s life, and the providential judgments which avenged it, but without disturbing his position as an instrument in God’s hand and a type of the Messiah. This is the fourth female name introduced among our Lord’s progenitors (see above, on vs. 3, 5), one of the four being of heathen origin, and the other three remembered chiefly for their sins. This remarkable fact may be connected with our Lord’s vicarious subjection to reproach and his official share in the dishonour brought upon our race by sin. A more exact translation of the last words would be, from (or by) the (wife) of Uriah. (See the original history in 2 Sam. 11:12.

7. Roboam and Abia are the Rehoboam and Abijam or Abijah of the Old Testament. (See 1 Kings 11:43, 14:31. 2 Chr. 12:16, 13:1.) They are named here only as connecting links in the chain of genealogical succession.

8. Josaphat and Ozias, called in the Hebrew Jehoshaphat and Uzziah. (See 1 Kings 22:41, 2 Kings 15:13.) Between Joram and Uzziah three kings are omitted, namely, Ahaziah (2 Kings 9:29), Joash (2 Kings 12:1), and Amaziah (2 Kings 14:1). These omissions were no doubt intended to reduce the genealogy to the uniform limits mentioned in v. 17 below; and these particular kings may have been chosen as descendants of Jezebel, and as such representatives of the corruption wrought in Judah by alliance with Israel, and especially by intermarriage with the family of Ahab. This is far more probable than that the choice of names to be omitted was entirely arbitrary; but even this is less incredible than that the omission was an ignorant or inadvertent one, either on the part of the evangelist or on that of the original genealogist from whom this genealogy was borrowed (see above, on v. 1).

9, 10. In these two verses there are no omissions, but the royal genealogy is given without interruption. Joatham, Achaz, and Ezekias, are the Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of the Old Testament, where they follow each other in the same order. (See 2 Kings 15:32, 16:1, 18:1, and compare 2 Chr. 27:1, 28:1, 29:1.) Manasses (Manasseh), Amon (in one or two of the oldest copies, Amos), and Josias (Josiah), are the next three kings in the original history. (See 1 Kings 21:1, 19, 22:1, and compare 2 Chr. 33:1, 19, 34:1.)

11. The omission of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah and the father of Jehoiachin or Jeconiah (2 Kings 23:34, 24:6, 2 Chr. 36:4, 8), has been variously explained. Some suppose Jeconiah to be the Greek form both of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin; but this is at variance both with Hebrew and Septuagint usage. (Compare 2 Kings 24:6, 12, 15, 25:27. Ezek. 1:2. with Esth. 2:6. Jer. 24:1, 27:20, 28:4, and

both with Jer. 22:24, 28, 37:1, where the name is still further contracted to Coniah.) This objection applies he less to the supposition that Jeconiah means Jehoiakim in this verse and Jehoiachin in the next, which would moreover be at variance with the context, as the name of each progenitor, except the first, is twice inserted. Still less admissible is the assumption of an ignorant or inadvertent error in confounding the two names, which are less alike in Greek and Hebrew than in English, and could hardly be confounded in a formal genealogy. More probable than either is the supposition of an error in transcription from the same cause, as nothing is more common when two words are alike than the unintentional omission of one. And we find accordingly, in several uncial manuscripts and ancient versions, Josiah begat Jehoiakim and Jehoiakim begat Jeconiah and his brethren. This is rejected by the critics as a mere interpolation, because wanting in the oldest manuscripts now extant, which however are at least four hundred years later than the date of composition. It is also objected that Jeconiah had no brothers, or at least not more than one (1 Chron. 3:16, 2 Chron. 36:10.) This objection may be met by still another explanation, which supposes Jehoiakim to be omitted as the king by whose fault the monarchy was overthrown and the national independence lost (2 Kings 24:4, 10), and the brethren of Jehoiachin (or Jeconiah) to denote the contemporary race who went with him into exile. (Compare the use of the word brethren in Ex. 2:11, 4:18. Num. 20:3. Acts 3:22, 7:23.) The principal objection to this last assumption is the vague and unusual sense which it puts upon the verb begat. But any supposition seems more credible than that of a gross blunder, either on the part of the evangelist or on that of his genealogical authority, and of its passing unobserved until the time of Porphyry, who wrote against the Scriptures in the latter part of the third century. About the time they were carried away is a correct but needless paraphrase of three Greek words (π τ ς μετοικεσίας) literally meaning on (or at) the migration. The preposition (πί) is explained by some as meaning towards or just before; but its usage elsewhere in construction with the same case rather requires the sense of about or at, (See Heb. 1:1. 2 Pet. 3:3, and compare Mark 2:26. Luke 3:2, 4:27. Rom. 1:10.) The genitive (of Babylon) can hardly denote motion to a place, but rather means belonging to it, as we say the Babylonian exile or captivity, in speaking of the national condition, or the Babylonian deportation, of the act or event which caused it.

12. After the migration of Babylon, or Babylonian exile, i. e. after it happened or began, not after it was ended, as the Greek word does not signify the state or condition of the people there, but their removal thither, as in the preceding verse. It is therefore neither necessary nor admissible to give the preposition (μετὰ) here the sense of in or during, which is contrary to usage. The English version (after they were brought to Babylon) conveys the sense but not the form of the original. The divine declaration, that Jeconiah should be childless, means that he should have no immediate successor on the throne, as explained in the context of the prophecy itself (Jer. 22:30.) Salathiel, the Greek form of the Hebrew Shealtiel, is repeatedly named in the Old Testament also as the father of Zorobabel (Zerubbabel, Ezra 3:2, 8. Hagg. 1:1), but in 1 Chr. 3:19 as his uncle, which may either relate to a different person, like the two Zedekiahs in vs. 15, 16 of the same chapter, or to an adoption, or to a leviratic marriage of the kind prescribed in Deut. 25:5. The Salathiel and Zorobabel of Luke 3:27 can hardly be identical with those here mentioned.

13–15. As these nine names belong to the interval between the Old and New Testament, we have no means of verifying or comparing them, but every reason to believe that they were found in the public archives of the tribe of Judah or the private genealogy of the family of Joseph. The number of generations corresponds sufficiently to that of years included in the interval referred to. If there is any disproportion, the excess is on the side last mentioned, and may be readily explained by the assumption that a few names are omitted, as in other parts of this same table. (See above, on v. 8, and below, on v. 17.)

16. This conclusion of the genealogy shows whose it is, namely Joseph's; and at the same time why it is recorded, namely, because he was the husband of Mary; and also why her husband's pedigree has any historical interest or value, namely, because she was the mother of Messiah. As if it had been said, 'Since Jesus was the Son of Mary, and Mary the lawful wife of Joseph, and Joseph the lineal descendant of David, therefore Jesus was himself the heir of David, by legal right, as shown in the preceding table, no less than by natural descent, as appears from his mother's genealogy recorded elsewhere,' i. e. in Luke 3:23–31. The Heli, there named as the father of Joseph, may have been so by adoption or by legal substitution (see above, on v. 12), but was more probably his father-in-law, i. e. the father of Mary herself, who is said to be so called in some Jewish books. Jesus called the Christ, or more exactly still, the (one) called Christ, is not, as some imagine, a suggestion of doubt (equivalent to saying, the reputed or alleged Messiah), nor on the other hand, a strong asseveration of the fact (so called because he was so, a use of the Greek verb now denied by the highest philological authorities); but a simple statement that he bore this title at the date of the history or genealogy, and was thereby distinguished from all those who shared with him the name of Jesus (or Joshua), which was one in common use among the Jews. The Christ has here its primary and full sense as an official title, and not its secondary and attenuated meaning as a personal or proper name (see above, on v. 1). Was born, the same verb that is used throughout the genealogical table in its active form (begat), but is applied, in Classical as well as Hellenistic usage, to both parents.

17. So, literally, then or therefore, a connective particle, referring back to the preceding genealogy, and summing up its statements, as an introduction to the history which follows. As if he had said: 'You see then from this table, that there are fourteen generations,' &c. This cannot mean that there were really, in point of fact, just fourteen generations in the several intervals here mentioned; for we know from the Old Testament that four names are omitted in the second period, and have reason to believe that others may be wanting in the third. (See above, on vs. 8, 13.) It rather means the contrary, to wit, that although there were more generations in the

actual succession, only fourteen are here given, for the sake of uniformity, in each of the three periods. So far from being a mistake or an intentional misrepresentation, neither of which can be imagined even in a skilful genealogist, much less in an inspired evangelist, it is really a caution to the reader against falling into the very mistake which some would charge upon the writer. As if he had said: 'Let it be observed that this is not a complete list of all the generations between Abraham and Christ, but that some names are omitted, so as to leave fourteen in each great division of the history of Israel.' All the generations, if extended to the whole verse, may then be understood to mean all that are here given; but if restricted to the first clause, which is a more probable construction, it may have its strict sense (absolutely all) and give a reason for selecting fourteen as the measure of the periods, namely, that there were really just fourteen generations in the first, and that the others were assimilated to it, either by the genealogist from whom the pedigree was borrowed, or by the evangelist himself. But how are the names to be distributed and reckoned, so as to leave fourteen in each division? The solution of this problem may be varied by counting David and Josiah once or twice, and by including or excluding Christ himself and his mother in the third division. But this only shows that the precise enumeration of the names is not the main thing, but their equal distribution, and that this must be determined by the real number in the first division, which remains the same in all these different arrangements. It is also evident that if the three fourteens can be made out in so many different ways, the writer cannot be mistaken in affirming their existence, although we may not be able to determine which mode of calculation he intended. But it still remains to be considered why he thus divided them at all. Some say that this was a customary formula appended to the ancient genealogies, designed to aid the memory, and here retained by the evangelist without change, as a part of the original document which he is quoting. Others suppose a mystical allusion to the name of David, the letters of which in Hebrew (דוד), when summed up according to their numerical value, make fourteen (4+6+4); or to the forty-two stations of the Israelites in the wilderness; or to the scriptural use of seven as a sacred number. Besides these mnemonical and mystical solutions, there is a chronological one, namely, that the periods are equal in years though not in generations, and two of the great cycles having been completed, he who was born at the close of the third must be the Christ. The only other supposition that need be stated is, that the writer's purpose was to draw attention to the three great periods in the history of Israel as the chosen people, one extending from Abraham as its great progenitor to David its first theocratical sovereign; another to the downfall of the monarchy and loss of the national independence; and a third from this disaster to the advent of Messiah. To this periodology attention would be drawn by the very effort to arrange the periods and the choice of methods in so doing. Thus understood, the verse may be paraphrased as follows: 'The foregoing table is divided into three parts, the first of which embraces fourteen generations, and the other two are here assimilated to it, by omitting a few names, in order to make prominent the three great eras in the history of Israel, marked and divided by the calling of Abraham, the reign of David, the Babylonian exile, and the birth of Christ, the end to which the previous succession pointed.'

18. Had the preceding pedigree been that of a mere man, it would have ended as it began with the usual genealogical formula, Joseph begat Jesus. But as this was not the fact, the true relation between them is distinctly stated in v. 16, namely, that Joseph was not the father of Jesus, though the husband of his mother. To this negative statement the evangelist now adds a positive statement of his real generation, connected yet contrasted with the previous genealogy by the connective (δέ), which has here its proper sense of but, or on the contrary. This connection of the sentences is weakened and obscured in the translation by the use of now instead of but, as well as by prefixing it to Jesus Christ, which in the Greek is rendered prominent by standing first. As if he had said: 'All these, from Isaac (v. 2) to Joseph (v. 16), followed one another in the natural sequence of ordinary generation; Jesus Christ, on the contrary, was born in a manner wholly different,' which the writer then goes on to describe (in vs. 18–25). Some of the modern critics omit Jesus, upon very doubtful manuscript authority, but with the supposed advantage of reserving the proper name or personal designation until after its prescription by the angel has been stated (in v. 21). But the name has been already mentioned twice (in vs. 1, 16), and cannot therefore be withheld as unknown to the reader. Birth, or rather generation, including also the conception. The Greek word in the common text is the noun (γέννησις) corresponding to the verb (γέννησε), which is repeated nearly forty times in the preceding context (vs. 2–16). The oldest manuscripts and latest critics have a different though kindred form (γένεσις) of wider import, and which really includes the other, as the specific sense of birth or generation is involved in the generic one of origin, production. In either case there is a verbal reference to what precedes which cannot be preserved in a translation. If the latter reading (γένεσις) be preferred, the allusion is to v. 1, where the genitive case of the same name occurs. As if he had said: Such is the book of the Messiah's generation, or his whole descent; but his immediate generation was as follows: If the other (γέννησις) be retained, the allusion is to the repeated use of the cognate verb (γέννησε) already mentioned. As if he had said: One of these begat another, in the natural and ordinary way; but the Messiah was begotten in a different manner. On this wise, or in modern English, in this manner, but in Greek a single word (ο τως), meaning simply thus (or so), and here equivalent to our phrase, as follows. For (γάρ), omitted in the version, unless it is included in the phrase when as, is here equivalent in force to namely, or that is to say, but really refers to something not expressed. As if he had said: and the origin referred to was entirely unlike that of all the persons previously mentioned, for, &c. When as, another obsolete expression, analogous to whereas, which is still in use, but here a mere periphrasis for a participial construction, his mother Mary having been espoused, i. e. before the discovery here mentioned, as implied in the past participle (μνηστευθείσης.) The Greek verb strictly means to court or woo, but in the passive form to be engaged, betrothed (as in the Septuagint version of Deut. 22:23, 25, 27, 28, compared with the active voice in Deut. 20:7.) There are frequent allusions in the Old Testament to the marriage vow as a religious contract (Prov. 2:17. Ezek. 16:8. Mal. 2:14). but the first mention of

a written bond occurs in the Apocrypha (Tob. 2:14.) According to the later Jewish books, the bride continued in her father's house for some time after her espousals. Before implies nothing as to what took place afterwards. Compare the use of the same phrase (πρ ν) in Mark 14:30. Luke 2:26, 22:34. Acts 2:20, 25:16. Came together, cohabited as man and wife, either in the wider or the stricter sense, more probably the former, which includes the other, before he had even brought her home (see below, on v. 25.) Was found, not simply was, a Hebrew idiom alleged by some interpreters, but now rejected by the best authorities, nor does it mean detected, or discovered, against Mary's will; but simply became known to herself, and probably through her to others, or at least to Joseph, her betrothed husband. With child, literally having in (the) womb, an idiomatic phrase occurring also in v. 23:24, 19. Luke 1:31. 1 Th. 5:3. Rev. 12:2, and often in the Septuagint version (e. g. Gen. 16:4, 5, 11, 38:24, 25.) Of, from, or by, as the source and the efficient cause. (See below, on v. 20, and compare John 3:6.) Ghost, the Saxon word for Spirit, still retained in German (Geist) and the cognate languages, but in modern English only used in this phrase, and in reference to the apparition of departed spirits, though it may be still traced in its rare but genuine derivative, ghostly, i. e. spiritual or religious. The whole phrase Holy Spirit does not signify an influence or power, but a person as in many other places, even where the article, as here, is omitted.* The indefinite form may have been adopted for the very reason that the phrase had become a personal or proper name.

19. Joseph, however (δὲ), or on his part, as the other and apparently the injured party in this grave transaction. Just may be taken either in the strict sense of rendering to every one his due (suum cuique), or in the wider sense of good (as Horace uses œquus), including mercy and compassion no less than rigid conscientiousness and honesty. In the former case, the whole phrase, just and not willing, will mean, just and (yet) not willing, i. e. too just to retain her but too kind to expose her. In the other case the sense is, just and (therefore) not willing. The first construction is the simplest and requires no departure from the ordinary usage of the word just. Willing is not an adjective in Greek, but the participle of the verb to will. What is denied, therefore, is not a mere disposition, which he may have felt, but a volition or decided act of will, to which he could not bring himself. To make an example of her, by divulging her supposed offence, or making it the subject of judicial process. (Wiclif: he was rightful and would not publish her. Tyndale: a perfect man.) He was inclined, not he positively wished, still less was determined, both which expressions are too strong for the original verb (βουλήθη.) Put her away, discharge, or free her, a term often applied elsewhere to divorce (see below, on 5:31, 32, 19:3, 7, 8, 9), but here used in the sense of a more private and informal separation. According to Philo and Maimonides, a betrothed woman possessed all the rights of a wife, and could only be repudiated with the same formalities. Privily, in modern English, privately or secretly, i. e. without judicial forms, by mere repudiation as prescribed in the Mosaic law (Deut. 24:1), not without a written instrument, but without undue publicity, and possibly without specification of the cause. This shows that the last words of the verse preceding are the evangelist's own statement of the real cause, and not a part of what was found (υρέθη) or discovered at the time in question.

20. While he thought, in Greek an absolute construction, he revolving (pondering, considering) these things. The original verb denotes an intellectual act, but with an implication of strong feeling (as in 9:4, below.) These things, those related in the two preceding verses, with particular reference to the purpose mentioned in v. 19. Angel originally signifies a messenger (as in Luke 7:24, 9:52. James 2:25), but is specially applied in scripture to the "ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14) sent forth to announce and execute the will of God. Angel of Jehovah is a title often given in the Old Testament to the second person of the Godhead; but this meaning would be here irrelevant. The angel sent may have been Gabriel, as in Luke 1:19, 26; but it is not here asserted. Appeared is in the Greek a passive form originally meaning was revealed (or rendered visible), but constantly employed as a deponent verb.* By dream (κατ' ναρ) an analogous expression to by day, by night, and perhaps like them indicative of time, but commonly explained as a description of the mode of the divine communication. The Greek noun is used in the classics absolutely as an adverb, and by Homer is contrasted with another which denotes a waking vision (ναρ and (παρ.) Son of David, not a pleonastic or superfluous expression, but one intended to remind him of his own descent and consequent relation to the Messiah, and perhaps thereby to make him the more willing to complete his marriage. The use of the nominative for the vocative is common not only in the Hellenistic but the Classical Greek writers. Fear not, either to do wrong or to incur injury. To take to thyself, into thy company, a frequent sense of the Greek verb (παραλαμβανειν), 2:13–21, 4:5, 8, 12:45, 17:1, 18:16, 20:17, 26:37, 27:27, and with special reference to marriage in Herodotus and Xenophon. Mariam (or Miriam) the original form of the Hebrew name, but only used by Matthew and Luke in the beginning of their Gospels.* Thy wife, not merely in anticipation, but de facto and de jure. (See above, on v. 19.) Of the Holy Ghost, as in v. 18 (compare Acts 5:39. Rom. 2:29.)

21. It is a slight but significant difference between this and the similar assurance made to Zecharias (Luke 1:13), that the pronoun (to thee) is omitted here, because our Lord was to be brought forth not to Joseph but to God. The second verb (thou shalt call) is neither an imperative future, as in the commandments, nor a mere prediction (thou wilt call), but something intermediate between them (thou art to call), implying both futurity and divine appointment. The naming of children is ascribed in Scripture to both parents (compare Gen. 29:32–35, 35:18, with Exodus 2:22), and to Joseph here as the husband of Mary and the legal father of her offspring (see above, on v. 16). The name itself (Jesus) is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, which may be variously analyzed, but always with the same essential meaning, that of Saviour or Salvation, and with reference to Jehovah as its author. (See Num. 13:8, 16. 1 Chr. 7:27. Neh. 8:17.) This idea, suggested by its very etymology, is distinctly expressed in the remainder of the verse. The verb translated save means strictly to preserve or keep safe, but is secondarily applied to active rescue or deliverance from evil,

whether natural or moral, being equally appropriate to bodily healing and to spiritual renovation. His people would be naturally understood by Joseph as referring to the chosen race, the family of Israel, not as a state or nation merely, but as a church or spiritual corporation, and as such including all who should believe in Christ as the appointed Saviour. From their sins, not merely from the punishment which they deserved and the effects which they produced, but from the guilt and turpitude of sin itself. The word here used is properly a negative description of moral evil, as a failure or short-coming, from a verb which primarily means to aim wrong or to miss the mark. But as this deficiency or failure has respect precisely to what man owes and what God requires, it becomes in usage one of the strongest and most positive expressions for sin as a want of conformity to the law of God. This description of Christ's mission as a moral and religious, not a secular and civil one, affords a key to his whole history as well as a sufficient refutation of the silly notion, that the salvation here ascribed to him (and in Luke 1:68, 71, 74) is emancipation from the yoke of Roman bondage, and the restoration of their former independence.

22. Here again, as in v. 18, the word translated now is the usual connective (δ) corresponding to our and or but, and continuing the sentence without interruption from the verse preceding. This construction raises a presumption that the words which follow are those of the same speaker, namely, of the angel, a presumption which can only be destroyed by something in the words themselves forbidding it. But instead of this, they rather strengthen and conform it. The expression all this, or retaining the exact form of the Greek phrase, this whole (matter), i. e. the betrothal and conception of Mary, is more natural if uttered by the angel at the time than if added by the evangelist long after. The verb too is in the perfect tense and properly means has (now) come to pass (or happened), and not, did come to pass (or happen) at some former time. This distinction between the perfect and the aorist is clearly marked, not only in the theory of the Greek verb and the practice of the classical Greek writers, but also in the usage of the New Testament where the perfect tense of this verb occurs more than sixty times, and with a few exceptions (such as Matt. 25:6. Rom. 16:7. Gal. 3:17. 1 Thess. 2:1. 1 Tim. 2:14. Heb. 7:16), some of which are doubtful, not only may but must be rendered by our perfect to express its full force, although rarely so translated (as in Acts 4:16. Rom. 6:5, 11:25), being usually rendered by the simple past tense or the present passive.* The same thing is true of the participial, infinitive, and pluperfect forms,† and of some places where the oldest copies have a different reading (e. g. Matt. 19:8, 24:21. John 6:25, 12:30, 14:22. Rom. 7:13. Gal. 3:24). That the two tenses are not simply convertible in either language, may be seen from Rev. 16:17, 21:6, where it is done means it has come to pass, and could not be exchanged for it was done, it happened, or it came to pass, without destroying, or at least obscuring the sense of the expression. Such being the settled usage of the form here used, as signifying, not what happened once (γενετο), but what has happened now (γέγονε), it may be added to the phrase before it (all this) as a further reason for regarding these as the words of the angel, and not of the historian. The conclusion thus reached is confirmed not only by the authority of Chrysostom and other Greek interpreters, to whom the nice distinction of the tenses must have been familiar, but also by the parallel cases in 21:4, 26:56 below, where the construction is precisely similar. Fulfilled, a verb originally meaning filled full, in the physical or proper sense (as in 13:48. Luke 3:5. John 12:3. Acts 2:2), and often applied figuratively to internal states or exercises,* and to completion or completeness, especially in reference to time.† but also to the full performance of a promise or an obligation,‡ and to the accomplishment or verification of a prophecy, as here and often elsewhere, but especially in Matthew's Gospel.§ That it might be fulfilled is the strict (and according to the highest modern philological authorities the only) sense of the original expression, as denoting purpose or deliberate intention. But besides this telic use (as the grammarians call it) of the Greek conjunction (να), some contend for an ecbatic use, denoting not design, but mere result or consequence, however unforeseen or accidental. As examples of this latter use are cited John 9:2. Rom. 5:20, 11:11, and the case before us, with the many others like it, where the sense will then be, so that it was fulfilled. As the other sense, however, is at once the proper and the common one, the best interpreters consider it as doubly entitled to the preference in this case. It does not mean, however, that the prediction was the cause of the event, which some make an objection to the telic explanation, but that the event was necessary to the execution of the divine purpose as expressed in the prediction which was spoken, literally, the (thing) spoken, not merely written, but originally uttered viva voce. Of the Lord by the prophet, or as it might be rendered more explicitly and more agreeably to modern usage, by the Lord (as the prime agent or the ultimate author of the revelation) through the prophet (as the instrumental agent or the organ of communication). The prophet is Isaiah, as expressed in one old manuscript (the Codex Bezæ), in whose writings the quotation is still extant (see Isai. 7:14), and of whose divine legation we have here inspired if not angelic attestation. This is the first appearance of a feature characterizing this whole gospel, namely the express quotation of Old Testament predictions which had been fulfilled in the life of Christ.

23. The quotation is made almost precisely in the terms of the Septuagint version. One of the two variations (ξει for λήψεται) exists only in relation to the Vatican text of the Seventy, the Alexandrian agreeing with the text of Matthew. This difference is merely one of form, without the least effect upon the meaning. The other variation (καλέσουσι for καλέσεις) is of more significance, though really of little moment, as it merely substitutes the indefinite expression, they shall call, equivalent to shall be called (compare Luke 12:20) for the definite address to the mother (thou shalt call), which is itself most probably a substitute for the third person (she shall call) of the Hebrew text.* The essential point is the act of naming, not the person who performed it. Another variation, both of the Septuagint and Gospel, from the precise form of the Hebrew text, is the substitution of the future (shall conceive or be with child) for the present, as implied though not expressed in the original construction, which is participial or adjective, not verbal. Behold, the virgin pregnant (or with child), as if actually present to the prophet's senses. But this too is a merely formal difference, the words

confessedly relating to the future, whether proximate or distant. The Hebrew word translated virgin (παρθένος) is not the usual equivalent of these Greek and English terms, but one which properly denotes a girl, maiden, or young woman, and is so rendered by the other ancient Greek translators (νε νις). Some suppose this difference in the old Greek versions to be connected with a different interpretation of the passage; but the two are really equivalent, as the Hebrew word (עַלְמָה) is always applied elsewhere to unmarried women,† and as the stronger terms, in Hebrew (בְּתוּלָה), Greek (παρθένος), Latin (virgo), are occasionally used of wives and mothers;‡ so that the idea of a virgin is as strongly expressed here as it could be. A virgin greatly weakens the original expression, which is definite in Greek (παρθένος) as well as Hebrew (הָעַלְמָה), and denotes the (particular) virgin in whom the prediction was especially verified. Lo (or behold), as usual, introduces something novel, unexpected, and surprising. The name in this case is descriptive, and was not to be actually borne in real life, as Jesus was. They shall call, i. e. they shall have cause or occasion, so to call him; he shall be entitled to the name Immanuel. God with us has both a lower and a higher sense, sometimes denoting a gracious or providential presence and protection,§ but in this case an essential and personal divine manifestation. Interpreted, translated out of Hebrew into Greek (Tyndale: by interpretation, Cranmer: which, if a man interpret it, is as much as to say), which some regard as a proof that Matthew was originally written in the latter language; but although this is probable for other reasons (see above, the general introduction p. 1), it does not follow necessarily from this clause which might have been inserted by the Greek translator. The application of this prophecy to Christ is not a mere accommodation, meaning that the words, originally used in one sense and in reference to one subject, might now be repeated in another sense and of another subject; for this does not satisfy the strong terms of the passage (all this happened that it might be fulfilled), nor would such a fanciful coincidence have been alleged with so much emphasis by Matthew, still less by the Angel. The only sense that can be reasonably put upon the words is, that the miraculous conception of Messiah was predicted by Isaiah in the words here quoted. This essential meaning is not affected by the question whether the prediction was a mediate or immediate, a twofold or exclusive one; that is to say, whether it was first fulfilled in the natural birth of a child soon after it was uttered, and the subsequent deliverance of Judah from invasion, but again fulfilled, and in a higher sense, in the nativity of Christ; or whether it related only to the latter, and presented it to Ahaz as a pledge that the chosen people could not be destroyed until Messiah came. Both these opinions are maintained by eminent interpreters, whose arguments, however, belong rather to the exposition of Isaiah than of Matthew. His authoritative exposition of the prophecy extends no further than the fact of its fulfilment in the miraculous conception of the Saviour.

24. This verse records the execution of the order sent to Joseph through the Angel, in a form very common both in Homer and the Scriptures, i. e. by repeating the terms of the command from v. 20, in the same sense that was there explained. His wife (like thy wife in the verse referred to) may either simply designate the person (her who was his wife), or have the more emphatic sense of as (or for) his wife. The former construction is more natural, especially in this case, where Mary is not named, and is commonly adopted by the best interpreters. Had bidden is in Greek a verb originally meaning to arrange, array, and specially applied, as a military term, to the posting or stationing of troops, but also employed by the best Attic writers in the secondary sense of enjoining any thing on a person, or (without an accusative, as here) commanding him.

25. This verse has been the subject of dispute for ages, not as to what it expresses, but as to what it implies. The question is not what the words directly mean, but what is the inference to be drawn from them. Knew her not, as his wife, cohabited with her only in the primary but wider sense of the expression, as denoting residence together. The remainder of the verse seems to limit this negation to the time which intervened between the divine communication made to Joseph and the birth of Christ. From this it is now inferred by some interpreters that after that event other children were born to Joseph and Mary, and that these are mentioned in the sequel as the brothers and sisters of our Lord.* This is supposed to be necessarily implied in Matthew's use both of the particle (until) and of the adjective (first-born).† But these implications, although plausible, are not necessary or certain. Until, and its equivalents in other languages (עַד, ως, donec), affirm and deny nothing beyond the terminus ad quem which they are used to designate but leave the rest to be discovered in some other way. The Greek interpreters assert this to be the usage of the word employed in this case (ως), and refer for proof to Gen. 8:7 and Ps. 110:1. to which others have added Isai. 42:3. as quoted in Matt. 12:20. where the meaning cannot be that after he has sent forth judgment unto victory he will begin to bruise the broken reed and quench the smoking flax. So too in 1 Tim. 4:13. Paul cannot mean to say that after he comes Timothy must cease to read, exhort, and teach. Nor is the contrary affirmed in either case, but simply left to be determined by the context or the nature of the case. These examples are sufficient to establish the position, that the inference in question from the use of the word till, however natural, is not conclusive; or in other words, that this expression cannot prove the fact of subsequent cohabitation in the face of cogent reasons for disputing it. As to the word first-born, the mistake lies in making it a popular expression, to be interpreted by common usage, whereas it is a technical term of the Mosaic law, and as such familiar to the Jews of that day both in Greek and Hebrew, being constantly employed in the Septuagint version, to translate the Hebrew term applied to the firstling both of man and beast, but by way of eminence to the human child by which the womb was opened, or the woman first became a mother. Such children were devoted to God, partly in commemoration of the Hebrew first-born being spared when those of Egypt were destroyed.‡ Can it be supposed that the destroying angel on that memorable night passed by those Egyptian families in which there was a single child; or that the law for the redemption of the first-born was suspended till a second child was born? If not, the legal epithet first-born included not only the eldest but also only children, and its constant use in this extended application in the law not only might but

must have made it perfectly intelligible as applied to Jesus though he were the sole child of his mother. It is not true, therefore, as is frequently alleged by modern writers, that the use of either of these terms by Matthew necessarily implies the birth of other children. Equally groundless is the common allegation that no other inference would ever have been thought of, but for a superstitious reverence for the Virgin Mary, and an ascetic over-estimate of virginity as a holier state than that of marriage. Entirely apart from such corruptions and anterior to their appearance, there was a strong ground for believing the virginity of our Lord's mother to have been perpetual, afforded by the obvious consideration, that the same reasons which required it before his birth might possibly at least require it afterwards. This analogy is not at all dependent on the nature of those reasons, which to us may be inscrutable, but simply on the fact of their existence. If, for any reason, it would not have been becoming or expedient that the woman chosen to be the mother of our Lord should sustain the same relation to any other child before his birth, why was it any more becoming or expedient after he was born? This view of the matter may at least induce us to suspend our judgment on this delicate and interesting question, without any fear of popish or ascetic superstition, till the history itself shall furnish further data for a definite conclusion. (See below, on 10:3, 12:47, 13:55, 28:10.) In the mean time, all that this verse necessarily imports is that her virginity remained unimpaired, if not forever, yet at least till she became a mother, which is the essential fact expressed by the phrase, brought forth her first-born son, just as the corresponding term (begat) in the preceding genealogy denotes the analogous relation of paternity. (See above, on v. 2.) The omission of the word (πρωτότοκον) from which this whole discussion has arisen, in the oldest extant manuscript (the Codex Vaticanus) and in the old Egyptian versions, though regarded by the latest critics as a sufficient reason for expunging it, may be a mere attempt of the transcribers and translators to cut the knot which they despaired of loosing.

CHAPTER 2

IN further prosecution of his purpose to demonstrate the Messiahship of Jesus, Matthew now relates his recognition by representatives of the Gentile world, closely connected, both in prophecy and history, with his birth in Bethlehem, and with his escape from the murderous designs of Herod, by being carried into Egypt, his return thence, and his subsequent residence in Nazareth, all which the Evangelist exhibits as the fulfilment of Old Testament predictions. The contents of this chapter have peculiar interest, not only on their own account, but also as affording the most striking illustration of the plan on which this Gospel is constructed, and of its distinctive character, as being not a mere history but a historical argument in favour of our Lord's Messiahship.

1. The actual nativity of Christ is only recorded incidentally by Matthew, in the last verse of the preceding chapter, and again in this verse, as an event which had already taken place. A detailed account of the time, place, and other circumstances, is supplied by Luke (2:1–20). The connective particle (δὲ) makes this as a direct continuation of the narrative in ch. 1. 'He knew her not until she had brought forth her first-born son, and when he was brought forth,' &c. Jesus having been produced, i. e. conceived and born, both which ideas are included in the meaning of the Greek verb, and its corresponding noun (see above, on 1:2, 18). Bethlehem (the house of bread), an ancient town belonging to the tribe of Judah, and as such distinguished from another of the same name in the tribe of Zebulon (Josh. 19:15). It is still in existence, about six miles south or south-west of Jerusalem. Though not a town of large size or political importance, it was early famous as the residence of Jesse and the birth-place of David. (1 Sam. 16:1, 17:58. Luke 1:11. John 7:42.) Herod, commonly surnamed the Great, was the son of Antipater, an Idumean and the confidential counsellor of the last of the Maccabees or Hasmonean princes, who reigned in Judea from the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (B.C. 175) to the Roman conquest (B.C. 53). Herod, at a very early age, was governor of Galilee, but having taken refuge from his enemies at Rome, there enjoyed the favour of Mark Anthony and Octavian (afterwards Augustus) and by order of the Senate was crowned king of the Jews at the Capitol. With the aid of the Roman General Sosius, he obtained possession of his kingdom and reigned thirty-seven years, with great talent and success as a secular ruler, but with great severity and jealousy towards all competitors and rivals, not excepting his own children and the Hasmonean family with which he intermarried. Hence he is chargeable with acts of extreme cruelty, including the murder of his wife and three sons. His ruling passion was the love of architectural embellishment, which he indulged by rebuilding and beautifying many towns in Palestine and elsewhere, but especially by the renovation of the temple (see below, on 24:1, and compare John 2:20). The days is an indefinite expression applicable to his whole life or his long reign, but here applied to its conclusion. What is here recorded must, however, have occurred at least forty days before his death, as we know from Josephus that his last forty days were spent, not at Jerusalem, but at Jericho and the baths of Callirhoe. Behold, as usual, implies that their coming was unlooked for and surprising (see above, on 1:23). Came is in Greek a verb without exact equivalent in English, strictly meaning became near (or present), but of course implying previous arrival. Wise men is Tyndale's vague translation of Magi or Magians, a word used by Herodotus to signify the learned tribe or caste among the ancient Medians or Persians, whose cultivation of astrology and other occult sciences gave rise to the derivative terms magic, magical, magician. A trace of this usage may be found in the phrase Rab-mag (chief magician) as the title of an officer or courtier at the camp of Babylon (Jer. 39:3), perhaps the same place which was occupied by Daniel (2:48). The word is here used without any implication of unlawful or disreputable practices. Wiclif translates it astromyens (astronomers), and the Rhemish version sages. That the providential representatives of

heathendom were chosen from this class, may imply the existence of some old tradition, perhaps connected with the record or the memory of astronomical phenomena. (See below, upon the next verse.) The word translated east means originally rise or rising, and is elsewhere coupled with the sun (as in Rev. 7:2, 16:12), but here denotes that quarter of the heavens or the earth. The form is plural, as in 8:11, 24:27 below, where the term is also used in a vague but local sense. It cannot therefore be determined from the word itself whether these Magi came from Persia, Arabia, Babylonia, or some still remoter country. An old ecclesiastical tradition makes them three in number (from the three gifts mentioned in v. 11) and the representatives of as many countries. Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, are the names attached to them by this tradition, which also makes them kings of their respective countries. Hence “The Three Kings,” is among the most familiar popular traditions of the old world, even on the signs of shops and taverns. From the east is construed by the best interpreters, not with the verb but with the noun, wise men from the east, i. e. originating or belonging there. Jerusalem (here Hierosolyma), anciently called Salem (Gen. 14:18. Ps. 76:2. and Jebus (Judg. 19:10, 11), in an elevated situation nearly midway between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, conquered by David from the Jebusites (2 Sam. 5:6–9), and thenceforth the political capital of Israel and seat of the theocracy. Having been destroyed at the Babylonian conquest (2 Kings 25:8–10), it was rebuilt at the Restoration (Neh. 2:5, 3:1–32), and retained its metropolitan pre-eminence under Herod and the Romans. To this well-known centre the wise men from the cast would of course resort in the first instance.

2. This verse assigns the reason of their visit, as given by themselves (saying). They assume the fact of his nativity as certain, and the time as known already (see below, on v. 7), and merely inquire for the place, as something not revealed or ascertainable from astronomical phenomena. The (one) born, already, as the past participle (τεχθεὶς from the verb used in 1:25), denotes. The Geneva Bible follows the Peshito in construing the words thus, that king of (the) Jews that is born. But the common version (which is Tyndale’s) agrees better with the form of the original. King of the Jews, the title applied to the Messiah in the New Testament by Gentiles (see below, 27:29, 37, and compare John 18:33), while the Jews themselves called him King of Israel (see below, 27:42, and compare John 1:50, 12:13.) After the downfall of the kingdom of the ten tribes, and particularly after the return from exile, the whole nation being merged in Judah, the name Jew became a general one, especially with foreigners, and is applied in the New Testament, not only to the people of Judea in the strict sense, but to those of Galilee, in reference both to their religion and their national descent (as in Luke 7:3. John 2:6. Acts 10:28, and elsewhere). As the throne of David had been vacant now for ages, the inquiry of the wise men had respect not to the actual sovereign, who was not an Israelite at all, but to the hereditary rightful sovereign who had just been born. This meaning of the question will account for the effect which it produced according to the next verse. Have seen, or more exactly, saw, i. e. on a particular occasion and some time ago. Even if they came no further than from Babylonia, they may have been as long upon the road as Ezra and his colony, to wit, four months (see Ezr. 7:9); but this is quite uncertain and was not intended to be made known by this narrative. His star, i. e. one relating or belonging to him, either by a special revelation, or according the principles of their astronomy, which partook no doubt of what we call astrology, i. e. prognostication of the future from the relative positions of the heavenly bodies. Their conclusions may however have been drawn from real astronomical phenomena, interpreted according to some old tradition, perhaps, that of Balaam (Num. 24:17), or Daniel’s prediction of the seventy weeks (Dan. 9:24), both of which were probably preserved in the east, or at least in Babylonia. Star is in Greek a word applied to any luminary in the heavens, whether fixed star, planet, comet or meteor, all which have been supposed by different interpreters to be intended here. More than one eminent astronomer has understood it as referring to a remarkable conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn in the sign of Pisces, which is said to have occurred three times in the year 747 after the building of Rome. The first of these conjunctions may have been observed in Babylonia and the last in Judea (see below, on v. 9). The star may then denote the conjunction itself, which is not inconsistent with the vague use of the Greek word, or the appearance of a new star, in the strict sense by which the conjunction may have been accompanied, as it was (according to Kepler) in the year 1604. By a singular coincidence Abarbanel, a famous Jewish writer of the fifteenth century, without alluding to the cases just referred to, speaks of a similar conjunction in the same sign of the Zodiac as having preceded the birth of Moses, and as having been repeated in his own day, (A.D. 1463), from which he infers that the Messiah was about to appear. The concurrence is in this case so remarkable, and the explanation recommended by such high scientific authority, that it would probably have been universally adopted, but for the foregone conclusion, in the minds of many, that the birth of Christ took place in a different year. But that assumption is so doubtful, and the views of the best writers so discordant, that it can scarcely be allowed to decide the question now before us, but may rather be decided by it. This astronomical solution is, at all events, both from its scientific character and from the high authority on which it rests, more satisfactory than the assumption of a transient meteor, a comet, or a purely miraculous appearance, which would here be less impressive than a natural phenomenon, coincident with such a juncture in the moral world, and showing both to be under the same infinitely powerful and wise control. This hypothesis moreover agrees best with the traditional devotion of the wise men of the East (i. e. of Babylonia and the adjacent regions watered by the Tigris and Euphrates) to astronomy, which would naturally lead them to observe such unusual appearances and perhaps to compare them with others of the same kind, preserved by the tradition of their science, and connected with previous critical conjunctures in the history of Israel, from which they might, erroneously or otherwise, infer that what they now saw was a premonition of the advent of that great deliverer, for whom, according to two Roman historians, the whole East had long been looking.* This is a testimony too explicit and unqualified to be explained away, as some modern sceptics have attempted, as a mere misapprehension or transcription of a passage in Josephus, where he disingenuously represents the Messianic prophecies of Scripture as pointing to Vespasian, who was proclaimed

Emperor, on the death of Vitellius, by the army under his command in Palestine. What is most important, after all, however, is to distinguish even the most plausible conjectures from the simple statement of the wise men in the text, that they had seen what they regarded as his star, i. e. a heavenly phenomenon relating to him. In the east may be construed either with the subject or the object of the verb, we (while still) in the east saw his star, or, we saw his star (appearing) in the east, an ambiguity of syntax which leaves it doubtful in what part of the heavens they beheld it. Some interpreters evade the solution of this question by giving the Greek noun (νατολή) its primary sense of rise or rising (see above, on v. 1), which it has in one place (Luke 1:78), though translated dayspring. The principal objection to this explanation is the want of any reason for referring to the rise any more than to the culmination of the star. Are come, or more exactly, came, that is, just now, or lately, which is substantially the meaning of the common version. Worship, a Greek verb which originally means to kiss the hand, the garments, or the ground before one, as an oriental method of expressing the profoundest reverence, and therefore specially applied to the act of doing homage to a Sovereign, which in ancient times, and in the east especially, was seldom free from some idolatrous ascription of divine honours even to a human being. There is therefore the less reason for explaining the word here of purely civil reverence or homage, to perform which could not well be the sole object of these Magi in their journey from the east, which would have been wholly out of place upon the part of Herod (see below, on v. 8). The meaning, therefore, must be that they came to do reverence and homage to a new-born child, as the Messiah, the long-expected king of the Jews, the benefits of whose reign were to extend to other nations also.

3. The effect of this unexpected visit and inquiry was such as might have been expected. And hearing (it, or this, or these things), Herod the king, de facto, as distinguished from the king de jure, who had just been born. Troubled, disturbed, agitated, with jealous fear of a competitor, which is known to have been one of Herod's weaknesses, and one which seems to have continued with him till his death, as such infirmities often do, even when rendered most irrational by age or other circumstances. All Jerusalem, a natural and common figure for its whole population, which occurs again in 3:5 below. With him may mean in sympathy with him, but more probably denotes mere coincidence of time and place. The causes of the agitation cannot have been perfectly identical. While Herod trembled for his throne, the people would naturally dread his violence, or the troubles incident to any revolution, or, as some suppose, the evils which were expected to precede the reign of the Messiah and were proverbially called his sorrows.

4. That Herod understood their question as relating to the birth of the Messiah, now appears from the mode in which he answered it, not by a mere declaration of his own, but by appealing to the highest authority in all such matters. Chief priests the plural of the word elsewhere rendered High Priest (see below 26:3, 51, 57, 58, 62, 63, 65), and denoting in the singular the hereditary head of the family of Aaron and of the sacerdotal tribe of Levi. Although this office could be held by only one person at a time according to the law of Moses, the Romans had usurped the power of appointing and displacing the High Priest at pleasure, so that there were often several who had enjoyed the dignity. These some suppose to be the chief priests mentioned in the Gospels. Others understand the term to designate the heads of the twenty-four courses into which the priesthood was divided by David (1 Chr. 24:3–18), or the natural heads of the families descended from Aaron; or such priests as were members of the Sanhedrim, either by elective or hereditary right, equal perhaps in number to the Scribes and Elders, who had seats in the same body, i. e. twenty-four of each class, making seventy-two in all, a number borrowed from the seventy elders who assisted Moses in the wilderness (Numb. 11:16, 24), and of whom this body may have claimed to be successors, though it probably originated in the exile. The scribes were the successors of Ezra, as conservators of the Old Testament canon, and as this office required a critical acquaintance with the text of scripture, the same persons would of course be its professional expounders. The name may have primarily signified their office as transcribers of the law, or it may be derived directly from the word meaning Scriptures, and denote a scripturist, or one employed about the sacred volume. Scribes of the people does not mean private unofficial scribes, but, on the contrary, national or public scribes, those who held the office, not for private advantage but for the general benefit and service. All the chief priests and scribes cannot, of course, be strictly understood, since they were scattered through the country, but must either mean all who were accessible, all then present in Jerusalem, or all who were members of the Sanhedrim. Most interpreters prefer the latter supposition, and regard this as a formal meeting of the Sanhedrim itself. The third class which composed it is not mentioned; but it is a common usage to describe the Sanhedrim by naming two of its component orders.* Or the scribes and priests may be particularly mentioned as the proper arbiters of such a question. Christ, the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed (see above, on 1:1). Should be born, or more exactly, is born as an abstract proposition, without reference to time, so as to leave it undetermined whether the event had actually taken place or was still future. (For a similar use of the indefinite present, see 1 Cor. 15:35. John 7:42.)

5. This is the reply of the chief priests and the scribes to Herod's question, returned no doubt by the whole body through their official representatives, and not promiscuously by the individual members. The answer seems to have been given without any hesitation, as a matter perfectly well understood and settled by divine authority. By or through (as in 1:22) the prophet, too well known to Herod and the other Jewish hearers to require specification. (See Micah 5:1, 2, where the passage is still extant.) For assigns the reason of their prompt decided answer, and imparts to it a meaning or an emphasis equivalent to that expressed by our phrase "of course." Thus may either mean as follows, or more probably, as just said, referring to the immediately foregoing designation of the place of the Messiah's birth. As if they had said: where should he be born except at Bethlehem, the place expressly fixed by God himself speaking through his inspired prophet. It is written, more exactly, has been written, the perfect tense suggesting the additional idea of its having been not only uttered long ago, but ever since on record and awaiting its fulfilment.

6. The retention of the particle at the beginning shows that this was meant to be a formal quotation, not a mere allusion or a paraphrase. Thou, or as for thee, in reference to what immediately precedes, not here, but in the original connection (Mic. 5:1). Instead of Ephrath (or Ephrata). an old name of Bethlehem (Gen. 48:7), which distinguished it from Bethlehem in Zebulon (Josh. 19:15), the evangelist or the scribes themselves distinguished it still more expressly by the phrase land (of) Judah. Some suppose land to be here used for town or city, as it sometimes is in the Septuagint version. Others take it in a wider although still restricted sense, as including both the town and the surrounding district. (See below, on v. 16.) But the simplest explanation is that which makes it an elliptical expression meaning (in) the land of Judah, just as we add the name of the state to that of the town (e. g. Princeton, New Jersey). Not the least, or more emphatically, not at all (or not by any means) the least. This peculiar form of speech suggests a sort of contrast or antithesis, as if it had been said, 'thou art not the least after all,' or, 'as thou wast of old described,' implying that both accounts were just, and that while it was the least in one sense, it was not the least, or (by a natural litotes or meiosis) was the greatest in another. This furnishes a key to the apparent disagreement between Micah and Matthew, and removes the necessity of charging the supposed inaccuracy on the Sanhedrim, whose words the evangelist reports without correction. Besides the extreme improbability of such an error or perversion, on the part of such a body, on so public and important an occasion, its retention would be utterly at variance with the plan of this evangelist, whose gospel is constructed on the very principle of choosing such events as proved or exemplified the fulfilment of prophecy, a design which could not have been promoted by the record of a false citation. The variation was no doubt intentional and meant to be a sort of gloss or comment on the obscure language of the prophet little to be among (i. e. too little to be named or reckoned among) the thousands of Judah, i. e. the divisions of the tribe (as in Judges 6:15, 1 Sam. 10:19). It is, to say the least a singular coincidence, that Bethlehem is not named among the cities of Judah in the Hebrew text of Josh. 15:59, although inserted with ten others by the Greek translators, who to make the text and context uniform, subjoin the summary "eleven cities with their villages." This is now regarded, by the highest critical authorities, as one of many instances in which these old translators sought to rectify the errors and supply the omissions of the Hebrew text, as they considered them. To say nothing of the other ten, the absence of Bethlehem from the official list is in striking agreement with its external insignificance as testified by all tradition, and explicitly asserted by the prophet in the passage quoted. The greatness here set off against it is entirely moral, and arises from the fact that Messiah was to be a native of this otherwise obscure and unimportant place. It is not to be overlooked, however, that this contrast had already been partially presented in the type, though it could only be completed in the antitype. David, the first and greatest of the theocratic sovereigns, and the most honoured representative of the Messiah as a king before he actually came, was born and spent his early life at Bethlehem. That the two things were connected, not only in the divine purpose, but in the popular belief and expectation, may be gathered from John 7:42, compared with Luke 2:4, 11, and with the original history in the sixteenth chapter of First Samuel. Princes, leaders, governors (10:18, 27:2, 11, 14, 15, 23, 27, 28:14), are put for the original term thousands (Sept. χιλίασιν), by a sort of personification in which the heads of families represent the families themselves and the places of their residence. There is no need therefore of explaining the Greek word (γέμοσιν) as an adjective agreeing with a noun understood and meaning chief (towns or cities), which is moreover not sustained by usage. Still less admissible is a change in the Hebrew text, or rather in its pointing, so as to read chiefs (אַלְפֵי) instead of thousands (אַלְפֵי). This is not only needless and gratuitous, but inconsistent with the usage of the former word (אַלוּף), which does not mean a chief in general, but a duke of Edom, the distinctive term happily employed in the English version of Gen. 36:15–43, 1 Chr. 1:51–54, the only place where the word occurs, except a few times in the later prophets (Jer. 13:21, Zech. 9:7, 12:5, 6.) when the primitive usage may have been corrupted, or perhaps alluded to by way of contrast (e. g. in Zech. 9:7, 'like an Edomitish chief in Judah'). For introduces or assigns the reason why the same place could be least and not least among the thousands of Judah. Out of thee shall come may have the strict sense of local derivation and progression, or the figurative one of birth and genealogical extraction, which is a common one in Hebrew. (See Gen. 17:6, 46:26, Isai. 39:7, and compare Heb. 7:5.) That the relation thus described is not immediate but remote, i. e. not birth at Bethlehem but mere descent from ancestors who lived there, is a figment invented by the later Jews to justify their application of the passage to Zerubbabel, who was no doubt born in Babylonia. (See Ezra 2:1, 2.) The obvious meaning of the word is that Bethlehem itself, considered as a place, was to be magnified by giving birth to an illustrious personage, who is then described in the remainder of the sentence. A governor, chief, leader, not the word translated princes in the first clause, but of kindred origin, the essential idea being in both cases that of leading, taking the lead, acting as a leader. As the other is a noun (γεμών) answering to leader, so this is properly a participle (γούμενος) and denotes a leading (man or person), although variously rendered elsewhere.* One of the oldest versions (the Peshito) uses king for both words. The general description is then specified by indicating where and among whom he was to be a leader. Rule is in the margin of the English Bible feed, neither of which conveys the full force of the Greek verb (ποιμανε), derived from a noun (ποιμήν) meaning shepherd, and itself denoting the whole office of a shepherd, which includes not only feeding but protection and control. Both in the literal and figurative usage of the term, the first of these ideas sometimes predominates (as in John 21:16, Jude 12, Rev. 7:17), sometimes the other (as in Rev. 2:27, 12:5, 19:15), sometimes both are meant to be included (as in Luke 17:17, Acts 20:28, 1 Cor. 9:7, 1 Pet. 5:2). The figurative representation of civil rulers, and especially of kings, as shepherds, is natural and common in the classics, as appears from the favourite Homeric phrase, "shepherds of the people," from Xenophon's explicit affirmation of the likeness, and from the saying of Tiberius preserved by Suetonius, and worthy of a better origin, that the part of a good shepherd is to feed his flock, not to devour it. The same application of the term occurs in Scripture, even where the English reader may suppose a reference to spiritual functions only, as the pastors

and shepherds, so often spoken of by Jeremiah and other prophets,† are not religious ministers, at least not exclusively, but also civil rulers. This last clause, who shall rule (or feed) my people Israel, is not formally contained in the original, though really involved in the first words of Micah 5:4 (he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God). These words imply that the ruler, who was to come forth from Bethlehem, was not to be a secular chief merely, but to wield a sacred and divine authority, which, with the words in Israel (Mic. 5:2), correspond in substance to the last clause of the verse before us, notwithstanding the omission of the words to (or for) me, i. e. for my service and by my authority, which are sufficiently implied in the expression who shall rule my people Israel, i. e. the old theocracy or Jewish Church. As the question put by Herod to the Sanhedrim had reference only to the place of the Messiah's birth, they quote only what relates to this point and the identification of his person, omitting what is said of his eternal generation (in the last clause of Micah 5:2) and the allusion to his mother (in the next verse), although both these are most interesting and important features of the passage as a Messianic prophecy, and both would naturally be suggested to a Jewish hearer by the formal quotation even of a part.

7. The prompt and authoritative answer of the Sanhedrim to Herod's question (in v. 4) would naturally lead him to inquire whether this prediction had been really fulfilled, or whether there was any recent birth at Bethlehem, on the ground of which the fact of such fulfilment could be plausibly asserted. In order to determine this important point, he seeks to know on what grounds these astronomers believed the event, so long expected both by Jews and Gentiles (see above, on v. 2), to have taken place. They had already given as a reason for their coming the appearance of a star, which they connected, in their science or their superstition, with the birth of a great personage among the Jews, to whom though Gentiles, they had come to render civil homage, if not religious worship. Then, i. e. after the response recorded in v. 6, and no doubt immediately, the Greek word (τότε), which is one of Matthew's favorite expressions, sometimes denoting even simultaneous actions or occurrences (see below, on v. 16). Privily, privately, or rather secretly, a word sometimes applied to any thing insensible or imperceptible, but commonly denoting, in the best Greek usage, fraudulent or treacherous concealment. Calling or having called, does not necessarily denote a peremptory summons, but in this connection rather a courteous invitation to a private conference, the secrecy relating to all but the Magians themselves, who might consider themselves honoured by this private audience. The motive for concealment may have been a wish to avoid further popular excitement before he had discovered all the facts; or it may no less naturally be referred to that instinctive fondness for concealment, which belongs to men of jealous and suspicious temper, or of treacherous intentions, even where there is no rational occasion or necessity for secret measures. We have then a striking instance of verisimilitude, which could not have occurred to a fictitious writer, for the very reason that the act was the result, not of reasoning or calculation, but of a spontaneous impulse. Inquired diligently, not the phrase so rendered in v. 16, but a single Greek word (κρίβωσε), meaning to render accurate, or do exactly, and applied in usage to arrangement, information inquiry, and many other acts of which exactness, accuracy, or precision may be predicated. The idea of diligence, or industry, derived by all the English versions from the Vulgate (diligenter didicit), is entirely foreign from the meaning of the Greek word and its cognate forms both here and elsewhere.* Of them, from them, as the only source of information upon this point. The literal translation of the last clause is, the time of the appearing star. As the word translated time is one applied to periods rather than to fixed points (compare Acts 1:7), the question may have been not when the star was seen first, but how long it had been seen since, which implies that it had remained visible (but see below, on v. 9). Appeared, or retaining the original form, appearing, is a Greek participle now adopted as an English noun, phenomenon, appearance, or rather something that appears. The idea of rarity or strangeness forms no part of the essential meaning. Herod's motive for making this inquiry was not to consult his own astrologers, as some suppose, in reference to the birth of which he had just heard, but rather to arrange the murderous design by which he hoped to render it innocuous.

8. The construction is the participial one so common in this context, and so constantly resolved by our translators into the past tense, sending them to Bethlehem, he said.* So too in the next clause, going, or having gone, or journeyed, as the Greek verb commonly denotes not mere motion but departure to a distance. The participle is not pleonastic, nor conditional (if ye should go), but a substantive part of the command or exhortation, pointing out a necessary means to the proposed end of exact investigation. This is of no importance here, but may throw light upon another instance of the same construction (see below, on 28:19). Diligently, thoroughly, exactly, an adverb corresponding to the verb in the preceding verse. Search, a verb which originally means to verify or ascertain as true (τάζω from τεός), here used in a compounded form (ξετάσατε) suggesting the additional idea of searching out, extracting or eliciting the truth in difficult and doubtful cases. The same verb is applied to persons in the sense of close or strict examination (see below, on 10:11, and compare John 21:12), and is used in the Septuagint version of Deut. 19:18 with the same adverb as in this case (κριβ ς). Search for, though essentially correct, is not the precise sense of the Greek phrase, which means rather to examine (or inquire of) others with respect to the child (περ το παιδίου), i. e. not only to discover his person, or find where he was, but also to learn all about him. Young child is in Greek a single word (παιδίον), explained by some to mean a suckling, as distinguished from a new-born babe (βρέφος), and a boy or lad (παίς); but that such terms are to some extent convertible, is clear from Luke 18:15–17, where two of them are actually interchanged. When is not as in the preceding clauses, introduced by the translators, but a literal translation of the Greek (π ν δέ), which sometimes indicates a slight antithesis (see Luke 11:22, 34), but here suggests only a contingency, like our whenever, i. e. whether sooner or later. Found, as the result of the search just commanded, and perhaps implying doubt as to the issue. Bring (me) word again, in Greek a single but compounded verb, meaning

sometimes simply to announce (as in 8:33, 12:18, 14:12, 28:8, 10, 11), but sometimes more specifically, to report or carry back news (as in 11:4. Luke 14:21. Acts 5:22, 12:25), which additional idea may however be suggested by the context, as in this case, where the word again is not in the original, but Herod must of course be understood as bidding them to come back or return, in order to communicate the fruit of their inquiries. I and also, separated in the version, stand together in the Greek, or rather form a single word (κ γω) and might be translated I too, i. e. as well as you and others. Whether worship be here taken in its civil or religious sense (see above, on v. 2), it cannot be supposed that Herod really intended either to adore the child or do him homage, but his words must be either hypocritical, intended to conceal his murderous intentions, or ironical, expressive of his scorn and spite towards his infant rival. Here again, we are not to assume too much of a rational and settled purpose, but must make allowance for unreasoning suggestions of strong passion or inveterate affection. (See above, on v. 7.) Come and worship is another resolution of the Greek participial construction, which appears to have been foreign from the English idiom in the days of King James, or at least of Tyndale, from whom all these unnecessary changes have been borrowed. Even the most fastidious ear and taste would probably take no offence now at the literal translation, so that I too coming may adore him.

9. But they, on their part (ο δὲ), having heard the king, waiting of course till he had ended his instructions, as recorded in the verse preceding. Departed, set out on their journey, or resumed it, from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Lo, behold, introduces something new and unexpected, like our own phrase, “strange to say,” &c. The star, luminary, heavenly phenomenon, whatever it may have been (see above, on v. 2). Saw may be either the imperfect tense implying a repeated or continued vision, or the aorist, denoting that they saw it at a certain time, or on one particular occasion. Went before them, a Greek verb which originally means to lead forth or bring forward (as in Acts 12:6, 16:30, 25:26), but in common usage, to lead the way, precede, or go before, whether the object be implied (as in 21:9. Mark 6:45. 1 Tim. 5:24. Heb. 7:18), or expressed (as in 14:22, 21:31. Mark 10:32, and here). It does not necessarily denote in this place, that a luminous appearance moved in front of them until they reached the house. It may mean merely that the star was visible before them as they went towards Bethlehem. So too the statement, that it stood over where, or above (the place in) which, the child was, is a natural expression of the fact that as they journeyed towards it, the star was visible in that part of the heavens. This explanation is entirely consistent with the use of the word came (or coming), which at most can only denote change of place or relative position, since they last observed it. It is not said, nor intended, that the star pointed out the house, which is not even mentioned, and which was no doubt ascertained, as in all such cases, by inquiry. Josephus in like manner speaks of a star as standing over the city of Jerusalem before its downfall. The miraculous, in either case, is represented as belonging to the star itself, and not to its position over the place indicated. The oldest manuscripts and latest editors have a passive form (στάθη) which strictly means, was placed (or stationed), but is equivalent in usage to the common reading (στη) stood.

10. And (or but, omitted in the version) seeing (or having seen, resolved, as usual, into when they saw) the star, implying, it should seem, that they had not beheld it during their long journey. Or the reference may be to its new position as described in the preceding verse. Seeing the star (in this apparent station), they rejoiced a great joy—very (or exceedingly). This collocation of the words gives great force to the intensive adverb which stands last in Greek. The combination of the cognate verb and noun (rejoiced a joy) is not a peculiar Hebrew idiom, as sometimes represented, but is found occasionally in the classical and modern writers. It is slightly different in form from the construction with the dative (see John 3:29. 1 Thess. 3:9), though translated in the same way. (Compare 1 Kings 1:40, and the marginal translation of Jonah 4:6.) The common version coincides with the Rhemish. Wiclif has, full great joy; Tyndale, marvellously glad; Cranmer, exceeding glad; and the Geneva Bible, exceeding great gladness. This extreme joy was most natural, not only in relation to the object of their search, but to the truth of their calculations and conclusions, in which they would naturally feel an intellectual and scientific pride.

11. Coming (or having come) into the house, where the holy family was then residing. This does not necessarily imply their permanent abode at Bethlehem, as the house might be merely one in which they had temporary lodgings (see below, on v. 23). Saw, or according to some ancient copies, found, with apparent reference to the words of Herod in v. 8. The (young) child with Mary his mother, not the Madonna and her child, as in the Romish Mariolaty, and the artistical tradition founded on it. The same incidental mention and subordinate position of the Virgin may be noted in vs. 13, 14, 20, 21. Falling (down) worshipped him, the same verb that is used to express civil homage in the Septuagint version of Gen. 42:6, 43:25, and both combined in that of 2 Sam. 1:2, unless we assume that all such homage in the ancient east included a religious or idolatrous devotion, like that paid to the emperors of Rome and China. At all events, the homage here described implied that they who paid it recognized the child as something more than “king of the Jews.” Opening (or having) opened their treasures, which may either mean their costly wares or their vessels which contained them, as the Greek word, from which ours is derived, is applied not only to the contents (as in 6:19–21, 13:44, 19:21, 2 Cor. 4:7), but also to the receptacle, whether fixed or portable. (See 12:25, 13:52, and compare the wooden treasure (θησαυρον ξύλινον) of Josephus. It is an old but fanciful opinion, that these three gifts were presented to the infant Jesus in as many different characters, gold as a king, incense as a God, and myrrh as a sufferer. Another notion of the same kind, is that the three gifts were presented by as many magi, who were therefore three in number, representing three countries of which these were the products, while a further combination with the prophesy in Ps. 72:10. Isai. 60:6, led to the conclusion that the three were kings of their respective countries. Hence arose the legend of the Three Kings, one of the most fixed and familiar in the popular traditions of the old world, though without foundation in the narrative before us, which is silent both as to the rank and number of the magi, and

describes the gifts as a collective or promiscuous offering from all together. The gifts themselves were valuable products of the east, but not confined to single countries, and are here combined, like those in Gen. 43:11, as a suitable present to a recognised superior, before whom, according to an ancient oriental usage, mentioned by Seneca and other classics, the inferior must not appear empty-handed. (Compare 1 Sam. 9:7, 8.) Incense, in its widest sense, is any sacrificial burning, but is specially applied to aromatic fumigation, as an act of worship. The Greek word here denotes one of the substances so used, an odoriferous transparent gum distilling from a tree in Arabia. In the classics this word (λίβανος) means the tree and a derivative form (λιβανωτός) the gum; but in the Greek of the New Testament, the latter means a censer (Rev. 8:3), and the former is applied to the gum itself (Rev. 18:13). Myrrh in Greek Smyrna, which appears elsewhere as the name of a city in Asia Minor (Rev. 1:11, 2:8). As an appellative it also signifies an aromatic gum, exuding from a thorn-bush in Arabia, extremely bitter, and employed by the ancients both as a spice and a perfume. (See Mark 15:23, John 19:39, and compare the Septuagint version of Ps. 45:9, Song Sol. 3:6, 5:5.)

12. Here the Greek participial construction is retained. Showing that it was avoided in the previous context only as a matter of taste, and not because it would have been a violation of the English idiom (see above, on v. 8). Being warned of God, in Greek a single word, originally meaning to deal or transact business, more particularly that of a pecuniary nature (χρηματίζω from χρήματα); then to negotiate, or confer on state affairs; and then to give an answer after such negotiation, in which sense it is used by Demosthenes and Xenophon. By a further elevation and extension of the meaning, it is applied to the responses of the oracles, and in the Scriptures to Divine communications, especially those made to individuals. The sense of warning is required by the context here as it is in Heb. 8:5, 11:7, 12:25, but probably without the implication of a previous prayer or consultation as in Acts 10:25, and in the Vulgate here (responso accepto). For a still further deviation from the primary sense, see Acts 11:26 and Rom. 7:3. By dream (κατ' ναρ), as in 1:20.* Not to turn back, or retrace their steps, an absolute or reflexive use of the verb also found in Plato, and in Heb. 11:15, Acts 18:21, where it is construed with the same proposition. They departed, not the verb so rendered in v. 9 (and go in v. 8), but one suggesting the additional idea of withdrawal or retreat, being the verbal root or theme of anchorite. Besides the verse given here (and in 4:12, 14:13, 15:21, 27:5. John 6:15), it is variously rendered, give place (i. e. make room, 9:24), turned aside (v. 22 below), withdrew himself (12:15), went aside (Acts 23:19, 26:31). It here implies not the mere act of departure or removal, but escape from danger as the motive. By (or through, omitted in the version) another way, different from that by which they came; perhaps a more direct one since they visited Jerusalem, not because it lay in the way, but because it was the capital, at which they would of course expect to find the new-born king, or at least to obtain news of him. Into their own place (χώραν, a kindred form to the preceding verb), land, territory, region, country, 4:16, 8:28. Luke 21:21, John 4:35), not that subject or belonging to them, as its sovereigns (see above, on v. 11), but simply that of their nativity or residence. Whether this was Persia, Babylonia, or Arabia is not revealed and cannot be determined by conjecture. (See above, on v. 1.)

13. Another participial construction, but resolved as usual into the past tense with when. They having retreated (or withdrawn), the same verb that was used in the preceding verse and there explained. The next clause is repeated from 1:20, but with the substitution of the narrative or graphic present (appeareth) for the past tense (appeared). This mode of revelation or divine communication seems to be the lowest mentioned in the sacred history, being confined in that before us to the Magi. Joseph, and the wife of Pilate (see below, on 27:19, and compare 20:13, 21:24). In the Old Testament it seems at times to characterize the revelations of false prophets as distinguished from the true (as in Deut. 13:1, Jer. 23:25, 27:9, 29:8, Zech. 10:2), once those of lower prophets as compared with Moses (Numb. 12:6). We find it also in the case of Solomon (1 Kings 3:5) and Daniel (7:1), who, although inspired men, were not official prophets. The verb translated arise originally means to raise or lift up (as in 12:11), then to rouse from sleep (as in 8:25), and by a natural figure from the sleep of death (10:8, 11:5). The strict sense of the passive form here used is, being roused, awakened, i. e. not when you awake as usual in the morning, but at once, immediately, without delay. Take (to thyself, or with thee, in thy company), the verb translated take unto thee in 1:20, and took unto him in 1:24. The (young) child and his mother, nearly though not precisely the same phrase with that in v. 11. Flee, a stronger term than that in the first clause of the preceding verse, and one expressing still more fully the necessity of haste and the existence of danger. Egypt, the nearest point of which was probably not more than sixty miles from Bethlehem. That country, although subject to the Romans, was beyond the reach of Herod, and was extensively inhabited by Jews, whose fathers had been settled there by one of the first Ptolemies or Greek kings of Egypt. It was here that the religion and philosophy of Greeks and Jews were first brought into contact, the Old Testament translated into Greek, and the Platonising Judaism of Philo and his school invented. So numerous were these Egyptian Jews, that a temple was erected for them under the priesthood of Onias (B.C. 150), which detracted in some measure from the exclusive claims of the legitimate sanctuary at Jerusalem. Near the site of this Egyptian temple, at a place called Metacea, an old tradition fixed the place of our Lord's temporary residence. Besides the reasons just suggested for selecting Egypt as the place of his retreat, there was another of more moment, which is afterwards expressly mentioned (see below, on v. 15). Be thou (continue or remain) there till I tell thee (otherwise or further), or till I say to thee (what thou shalt do). This is the literal translation of the words corresponding to Tyndale's paraphrase, until I bring thee word. Will seek, or is about to seek, the first verb (μέλλει) having no equivalent in English, and denoting mere futurity, but with more distinctness than the future tense. Seek has here its proper sense of search or look for, with a view to the discovery of his home or hiding-place. To destroy, or (for the purpose) of destroying, an idiom sometimes represented as a Hebraism, but found also in the best Greek writers. Him, literally, it, the word translated young child being of the

neuter gender.

14. This verse simply states the execution of the order in the one before it, which was even more prompt than the English version seems to represent it. When he arose might seem to mean that he waited till his ordinary time of rising; whereas the literal translation is, being aroused, or having risen, i. e. instantly, without delay. This idea is moreover, suggested by the phrase at night, or in (the) night, which would be unmeaning if he waited till the morning. Departed is the verb already twice used in relation to the retreat of the wise men, and denoting something less than flight, but something more than mere departure. (See above, on vs. 12, 13.)

15. This verse describes Joseph as passively no less than actively obedient to the words of the angel. He not only went into Egypt, but remained there (was there), a correlative expression to the one in v. 21 (be there). Till the death, literally end, i. e. end of life, a term occurring only here in the Now Testament, but used in the Septuagint version (Gen. 27:2) and the best Greek writers as an euphemism for death. That of Herod took place in the spring of 750 U.C., the year being fixed by an eclipse of the moon about the same time, which, ac-according to the highest astronomical authorities, could not have occurred in any other year within a reasonable compass. The physical cause of Herod's death, according to Josephus, was a loathsome and most painful malady. That it might be fulfilled, the same formula essentially with that in 1:22, but without the emphatic preface, all this happened. The words here quoted are still extant in Hos. 11:1, and more exactly rendered here than in the Septuagint version, which, instead of my son, reads his children. But the first person was correctly given in the other old Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. Between the extreme of making this a case of mere accommodation, and that of making the original passage an exclusive prophecy of Christ, the most satisfactory interpretation is the one which supposes an intended typical relation between the history of Israel and that of the Messiah, as the Body and the Head. This significant analogy, which may be readily traced in the later sufferings and temptations of both parties is also visible in the commencement of their several careers. As the national existence of Israel began with the exodus from Egypt, so the early life of the great antitype sets out from the same point of departure. The same thing would be true essentially if Bengel's exposition were the true one. From the land of Egypt (i. e. ever since he dwelt there) I have called (him) my son. Compare Exodus 4:22, 23, Hos. 12:9, 13:4.)

16. Having related the escape to Egypt and the residence there, Matthew now returns to Herod and describes the effect produced upon him by the failure of the Magi to return as he had ordered or requested (see above, on v. 8). It agrees remarkably with Herod's character, as known to us from other sources, that he is here described as acting not from politic nor even from malignant motives merely, but also from a sense of injured dignity and wounded pride. His cruelties indeed, atrocious as they were, appear to have been prompted not so much by natural blood-thirstiness as by a jealous and suspicious temper, especially in reference to rivalry or competition. In this respect a parallel might easily be drawn between his downward course from bad to worse and that of Saul in his jealous enmity of David, but with this advantage on the part of Saul, that he was jealous in behalf of his own children, whereas Herod, with a sort of insane selfishness, committed his worst cruelties upon his own sons, which gave rise to the famous witticism of Augustus, that he would rather be Herod's hog (in allusion to the Jewish abstinence from swine's flesh) than his son, a still more pointed sarcasm if, as some suppose, it was pronounced in Greek and with a play upon the likeness of the words denoting hog (ς) and son (ιός). By a singular anachronism, Macrobius, a Roman writer of the fourth century, confounds this saying and the act by which it was occasioned with the prominent massacre recorded in the verse before us, as if Herod's own son was among the children slain at this time, whereas he was put to death after he had reached maturity. Matthew's narrative is also in acordance with the general teaching of experience, that few important actions, whether good or bad, are prompted by a single unmixed motive. This accounts for the diversity with which historians explain the same facts, and for the mystery overhanging the whole subject of historical causes and effects, where the result depends on human agency. Seeing, perceiving, that is, inferring from the non-appearance of the Magi, on their homeward route from Bethlehem (see above, on v. 12). Mocked is in Greek a compound verb derived from a noun meaning child, and itself denoting childish sport or play, but also used by the classical writers in the secondary sense of fooling, duping, and by the Hellenists in that of scoffing or derisive insult, being thus applied to the cruel derision of our Lord before his crucifixion.* The idea here is not that of mere deception, i. e. breach of promise or disappointment of his expectation (Wiclif, deceived), but that of contemptuous slight or insult, as expressed in the common version, mocked of (i. e. by) the wise men. Even the Rhemish version (deluded) really includes the notion of derision, although lost in modern English usage. Exceeding wroth, in modern English, very angry, or more exactly, very (much) enraged, as the last word is in Greek a passive verb, derived from a noun meaning passion, and particularly that of anger.† The remainder of the verse describes the acts to which this fury prompted him. Sending forth, commissioning, the verb from which apostle is derived. It is here used absolutely or intransitively, as in 14:35, 27:19 below. There is no need, therefore, of supposing a grammatical ellipsis and supplying messengers or men of war (as Cranmer does). Slew, a Greek verb strictly meaning to take up or take away (as in Heb. 10:9), but commonly employed, like our despatch or make away with, as a sort of euphemism for the act of killing. Except in this place and the one just cited, it is used exclusively by Luke, occurring in his two books twenty times, and always in the secondary sense of slaying or destroying. The Rhemish version renders it too strongly, murdered, which, though true in fact, is not necessarily included in the import of the word itself. Children, i. e. male children (Geneva), men-children (Rheims), the sense being limited to one sex by the masculine adjective and article (πάντας το ς) and by the usage of the Greek noun (πα δας), which is the nearest equivalent to our word boy, and like it sometimes used both

for son and servant. (See below, on 8:6, 12:18, 14:2, 17:18.) Coasts, confined in modern English to the maritime borders of a country, but of old denoting boundaries in general, and in Scripture sometimes the territory hounded or enclosed between them.‡ It may here mean either the immediate outskirts (suburbs) or the district dependent upon Bethlehem as its chief town. In either case, the tract intended must have been a small one (see above, on v. 6). From two years old, in Greek an adjective (διετο ς) meaning biennial (or of two years), and agreeing with some noun understood, such as time (from the age of two years), or child (from the boy of two years), or used abstractly, as in the Vulgate version (a bimatu).§ And under, a comparative form of the adverb (κ τω), down (see below, on 4:6, 26:51), and here denoting lower down, not in reference to space but time, i. e. under or below the age just mentioned. Wiclif has within, i. e. within the limits just defined. Diligently inquired, in Greek a single word, the same that was employed above in v. 7 and there explained (Vulg. exquisierat). This does not imply that Jesus was just two years old at this time, but rather that he was not, as appears from the word under. In the former case, it would be hard to account for the long delay of the wise men either in beginning or in finishing their journey. The true sense is that two years was the maximum or highest age consistent with the statements of the Magi, while the real age was no doubt far below it. That the tyrant should allow himself margin in this devilish infanticide, and choose rather to destroy too many than too few, is in perfect keeping with his sanguinary habits, when influenced by jealousy or hatred. The silence of Josephus with respect to this slaughter of the innocents, as it is beautifully called in the traditions of the early church, has been made a ground of cavil by some modern sceptics. But the difficulty, if it be one, is not only purely negative as founded on the silence of a single writer, but susceptible of easy explanation from the obvious consideration, that the male children under two years, in so small a town as Bethlehem (see above, on v. 6), or even in the tract of which it was the centre, must have been very few, and that the interest imparted to the massacre by its connection with the infant Saviour would be wholly wanting to a Jewish writer, who could view it only as a small drop in the bloody stream of Herod's cruelties. On the other hand, the truth of the occurrence here related is confirmed by its analogy to one which Josephus does record among the last acts of this jealous tyrant, namely, his command that a number of the chief men, should be put to death as soon as he expired, in order that there might be mourning, or at least no rejoicing, at his own departure.* The motive of the massacre, as we have seen was partly politic and partly passionate. While this appeared to be the only way in which a feared and hated rival could be reached, it seemed at the same time to gratify the tyrant's proud and bestial resentment. This agreement between Matthew and Josephus, as to Herod's character, even in relating wholly different events, is the more remarkable because he appears here only for a moment as it were before his final disappearance from the field of action, thus affording a strong though incidental proof of authenticity.

17. This too was the fulfilment of a prophecy still extant in the Hebrew Scriptures (Jer. 31:15). The formula of reference is not so-strong as that in 1:22, nor even as that in v. 13 above. The expression here is not, that it might be fulfilled, but simply that it was fulfilled. Hence some infer that this is a case of mere accommodation or a new application of words originally uttered in relation to a subject altogether different. But the difference of form is not such as to warrant this distinction, since a mere accommodation is not more at variance with the statement of design or purpose (that it might be fulfilled) than it is with the positive assertion of the fact (then it was fulfilled). The question whether the fulfilment was a real or fictitious one must be determined, not by the prefatory formula, but by the meaning of the prophecy itself and by its correspondence with the facts which are said to have fulfilled it.

18. The original passage, by a fine poetical personification, represents the mother of Joseph and Benjamin (Gen. 30:24, 35:18) as mourning over the captivity of Israel at Ramah, where Nebuzaradan, the captain of the Babylonian guard, appears to have assembled the exiles, as a sort of rendezvous, before they actually left the country (Jer. 40:1). The name Ramah properly means high and is so understood here by Wiclif (on high) and Tyndale (on the hills). It is commonly agreed, however, that it here denotes a particular place, namely, Ramah in Benjamin near Judah, so called from its elevated site, five or six miles north of Jerusalem, between Gibeah and Bethel (Judges 19:13). It is now called Erram and is not to be confounded with another Ramah, the birth-place and residence of the prophet Samuel (1 Sam. 1:19, 2:11, 7:17). Rachel, though not the mother of Judah, was buried near Bethlehem (Gen. 35:16, 19), where her grave is still shown, and is therefore not inappropriately introduced in this place as renewing her old lamentation over this new calamity occurring near her resting-place. She may even be conceived of as rising from her tomb, disturbed in her long rest by this new and strange catastrophe. It is not however merely this poetical conception that is here embodied, but a real affinity between the cases. The point of resemblance may be that in either case the temporary suffering was the precursor of a joyful future. As the Babylonish exile was soon followed by the Restoration (see Jer. 31:16–40) so the massacre at Bethlehem was followed by the ministry of Christ and his salvation. The quotation varies somewhat from the Septuagint version. Rachel may be construed with a verb before or after (was heard or refused) but more naturally as an independent nominative. Lamentation, weeping, and mourning, may be either explained as synonyms, or as denoting articulate, inarticulate, and silent sorrow. The first of the three is omitted in several manuscripts and versions. Would not, was not willing, did not choose, refused. Are not, or as it is more fully expressed both in Greek and English, are no more, i. e. no longer living. The force of this description would be greatly heightened by the recollection of the circumstances which attended Rachel's own death (Gen. 35:16–20).

19. But (or and) Herod having ended (his life). This elliptical use of the verb, the only one which occurs in the New Testament (see below, 9:18, 15:4, 22:25), is also found in the best Greek writers from Herodotus to Xenophon (compare the cognate noun in v. 15 above). As this event, according to Josephus, took place about the Passover, and was preceded by an eclipse of the moon, astronomers are able, by these data, to define the year, viz., 750 after the building of Rome, and four years earlier than the vulgar

idea of the birth of Christ, which was introduced by Dionysius Exiguus more than five hundred years after the nativity itself. This error, which is now universally admitted, although its exact extent is still disputed, has had no effect, as Bossuet well observes, upon the mutual relation or the chronological succession of events, or the correctness of men's views respecting them. (See above, on v. 2.) Lo, behold, or strange to say (as in vs. 1:9, 13). In Egypt, where he had been ordered to remain till this time (see above, on v. 13), where the same form of expression is employed, except a slight change in the order of the words.

20. The first clause agrees exactly with the second of v. 13, till we come to the word flee, which is exchanged for go, or rather journey, set out (see above, on v. 9), because what is here described was not a flight but a return home. Land (of) Israel, without the article, precisely similar in this respect, though not in case or syntax, to land (of) Judah in v. 6 above. The phrase here signifies the whole country, two of the provinces or parts of which are there distinguished in the next verse. The general name is derived from the inhabitants, like the older designation land of Canaan, which however is commonly restricted to the country west of Jordan,* and is supposed by some to be a physical description of it as lowlands, and in contrast with the highlands of Libanus and Syria. Palestine is properly the Greek form of Philistia, denoting strictly the south-western portion,† but extended by the Romans, and in modern usage, to the entire land of Israel. Are dead, or more exactly, have died, i. e. since you came away, the perfect to be strictly understood as usual (see above, on 1:22). The plural form, those seeking (i. e. those who once or lately sought), has been variously explained as referring to Herod and his counsellors as agents, or to Herod and his son Antipater, who resembled him in cruelty, and had still more reason to be jealous of a rival, though eventually put to death five days before his father. Others regard it as a majestatic plural, often used by kings in speaking of themselves, but wholly inappropriate as applied to Herod by an angel. A more palpable hypothesis is that of a generic plural, sometimes used in reference to a single object.* Somewhat different from this is the indefinite plural, supposed to be exemplified in Luke 12:20, 16:9, and in Ex. 14:19, which appears to be alluded to, if not directly quoted, in the verse before us, and may therefore have determined its peculiar form. Upon any of these suppositions, the essential fact is still the death of Herod himself. Young child, in Greek a single word, but a diminutive in form, the same that is employed above in vs. 8:11, 13:14. Life, a word which properly denotes the vital principle or living substance, and is therefore sometimes used to distinguish the soul from the body (as in 10:28, and perhaps in Luke 12:20), but is here and elsewhere properly translated life.†

21. This is the simple execution of the order in the verse preceding, and exactly similar in form to v. 14 above, excepting that by night is here omitted, there being no necessity for hasty flight in this case, and that retired into Egypt is exchanged for came into (the) land (of) Israel, the same phrase that occurred just before (in v. 20) and was there explained. The indefinite form in both cases might be represented in English by the idiomatic combination, Israel-land.

22. But hearing, on the way, or after his arrival in the land of Israel. Archelaus, the eldest son of Herod the Great, by his Samaritan wife Matthace, to whom he bequeathed his crown and royal title, but Augustus only partially confirmed the will, confining his dominions to Judea, Idumea, and Samaria, and requiring him to bear the title ethnarch till he should prove himself worthy to be called a king. After reigning eight or nine years he was summoned to Rome to answer charges of oppression and cruelty, and afterwards banished to Vienne in Gaul. Did reign, literally, reigns, is reigning, the form of expression which would have been used by Joseph himself, or by those who told him of the fact. There is no need of taking the verb reign in a diluted sense, as it may here have reference to the time immediately succeeding Herod's death, before his will was broken and his successor's title changed, at which time, as we learn from Josephus, Archelaus was congratulated as already reigning (δη βασιλεύοντα). In (or rather over) Judea, the received text (πί) being retained by the latest critics, and having the same sense as in Rev. 5:10, where the construction is the same, and in Luke 1:33, 19:24, 27. In the room (Tyndale's version) is in Greek a preposition (ντί) often rendered for, but really denoting either substitution or retaliation.* Was afraid, a passive verb, was frightened, or alarmed, which is the original import also of the English word (affrayed), the noun derived from which and still in use (affray), though popularly used of any fight, denotes in law, according to Blackstone, only one which alarms the vicinage. The passive form could not be retained here in the version, because our idiom does not allow it to be construed with an infinitive. The explanation of the words as meaning that he did go, but with fear, is wholly at variance with usage, and directly reverses the true sense of the expression. To go, or more exactly, to go away, implying that his natural course would have been to go elsewhere, which agrees exactly with Luke's account of Mary's previous residence at Nazareth. (See Luke 1:26, 2:4.) Thither, literally there, an interchange of prepositions equally familiar to the Greek and English idiom, though commonly expunged in our translation.† Notwithstanding (Tyndale's version) is in Greek the usual connective (δέ), and is here little stronger than our and. Warned of God in a dream, the same words that were used above in v. 12, and there explained. Warned must here be understood as meaning admonished or instructed with authority. Turned aside (Tyndale's version) is the verb rendered departed in vs. 12:14, but in all three places meaning retired, retreated, with an implication of escape from danger. Parts of Galilee, not portions of that province, but that part of the country so called.‡ Galilee, a Hebrew word which originally means a ring (as in Esth. 1:6. Song Sol. 5:14) or circle, and like the latter term is applied to geographical divisions, being sometimes rendered (in the plural) coasts (Joel 3:4) and borders (Josh. 13:2), but commonly applied as a proper name (Galilee) to the northernmost province of the land of Israel, as divided by the Syrians and Romans, lying between Phenicia and Samaria, the Jordan and the Mediterranean.§ The remoteness of this district from Jerusalem and its proximity to the heathen, perhaps with some mixture of the population, as expressed in the name Galilee of the nations or the Gentiles (Isai. 9:1. Matt. 4:15), seem to have lowered it in Jewish estimation (John 7:41, 52), although the Galileans professed the same religion and frequented the same sacred places

(John 4:45, 7:2, 11:56).

23. Having stated why he took up his abode in Galilee and not in Judea, Matthew now explains the choice of a particular locality within the first-named province. Coming, or having come, is not a pleonasm or superfluous expression, but a distinct statement of his arrival in the province, followed by his settlement in Nazareth. As if he had said, for these reasons he came to Galilee and not Judea, and having come he dwelt, of rather settled, took up his abode. The Greek verb does not of itself denote either permanent or temporary residence, but rather the act of settling or beginning to reside, as in 4:13, 12:45. Luke 11:26. Acts 2:5, 7:2, 4, whether the subsequent abode be temporary (as in Heb. 11:9) or permanent (as in Acts 9:32, 17:26, and often in the Book of Revelation.) In, literally into, a familiar idiom where previous motion is implied though not expressed.* A city, in the wide sense, or a town, in its proper English acceptation, as including villages and cities, both which terms are applied in the New Testament to Bethlehem. (Compare Luke 2:4, 11 with John 7:42.) The indefinite expression (a town or city) implies that it was not a place universally well known like Jerusalem or even Bethlehem. There is no doubt, however, as to its identity, since it has been visited by travellers and pilgrims almost without interruption from the time of Christ until the present day. It is situated on the northern edge of the great central plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon, into which it opens through a narrow pass in the wall of hills by which it is surrounded. The name Nazareth seems to be an Aramaic form (נצראת) of a Hebrew) word (נצר) meaning a shoot or twig, and applied by Isaiah (11:1) to the Messiah as a shoot from the prostrate trunk or stem of Jesse, i. e. to his birth from the royal family of Judah in its humble and reduced estate. This coincidence of name, as well as the obscurity of Nazareth itself and the general contempt for Galilee at large, established an association between our Lord's humiliation and his residence at this place, so that various predictions of his low condition were fulfilled in his being called a Nazarene. This is, on the whole, more satisfactory than any other explanation of this difficult and doubtful passage. That which supposes an allusion to the Nazaritic vow of the Old Testament (see Numbers 6:1–21); or to Samson in particular as one of that class (Judg. 13:5), and a type of Christ, is at variance with our Lord's mode of life, which was not that of a Nazarite (see below, on 11:19), and with the usual orthography of that word in the Septuagint version. Still less admissible is the reference, assumed by some, to another Hebrew word which means a crown, or the supposition of some early writers that the passage quoted has been lost from the Hebrew text by negligence or expunged by fraud, both which contingencies are utterly forbidden by the care with which that text has been preserved and guarded both before and since the time of Christ. On the other hand, if we admit a reference to various predictions of our Lord's humiliation with particular allusion to his birth from the humbled house of David, as foretold by Isaiah (11:1), this accounts both for the plural and indefinite form (the prophets), and for the stress laid upon the local name, which is identical with that applied to the Messiah in the particular prediction just referred to. This was not the fortuitous result, but the providential purpose of Christ's residence at Nazareth. The meaning is not that Joseph so designed it, but that God so willed it. The formula of reference is the same with that employed in v. 15, there explained. He shall be called, not merely in the sense of being entitled to be so called (see above, on 1:23), but in that of actually hearing the name here imposed in real life, as we know the Saviour to have done, though the fulfilment of this prophecy is rendered less clear to the English reader by the constant substitution of the paraphrase Jesus of Nazareth, which occurs only twice in the original (John 1:46, Acts 10:28) for the exact phrase elsewhere used, Jesus the Nazarene. Even in the mouth of the Apostles and of Christ himself, this phrase has reference to its original derisive import, Jesus of Nazareth, i. e. whom you have treated with contempt by that name.* This explanation of the purpose for which Joseph was led to take up his abode at Nazareth, is perfectly consistent with the fact of his previous residence at that place as alleged by Luke (1:27, 2:4, 39, 51). That it was not before mentioned arises from the peculiar plan of this first gospel, the grand design of which is to demonstrate the Messiahship of Jesus, and which introduces only such historical events as have a bearing on this purpose, which the early residence of Joseph and Mary at Nazareth had not.

CHAPTER 3

HAVING recorded the genealogy and birth of Christ, with the events which led to his residence at Nazareth, the evangelist now proceeds to describe his public ministry, beginning, however, with that of John the Baptist, which preceded it and introduced it. Omitting, as already known, or unimportant for his special purpose, the early history of John himself, Matthew introduces him abruptly at the beginning of his public work, with an exact specification of its scene (1) and subject (2), its relation to prophecy (3) and to the habits of the ancient prophets (4), its effect upon the people (5, 6), and a specimen of John's fidelity and earnestness in dealing with all classes (7), exhorting them to reformation (8), warning them against false confidence (9) and impending judgments (10) and defining his position as a baptizer with respect to his superior who was to follow (11), and whose coming must be either saving or destructive to the souls of those who heard him (12). To this description of John's ministry in general is added a particular account of his principal official act, which also forms a natural transition to the ministry of Christ himself (13–17). This was his own baptism, as to which we are informed of the localities (13), of John's refusal (14), of our Lord's reply and John's compliance (15), and of the divine recognition of our Lord as the Messiah, addressed both to the eye (16) and to the ear (17) of the spectators. This view of the narrative contained in the third chapter will suffice to show that it is in its proper place, between the account of his nativity

and infancy that goes before, and that of his temptation and the opening of his ministry that follows.

1. In those days, an indefinite expression, used not only in the Scriptures (as in Ex. 2:11. Isai. 38:1), but by the best Greek and Latin writers (as Herodotus, Virgil, and Livy), in reference either to a period of a few days (as in Acts 1:15), or of many years, as in the case before us, where there is a blank of nearly thirty years (see Luke 3:2, 23), filled elsewhere only by a single incident (Luke 2:42–52), and that removed from what is here recorded by an interval of eighteen years. This protracted period of private discipline and preparation in the life both of Christ and his forerunner, is in striking contrast with our own impatience even under the most hurried superficial processes of education. The reference of those days to the Saviour's residence in Nazareth, although not necessarily included in the meaning of that vague phrase, is true in fact, and with the continuative particle (δὲ) serves to connect what is here said with the immediately preceding context (2:23). It is also in accordance with the usage of the phrase itself, which, even when most indefinite, always has respect to something previously mentioned. In those days, i. e. while he was still resident at Nazareth. The corrupted or apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews, as we learn from Epiphanius, had here the full but false specification, "in the days of Herod the king," from which some groundlessly suppose the clause before us to have been abridged, without regard to its inaccuracy. That the phrase (in those days) cannot mean at the precise time mentioned in 2:23, is plain from what follows and from a comparison of Luke's more exact chronological specifications (3:1, 2, 23), which may be used to illustrate the narrative before us, but are not to be incorporated with it, because not included in the plan and purpose of Matthew's Gospel. Came is in Greek the graphic present, comes, arrives, or, retaining the precise sense of the compound verb, becomes near, at hand, or present. The same form is common in the Septuagint version, and another of the same verb is applied in the Apocrypha (1 Macc. 4:46) to the future or prospective appearance of a Prophet in Israel, after the long suspension of the office. In like manner it is used of Christ's appearance (Heb. 9:11), and here of John the Baptist, not as a private person, but a preacher and baptizer. John, a Hebrew name, the etymology of which suggests the idea of divine grace or favour. The circumstances of its imposition, with the other incidents of John's conception and nativity, omitted here by Matthew, because not essential to his argument in proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, are detailed with great particularity by Luke (1:5–25, 57–66), as necessary parts of a methodical biography or history. The Baptist (or Baptizer), a definite description, presupposing some acquaintance with his name, as that of a historical person on the part of the original readers. Some of the older writers understood him to be so called simply as the person who baptized our Saviour, John the Baptizer (of Jesus). But this, although the most important and most honourable act of his official life, is only one out of the many that entitled him to bear the name in question, which describes him, not by that one act, but by the rite which distinguished his ministry from all before it, and is, therefore, sometimes used to designate it as a whole.* Preaching, a verb so rendered more than fifty times in our version, but four times publish (Mark 5:20, 7:36, 11:10. Luke 8:39), and twice proclaim (Luke 12:3. Rev. 5:2). It properly denotes the act of a public crier, or a herald, announcing or proclaiming something by authority. This primary and strict sense of the term must not be superseded by the technical and modern usage of the word preaching, as applied to formal and official religious teaching. In this sense, it is probable that neither John nor the Apostles preached, while Christ was with them (see below, on 10:7.) It is at least not the main act here ascribed to John, which is rather that of announcing, giving notice, that the long-expected advent of the Messiah was at last approaching or arrived, as expressed more fully in the next verse. Wilderness, like the corresponding word in Hebrew, does not necessarily or always signify a sandy desert, nor even an unbroken forest, but merely the uncultivated land as distinguished from that under tillage, but consisting often of rich pastures, and inhabited, though not so densely as the other portions. Hence we read of men residing, and of towns or cities, in the wilderness. (See Josh. 15:61, 62. Judg. 1:16. 1 Sam. 25:1, 2). The first two passages just cited, and the title of Ps. 63. mention the wilderness of Judah, or, as it is here called, Judea (see above, on 2:1, 6). This cannot mean the country, as distinguished from the towns or cities, of that province, which is altogether contrary to usage. Nor does it mean that John was traversing the less frequented portions of the country. The ministry here spoken of was stationary, and the wilderness must therefore be a definite locality. It does not mean, however, the great desert stretching from Tekoa to the Persian Gulf, which could not have been called the desert of Judea simply because it begins or ends there, but denotes specifically that part of Judea itself which is adjacent to the Dead Sea and the Jordan, without any very definite limits, as none such probably existed. Josephus, in describing the course of the Jordan from the lake of Genessaret to the Dead Sea, speaks of it as traversing much desert territory (πολλ ν ναμετρούμενος ρημίαν). This relates to the upper or external valley of the Jordan, while the inner or immediate bed has always been luxuriantly fertile. It was not merely optional or accidental, but a material part of John's commission, that he should make his appearance as a herald and forerunner far from the ordinary haunts of men, and instead of seeking them should be sought by them. In this respect he symbolized or represented the segregation of the Jewish church from other nations under the restrictive institutions of the old economy.

2. This verse gives the subject or substance of John's preaching, in his own words, not as uttered upon any one occasion, much less as repeated without change on all occasions, but as a summary and sample of his constant proclamation or announcement. And saying is a direct continuation of the sentence from the verse preceding, preaching and saying, i. e. proclaiming by (or in the act of) saying (what immediately follows). This, though sometimes represented as a Hebrew idiom, is a simple and natural expression equally at home in any language. Repent, a Greek verb properly denoting afterthought, reflection, and then change of mind, including both the judgment and the feelings, upon moral subjects, with particular reference to one's own character and conduct, with an implication of improvement or reform in both. Evangelical repentance is not mere amendment nor mere sorrow for sin, but

comprehends them both. The latter is expressed by a distinct Greek verb, which is used to denote even the remorse of Judas (see below, on 27:3). The repentance to which John the Baptist called the Jews was a total reformation of both heart and life, as an immediate preparation for the advent of Messiah. The same necessity is urged not only in the prophecies (especially in Mal. 4:5, 6), but also in the later Jewish books, and particularly in the saying, that when Israel repents a single day, the Messiah will immediately appear. The kingdom of heaven is a favourite expression in this gospel, parallel and equivalent to kingdom of God in the others.* It appears to be derived from the prophecies of Daniel, where it is applied to the kingdom which God himself was to erect upon the ruins of the four great empires, the successive rise and fall of which are so explicitly foretold in that book. This final and everlasting reign is that of the Messiah, both in its inception and its consummation, one of which is sometimes prominent, sometimes the other. Heaven (or heavens), in this phrase, is not put for God himself (as some explain the same word elsewhere), nor for a state of perfect blessedness hereafter (as it sometimes does mean), but for that heavenly condition of society or of the church, which was to commence at Christ's first advent and to be completed at the second. Is at hand, literally, has approached (or come near) i. e. lately and in consequence of recent changes, namely, the conception, birth, and adolescence of Messiah. The idea is not that his reign was once near but is so no longer, nor that it is now near and has always been so, but the intermediate notion that it has lately become nearer than it ever was before.

3. Some regard these as the words of John himself, who is certainly represented elsewhere (John 1:23) as applying the same prediction to his own ministry. There is no objection to this construction from the use of the demonstrative pronoun (this), which would then be precisely the same as in John 6:50, 58. But most interpreters suppose the citation to be made by the evangelist, as in the parallel accounts (Mark 1:3. Luke 3:4). For assigns the reason of his uttering the words in the preceding verse, to wit, because he was the herald fore ordained to do so. This, the person just described as so proclaiming. It is not necessarily implied that the prediction was fulfilled in John alone, but merely that he was the last in the succession of forerunners, and in some respects the greatest (see below, on 11:11). The use made of the prophecy is not an "elegant accommodation," but an authoritative exposition of its true sense and a legitimate application to its real subject. The present tense (is) does not show these to be the words of John, or necessarily refer to the preceding verb (has come near or approached). It may just as well have reference to the present (comes, appears) in v. 1, or to the general fact of John's position in the scheme of prophecy and history. The (one) spoken of or mentioned by, (as in 2:17), or, according to the Syriac version and the latest critics, through (as in 1:22, 2:5, 15), i. e. by his instrumental agency, or through his as a medium or an organ of communication. The prophet Isaiah, not a certain prophet so called, but the well-known and illustrious prophet of that name. The passage quoted is still extant in the Hebrew text (Isai. 40:3) and in the Septuagint version, from which it is here taken with little variation. Saying might seem in English to agree with this; but there is no such ambiguity in the original, where the form of the word shows that it agrees with the prophet Isaiah, all these words being in the genitive singular masculine. The voice, or, more exactly, a voice, may be construed with a verb understood, (there is) a voice, or a voice (is heard); but it is rather an abrupt exclamation or ejaculation, as if he had said, 'Hark, a voice,' perhaps with the additional idea of a long-continued previous silence. John is supposed by some, perhaps too fancifully, to be called a voice, i. e. a transient, momentary utterance, as contrasted with the Word, or permanent revealer of the Father who came after him (John 1:1, 8). It may also be an undue refinement, though a pleasing one, to suppose that he is here represented as a voice, because his life was vocal no less than his lips, the whole man being as it were a sermon. Of (one) crying is the Rhemish translation of a word (βο ντος) variously rendered in the older English versions, of him that crieth (Geneva Bible), of a crier (Wiclif, Tyndale, Cranmer). In Greek it is the participle of a verb which means to cry aloud, and is especially applied to the roaring or bellowing of certain animals, and therefore used, as some suppose, to signify the vehemence and harshness of John's ministrations. The original construction in Isaiah seems to be a voice crying; but the genitive construction, here adopted from the Septuagint, conveys substantially the same idea. In the desert is connected by the Hebrew accents with what follows (in the wilderness, Prepare, &c.), and the same construction is here possible, though not so natural as that which couples it with voice and crying.* But they both amount to the same thing, what is formally expressed in one case, being really implied or incidentally suggested in the other. If the command was uttered in the desert, it was in order to its being there obeyed or carried into execution (Bengel: ubi vox ibi auditores), as if it had been said, 'Here prepare,' &c. The wilderness primarily meant in the original prediction is a metaphorical or moral one, to wit, the spiritual desolation of the church or chosen people, through which God is represented as returning to them, a common figure in the Scriptures for the restoration of his favour or his gracious presence, after any interruption caused by sin. The twofold allusion, assumed by most interpreters, to the restoration from the Babylonish exile, and to the ancient oriental usage of opening and clearing roads before armies on the march or sovereigns upon journeys, is by no means certain or necessary. The latter is no peculiar local usage, but one which may be practised anywhere in case of need.* The former rests upon a dubious assumption as to the connection between the thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters of Isaiah, and is countenanced by no explicit reference to Babylon, or to the captivity there, in the text or context. The terms of the prophecy may be applied to any reconciliation between Jehovah and his people, but are especially appropriate to that which was expected to accompany the advent of Messiah and the change of dispensations. When the "fulness of the time" for those events was come (Gal. 4:4), the moral condition of the Jews might well be represented as a wilderness or desert, through which the way of their returning God must be prepared anew. But while this was the primary and full sense of the prophecy, which could only be morally accomplished, the literal fulfilment of its terms by John's actual appearance in a wilderness, seemed both to identify him as its subject and to prepare the minds of men for its fulfilment in a higher

and more spiritual sense. Examples of the same twofold accomplishment, intended to secure the same end, are by no means unknown to the history of Christ himself, and more particularly of his passion.† At the same time John's appearance, not in the temple or the synagogue or even in the streets of the Holy City, but in an accessible though somewhat distant solitude, enhanced his fitness as a living symbol of the law, in its contrast with the Gospel, as explained above (on v. 1). Prepare, in the original prediction, means a particular mode of preparation, namely, the removal of obstructions, corresponding to the English clear, in reference both to roads and houses.‡ The obstructions here meant, being of a moral kind, could only be removed by reformation or repentance (see above, on v. 1), or as one of the Greek commentators beautifully phrases it, by gathering from the surface of the desert the thorns of passion and the stones of sin. The Lord, not the Lord Jesus Christ, at least exclusively, but as in the original prophecy, Jehovah, the peculiar name of God considered as the national and covenanted God of Israel (see Ex. 6:3), a name represented in the Greek of the Septuagint and of the New Testament by the phrase (κὐριος) the Lord, denoting sovereignty. The second person of the Godhead is, however, not excluded, since it is in Christ, not only by him as an instrument, but in him as a person, that God reconciles the world unto himself (2 Cor. 5:19), or, exchanging apostolic for prophetic forms, returns to his forsaken people. Straight may be opposed either to obliquity of course (as in Acts 9:11), or to unevenness of surface, which last is the meaning in Isaiah, as appears from the next verse (40:4), omitted here but introduced by Luke (3:5), and exhibiting the ways as rectified or made straight (Wiclif, right) by the levelling of mountains and the filling up of valleys, a description also found in classical poetry.* Paths, in Greek a noun (τρἰβους) derived from the verb (τρἰβω) to rub, and therefore strictly meaning ways worn by the feet. In the Greek of the Scriptures it occurs, besides this place and the parallels, only in Gen. 49:17. 1 Sam. 6:12. But the corresponding Hebrew word denotes a highway or an artificial causeway, thrown up above the level of the land through which it passes.

4. The same John seems equivalent in English to the said (or the aforesaid) John; but the literal translation is, and John himself, perhaps employed as a transition from the prophecy to the fulfilment. As if he had said, 'the John thus described in prophecy, when he actually came himself (or in fact), had his dress,' &c. This last phrase denotes more than that he had a dress of the kind described, suggesting the additional idea that his dress was a peculiar or distinctive one. Raiment is in Greek a noun peculiar to the Hellenistic dialect, but derived from a verb used in the classics. Of camel's hair, literally, from hairs of a camel, the preposition (πὸ) indicating the source and the material. The reference is not to camel's skin with the hair, which would be too heavy, and has never been in use for clothing, although Clement of Rome, in his epistle, adds it to the sheepskins and goatskins of Heb. 11:37. Nor is the stuff meant camlet, i. e. the fine cloth made in the east of camel's hair, much less the woollen imitation of it made in Europe, but a coarse sackcloth made of the long shaggy hair of the camel, which it sheds every year. Such cloth has always been extensively used in the east, both for tents and clothing, especially among the poor, and as a sign of mourning, being generally black in colour (Rev. 6:12). It seems to have been used as a proverbial designation of the cheapest and coarsest kind of dress. Thus Josephus says that Herod used to threaten the ladies of his court, when they offended him, that he would force them to wear hair-cloth. The garb of John the Baptist, here described, was not worn merely from frugality, or in contempt of fashionable finery, like that of Cato as described by Lucan.† but in imitation of the ancient prophets, who are commonly supposed to have been distinguished by a rough (or hairy) garment (Zech. 14:3), or rather of Elijah in particular, who is described in the Old Testament (2 Kings 1:8) as an hairy man (Sept. ν ρ δασὐς), or more exactly, a possessor (i. e. wearer) of hair (meaning hair-cloth, as above). The epithet hairy is not only as appropriate to his dress as to his person, but its reference to the former agrees better with the mention of the leathern girdle which immediately follows it in that case, as it does in this. As the words of Zechariah above cited are the only intimation that the prophets were distinguished by an official dress, and as Ahaziah, upon hearing the description above quoted (2 Kings 1:8), appears to have recognized it, not as the prophetical costume, but as the dress of a particular prophet, it is on the whole most likely that Elijah wore it, not merely ex officio as a prophet, but for some special reason growing out of his own prophetic ministry as a Reprover and Reformer in the apostate kingdom of the ten tribes (1 Kings 18:21, 19:14). It may then have been a kind of mourning for the sin and the impending ruin of his people, which is much more likely than the supposition that it indicated an ascetic life, of which we find no trace in the prophetic history. Now John the Baptist's ministry not only bore a strong resemblance to that of Elijah, but is expressly represented by the Angel who announced his birth as a continuation or renewal of it (Luke 1:17), and had been so represented in the last prophetic utterance of the Old Testament (Mal. 4:5, 6), as expounded and applied by Christ himself (see below, on 11:14, 17:10–13). The dress of John may therefore be regarded, like his preaching in a literal desert (see above, on v. 3), as an outward coincidence intended to identify him as the subject of an ancient prophecy and the successor of an ancient prophet, while the prophecy itself had a wider scope and a more complete fulfilment, not in his external habits merely, but in the whole purpose of his ministry to reconcile the fathers and the children, i. e. to bring back the chosen people to the spirit and the practice of the old theocracy, so far as this was absolutely necessary as a moral preparation for Messiah's advent. (See above, on v. 1.) This view of John's relation to Elijah is by no means inconsistent with the supposition, that his coarse dress and food had also a practical use as an example to the penitent, as well as a symbolical significance as representing the austerity and rigour of the law in its demands upon those who were subjected to it.* The girdle, worn to bind the flowing oriental dress together, being necessary to all active movement, is a natural and common figure both for energy and preparation.† But in this case, as in that of Elijah (2 Kings 1:8), the emphasis is not so much on girdle as on leathern. The important fact is not that John the Baptist wore a girdle, which was no doubt true of all his neighbours and acquaintances, both male and female, but that this universal article of dress, instead of being costly in material or decoration, was composed, not even of what we call leather, but most probably of undressed hide, an idea not so readily

suggested by the authorized as by the older versions (of a skin). Such a girdle was in keeping with his shirt of hair-cloth, and his whole dress with the coarse and frugal fare described in the remainder of the verse. His meat, not flesh or animal food, which is the meaning of the word in modern English, but his food in general, by which term it is rendered twice (Acts 14:17. James 2:15), but always elsewhere meat. The change of usage as to the word is remarkably exemplified in the phrase meat-offering, which is employed by our translators to describe precisely that kind of oblation into which meat (in its modern sense) could never enter.* Locusts, an insect of the grasshopper family, exceedingly destructive in the east, but allowed to be eaten by the law of Moses (Lev. 11:22), and actually so used among many nations, both in earlier and later times. From some mistaken notion as to such food, and in strange oblivion of the legal grant just cited, some of the older writers tried, by arbitrary change of reading or by forced interpretation of the common text, to change those locusts into crabs or fishes, wild pears, nuts, cakes, or the boughs and leaves of trees. One of the strangest grounds of this gratuitous perversion was that John had not time or means to cook the locusts in the desert, which, however, is a very simple process, and continually practised by the Bedouins and other dwellers in the desert. Others, with more plausibility, but still without sufficient reason or necessity, explain wild honey to mean a sweet gum which distils from certain trees or shrubs, and is supposed to be so called in a few doubtful passages of ancient writers. The necessity of all such explanations is precluded by the clear and frequent mention, both in Scripture and the classics, of honey, in the strict sense, as produced by wild or unlived bees, and therefore found in trees and rocks, and situations still more unexpected.† It may have been in reference to these wild spontaneous products, rather than those secured by human care and labour, that the Holy Land was said to flow with milk and honey.‡ The fare of John the Baptist here described was not the ordinary diet of the country, as distinguished from the luxury of towns and cities, but one of more than usual simplicity and abstinence, and although not miraculously furnished, yet resembling Elijah's (1 Kings 17:6, 18:6) in its difference from that in ordinary use. In consequence of this abstemious mode of life, our Lord himself describes John as neither eating nor drinking, in comparison with his own less rigid practice (see below, on 11:18). That it was not, even upon John's part, mere ascetic rigour, but commemorative and symbolical imitation, is apparent from the fact that he does not appear to have enforced this mode of life on others. Even the frequent fasts of his disciples seem to have been borrowed from the Pharisees and not from John (see below, on 9:14).

5. Then, at the same time that is mentioned in the foregoing context, i. e. while John was thus living and thus preaching. Or the sense may be, after he had made his first appearance, as described in v. 1. Went out (or forth) from their homes into the wilderness. Jerusalem is put for its population by a natural and common figure also used by Cicero.* All Judea, i. e. all the rest of it, besides the capital and holy city. (Compare the frequent combination, Judah and Jerusalem, Isai. 1:1, 2:1, 3:1). The country round about Jordan may be either a particular specification of the general terms just used (all Judea and especially that part about the Jordan), or an extension of the previous description (all Judea and those parts of the other provinces which are adjacent to the Jordan), so as to include a part of Galilee, Samaria, Perea, and Gaulonitis, all which had their points or lines of contact with the river. The phrase however is most probably indefinite and popular, denoting an indefinite but well-known region, not a technical expression of political or physical geography. Some would restrict it to a particular district called in the Old Testament the Plain of Jordan (Gen. 13:10, 11. 1 Kings 7:46. 2 Chr. 4:17), or to the whole bed of that river, either from its source or from its leaving lake Gennesaret to its entrance into the Dead Sea, a tract now called by the inhabitants El Ghor (the Valley). The all in these two clauses is explained by some as a hyperbole for most or many, such as they suppose to be exemplified in 4:18, 24, 10:22, Mark 1:37, Luke 7:29, John 12:32, Acts 4:21, and elsewhere. But in all such cases there is more danger of attenuation than exaggeration, and in that before us we have reason to believe that the strong expressions of the text were literally true, or at least that a very large proportion of the whole population were drawn forth into the wilderness, by what they had heard of John the Baptist's early history and his peculiar mode of life, as well as by his earnest appeals to the conscience, which in every age have had a strange fascination, even for those whom they condemn or force to sit in judgment on themselves. From all this it is probable that John for some time, the precise length of which cannot now be determined, was an object of general curiosity, and even universally acknowledged as a messenger from God. (See below, on 11:7–15, 21:23–27.)

6. The sentence is continued, without interruption or a change of subject, from the verse preceding, they went out and were baptized. The imperfect tense of both verbs snows that this concourse was not merely once for all, on some particular occasion, but repeated and continued for a length of time not here determined nor recorded elsewhere. The act or rite here mentioned is the one from which John derived his title Baptist or Baptizer (see above, on v. 1). Baptism is neither washing nor immersion simply, but symbolical or ceremonial washing, such as the Mosaic law prescribed, as a sign of moral renovation, and connected with the sacrificial rites of expiation, to denote the intimate connection between atonement and sanctification. It was from these familiar and significant ablutions that John's baptism was derived, and not from the practice of baptizing proselytes, the antiquity of which, as a distinct rite, is disputed, since it is not mentioned by Philo or Josephus, and first appears in the Gemara or later portion of the Babylonish Talmud. If really as ancient as the time of Christ, it was no doubt one of the traditional additions to the law made by the Pharisees, like the tithing of garden-herbs and the baptism of beds and cups. (See below, on 23:23, and compare Mark 7:4.) The extravagant importance afterwards attached to this rite in the case of proselytes, so as even to make it more essential than circumcision itself, and necessary to the validity and value of that ordinance, confirms the view just taken of its origin. The stress laid by the same traditional authorities on total immersion as essential to this baptism savours also of the oral law, and may perhaps

have some connection with a similar confusion of the essence and the mode in Christian baptisms. In the written law of Moses, on the other hand, as in the primitive or apostolic practice of the Christian church, the essence of symbolical or ceremonial washing was the application of the purifying clement. Some modern writers have carried this perversion so far as to deny the reference to cleansing altogether, and to make the dipping or immersion every thing, as symbolizing burying, death, depravity, or condemnation. There is far more truth, though not unmixed with fancy, in another modern notion, that John first excommunicated the whole people as unclean before God, and then on their profession of repentance purified them by his baptism. We may at least be certain that this rite was recognized by those who underwent it as a new form or modification of the purifying rites with which they were familiar, as appointed symbols of repentance and regeneration. As to the mode, the very doubt which overhangs it shows it to be unessential, and the doubt itself does not admit of an etymological solution. Even admitting that the word baptize originally means to dip or plunge, and that the first converts were in fact immersed—both which are doubtful and disputed points—it no more follows that this mode of washing was essential to the rite, than that every elder must be an old man or that the Lord's supper can be lawfully administered only in the evening. The river Jordan is the only considerable stream of Palestine, rising near the base of Mount Hermon, flowing southward in a double bed or valley with a deep and rapid current, through the lakes of Merom and Tiberias, into the Dead Sea. Recent surveys and measurements have shown that the valley of the Jordan, with its lakes, is much below the level of the Mediterranean. This famous river formed the eastern limit of the province of Judea, and was probably the nearest water to the desert tract where John had made his first appearance. It was on account of this contiguity, and for the accommodation of the crowds attending him (John 3:23), that John baptized there, and not for the convenience of immersion. They submitted to John's baptism, not as an unmeaning form, but at the same time confessing their sins, the Greek verb being an intensive compound, which denotes the act of free and full confession or acknowledgment. This, which is prescribed as a condition, although not a meritorious ground of pardon (Prov. 28:13. 1 John 1:9), and was therefore required even under the Mosaic law (Lev. 5:5, 16:21, 26:40. Num. 5:7), is at the same time one of the best tokens of repentance. The confession in the case before us, was neither public nor auricular, but personal and private. Whether it was general or particular, and uniform or various in different cases, are questions which we have no means of certainly determining. As John's whole ministry was only introductory to that of Christ, and his baptism not immediately effectual, but only for (or with a view to) the remission of sins, as Mark (1:4) and Luke (3:3) express it, it is possible, though not to be insisted on as certain, that the confession here referred to was a general acknowledgment of personal and national defection from the principles and practice of the old economy, to which the people must be brought back, as an indispensable condition or prerequisite of the Messiah's advent. See above, on v. 4. and compare Mal. 4:5, 6 (in the Hebrew text 3:23, 24), where this change is ascribed to the instrumental agency of Elijah, i. e. John himself (see below, on 17:10–13).

7. We learn from this verse, that the concourse to John's ministry and baptism was not confined to either of the great religious sects, or rather schools, into which the Jewish church was then divided; and that John reproved and warned them both with impartial faithfulness, without respect of persons or of parties. The Pharisees and Sadducees differed, not only as to certain doctrines and the observance of the oral law, but also in their national and patriotic feelings, and their disposition to assimilation with the Gentiles. The name Pharisee, though otherwise explained by some, most probably means Separatist, not in the modern sense of schismatic, nor in allusion to mere personal austerity and strictness, as distinguishing a few ascetics from the masses of the people, but rather as defining the position which they occupied in reference to other nations, by insisting upon every thing peculiar and distinctive, and affecting even to exaggerate the difference between the Gentiles and themselves. This, which was at first, i. e. after the return from exile, when these divisions are first traceable in history, and even later, under the first Maccabees or Hasmonean princes, the true national and theocratic spirit, by degrees became corrupt, losing sight of the great end for which the old economy existed, and worshipping the law, not only that of Moses, but its traditional accretions called the Oral Law, as a system to be valued for its own sake, and designed to be perpetual. The opposition to this school or party arose chiefly from the Sadducees, a name of doubtful origin, derived by the early Christian writers from the Hebrew word for righteous (צַדִּיק), but by the Jewish books from a proper name of kindred origin (צָדוֹק) Zadok, said to be that of the original founder. At first, they seem to have objected merely to the narrow nationality of their opponents, and to have aimed at smoothing down, as far as possible without abandoning their own religion, the points of difference between Jews and Gentiles, so as to reconcile the faith of Moses with the Greek philosophy and civilization, and renouncing or suppressing whatever appeared most offensive or absurd to the cultivated heathen. But this dangerous process of assimilation could not be carried far without rejecting matters more essential; and we find accordingly, that the Sadducees, before the time of our Lord's public ministry, had abjured, not only the Oral Law or Pharisaical tradition, but the doctrine of the resurrection and of separate or disembodied spirits, no doubt on the pretext of their not being expressly taught in the Old Testament.* This liberal or latitudinarian party was composed, according to Josephus, of persons in the more refined and educated classes, while the Pharisees included the great body of the people. For between these schools or parties the whole nation was divided, unless we except a third, called by Josephus the Essenes, and described as an ascetic class, inhabiting the desert near the Dead Sea, and leading a life not unlike that of the later Christian monks. The absence of all reference to this class in the Gospels is explained by some, upon the ground that they were merged in the vast multitude of those who followed John the Baptist and our Lord himself. But as they are not mentioned here and elsewhere, where the other schools and parties are referred to, it is probable that what Josephus tells us of the Essenes is only true of a temporary association, growing out of transitory local causes, and without a permanent distinctive character, like that of the two great bodies named by Matthew in the verse before us. If the Essenes, however,

had a permanent and organized existence, they were no doubt entitled to the appellation of a sect, in the ordinary sense of that expression, as implying a distinct organization and a separate worship. But for that very reason it is not at all appropriate, though commonly applied, to the Pharisees and Sadducees, who, notwithstanding their diversities of, doctrine and of practice, were professors of the same faith, and, so far as now appears, joined in the same worship. Their mutual relation may be therefore more exactly represented by the word schools or parties, the one suggesting difference of doctrine, and the other that of discipline or practice. The mutual relation of these parties in the Jewish church and state (which were inseparably blended) was analogous to that of Whigs and Tories, or of High and Low Church, for the last two hundred years, in England; each obtaining the ascendancy in turn, or at the same time sharing it between them. Such vicissitudes and rivalries may be distinctly traced in the history of the Hasmonean dynasty before the Roman conquest, as for instance in the fact, that Alexander Jannæus charged his widow on his death-bed, as the guardian of her sons and regent during their minority, to transfer her political connections from the Sadducees, with whom he had himself been acting, to the Pharisees, as being not only the more numerous and powerful, but also the more national and patriotic party. From all these facts it will be seen that the Pharisees and Sadducees are here named, not as select classes, large or small, distinct from the body of the people, but as the two great schools or parties, into which that body was itself divided, so that many refers rather to the aggregate number, which is there described by its component parts. As if he had said, 'seeing a great multitude, consisting both of Pharisees and Sadducees.' From this it also follows, that when Luke (3:7) represents John as uttering the same words to the crowds or multitudes (το ς χλοις), there is no mistake in either statement, nor the least inconsistency between them, nor the slightest need of forced constructions, as, for instance, that he spoke to the Pharisees and Sadducees before the people, or at the former although to the latter, but a twofold yet harmonious statement of the simple fact, that the crowds who came out were both Pharisees and Sadducees. To his baptism, i. e. both to witness and receive it, not merely to the place of its administration. The sense of opposition or hostility (against his baptism) is at variance both with usage and the context. To both these parties, so unlike and even opposite in character and spirit, and little accustomed to be thus confounded, John addressed himself in terms of undistinguishing severity. Generation is in Greek a plural, and is so translated by Wiclif and m the Geneva Bible, both of which have generaciouns. The plural may have reference either to variety of species or to multitude of individuals. The word itself denotes any product, whether animal (as here) or vegetable (as in 26:29, below, and in Luke 12:18). It is commonly translated fruit, which has the same double use in English. (Besides the passages just cited, see Mark 14:25. Luke 3:7, 22:18. 2 Cor. 9:10.) Generation occurs only here and in the parallels (12:34, 23:33. Luke 3:7). The Rhemish version has a more poetical expression, but equivalent in import, vipers' brood, i. e. offspring or progeny of vipers. As a mere expression of abhorrence or contempt, this language would be unaccountable, if not unworthy of the man who used it. If the notion thus conveyed were that of craft or cunning, the form would still be a surprising one. The only satisfactory solution is afforded by assuming an allusion to the protevangelium or first promise of a Saviour after the Fall (see Gen. 3:15), in which the seed of the woman, i. e. Christ and his people, are contrasted with the seed of the serpent, or the devil and his followers, both men and demons, throughout all ages, as composing two antagonistic powers, which were to be long at war, with various fluctuations and vicissitudes of fortune, including temporary partial advantages on one side, but an ultimate and total triumph on the other. This prediction gives complexion to all later history, which is really the record of its gradual fulfilment. This war of ages was now approaching to its crisis or catastrophe. The heads of the two parties were about to be brought into personal collision.* In the mean time the forerunner of the conqueror denounces the great body of the people who came forth to hear him, and especially the leaders of the two great parties into which they were divided, as belonging to the hostile army. The mere change of expression, from seed of the serpent to brood of vipers, is entirely insufficient to outweigh the historical and other arguments in favour of this explanation, which converts a harsh and almost passionate vituperation into a solemn and impressive recollection of a prophecy coeval with the fail of man and interwoven with the whole course of his subsequent experience. Who hath warned you, or retaining the strict sense of the aorist, who did warn you, or who warned you, i. e. just now, or before you came out hither? The Greek verb, elsewhere rendered forewarn (Luke 12:5), shew (Luke 6:47. Acts 9:16, 20,35), originally means to show secretly or partially, both which ideas are suggested by the particle (πὸ) with which it is compounded, and may therefore be expressed by our phrase, to give a glimpse of any thing. Here (as in some of the passages just cited) it denotes a slight intimation or suggestion, as distinguished from a full disclosure. 'Who has given you a hint of the impending danger?' The infinitive which follows may be variously construed, as denoting either the necessity of flight or possibility of rescue. 'Who has shown you that you must flee?' 'Who has shown you that you can escape?' In either case, the words express surprise; on the former supposition, at their having been alarmed; on the latter, at their venturing to hope. The first is probably the natural impression made on most unbiassed readers, though the other is preferred by some interpreters, and one even understands the words to mean, that if they had been warned, they would no doubt have fled. The wrath, i. e. the manifestation of God's anger against sin and his determination to punish it.† To come, in Greek an active participle, coming, or about to be, the verb denoting mere futurity and having no equivalent in English (see above, on 2:13). The coming wrath is an expression elsewhere used by Paul (1 Thess. 1:10), and in the same sense, namely that of future and impending judgments, without specification of their form or nature.

8. Bring forth, literally, make, i. e. produce or bear (Rhem. yield). The same use of the verb occurs in Gen. 1:11, and 7:17, 18, 21:43 below. Fruits, or, according to the critics, fruit, in the singular number, but without a change of meaning. Meet, the word so rendered Acts 26:20, 1 Cor. 16:4, 2 Th. 1:3, and due (reward) in Luke 23:41, but usually worthy, which would have been better here. Fruits

worthy of repentance, i. e. such effects as it may justly be expected to produce. The margin of the English Bible has answerable to amendment of life. The Peshito, or old Syriac, has conversion. Therefore, because you have been warned, or because you have come forth to be baptized, professing your repentance, which includes at least the purpose of reformation, act accordingly. As this is not a continuation of the figure in v. 7 (generation of vipers), but an introduction to the one in v. 9 (trees), fruit is to be taken in a vegetable not an animal sense, though appropriate to both (see above, on v. 7), and therefore furnishing a natural transition from the one to the other.

9. Think not to say is explained by some as a mere pleonasm, meaning nothing more than say not, as the same verb used in Mark 10:42, is omitted in the parallel passage (20:25 below). Others run into the opposite extreme of making it mean wish (Vulg. ne velitis), begin (Luther), presume (Geneva), delight (Rhemish), none of which ideas is suggested by the Greek verb. It simply means, do not even think of saying, as expressed by Tyndale's paraphrastic version (see that ye once think not to say), and a little differently in Cranmer's (be not of such mind that ye would say). The act prohibited is not simply that of speaking, but of thinking or intending so to speak. In yourselves, or as it is expressed in Hebrew, in your hearts (see Ps. 4:6, 10:6, 14:1), i. e. secretly and mentally, not vocally or audibly, implying that they might be disposed to think, what they would not care to utter upon this occasion. (As a) father, founder, or progenitor, we have Abraham, a proud boast afterwards expressly uttered by the Jews in opposition to our Lord himself (See John 8:33, 37, 39). What was then denied by him, and by John the Baptist in the case before us, was not the fact of their descent from Abraham, which was notoriously true, but their reliance upon that fact, as securing the divine favour, irrespective of their character and conduct. This arrogant and impious reliance, which was secretly or openly cherished by the Jews of that day, found expression afterwards in maxims, some of which are still preserved in the rabbinical tradition, for example that of the Bereshith Rabbah, that Abraham sits at the gate of hell, and suffers no one of his circumcised descendants to go down there. For assigns a reason why they should not entertain this national hereditary trust, viz., because it presupposed that God was bound to that one race as his chosen people, and could not, if he would, reject them. In opposition to this wicked and absurd illusion he assures them, in a tone almost ironical, that if they perished, God was able to supply their place, and that from the most unpromising and unexpected quarters. Of (out of, from among) these stones, not a figure for the Gentiles as worshippers of stocks and stones; nor in allusion to the monumental stones of Gilgal; but a simple designation of the loose stones lying on the surface of the ground, to which the Baptist may have pointed as he spoke. There is no need of supposing an allusion to the stony soil of the Arabian desert, from which one part of it derives its name (Arabia Petrœa), as wilderness does not necessarily denote a barren waste (see above, on v. 1). The expression would be natural in any situation where loose stones happened to be lying around. They are mentioned at all as the least obvious and likely source of such supply, and therefore necessarily implying an immediate divine agency in its production. The same idea might have been expressed in general terms, but with far less emphasis, by saying, 'If all the natural descendants of the Patriarch were swept away, God could supply their place at once from any quarter even the least promising.'* There is a possible though not a necessary reference to Isai. 51:1. It matters little as to John's essential meaning, whether children to (or for) Abraham be understood of natural or spiritual offspring. If the former, the assertion is, that God could easily renew the Jewish race, in case of its perdition; if the other, that he could as easily substitute a better. On either supposition, the vocation of the Gentiles, although not expressly represented by the stones, is tacitly implied as possible. Raise up, or retaining the original import of the Greek verb (see above, on 2:13, 14, 20, 21) arouse, awaken from inanimate existence into life.† I say unto you, with emphasis on both pronouns, as in 5:28 below, and often elsewhere. 'Whatever you may say to me or to yourselves about your proud prerogatives as natural descendants of the faithful Abraham, the Friend of God, I tell you in return that God has no need of your services, but with the same ease that he made you or Abraham or Adam, can convert the very stones beneath your feet into worthier sons of Abraham than you are.'

10. And now also, not at some period remotely or indefinitely future, but already, even while I speak, the judgment is impending.‡ The axe, which in Homer always means a battle-axe, but in the later classics, as with us, an instrument for felling trees, is here a figure for divine judgments, possibly suggested by the reference to fruit in the preceding verse. Is laid, literally lies, is lying, as the original verb is a deponent one. The passive form, employed in the translation, seems to mean that some one is now laying (or applying) it to the tree, i. e. actually felling it; whereas the neuter form of the original may possibly have been intended to convey the idea of its lying there as yet inactive, in immediate proximity (at, close to, πρός) and ready to be used at any moment. This is indeed all that the words necessarily denote, although more may be implied or suggested by the context. Upon this point depends another question as to the precise sense of the root, which may either mean the bottom of the tree, at which the axe is lying in readiness for future use, or the radical and vital portion of the tree, to which it is already actively applied, with a view to its complete excision, or as that idea is expressed in prophecy, with reference to this very period and these very judgments, so as to leave neither root nor branch (Mal. 4:1. Hebrew text, 3:19). The essential meaning, upon either supposition, is that of imminent complete destruction. The combination of the singular and plural (root and trees) may have no separate significance, or may specifically signify the common root of all the trees, with reference perhaps to the national dependence or descent from Abraham, as cherished by his individual descendants. The trees of this verse, corresponding to the fruits of that before it must of course denote those from whom fruit was expected and required, namely, those to whom John the Baptist was now speaking, the crowds who came forth to his baptism and consisted both of Pharisees and Sadducees. Therefore, because the axe is laid there for the very purpose. Bringing forth, literally,

making, i. e. yielding or producing, as in v. 8. Good fruit, there described as fruit meet for (answerable to, or worthy of) repentance, but here by its intrinsic quality as good, both in the sense of right or acceptable to God, and that of salutary, useful, to the doer and to others. Is cut down, not is commonly or generally cut down, as a matter of course, which is forbidden by the preceding therefore, but now, in this case, upon this occasion, at this time, or as it might be expressed in the English of the present day, is being cut down, as something actually passing, according to one sense of the verb lies, as explained above; but if the other be preferred, the present may be used to represent a certain and proximate futurity (is cut down, i. e. sure and just about to be so). Hewn down, so translated in the parallel passage (Luke 3:9) and in 7:19 below, but twice cut down (Luke 13:7, 9). and thrice cut off (18:8, Rom. 11:22. 2 Cor. 11:12), and once hindered (1 Pet. 3:7), means strictly cut out, and is so translated in a single instance (Rom. 11:24). It is here used to denote, not the mere felling, but the complete excision of the tree, i. e. its being cut up by the root. (See below, on 13:29, 15:13, and compare Luke 17:6. Jude 12, in all which places the idea of eradication is expressed, but without that of cutting). Is cast (or thrown), not in general, but now, the present having the same sense as in the verb immediately preceding, rendered more emphatic, in the Greek, by its position at the end of the whole sentence (into fire is cast). Into fire, (not the fire), an indefinite description of the element made use of to consume the tree, and representing, as a figure, the wrath of God, already mentioned (in v. 7), or its ruinous effect, upon the unforgiven sinner (compare Heb. 12:29).

11. But though John uttered these severe denunciations, it was not in his own name, or by his own authority. He was only a forerunner, not a principal. The very rite which he administered was only emblematical of something to be actually done by his superior, between whom and himself there was a greater disparity than that between a master and his meanest slave. A contrast or antithesis is indicated by the very structure of the sentence, which is balanced, in the usual Greek manner, by the corresponding particles, indeed (μέν) and but (δέ), equivalent, when thus combined, to our expressions, ‘on the one hand and the other.’ The first introduces a description of himself and his own ministry, the second that of his superior or principal. Indeed, or it is true, a sort of concession or acknowledgment that they were right in thinking him a messenger from God, commissioned to baptize with water, literally, in water, as the element or fluid, which no more implies immersion than our common phrases to rinse or wash in water. But though both were to baptize, it was in a manner and with an effect immeasurably different, a difference corresponding to the infinite disparity between them as to rank and nature. The sum of what is here said is, that John’s whole ministry was relative, prospective, and preparatory; that he was not a principal but a dependent; further removed from his superior in rank than the humblest domestic from his master; and that the same disparity existed between the ministry and acts of the two parties. John did indeed baptize them for (or with a view to) repentance; but even this he only did as a forerunner. The (one) behind me coming seems to presuppose their knowledge of the fact, that he was to be followed by another, though they might not be aware of the precise, relation which the two sustained to one another. Mightier, more powerful, implying not only a diversity of rank but also of efficiency and actual performance. The first of these ideas is then stated still more strongly and distinctly. The difference was not merely that of first and second, but of master and servant; nay, it was still more marked and distant. For the meanest slave might bring or carry his master’s sandals; but this humblest of all services, as rendered to John’s master, was too great an honour even for the man whom all Judea and Jerusalem had come forth to honour. Worthy, or as the Greek word strictly means, sufficient, i. e. good enough. Shoes, literally, underbindings. i. e. sandals, soles of wood or leather, fastened by a strap, particularly mentioned in another form of this repeated declaration, which has been preserved by Mark (1:7). To bear, or carry, with particular reference, as some suppose, to a journey or the bath. To an oriental audience words could hardly have expressed the idea of disparity in a stronger or a more revolting manner. That John should have made such a profession of his own inferiority, not once but often, in the presence of the people, and at the height of his own popularity, implies a disposition, on the part of others, to rest in him as the expected Saviour; his own clear view of the subordinate relation which he bore to Christ; and his sincere and humble resolution to maintain it, even in the face of popular applause and admiration, and amidst the most enticing opportunities of self-aggrandizement. What was thus true of the persons was no less true of the acts which they performed and the effects which they produced. If John was less, compared with Christ, than the lowest slave compared with his own master, what he did, even by divine authority and as our Lord’s legitimate forerunner, must be proportionately less than what his principal would do, as to intrinsic worth and power. He shall baptize you in holy spirit, or (the) Holy Spirit; for although the article is not expressed in either of the Gospels, the constant use of this phrase to denote a divine person has almost rendered it a proper name, and as such not requiring to be made definite by any prefix, like a common noun. The antithesis is then not only between water and spirit but between dead matter and a divine person, an infinite disparity. Now this extreme incalculable difference seems to be predicated of baptism as administered by John and Christ. But Jesus baptized only by the hands of his disciples (John 4:2), and this was no less water-baptism than that administered by John. The contrast, therefore, cannot be between John’s baptism as performed with water, and that of Christ (or his disciples) as performed without it. Nor can it be intended to contrast Christ’s baptism, as attended by a spiritual influence, with John’s as unattended by it; for the latter is proved to be essentially identical with Christian baptism by its source, its effects, and its reception by our Lord himself. There are still two ways in which the comparison may be explained, and each of which has had its advocates. The first supposes the antithesis to be, not between the baptism of John and that of Christ, which were essentially the same, but simply between the administering persons. ‘I baptize you in water, not without meaning and effect, but an effect dependent on a higher power; he will baptize you in the same way and with the same effect, but in the exercise of an inherent power, that of his own spirit.’ This construction, though it yields a good sense and conveys a certain truth, is not so natural and obvious as another, which supposes no allusion to the outward rite of

Christian baptism at all, but a comparison between that rite, as John performed it, and the gift of spiritual influences, figuratively called a baptism, as the same term is applied to suffering (see below, on 20:22, 23). The meaning then is, 'I indeed bathe your bodies in water, not without divine authority or spiritual effect; but he whose way I am preparing is so far superior, both in power and office, that he will bathe your souls in the effusion of the Holy Spirit.' And as this divine influence is always described in the Old Testament either as unction or effusion, and the figurative baptism must correspond in form to the literal, we have here an incidental proof that the primitive baptism was not exclusively or necessarily immersion. With fire, not the fire of divine wrath, as in v. 10, but the powerful and purifying influences of the Spirit so described elsewhere. (See Isai. 4:4, 64:2. Jer. 5:14. Mal. 3:2. Acts 2:3.)

12. To the figure of a fruitless tree cut down and burnt (in v. 10), John now adds that of chaff destroyed in the same way, but with distinct reference to the saved as well as lost, the former being represented by the corn or wheat, the latter by the chaff, straw, or stubble, separated from it. Fan, or winnowing instrument, whatever may have been its form, whether that of a shovel or a fork, with which the grain was thrown up to be cleansed by the wind. (Is) in his hand, i. e. in readiness for use, or just about to be employed. Or without supplying any verb, we may explain the phrase as a descriptive one, analogous to sword in hand, and others like it. The axe could only represent one part of the judicial process, the excision of the wicked, while the fan suggests both, as its very use was to separate the wheat and chaff, in order to the preservation of the one and the destruction of the other. And (being thus armed or equipped) he will (certainly, or is just about to) cleanse thoroughly, in Greek a single word meaning to cleanse through and through, or from one end to the other. Floor, not in the usual or wide sense, but in the specific one of threshing-floor, as the corresponding Hebrew word is sometimes rendered (see for example Gen. 50:10, 11, where both forms are used to represent precisely the same word in the original). The oriental threshing-floor is not a floor at all, in our customary sense of the expression, but a hard flat piece of ground, on which the grain is either threshed with sledges or the feet of cattle, or exposed to the wind, to which last method there is here allusion.* To cleanse the floor is either to cleanse the grain upon it by removing all impurities, or to cleanse the floor itself by the removal of the grain thus purified, in which case these words are descriptive of the end of the whole process. Gather, collect, or bring together, first from its dispersion, at the harvest, and then from its mixture with the chaff and other refuse, at the winnowing or threshing. His wheat, or his own wheat, that belonging to him, which implies its value, while the chaff belongs to no one, because worthless. Garner, granary, in Greek depository, or the place where any thing is laid up for safe-keeping. From this word, through the Latin, comes apothecary, and the word itself (Apotheke) is used in German to denote a druggist's shop or store. Its specific application to a barn or granary is in accordance with the classical usage, though Herodotus applies it to the thing deposited, a twofold usage similar to that of store in English. It might here be not inaccurately rendered store-house. The remaining clause presents the contrast under the same figurative form. But (while he thus secures his wheat in the appropriate place) the chaff (or whatever is not nutritive and therefore valuable) he will burn up, literally, burn down, both denoting entire consumption, but the latter being applicable in our idiom, which differs from the Greek in this point, only to houses, or to something which the fire reduces and disorganizes as well as destroys. With fire unquenchable, or more exactly unquenched, i. e. never quenched or put out, which amounts to the same thing, as the fact that it is not quenched implies that its extinction is impossible. The Greek word is a favourite with Homer, but most frequently applied in a figurative sense to what is endless or unceasing, such as fame or laughter, and by Æschylus even to the ceaseless flow of ocean. The word itself has now been anglicized (asbestus) to denote natural or artificial substances considered incombustible, whereas it really describes them as perpetually burning. (Compare Mark 9:43, 45, where the same Greek word is paraphrased, that never shall be quenched.) With a freedom in the use of figures which is characterestic of the Scriptures, the same persons who in v. 10 are consumed as trees are here consumed as chaff, while the careful preservation of the wheat represents the destination of the saved.* In most other instances, the prominent idea is that of chaff scattered by the wind, to which is here superadded that of burning, both which agencies, as some suppose, were often visibly connected at the threshing-floor, the wind to separate the chaff and fire to destroy it.

13. The transition from John's ministry to that of Christ is furnished by the baptism of our Lord himself, as the most important act of the former, and an immediate preparation for the latter. At the same time, it afforded the most striking confirmation of what John himself had taught as to his own inferiority (see above, on v. 11), by an express divine recognition of our Lord as the Messiah. But this was not the only nor perhaps the chief end of our Lord's subjection to this ceremonial form. Though without sins of his own to be repented of, confessed, or pardoned, he identified himself by this act with his people whom he came to save from sin (see above, on 1:21), and gave them an assurance of that great deliverance;† avowed his own subjection to the law as the expression of his Father's will (see below, on v. 15); and put honour upon John as a divinely inspired prophet and his own forerunner. An ingenious living writer supposes an allusion to the cleansing rites required by the ceremonial law not only in the case of personal impurity, but in that of even accidental contact with the unclean.* Then, or in those days (Mark 1:9), i. e. while John was thus preaching and baptizing, without any intimation of the length of his ministry, which cannot, however, have been very long. The conclusion reached by highly probable, though not entirely conclusive combinations, is, that from John's public appearance to his death was a period of about three years, at least one half of which was spent in prison. (See below, on 14:1–12.) Cometh, the same word that is used above (in v. 17) to describe John's own appearance as a preacher and baptizer. In this place, as in that, it strictly signifies arrival, but perhaps with the accessory idea of a sudden unexpected coming forward into public view, for he was not baptized in secret or alone, but in the presence, if not in the company of others. (Compare Luke 3:21.) From Galilee, that is to say, from Nazareth in Galilee

(Mark 1:9), where Joseph and Mary lived before the birth of Christ (Luke 1:26, 27), and where they again took up their abode on their return from Egypt. (See above, on 2:22, 23, and compare Luke 2:39, 51.) To the Jordan (as the place, and) to John (as the person), a distinction marked in Greek by the use of different prepositions (πἰ and πρός), but which can only be expressed in English by approximation to John at the Jordan). For a brief description of this river, and the reason of John's being there, see above, on v. 5. To be baptized, in Greek a genitive construction (for the sake or purpose of being baptized), from which we learn not only that he was baptized (Mark 1:9), but that this was no fortuitous occurrence or mere after-thought, but the express design with which he left home and appeared among John's hearers. Of him, or in modern English, by him, as the visible and real agent in baptizing, though the act was performed under a superior authority, and, therefore, only through him as an instrumental agent, just as prophecies are sometimes said to have been uttered by and sometimes through the prophets. (See above, on 1:22, 2:5, 15, 17:23.)

14. Although we have no less than three accounts of our Lord's baptism, it is only from the one before us that we learn the fact of John's at first declining to perform it. Forbad, in Greek the verb to hinder or prevent, compounded with a preposition (διά) meaning through which may either give the verb the local sense of stopping, not permitting him to pass (of which there is a clear example in the apocryphal book of Judith 12:7), or the intensive sense of thoroughly or utterly forbidding him, as in the similar compound of the verb to cleanse, in v. 12. But in either case, the main idea is not so much that of verbal prohibition, which is commonly suggested by the verb forbid, as that of physical obstruction, hindrance, or arrest, the act of holding back or stopping with the hand or by some movement of the body. The imperfect tense implies that this was more than a momentary act, being still persisted in till Jesus spake the words recorded in the next verse. John was stopping him (and) saying, I have need, etc., (when) Jesus answering said (see below on v. 15). I have need, a synonymous but stronger phrase than I need, being more suggestive of continued and habitual necessity. (Compare its use in 6:8, 9:12, 14:16, 21:3, 26:65.) Of thee, i. e. by thee, as in v. 13. Comest thou, a question, or thou comest, an exclamation, both expressive of surprise, as in John 13:6. To me, i. e. to be baptized by me, as fully expressed in the preceding verse. This surprise of John implies his previous acquaintance with the person, or at least the character, of Jesus, and perhaps a personal belief that he was the Messiah, which is perfectly consistent with his saying elsewhere, that he knew him not, i. e. was not assured of his Messiahship, until he had received the promised sign from heaven (John 1:33). The spirit of John's language is, 'If either of us is to receive baptism from the other, I should be baptized by thee as thy inferior (see above, on v. 11, and compare Heb. 7:7), and as being really a sinner needing pardon and repentance, whereas thou art thyself the Lamb of God which, taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29, 36). This shows how far John was from regarding his own baptism as a magical charm, or as intrinsically efficacious, and how clearly he perceived and represented it to be significant of something altogether different and dependent on a higher power. For it is only upon this ground that he could have seen any incongruity in his administering it even to his own superior, who might have submitted to the rite, or performed it as an opus operatum, no less than others, but who seemed to be entirely beyond the reach and the necessity of that which the baptismal washing signified, to wit, the need of pardon and of moral renovation. (See above, on v. 6.)

15. The participial construction, commonly resolved by our translators into a past tense (see above, on 2:8), is here retained with great advantage as it is in 2:12 above. The two first words of our Lord's answer (φες ρτι) are perceptive or imperative; the rest assigns the ground or reason. Suffer is in Greek a verb originally meaning to let go or (more actively) to send away, in which sense Matthew uses it below (13:36); then to let alone or leave undisturbed (as in 15:14, 27:49); then to leave, in the proper local sense, to go away from (as in 4:11, 20, 22, and often elsewhere); then to leave with, or give up to (as in 5:40); then to leave out or omit (as in 23:23); then to leave unpunished, pardon, or forgive (as in 6:12, 9:2, 12:31, 18:21); and lastly to permit, allow, or suffer (as in 19:14, 23:13). Among these various shades of meaning there is only one entirely inadmissible in this case, namely that of simply leaving or forsaking, since we cannot understand our Lord as telling John to leave him, when he had just come to be baptized by him. But he might say, in accordance with the context and the circumstances, let me go, i. e. into the water, from which John was keeping him; or let me alone, meddle not with my proceedings; or yield to me, give up to my expressed wish; or omit, dispense with, these gratuitous objections; or even pardon me, excuse me, as a formula of condescending courtesy; or finally permit me, suffer me to do what I am doing, which is the sense preferred by most interpreters and well expressed in our translation (suffer it to be so), though the true grammatical construction may require the ellipsis to be otherwise supplied (suffer me to do so). As John's surprise and hesitation necesrily imply that there was something strange in the request or application, so this one word of our Lord implies that there was really some cause of wonder, and that what he now proposed was an exceptional extraordinary act, and as such to be borne with and submitted to. The next word suggests the kindred but additional idea, that it was a temporary act, or rather one to be performed once for all (hoc una vice). It is not the common adverb of time (v v) exactly answering to now (at present, or at this time), but another (ρτι) corresponding rather to just now and presently, sometimes referring to a time already and yet scarcely past (as in 9:18 below and 1 Th. 3:6); sometimes to a proximate immediate future (as in 26:53 below and John 13:37); sometimes to the present moment, as a passing one, in contrast either with the past (as in John 9:19, 25) or with the future (as in John 13:7, 19). This last is here to be preferred, not only as by far the most common and familiar sense, but also as best suiting the connection, and especially the word immediately preceding (φες), as it has been just explained. The two together then mean that the act proposed, although unusual and mysterious, was to be allowed and acquiesced in for some temporary reason. But as this might have seemed

to represent it as a necessary but a real violation of the order constituted by divine authority, our Lord precludes this misconception by affirming the contrary, or giving as a reason for his present conduct its conformity to right and to the will of God. For thus (i. e. by acting in this very way) it becometh, literally, is becoming, seemly, congruous, i. e. precisely suited to our character and relations, which implies without expressing the idea of duty or moral obligation. Instead of saying, in so many words, we ought (or we are bound) to do it, he suggests the same truth less directly and with the additional idea of a fitness or suitableness springing from their personal and mutual relations, what they were in themselves, to one another, and to God. (Compare the application of the same term, becoming in Heb. 2:10, 7:26) To fulfil, the verb applied to prophecy in 1:22, 2:15, 17, 23 above, but here used in the sense before explained (on 1:22) of making good, completing, satislying, or discharging moral obligations. In the same sense it is said below (5:17) of the entire law, which Christ came not to abrogate but to obey, and here, with a difference rather formal than substantial, of all righteousness, or all right, meaning all that is right, and as such incumbent, because pleasing in the sight of God, if not explicitly required by him. There may also be a reference to the doctrinal meaning of the same word as employed by Paul (Rom. 3:21, 22) to signify God's mode of justifying sinners, or his method of salvation, into which Christ's baptism did unquestionably enter, as a link in the long chain of connected means by which the end was to be brought about. But even in the vague sense proposed above of all that is right and therefore binding upon us, the clause assigns a satisfactory reason for requiring John's consent, to wit, that if withheld it would leave something undone, which it was becoming should be done and done by them. For us (μ ν) might possibly be taken in a wide sense as denoting men in general, but much more probably denotes specifically those immediately concerned in this case, i. e. John and Jesus. It becometh (or is suitable for) us (i. e. for me and thee as my forerunner) to accomplish all that is required by God, and therefore right, as well as necessary to the execution of his method of salvation by freely justifying all believers. Then, on hearing this conclusive and authoritative answer, (John) permits (or suffers) him, another instance of the graphic present (see above, on vs. 1:13, and compare 2:19). The meaning of the verb here is of course determined by its meaning in the first clause, and according to the several alternatives there stated, might be rendered, lets him go, lets him alone, yields to him, excuses him, or suffers him, which last is probably the true sense in both cases, suffers him (to be baptized). This expresses more than he baptized him, since it represents the baptism as in some sense the act of the baptized and not of the baptizer, who was really more passive than the subject of the rite, by whose authority, and in direct obedience to whose positive command, it was administered. That John obeyed in silence, though a probable suggestion, is not a necessary inference from that of the historian, who might naturally hurry over all that John said further, as without importance for his purpose, to describe the baptism itself, or rather the divine recognition and attestation of our Lord as the Messiah, by which it was accompanied and followed. The pronoun here expressed (suffers him) determines the construction of the same verb as elliptically used above.

16. The baptism itself was followed by a visible and audible divine recognition of our Lord as the Messiah. Having been baptized, not when he was baptized, which is not only a gratuitous departure from the form of the original, but leaves the order of events in doubt, as when might be equivalent to while, whereas the past tense of the Greek verb (βαπτισθεὶς) determines it. Jesus ascended (went or came up) straightway (forthwith or immediately) from, i. e. away from, as in vs. 7:13. and in 2:1, 4:25, 5:29. not out of, which would be otherwise expressed, as it is in v. 9, and in 2:6, 15, 7:5, 8:28. much less from under, which is not the meaning of the particle in any case, nor here suggested by the context. Ascended from the water evidently means went up from the bed of the river, in which he had just been standing, whether baptized by immersion, or affusion, as the most convenient method, even in the latter case, especially for those who wore the flowing oriental dress, and either sandals (see above, on v. 11) or no covering of the foot at all. But even if John did submerge, in this and other cases, this was no more essential to the rite than nudity, as still practised by the bathers in the Jordan, and at least as much implied in this case as immersion. The two things naturally go together, and immersion without stripping seems to rob the rite in part of its supposed significancy. And behold (or lo), as usual, implies a sudden unexpected sight (see above, on 1:20, 23, 2:1, 9, 13). The heavens, a plural form explained by some as an allusion to the fact or popular belief of several successive heavens, one of which seems to be spoken of by Paul (in 2 Cor. 12:2); but much more probably a Hellenistic imitation of the corresponding Hebrew word which has no singular, and simply equivalent to sky or heaven. Were opened, an entirely different word from that employed by Mark (1:10), and meaning torn or rent, though rendered by the same word as the one before us in the text of the translation. This cannot possibly denote a flash of lightning, or the shining of the stars, or a sudden clearing of the sky, or any thing whatever but an apparent separation or division of the visible expanse, as if to afford passage to the form and voice which are mentioned in the next clause. (Compare the similar expressions of Isai. 64:1. Ezek. 1:1, John 1:51, Acts 7:56.) In all these cases the essential idea suggested by the version is that of renewed communication and extraordinary gifts from heaven to earth. To him is commonly explained as meaning to his view or to his senses, and by some referred to John, who elsewhere speaks of having seen this very sight, and for whose satisfaction and direction it would there seem to have been imparted (see John 1:33). But although it was an attestation not to John alone but to the people (see Luke 3:21), the only natural construction here is that which refers the words to Christ himself, the nearest antecedent, especially if the pronoun (α τ) be regarded as the dative, not of object merely, but of use or profit (opened for him, i. e. for his service and advantage). The same is true of the next verb (and he saw), which is referred to John by some, who understand the previous clause of Jesus; but all analogy and mode are in favour of an uniform construction, i. e. of assuming the same subject in both clauses, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw (i. e. to Jesus, and Jesus saw). This is perfectly consistent with John's seeing the same objects, as asserted by himself (John 1:33), but not with the idea that this whole scene was a visionary one, restricted to the mind or the imagination either of the Baptist

or of Christ himself. The harmonious variation of the two accounts in this respect may possibly have been intended to prevent this error, and to show the objective reality of the scene described in both these places. The Spirit of God cannot be an attribute or influence, which could not be embodied or subjected to the senses, but denotes a divine person still more certainly and clearly than in v. 11 above. Descending, the correlative expression to ascended in the first clause, being compounds of the same verb with the prepositions up and down. Like is in Greek a compound particle made up of the words as and if, and equivalent in meaning to the phrase, as if it had been, which does not necessarily imply that it was not so, though it cannot be employed to prove the presence of a real dove, much less of one which accidentally flew by or over, and was viewed by John the Baptist as an emblem of the Holy Ghost! Equally groundless is the notion that the point of the resemblance or comparison is not the shape or figure but the motion of the dove, as being either swift or gentle, or in any other way peculiar. The uncertainty and vagueness of the image thus presented, renders this interpretation as unnatural and foreign from the context here, as it is inconsistent with the more explicit terms employed by Luke (3:22). The natural expression, and indeed the strict construction of the words, is that there were was an appearance of a dove, most probably a form momentarily assumed, in order to make visible the union of the Spirit with the Son on this august occasion. The selection of this form has been referred by some to the natural qualities belonging to the dove, such as gentleness and purity; by others to its hovering and brooding motion, used in Gen. 1:2, according to an ancient Jewish exposition, to describe the generative or productive agency of the Divine Spirit in the first creation. Instead of this, or in addition to it, some suppose a reference to the dove of Noah (Gen. 8:8–11) and to the sacrificial use of this bird, as prescribed or permitted by the ritual in certain cases (Gen. 15:9. Lev. 14:22, 21:6. Luke 2:24). Whether all or any of these reasons entered into the divine plan of our Lord's inauguration as the Christ, can only be conjectured, and is wholly unimportant in comparison with what must be regarded as the certain and essential fact recorded, namely, that the incarnate Son did see the Spirit in a bodily form (Luke 3:22), not only descending from the open heavens, but coming to and on himself, as the central figure in this glorious scene, and as the person with whom the Divine Spirit, though essentially one with him, now entered into new relations, with a view to that mediatorial work in which they were to be respectively the Saviour and the Sanctifier of mankind.

17. The visible presence and communication of the Spirit was attended by an audible testimony from the Father. Lo (or behold) again introduces something strange and unexpected. There is no need of supplying came from the parallel accounts (Mark 1:11. Luke 3:22), as lo is often followed by a nominative absolute (i. e. without a verb), forming not a complete sentence but an exclamation.* A voice, not visionary or imaginary, nor heard only by our Lord himself, nor that mysterious echo which the Jews call Bath-kol, but a literal and real sound, corresponding to the bodily appearance (Luke 3:21) by which it was preceded (see above, on v. 16). That the voice was audible to others, may be learned from the analogous occurrence at the Transfiguration, where the added words (Hear ye him) were addressed directly to the three disciples (see below, on 17:5). From, or more exactly, out of, (see above, on v. 16, where the usage of the prepositions κ and πό) is explained. Heaven, literally the heavens, as in the preceding verse, though here (and in Mark 1:11) needlessly assimilated in the English version to the singular form used by Luke (3:22). This is, as if still addressing others, whereas Mark and Luke have thou art, as addressed to Christ himself. This variation in reporting words expressly used on a particular occasion, although made a ground of cavil here and elsewhere,† is susceptible of easy explanation on the principle which all men recognize, if not in theory in practice, that one witness may report the substance and another the exact form without any inconsistency or violation of the truth. This, i. e. this man now before you, upon whom the Spirit has descended in your presence. My Son, the words applied to the Messiah in the promise made to David (2 Sam. 7:14), and in his own prophetic psalm founded on it (Ps. 2:7). Hence the Son of God became one of his standing designations (see below, on 4:3, 6, 8:29, 14:33, 26:63, 27:40, 54), corresponding to his other title, Son of Man (Dan. 7:13. Matt. 8:20, 9:6, 10:23, 11:19 &c.), each implying more than it expresses, the Son of God (who is the Son of Man), the Son of Man (who is the son of God). The filial relation thus ascribed to the Messiah, far from excluding, presupposes his eternal sonship. My beloved Son, is more emphatically worded in the Greek, my Son, the Beloved, as a sort of proper name or distinctive title. (Compare the similar but not identical expression in Eph. 1:6.) As this epithet could not be applied, in the same sense, to any other being, it is really coincident, though not synonymous, with own son (Rom. 8:32), only son (Gen. 22:2, 12, where the Septuagint uses the same Greek word), only begotten, as applied to human relations by Luke (7:12, 8:42, 9:38, and to divine by John (1:14, 18, 3:16, 18, 1 John 4:9), and Paul (Heb. 11:17). The combination of these epithets by Mark (12:6) and Homer (μο νος ν γαπητός), far from proving them synonymous, explicitly distinguishes between them. This divine love is not to be deemed as the ground or cause, but the effect or co-eternal adjunct of the sonship here ascribed to Christ. The remaining words are also borrowed from a Messianic prophecy, still extant in Isaiah (42:1), and expressly quoted and applied by Matthew elsewhere (see below, on 12:18). In whom, or as Luke (3:22) and the latest text of Mark (1:11) read in thee (see above, on the preceding clause). I am well pleased is in Greek a single word, the aorist of a verb used sometimes to express volition, and then construed with a following infinitive, but sometimes perfect satisfaction or complacency, the object of which is then denoted by a noun or pronoun following.* According to the theory and usage of the Greek verb, both in the classics and in Scripture (see above, on 1:22), the aorist (ε δόκησα) is to be confounded neither with the present, I am (now) well pleased, nor with the perfect, I have (ever) been well pleased, but has respect to a specific point of time, I was (once) well pleased. Although the deviations from this strict rule are sufficient to authorize a liberal construction when required by exegetical necessity, the latter is precluded in the case before us by the obvious allusion to the Son's assumption of the Mediatorial office, which is here presented as the ground or reason of the Father's infinite complacency or approbation, as distinguished from what may be called,

for want of any better term, the natural affection or intense love, which enters into our conception of the mutual relation of paternity and sonship. There is therefore no tautology in these two clauses, but the first describes our Lord as the beloved Son of God from all eternity; the second as the object of his infinite complacency and approbation as the Son of Man, the Mediator, the Messiah. In this voluntarily assumed or adopted character, the Son of God was recognized and set forth at his baptism. Though himself the only Son of God by nature or inherent right, he is here offered to us as a pledge of our adoption, so that through his mediation we may all become the Sons of God, “to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6, compare Col. 1:15, 20. 1 John 3:1). This sublime and solemn recognition of our Lord in his official chracter, involves a striking exhibition of the threefold personality in the divine essence, the Father audibly addressing and the Spirit visibly descending on the incarnate Son, as he assumes his Messianic Office.

CHAPTER 4

Continuing his narrative of the events immediately preceding our Lord’s public ministry and serving as preliminaries to it, Matthew now records his conflict with the Tempter in the wilderness, and triumph over him (1–11). He then begins the history of our Lord’s prophetic ministry in Galilee, which opens where the ministry of John the Baptist closes, and is shown to have been long before predicted by Isaiah (12–17). At Capernaum, the chosen centre of his operations, he selects four fishermen to be his personal attendants, and eventually his Apostles (18–22). This is followed by a summary account of his itinerant labours, as a teacher and a healer, with the consequent concourse from all quarters, both of Palestine and the adjacent countries (23–25).

1. Then, a favourite connective in this gospel, where it occurs thrice as often as in all the others put together, a minute but strong proof that inspiration did not supersede the peculiar modes of thought and speech by which the sacred writers were distinguished. As it may mean either afterwards or at the same time, and in the former case may denote either longer or shorter intervals, it can here prove nothing by itself as to the chronological relation of the incidents which it connects in Matthew’s narrative, namely our Lord’s Baptism and Temptation. It does, however, raise a presumption that they were immediately successive, and this presumption is confirmed by the more explicit language of the parallel accounts (Mark 1:12, Luke 4:1). Jesus, who had just been recognized as the Son of God by a voice from heaven and the visible descent of the Holy Ghost (see above, on 3:17). Was led up, as if passively, and in obedience to an impulse distinct from his own will, though not opposed to it. Of (i. e. by) the Spirit, as the source or author of the impulse just referred to. The Spirit does not mean his own mind or the evil spirit, but the Holy Ghost, as a divine person, often simply so described, which had just descended visibly (3:17) and rested on him (John 1:32), and of which he was now full (Luke 4:1), i. e. occupied, endowed, and governed by it, not merely as a man, but as the God-Man or Mediator, in which character or office he sustained a peculiar relation to the third person of the godhead, as the author of all spiritual good in the hearts and lives of men, and in his own as their surety and their representative. Into the wilderness, not in the wide sense of the term before explained (on 3:1), namely that of an uninhabited or even an uncultivated tract, however fertile or luxuriant; but in the strict sense of a desert, yielding no supplies, and far from the abodes of men, frequented only by wild animals (Mark 1:13). Whether the wilderness here meant was the interior and wilder portion of the one where John appeared (3:1), so that our Lord, though in the wilderness already, might be said to have gone (i. e. to have gone further) into it; or a distinct and wilder solitude, extending from the Jordan in the neighbourhood of Jericho to Bethel (Josh. 16:1); or the wilderness of Sinai, where the Israelites wandered, and where Moses and Elijah fasted (Ex. 34:28. 1 Kings 19:8), are questions not determined by the text or context, and of little exegetical importance, as the only essential fact, because the only one recorded, is that these transactions took place in a desert, far from all human aid and sympathy. Led up, i. e. as some understand it, towards Jerusalem, in reference to its physical and moral elevation, but much more probably, from the depressed bed or valley of the Jordan into the mountainous solitudes of Bethel or the Dead Sea, where tradition designates the spot by the name of Quarantaria, in allusion to the forty days’ fast recorded in the next verse. To be tempted, not as a mere incidental consequence (so that he was tempted), but as the deliberate design or purpose (that he might be tempted) not of his own mind, which at least is not directly meant, but of the Father who had sent him, and the Spirit who now led him. To be tempted means originally nothing more than to be tried, proved, or (in modern English) tested, i. e. shown to possess or want certain qualities, to be determined by comparison with some prescribed and well-known rule or standard. In a material sense the term is thus applied to the precious metals, in a moral sense to human character, as proved or tried by God himself, or as solicited to sin by men or devils, in which sense God can no more tempt than he can be tempted (James 1:13). The great tempter of mankind is the prince of demons (9:34, 12:24), or the chief of fallen angels (25:41), by whom our first parents were betrayed into transgression (2 Cor. 11:3), and who is therefore called Satan or the Adversary (Mark 1:13), and the Devil, slanderer or false accuser (Luke 4:2). It was by this enemy of God and Man that Jesus now went up into the desert to be tempted, as a necessary part of his own human discipline and humiliation (see above, on 3:15); as a lesson to his people of what they must look for, and an assurance of their own escape and triumph; but besides all this, as a premonition of the great decisive crisis in the war between the “seed of the woman” and the “seed of the serpent” (see above, on 3:7), the heads and representatives of both which parties were now to be brought personally into contact. Our Lord’s susceptibility of temptation was no more inconsistent with his sinlessness than that of Adam, and

is insisted on in Scripture as essential to his office, and especially as necessary to a real sympathy between him and his tempted people (Heb. 2:18). This scriptural idea has been variously amplified, embellished, and extended, by ingenious and in some cases fanciful comparisons between the three temptations here recorded and the threefold bait presented to Eve (Gen. 3:6), the threefold description of worldly lusts by the Apostle (1 John 2:16), the successive temptations of Israel in the wilderness, those peculiarly belonging to the three great periods of human life, and to the corresponding stages in the progress of the race or of particular nations; to which has recently been added an analogy between these temptations and the three great offices of Christ on one hand, and the three great Jewish sects or parties on the other. As such comparisons admit of an indefinite multiplication, and depend upon the taste and fancy of the individual interpreter or reader; they are not to be forced upon the text as a part of its essential meaning, whatever use may be made of them as striking and illustrative analogies.

2. And having fasted, not in the attenuated sense of eating little, or of abstaining from all ordinary food (see above, on 3:4); but in the strict and proper sense of eating nothing (Luke 4:2). Forty days and forty nights, i. e. forty whole days of entire privation, not merely half days of such abstinence with intervening periods of indulgence, such as the later Jews, according to their own traditions, practised in their stated fasts. This protracted fast of Christ, being clearly miraculous or superhuman, affords no example to his people, and can be imitated by them only in the way of thankful and reverent commemoration. A yearly fast of forty days, whatever it may have to recommend it, can never be made binding on the conscience by this extraordinary incident occurring once for all in the biography of Jesus. Was an hungered, an unusual phrase even in Old English, corresponding to a single word in Greek, and that an active verb, meaning nothing more nor less than hungered, or in modern phrase, was hungry. Afterward, a relative expression which can only be referred to the preceding clause, and must mean therefore when the forty days were ended. This implies that while they lasted he was free from hunger; and this again that his fast was not a painful act of self-denial, but an abnormal preternatural condition, having no analogy in our experience, and therefore not a proper object of our imitation. As here recorded it has reference, not so much to bodily mortification, or even spiritual discipline, as to intimate and exclusive intercourse with God, like that of Moses and Elijah, when called to the solemn task of legislation and of reformation (see above, on v. 1). To these great historical examples there is evident allusion in the mention of the forty days, an external circumstance alike in all three cases. As the abstinence from food for such a length of time evinced an interruption or suspension of the ordinary laws of life, so the hunger which followed showed the suspension to be at an end, and the humanity of Christ to be no less real than that of the Great Lawgiver and Reformer of the old economy.

3. As it is not said that this was the beginning of our Lord’s temptation, there is no inconsistency with the account of Mark (1:13) and Luke (4:2), that he was tempted forty days. Both may be reconciled by simply assuming that the three temptations here recorded were the last of a long series, and perhaps the only ones in which the tempter became visible. The sense of Matthew’s narrative will then be, that after having otherwise assailed him, in a way perhaps which could not have been comprehensible to us, the tempter now approached him visibly, and took advantage of the natural hunger which succeeded his extraordinary abstinence. The tempter, literally, the (one) tempting, i. e. the one who was to tempt our Lord on this occasion, but not without allusion to his character and practice, as the (one) tempting (others also) or the tempter (of mankind in general). The idea that the tempter mentioned here, is a mere personification of our Lord’s own thoughts and dispositions, is as impious as it is absurd. That the tempter, though a real person, was a human one, the High Priest, or a member of the Sanhedrim, or one of the emissaries sent to John the Baptist (John 1:19) now on his way back to Jerusalem, are notions which, if ever seriously entertained, have long since been exploded. The impression made by the terms of the narrative itself for ages upon every unsophisticated reader is undoubtedly the true one, namely, that the tempter who appears in this transaction, was a personal but not a human being, or in other words an evil spirit, and the one emphatically called the Devil (see above, on v. 1). When the tempter came to him is not, as it might seem in English, a mere note of time, but a substantive part of the transaction, coming to (approaching) him, the tempter said. The voice which spake was not that of an unseen speaker, or uttered from above or from below, but by a person coming up to him, perhaps as a stranger, or a casual passer by. This supposes him, however, to have exhibited an ordinary human form, whereas some think that he was transformed into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), and others that he wore a shape peculiar to himself, or at least to fallen angels. There is nothing in the text or context to decide this question, which is rather one of curiosity than of exegetical importance. If a son thou art of God would be the strict translation; but as the usage of the article in this phrase varies, even where the sense remains unchanged,* the indefinite form is not to be insisted on. The division of the chapters tempts the reader to regard this scene as wholly unconnected with the one before it in the narrative, although they were immediately successive (see above, on v. 1), and the first words of the tempter, here recorded, seem to contain an allusion to the solemn recognition of our Lord as the Son of God by a voice from heaven (see above, on 3:17), of which Satan may have been himself a witness. This clause may be either understood as expressing a doubt (if thou art really the Son of God), or as admitting that the fact was so (since thou art the Son of God), which last is no less in agreement with Greek usage. On the former supposition, the remainder of the verse prescribes a test by which the truth of his pretensions might be tried; on the other, it simply makes a proposition or request, which could not be complied with, if he were not really the Son of God.—Command that, literally, Say (or speak, in order) that, for the purpose of seeing this effect. (As to the usage of the Greek conjunction, see above, on 1:22). These stones, perhaps the same to which John the Baptist pointed (see above, on 3:9), or at least of the same kind, i. e. loose stones scattered on the surface of the desert.—Be made, or more exactly,

may become, begin to be, i. e. be changed into (see above, on 1:22).—Bread, literally, breads, i. e. loaves or cakes, a usage similar to that of the French (pains). This plural form renders it less probable that bread as some suppose, and as it does in 15:2 below and elsewhere stand for food in general, the different varieties of which would hardly be denoted by the plural (breads). The strict interpretation is confirmed, moreover, by the proverbial antithesis or contrast between stone and bread (or stones and loaves) both in Scripture (see below, on 7:9), and in the classics. The suggestion of the tempter then was not that he should supply himself with dainties or varieties of food to gratify his appetite, but simply with the staff of life, to satisfy his hunger.* If so, the first temptation was not to the sin of gluttony, as some have strangely fancied, which could not have been committed by eating bread when hungry, and after a fast of forty days, and to which our Lord's reply in the next verse would be wholly irrelevant. Nor was the temptation to a vain and ostentatious exhibition of miraculous endowments, which would have been thrown away in such a spot, and to which the answer would be no less inappropriate. The only sin, which satisfies the terms of the whole context, is that of distrusting God and refusing to rely upon his providence, by undertaking to supply one's own wants and sustain one's own life, in the exercise of an extraordinary power.—As to the motive or design of this temptation, some regard it as a mere desire to induce our Lord to sin, and in a way suggested by his actual condition, which was one of hunger. Others suppose it to have been a more specific wish to ascertain the truth of his pretensions, by inducing him to act in a manner inconsistent with them.—Another point which may be variously understood, because entirely conjectural, is the knowledge which the tempter had of Christ's divinity, or the sense which he attached to his acknowledged Sonship. Though the title Son of God was applicable to him in the highest sense, as denoting community of nature or participation in the essence of the Father (see above, on 3:17), it admitted also of a lower application to his human nature, to mankind in general, to angels both as creatures and as objects of divine affection; and the tempter may have been in ignorance or doubt as to which of these relations was denoted by the phrase when uttered by the voice from heaven, or, as some suppose, applied by Jesus to himself in previous conversations during the forty days preceding this direct and overt demonstration of hostility. In favour of such ignorance or doubt is the extreme improbability that Satan would have dared, or thought it possible, to tempt a divine person; whereas a Son of God, in some of the inferior senses which have just been mentioned, might be capable of falling into sin as the apostate fiend himself had done (John 8:44, Jude 6). This seems to be a more satisfactory solution of his conduct upon this occasion, than to resolve it into the fatuity which naturally clings to all depravity, and which therefore might betray even the most crafty and sagacious of all finite spirits into the absurdity of tempting God to sin, as he had no less foolishly attempted to resist him, or to be his rival. All this, however, is mere matter of conjecture or imagination, as the narrative itself affords no hint of any thing but what was actually said and done, and the whole subject of Satanic agency is too mysterious and too imperfectly revealed, to be successfully subjected to a process of reasoning or of speculation.

4. The contrast is not between material and spiritual food, which would be wholly inappropriate to this temptation, but between ordinary food, represented by bread, and any other food which God may prescribe or promise. This is clear from the connection here and in the passage quoted (Deut. 8:3), where the reference is plainly to the manna, not as immaterial food, which it was not, but as a succedaneum for the usual kind of nourishment, by which the Israelites were taught to rely upon Providence not only for the customary means of subsistence, but for extraordinary supplies in rare emergencies. The application intended by our Saviour to his own case evidently is, that in providing for himself by miracle, he would be guilty of the same sin which the ancient Jews so frequently committed, that of questioning God's willingness and power to supply them. But (on the other hand, and in reply to this suggestion) he (Jesus) answering said, Not on bread only (or alone), i. e. in reliance or dependence on it as the only practicable means of sustenance, shall man live, i. e. is he, by divine appointment and the law of his condition, to subsist, but on (or according to the latest critics, in, i. e. in the use of) every word proceeding through the mouth of God, or uttered by him. Word neither means thing (a usage now denied by eminent philologists) nor truth, which, as we have already seen, would be irrelevant in this connection, but, must be taken in its strict and proper sense of something spoken, as appears further from the added words, by (or through) the mouth of God. Proceeding, coming (or going) out, i. e. uttered or pronounced, whether in the way of precept or decree or promise. (Compare Num. 30:12. Deut. 23:23. Judg. 11:36). It has been written, long ago, and still remains on record (see above, on 2:5). By thus appealing to the Scriptures, Christ not only gives his attestation to the Pentateuch and to the Book of Deuteronomy, as part of a divine revelation, but instructs us, by example, in the proper method of repelling such temptations, namely by opposing truth to error, and the word of God to the suggestions of the Evil One. (See below, on vs. 7:10).

5. Then, sometimes loosely or indefinitely used, but here, no doubt, meaning in the next place, and indicating the exact order of events, which is reversed by Luke (4:5, 9), in order to accommodate his own plan or purpose. Then may also mean immediately, as in v. 1 above, though some suppose an interval between the two temptations, as if he had said, afterwards, or at another time, or on a different occasion. It has even been imagined that this second onset took place when our Saviour was returning from the desert to Jerusalem. But this, though possible, is not the natural impression made upon most readers, who regard the temptations as immediately successive. Takes him along (or with him), in his company, a verb of frequent use in the New Testament, and always, when applied to persons, in the same sense, without any necessary implication of coercion, or even of authority, though one or both may sometimes be suggested by the context.* Here, however, there is nothing to imply compulsion, and the verb means merely that they went together, but at Satan's instance, which is no more inconsistent with our Lord's divine or human dignity, than his submitting to be scourged and crucified by Satan's agents. In either case it was a part of his voluntary humiliation as a Saviour and a

substitute, the height or depth of which consisted not in his permitting Satan to conduct him from place to place, but in submitting to be tempted by him.—The Devil, slanderer, or false accuser (see above, on 4:1). Up, though not in the original, is found in all the English versions except Wiclif's. Into the holy city, i. e. Jerusalem, so called because it was the seat of the theocracy and sanctuary, or as our Lord himself expressed it afterwards, "the city of the Great King" (see below, on 5:35). There is nothing here to intimate a visionary or ideal journey, but the natural impression made is that of a corporeal external entrance from without, perhaps directly from the wilderness or desert. Sets him, literally, stands him, i. e. makes him stand, but here again without implying force or authority, the essential notion being that of causing him to stand, but whether by request or otherwise, is not expressed (see below, on 18:2, 25:33). A pinnacle, in Greek the wing, supposed by some to be the roof of the temple itself so called from its gradual inclination upon either side, like the folded wings of a bird, perhaps an eagle, which word is itself applied thus in Greek writings. But according to Josephus, the summit of the sacred edifice was armed with spikes to prevent birds from alighting on it. A more obvious and natural interpretation gives to wing its ordinary sense in architecture, namely, that of a lateral projection from the main edifice or body of a building. In this sense it may be applied either to the vestibule or porch of the temple properly so called (ναός†) which was higher than the temple itself, or to one of the vast porticoes or colonnades surrounding the whole area of the temple, two of which overlooked deep valleys, namely, Solomon's porch,‡ upon the east side, looking down into the valley of Jehoshaphat or Kedron, and the Royal Porch, upon the south side, looking down into the valley of Hinnom. This last is represented by Josephus as a dizzy height, which would agree well with the context and the circumstances in the case before us. The temple, one of the words so translated, and denoting the whole sacred enclosure, not the sanctuary only, but the courts by which it was surrounded.*

6. Here again some suppose the sin to which our Lord was tempted to have been a vain display of his miraculous power, not as in the other case without spectators, but before the multitude who thronged the courts of the temple, and by whom he might be recognized as the Messiah. But as no such purpose is referred to in the narrative, or in our Lord's reply to the temptation, a more probable interpretation is the common one, which makes this the converse of the former case, and as that was a temptation to distrust, explains this as a temptation to presumption, or a rash reliance upon God's protecting care in situations where he has not promised it, and where the danger is a voluntary or a self-produced one. Cast thyself down, from the summit of the temple to the pavement of the court below, or from the lofty porch into the deep valley which it overlooked. This he is solicited to do without necessity, or fear of the result, confiding in the promise of divine protection and angelic care. As the ground of this rash confidence, the tempter, borrowing the weapon which had just disarmed him, cites a passage from the ninety-first Psalm (vs. 11, 12). an inspired composition, the whole drift of which is to illustrate the security of those who put their trust in God, even with reference to temporal calamities. It relates to the Messiah, not exclusively, but by way of eminence. The argument suggested is a fortiori, namely, that if all God's people are thus cared for, much more will his Son be. The quotation is recorded in the words of the Septuagint version, which is here a correct transcript of the Hebrew. The plural (angels) shows that there is no allusion to a guardian angel attending each individual believer, but merely to the angels collectively, as "ministering spirits," the instrumental agents of God's providential care over his people (Heb. 1:14). The promise here given does not extend to dangers rashly incurred or presumptuously sought, and was therefore no justification of the act to which our Lord was tempted by the Devil. That the mere omission of the words, in all thy ways, was a part of that temptation, or designed to wrest the passage from its true sense, though a very ancient and still prevalent opinion, seems to be a gratuitous refinement, as our Lord himself makes no such charge; as the first words of the sentence would of course suggest the rest; and as ways, in the original, does not mean ways of duty, but of Providence. Neither the tempter's argument nor Christs' reply to it would be at all affected by the introduction of the words suppressed. Bearing or carrying on the hands seems intended to denote a tender care like that of nurses, an allusion frequently found elsewhere.* Lest at any time is all expressed in Greek by one word (μήποτε), which may also be explained as denoting mere contingency, lest haply or by chance.† Dash, knock, or strike, in walking, i. e. stumble. Against, is twice expressed here by the same particle (πρός), once before the verb and once before the noun. The stone, i. e. the one which happens to be lying in the way. A smooth path and unobstructed walk is a natural and common figure for prosperity and safety. "Then (if thou keep wisdom and discretion) thou shalt walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble" (Prov. 3:23).

7. Our Lord here uses the same method of resistance as before, repelling the temptation by a dictum of the Scriptures, drawn from another passage of the same book (Deut. 6:16). Again, does not mean, on the contrary (or other hand), in reference to the tempter's allegation from the Psalms, but once more, in another place, with reference to his first quotation, or to both together.‡ Tempt, not the simple verb so rendered elsewhere,§ but an emphatic compound meaning to try out, to draw out by trial, to try thoroughly. ‖ As applied to God, it means to put him to the proof, to demand further evidence of what is clear already,¶ as in this case by requiring him to show his watchful care by an extraordinary intervention in a case of danger wilfully and needlessly incurred. The precept has a double edge or application, to the Saviour, as a reason why he would not tempt God, and to the Devil, as a reason why he should not tempt Christ. As if he had said: I will neither tempt God by presuming on his providence, nor suffer you to tempt me by presumptuous solicitation.

8. Again, as in the verse preceding, although here used to distinguish not the quotations but the temptations from each other. The same question here arises as in v. 5, with respect to the interval between the two assaults; but here too the impression made on all unbiassed readers is no doubt that of immediate succession. Taketh, i. e. along or in his company, precisely as in v. 5. This part of

the transaction is supposed to have occurred in vision, even by some who understand what goes before as literally, true. But such a difference is highly arbitrary and unnatural; nor is there any more necessity for such a supposition here than in the other cases. The very high mountain is not named, and can only be conjectured. The scene of this temptation is supposed by some to have been Nebo (Deut. 34:1), and by others Tabor (see below, on 17:1); but as very high is a comparative or relative expression, it may just as well have been the Mount of Olives (see below, on 21:1, 24:3, 26:30), immediately adjacent to the Holy City, or some point in the highlands, between Jericho and Bethel, or in those adjacent to the Dead Sea (see above, on v. 1, and on 3:1). Sheweth, causes him to see, not upon a map or picture, which might just as well have been presented elsewhere; nor by an optical illusion, which the tempter had no right or power to practise on the Saviour's senses; but either by a voluntary and miraculous extension of his vision on his own part, or by a combination of sensible perception with rhetorical description (show being elsewhere used to express both visual and oral exhibition, as in 8:4. compared with 16:21), an actual exhibition of what lay within the boundary of vision, and an enumeration of the kingdoms which in different directions lay beyond it, with a glowing representation of their wealth and power (and the glory of them). Upon either of these latter suppositions, all the kingdoms of the world may be strictly understood, instead of being violently explained away, as meaning the different provinces of Palestine, or even of the Roman Empire.

9. Having thus exhibited the bait, the tempter actually offers it. These (things), all (of them), which I have now shown or described to thee, to wit, the kingdoms of the world with their glory, i. e. all that renders them attractive to the love of power, pleasure, wealth, and honour. To thee will I give, implying that he had a right to do so, not inherent but derivative (Luke 4:6). This is not to be regarded as a sheer invention, but a statement at least partially correct, and shown to be so by the frequent reference to Satan as the prince or god of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11. 2 Cor. 4:4). How far this delegated power extends, in what way it is exercised, and by what checks it is restrained, are questions which we have not data to determine, but which cannot nullify the fact itself so clearly revealed elsewhere. The charge of simple falsehood, therefore, is as groundless here as that of misquotation in v. 6, the force of the temptation lying deeper in both cases. The condition annexed to this seductive offer is supposed by some to be religious adoration, i. e. idolatry or rather devil-worship;* by others a mere civil homage or acknowledgment of sovereignty (see above, on 2:2, 8, 11). But in this case the two acts are necessarily coincident if not identical, as no one does or can pay allegiance to the Devil as his sovereign, without making him his god, and worshipping him as such. The falling down was merely the external recognition of his right to this two-fold homage. The sin to which our Lord is here solicited is not a simple but a complex one, including secular ambition and idolatry, not only that covetousness which is idolatry (Col. 3:5), but also apostasy from God as the true sovereign and the only object of religious adoration, and the substitution of his most malignant enemy in both these characters. To this same complicated sin, the ancient Israel was tempted, and with a very different result (Lev. 17:7. Deut. 32:17).

10. Then, as in vs. 1, 5, corresponding to again in vs. 7:8, both meaning once more, and marking repetition and succession. Get thee hence, in Greek a single word (παγε = apage!) begone, avaunt, out of my sight! a strong expression of abhorrence, not only for the person of the tempter, but particularly for the impious audacity of his last temptation. Some of the old manuscripts and late editions add behind me, which is probably, however, an interpolation from 16:23 below. Satan, adversary, enemy of God and Man, in which light he had now unmasked himself, and is therefore here addressed by name, as well as driven from the Saviour's presence. This climax both in the temptation and in the repulse, may serve to show that Matthew's order is that of the occurrences themselves, whatever may have been Luke's reason for inverting it (see above, on v. 5). But not content with naming the tempter and bidding him begone, our Lord once more opposes scripture to his vile solicitations, drawing still upon the same part of the Pentateuch, as if to put peculiar honour in advance upon a book which was to be especially assailed by modern infidelity. The passage is found in Deut. 6:13, and is here given in the words of the Septuagint version. Alone is not expressed in the original passage, but is necessarily suggested by the context, and is therefore introduced not only in the lxx. version, but by Josephus and by Aben Ezra, one of the most famous of the rabbins (see also 1 Sam. 7:3). Serve, a verb used in classic Greek to signify mercenary labour, work for hire, but in Hellenistic usage transferred to religious service. The distinction which the Church of Rome would make between this and the lower service which she pays to images, is utterly precluded by the text before us, which prohibits not latreia merely, but even proscynesis, to be paid to any other object than to God alone. This scripture also has a double edge or application, as if he had said: 'Instead of being asked to worship thee, I am entitled to be worshipped by thee.'

11. Then, after the conclusion of this last assault and its repulse. Leaveth him, or letteth him (alone), the Greek verb used above in 3:15, and there explained. The idea here expressed is not that of mere locomotion or departure, but of cessation from disturbance and annoyance, not forever but until a a future time (Luke 4:13). The departure of the Devil coincides with the appearance or return of holy angels, who would seem to have withdrawn during this mysterious conflict, that the honour of the triumph might be Christ's alone. Came, literally, came up, or came to (him), which naturally, although not necessarily, suggests the idea of a visible appearance. Ministered, or as the Greek specifically signifies, waited on him, served him, with particular reference to food.* This angelic ministration is in contrast both with the Satanic onset and with the abstinence and hunger which preceded it. From the privations of the desert and the solicitations of the devil, the transition was immediate to the society and help of angels.

12. Having thus recorded the preliminaries of the Saviour's ministry, Matthew now proceeds to the ministry itself, which he seems, like Mark and Luke, to describe as beginning in Galilee, the northern province of the land of Israel, divided from Judea by the district

of Samaria (see above, on 2:22). But we learn from John (1:19–51, 2:13–25, 3:1–36, 4:1–42), that he was publicly recognized by his forerunner, and began his own work, in Judea. This has been malevolently represented as a contradiction; but in neither of the first three gospels is it expressly said that this was absolutely his first appearance as a public teacher, but only that he now appeared as such in Galilee. Matthew, moreover, as well as Mark (1:14), explicitly confines his narrative to what happened after John's imprisonment, leaving room at least for the assumption that something previous is omitted because not included in the writer's plan. Luke too speaks of Jesus as returning to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14), i. e. of the same Spirit who had prompted and directed his official functions elsewhere. The only question is why the first three gospels should have omitted what took place in Judea, and begun with his appearance in Galilee. A sufficient answer seems to be, that his appearance in Judea was intended merely to connect his ministry with that of John, by letting the two co-exist or overlap each other, like the two dispensations which they represented. As the forms of the Mosaic law were still continued in existence, long after they were virtually superseded by the advent of Messiah and the organization of his kingdom, as if to show that the two systems, although incompatible and exclusive of each other as permanent institutions, were identical in origin, authority, and purpose, the one being not the rival or the opposite, but simply the completion of the other; so our Lord, whose presence was to supersede the ministry of John, appeared for a time in conjunction with him, and received his first disciples from him (John 1:37), as a proof that John had only begun the work which Christ was to accomplish. When this joint ministry, if it may be so called, was terminated by the imprisonment of John, our Lord retired or retreated into Galilee, where he had been brought up, and where he was to be rejected by his neighbours and acquaintances, as well as to perform the greater part of his prophetic functions. The imprisonment of John is barely mentioned here, as suggesting the time and the occasion of our Lord's withdrawing from Judea, the events which led to the imprisonment itself, being reserved by Matthew for another place (see below, on 14:3–5). Hearing or having heard, seems to imply that he was at some distance from the place of John's arrest or seizure. Cast into prison is more correctly rendered in the margin, delivered up, i. e. by Herod to the jailer (compare Luke 12:58. Acts 8:3, 22:4), or by Providence to Herod himself (compare Acts 2:23). Departed, the verb used in 2:12, 13, 14, 22, above, and corresponding more exactly to withdrew, retreated. It does not necessarily denote escape from danger, as in the places just referred to, where that idea is suggested by the context. It is here precluded by the statement that our Saviour went directly into Herod's jurisdiction, and that his danger in Judea could not be increased by John's imprisonment. The meaning rather is that he withdrew from Judea, where his ministry had already roused the jealous party spirit of the Pharisees (John 4:1), into Galilee, where John's removal left an open field for Christ's own ministry and missionary labours. It is unnecessary therefore to take Galilee in the specific sense of Upper Galilee, or as denoting any other portion of the province as distinguished from the rest; which would be perfectly gratuitous and contrary to usage, as well as inconsistent with the context, which requires Galilee to be contrasted, not with itself or any part of itself, but with the other provinces of Palestine.

13. Leaving Nazareth, which had been his home since his return in infancy from Egypt (see above, on 2:21–23), and which might have been expected to become the seat and centre of his operations. Without explaining why this expectation was not realized, as Luke does most minutely (4:16–31), Matthew hurries on to speak of his settlement at Capernaum, in which a signal prophecy was verified. Coming (or having come) is not a pleonastic or superfluous expression, but a distinct statement of the fact, that he not only went to Capernaum, as he often did at other times, but took up his abode there. Dwelt, or rather settled, the Greek verb denoting an incipient residence (as in 4:13, 12:45, Luke 11:26. Acts 7:2, 4), whether eventually permanent (as in Acts 9:32, 17:26), or temporary (as in Heb. 11:9). What is here recorded is our Lord's adoption of Capernaum instead of Nazareth, as the centre of his ministry, from which he went forth on his missions or official journeys (see below, on v. 23). Capernaum the maritime, in Greek an adjective denoting what is on or by the sea, as correctly paraphrased but not translated in the English Bible. It is so called, not to distinguish it from any other place of the same name, for no such place is known to have existed, as in the case of Bethlehem (see above, on 2:1, 6), but because its situation was important to identify it as the subject of the prophecy recited in the following verses. Capernaum itself is no longer in existence, and its very site is now a subject of dispute; but Dr. Robinson has clearly shown that it was always understood to be marked by a village now called Khan Minyeh, till the 17th century, when travellers began to seek it at a place called Tell Houm an hour further to the north-east, but with nothing to support its claims except a very faint resemblance to the ancient name. This was variously written, Capharnaum, Cepharnome, Caparnaum, Capernaum, &c. The place is not named in the Old Testament, which probably, though not necessarily, implies a later origin. Josephus mentions the town once by the name of Cepharnome, but applies the form Capernaum (or Capharnaum) only to a fountain. The most probable site of the city was near the northern edge of the small but fertile district called Gennesaret* on the eastern shore of the lake which forms the eastern boundary of Galilee, and through which the Jordan passes (see above, on 3:6 and below, on v. 18). Borders, or boundaries, in Scripture sometimes means the region bounded, or the area within the borders;† but the same town could not be within two tribes, except by being on their confines or borders in the strict sense. Zabulon and Nephthalim are slight modifications of Zebulon and Naphtali, the names of two of Jacob's sons (Gen. 30:8, 20), and of the tribes descended from them (Num. 1:8, 9). The precise bounds of the territory occupied by these tribes cannot now be ascertained; but what is known from the books of the Old Testament agrees exactly with the language of the verse before us. There can be no doubt that they were contiguous and settled in the northern part of the country (Josh. 19:10–16, 32–39), and the later Jewish books represents the Sea of Galilee as belonging or adjacent to the tribe of Naphtali. The design of this minute topographical description of Capernaum, as situated on the sea and also on the confines of these two tribes, is disclosed in the next verse.

14. The formula here used is the same with that in 1:22, but without the prefatory phrase, all this came to pass (or happened), and with a distinct mention of the prophet's name. The passage quoted is still extant in Isaiah (8:22, 9:1), from whose text it is here translated into Greek, and not borrowed from the Septuagint version, which is exceedingly corrupt, and in some points wholly unintelligible. This is the fifth prophecy alleged by Matthew to have been fulfilled in the life of Christ (see above, on 1:22, 2:15, 17:23), besides the one implicitly applied to him in 2:6. It is no doubt with a view to this fulfilment that our Lord's removal to Capernaum is so distinctly stated, although other circumstances, in themselves of more importance, are omitted (see above, on v. 12, and on 2:22). The words quoted from Isaiah are the close of a prophetic passage, in which the old theocracy is threatened with divine judgments, to be afterwards succeeded by extraordinary favour, to be specially experienced by that part of the country which had suffered most in the preceding trials. The evangelist cites only what was necessary to his purpose, beginning with the last words of a sentence, which he introduces to identify the subject and describe the scene, in order to connect it with the local habitation of the Saviour.

15. Land (of) Zebulon and land (of) Naphtali may be taken, either as nominatives or vocatives. In the former case, there is an absolute construction of the noun without a verb, equivalent in sense but not in form to our phrase (as to) the land of Zabulon, &c. On the other supposition, the form is that of an apostrophe addressed to those two regions. (Oh) land of Zebulon, &c. The question is entirely grammatical, without effect upon the meaning of the sentence, as this clause is only introduced to show of what region the prophet was speaking. Way of the sea, is not in apposition with these phrases, way being in the accusative case (δόν), and according to the usual construction, governed by a preposition understood (κατὰ), as expressed in the English version (by way, i. e. near, adjacent to). Some understand it to mean that Capernaum was on the way to the sea, i. e. the Mediterranean; but the previous description of it as upon the sea (in v. 13), requires sea to be here taken in the same sense as denoting the sea of Galilee. Beyond is in Hebrew a noun originally meaning passage or crossing, then the side or bank of a stream, whether the nearer or the further side. In the Old Testament it usually means the country east of Jordan, but in some cases no less certainly the west side.* As here used, it is understood by some to mean the country east of Jordan (called in Greek Perœa), and to describe a different tract from those mentioned in the previous clauses. But more probably it means the country lying along Jordan, on the west side, and is in apposition to what goes before, i. e. descriptive of the same tract or region, namely, the land of Zebulon and Naphtali, which was partly adjacent to the Sea of Galilee and partly to the river Jordan. Galilee of the Gentiles, a name given to the northern part of Galilee, on account of its proximity to the Syrians and Phenicians, or perhaps an actual mixture of the population.

16. The people, not a plural meaning persons, but a singular denoting a community or nation, here that portion of the Jews who were settled in Galilee. The (people) sitting, not merely being, but continuing, dwelling, yet with due regard to the metaphor or image, drawn from a sedentary posture, as implying permanent inaction. Darkness, a familiar figure in the dialect of Scripture, not only for intellectual evils, such as ignorance and error, but for the moral depravity and the misery resulting from them. Saw or (have seen), a prophetical description of the change, which although future when Isaiah wrote, was absolutely certain, and when Matthew wrote actually past. Light, a metaphor answering to darkness, and of course denoting its opposite or converse, intellectual and moral. The ideas necessarily included are those of truth, knowledge, moral purity, and happiness.* Great light, i. e. bearing due proportion to the darkness which it scattered; a light sufficient to dispel the thickest darkness, intellectual and moral, such as that described in the foregoing sentence. The strong terms of this first clause become stronger still in that which follows. To those (or to the persons) sitting (i. e. inactively and helplessly remaining) in the (very) region (place or country) and shadow of death, a much more emphatic form of speech than darkness, though intended to express the same essential meaning. Region and shadow of death may either be explained as independent figures, meaning region of death and shadow of death, or as an instance of the figure called hendiadys, equivalent to region of the shadow of death, i. e. the place or region where his shadow falls. According to the other construction, the two ideas are suggested of death's region (where he dwells or reigns) and his shadow (the darkness which he produces). In either case the main idea is that of the profoundest shade, such as belongs to death, as its effect or its precursor. Even to such light arose (or sprung up) in the prophet's view as future, and in the evangelist's as past. The Greek verb is the one corresponding to the noun translated east in 2:1, 2, 9, and rising elsewhere (Rev. 7:2, 16:12). It is specially appropriated to the rise of heavenly bodies,† although sometimes otherwise applied (Luke 12:54, Heb. 7:14). The verse in its original connection has respect to the degraded and oppressed state of the Galileans, arising from their situation on the frontier, their exposure to attacks from without, and their actual mixture with the Gentiles. The same description is transferred by Matthew to the spiritual darkness which they shared in common with the other Jews, and the peculiar ignorance with which the other Jews reproached them (John 7:41, 49, 52). That the Galileans were in fact more barbarous, corrupt, and ignorant, though often said, is neither susceptible of proof nor intrinsically probable, as their intercourse with strangers tended rather to improve them, and the ancient writers represent them as a turbulent and martial race, but not as peculiarly or grossly wicked. Yet even their alleged inferiority in mind and morals made it more remarkable that it was among them, in this remote and relatively dark part of the country, that the great Prophet or Revealer manifested forth his glory (John 2:11). Nay, it was in the very midst of this benighted or calumniated region, that he fixed the seat of his prophetic ministry, not indeed at Nazareth, but at Capernaum.

17. From that time, i. e. the time mentioned in v. 12, the time of John's arrest, and the consequent cessation of his ministry. The words are not intended to define the date with chronological precision, but to draw the line by which the public work or the official life

of Christ was bounded in relation to the previous or preparatory ministry of John the Baptist. The essential fact is not one of chronology but history, to wit, that one opened when the other closed, which is perfectly consistent with the visible and temporary co-existence, previously mentioned as evincing their identity of origin, authority and purpose (see above, on v. 12). And accordingly we find that in the apostolical history the public life of Christ, is measured or computed from “the baptism (i. e. from the ministry) of John.”* But besides this chronological succession between John and Jesus, there was also an extraordinary sameness in the subject or the substance of their preaching, as described in 3:2, and the verse before us. Both are in fact described as uttering the same call to repentance and presenting the same motive, namely, the approach of the Messiah’s kingdom. (For the meaning of all these expressions, see above, on 3:2). But that this was only the beginning, not the whole, of our Lord’s preaching, is expressly intimated here by saying, he began to preach. In other words, what constituted John’s whole message was but the beginning of his own. He took it up where his forerunner laid it down, resumed the thread where it had seemed to be abruptly broken by the violence of Herod, but only, if we may so say, to spin it out indefinitely further. So far then is the preaching or official proclamation of the two divine messengers from being here described as co-extensive, that the very opposite is really suggested by the statement that our Lord began where John had ended. This view of the passage sweeps away all pretext for regarding the began as pleonastic or superfluous, as well as the opposite extreme of making it mean more than it does or legitimately can, to wit, that he began afresh, began a second time, began in Galilee, &c. We have seen already that his earlier appearance in Judea, although full of striking incidents and proofs of his divine legation, was preliminary to his ministry or preaching, properly so called, which now began, when he resumed and carried on the interrupted work of John, and became as it were for a time his own forerunner, or acted as the herald of himself as king. By this arrangement, though at first sight paradoxical or accidental, the precise relation of John’s ministry to that of Christ was more distinctly set forth than it could have been if he had ended his preparatory work before his principal appeared at all, leaving a doubtful interval between them, or if, on the other hand, our Lord had fully entered on his own work during John’s captivity, thus holding up the two together in a kind of rivalry or competition.

18. Although it formed no part of our Lord’s personal mission upon earth to re-organize the church, a change which was to rest upon his own atoning death as its foundation, and must therefore be posterior to it, he prepared the way for this great revolution by selecting and training those who should accomplish it. This process was a gradual one, beginning with the first introduction or acquaintance, followed up by an express call to personal attendance, and resulting in the ultimate formation of the persons thus selected into an organic body of Apostles. Passing by the first steps of this gradual vocation, which were afterwards supplied in part by John (1:35–51), the other three evangelists proceed at once to the second, the actual vocation of the first Apostles to be followers or personal attendants of the Saviour. Hence they are naturally spoken of as if before unknown to him, though not expressly so described, and therefore in agreement with the previous occurrences preserved in John’s supplementary account, but not included in the plan and purpose of the other gospels. Walking about, not listlessly or idly, but no doubt in the performance of his work as a proclaimer or announcer of the kingdom. By (or along) the Sea of Galilee, the lake through which the Jordan flows, along the east side of the province so called (see above, on 3:5, 4:13). This use of the word sea, though lost in modern English, is retained in German. (See) with specific reference to inland lakes. It is here, however, the exact translation of the Greek word (θάλασσαν), which in classical usage is applied both to lakes and oceans. The one here meant is also called Gennesaret (Luke 5:1), in Hebrew Cinnereth (Deut. 3:17), or Cinneroth (1 Kings 15:20), from a city and a district on the western shore. (See above, on v. 13, and compare Josh. 19:35. Num. 34:11). A third name is the sea (or lake) of Tiberias, from a city built by Herod on the south-west shore, and named in honour of the Emperor Tiberius. (See John 6:1, 21:1). The lake is about twelve miles long and half as many wide, in a deep basin surrounded by hills. It is still famous, as of old, for its clear pure water, abundant fish, and frequent storms. From among the fishermen on this lake Christ selected his first followers, four of whom are here named, being two pairs of brothers. Simon, a later form of Simeon (Gen. 29:33), which, however, is sometimes retained in reference to the same and other persons (Luke 2:25, 3:30. Acts 13:1, 15:14. 2 Pet. 1:1. Rev. 7:7). The (one) called Peter, i. e. not only the person so called, but the Simon so called, to distinguish him from others of the same name, which was very common. This second name or surname had its origin, however, not in accident or popular usage, but in the words of Christ himself when Simon was first brought into his presence by his brother Andrew (John 1:43). The name Cephas then imposed is the Aramaic synonyme of the Greek Petros, both denoting a rock or stone. This is sometimes explained as having reference to Peter’s constancy and firmness; but these are attributes in which he was remarkably deficient, not only in his immature or pupillary state (see below, on 26:40, 75), but even after the effusion of the Spirit, as appears from a remarkable incident preserved in one of Paul’s epistles (Gal. 2:11). His true characteristics were ardor and boldness, often degenerating into rashness and a blind self-confidence (see below, on 14:28, 16:22, 26:33–35); but these are not suggested by the figure of a stone or rock. It is, therefore, a more probable opinion, that he was so called as the first stone in the Apostolic basis or foundation which our Lord was then about to lay, and on which, in due subordination to himself, the church was to be built up in its new Christian form. (See below, on 16:18, and compare Eph. 2:20). As the Apostles were to be the founders of the church, so Peter was to be their foreman, a position for which he was naturally fitted by the very qualities already mentioned, which are not however indicated by the name itself. That this priority was not a primary or permanent superiority in rank and office, but a purely ministerial and temporary leadership, intended for the benefit of others, and contributing to humble rather than exalt himself, will be clearly seen when we come to the organization of the Apostolic body (see below, on 10:1, 2). Andrew is itself a Greek name (Andreas) the Hebrew etymology assumed by some being forced and far-fetched. It may serve to illustrate the familiar use of the Greek language

even in the east from the time of the Macedonian conquests, and the Jewish practice of adopting Gentile appellations, either exclusively or in conjunction with their native names. (See Acts 1:23, 9:40, 12:12, 13:1, 9). Which was the elder brother, we have no means of determining, as Simon may be first named in prospective reference to his priority as an Apostle, or his greater eminence in after life; whereas Andrew was the means of introducing him to Jesus, to whom he had himself been introduced by John the Baptist (compare John 1:49). Casting a net, a Greek noun derived from the preceding verb, and meaning something cast around (the body) as a garment, or (in the water) as a net of large size, which sense of the word occurs in Hesiod and Herodotus. That he saw them thus employed is perfectly consistent with the fuller narrative of Luke (5:1–10), describing the symbolical miracle by which the call of these Apostles was attended, while that before us, and the parallel account in Mark (1:16), speak only of the call itself. So far from discrediting each other, these harmonious variations serve to show that the evangelists, though perfectly consistent, because under one divine direction, were so far independent of each other as to have their several designs and plans, determining the choice of their materials, or the insertion and omission of particular events and topics. For they were fishermen, not only upon this occasion, but as their stated occupation and the means of their subsistence. This is not to be exaggerated as a proof of abject poverty and social degradation, because fishermen, in some countries or in some states of society, hold such a position, or because an old Greek proverb makes a fisher's life the type of hardship and of destitution. In the part of Galilee adjacent to the lake, this was probably a common and a profitable business, as it is now on the banks of Newfoundland and coasts of New England. The first Apostles seem to have been chosen out of this class, not as the lowest and the most illiterate, in order to enhance the proof of a divine authority attending the religion which they propagated; nor as the hardiest and most accustomed to exposure, fitting them for what they were to suffer in their master's service; but as representing the body of the people in that part of Palestine, and no doubt possessing at least an average amount of natural intelligence and such religious training as was common to the whole population, even of Galilee, who, although treated with contempt by the people of Judea, frequented the same feasts (John 4:45), and attended the same spiritual worship in their synagogues (see below, on v. 23), and received the same instruction from their scribes in every town of Galilee (Luke 5:17). The inference which some of the old writers draw from their being thus employed when called, to wit, that we have most reason to expect the call of God when busily engaged in our lawful occupations, though unexceptionable in itself, is historically neither so important nor so clear as the fact that these men, after having been in company with Christ and recognized as his disciples, had returned to or continued in their former business, no doubt under his direction, and perhaps expecting such a call as the one here recorded. This would render more intelligible, or at least more natural, their prompt obedience to the summons, and confirm what has been said already of the gradual progressive plan by which our Lord collected the materials of his apostolic structure.

19. This verse contains the call itself, for which they had no doubt been waiting, and by which the whole course of their life was now to be determined. Come after me, or more exactly, hither! behind me, not only in the literal and local sense, but in the moral and figurative sense of close adherence and subordination. This is far more natural and satisfactory than to suppose an allusion to the practice of teachers literally walking about with their pupils behind them. Even if there were no such practice in the east, as there was among the restless and mercurial Greeks, the language here used would explain itself, as suited to the outward circumstances in which it was uttered, and at the same time as expressive of the intimate relation which these men were to sustain to their new master. With a beautiful allusion to their former occupation, at which he had found them busy, he describes their new employment as essentially the same, but dignified and sublimated in its ends, and in the means by which they were to be secured. They were still to be fishermen, but not of fishes; they were henceforth to employ their art on higher and more valuable prey. This metaphor like others must not be unduly pressed; but the main points of resemblance cannot be mistaken, such as the value of the object, the necessity of skill as well as strength, of vigilance as well as labour, with an implication if not an explicit promise of abundance and success in their new fishery. All this was dependent not upon themselves, but on the power and authority of him who called them. I will make you (to become, Mark 1:17) fishers of men. As the business of their lives had hitherto been only to provide for the subsistence of the body, by securing the bodies of inferior animals for food; so now they were to seek the souls of men, not to destroy but save them, in the way of Christ's appointment and for the promotion of his glory. Though it cannot be supposed that he selected fishermen to be his first Apostles merely for the purpose of drawing this comparison, he may have called them from the actual labours of the fishery, in order to employ it as an emblem of their future work, as well as with a view to its miraculous illustration, as preserved by Luke (5:1–10).

20. The effect of this abrupt call, as it seems to be if we look only at this narrative and that of Mark, without Luke's more particular account of what preceded it, is here described as instantaneous, not only because they were expecting and prepared for such a summons, but because they were divinely moved to answer and obey it. This unhesitating response to the divine call is represented elsewhere as an equitable test of true devotion to the Master's service (Luke 9:57–62). Leaving, letting them lie, or letting them alone, the Greek verb used above in 3:15, and there explained. The nets (not the word so rendered in v. 18, but the generic term of which that is a specification), i. e. the nets which they were casting into the sea, either to wash them (compare Luke 5:1), or for a draught of fishes (compare Luke 5:4, 5). It is implied, though not expressed (as in the version) that the nets belonged to them. The immediate act described is that of leaving their nets then and there; but this implies their leaving them forever, both as property and sources of subsistence. (See below, on 19:27.) Followed, not the phrase so rendered in v. 19, but the usual Greek synonyme of

follow, and expressing the same sense as in the other case, but in a less pointed and emphatic manner.

21. Another pair of brothers was to be called to the same service at the same time and place. Advancing, going forward in the same direction, from the spot where Simon and Andrew had been called, and now perhaps attended by them, although this is not a necessary supposition, as the boats were near together (Mark 1:19), and the fishery a joint one (Luke 5:10). Them too (he saw, as he had seen the others) in the boat (as Wiclif renders it, the less exact term ship having been introduced by Tyndale.) The Greek word (πλο ον from πλἐω) properly means any thing that sails, corresponding more exactly to the English craft or vessel. Those here meant were probably mere fishing smacks, propelled both by sails and oars, and drawn up on the shore when not engaged in active service. James the (son) of Zebedee, a name occurring also in the Jewish books (Jacob Bar Zabdi or Zabdai), and supposed by some, but without much probability, to designate the same person. The first name has always been a common one among the Jews, as that of their national progenitor, and the other seems to be identical with names which occur in the Old Testament (Zabdi, Josh. 7:1; Zebadiah, 1 Chr. 8:15). That the relation here denoted by the genitive is that of father and son, is not only probable from usage, but rendered certain by the distinct mention of the father in the next clause, as present in the boat, and no doubt managing the fishery. John his brother, commonly regarded as the other disciple of John the Baptist, who with Andrew followed Jesus when acknowledged by their master as the Lamb of God, (John 1:35, 37.) Mending, repairing, what is worn or broken, is the usual meaning of this Greek word in the classics, though according to its etymology and Hellenistic usage, it may have the wider sense of making perfect or complete, putting in order, making ready for use, or in familiar English, fixing.* In one way or the other, both these pairs of brothers were preparing for their daily work or actually busied at it, when the master called them, using probably the same formula in both the cases, though recorded only in the first (v. 19).

22. Here again the effect was an immediate one, and rendered still more striking by the fact that they left not only the nets and the boat but their father who was in it. And they (or they too), i. e. the sons of Zebedee no less than those of Jonas (see above, on v. 20). Even from what is here said it might naturally be inferred that Zebedee was present, not as a passenger or mere spectator, but as the chief-fisherman, and this is confirmed by the mention of hired men in the parallel account of Mark (1:20). There is therefore no ground in the text or context for the notion that they left their father by himself, or destitute or helpless from extreme old age, all which are fanciful embellishments, without even probability to recommend them. On the contrary, the natural presumption is that Zebedee, instead of being utterly dependent on his sons for his subsistence, furnished them employment as he did to others, and that when they left him, it was not to starve, but to continue his old business with the aid of others. Even in the imaginary case just mentioned, the express command of Christ would have suspended every other claim and obligation; but no such case appears to have existed, and we have neither right nor reason to invent it. That the family of Zebedee was not one of the lowest rank, may also be inferred from John 18:15, as commonly interpreted. That the miracle which Luke records (5:1–7) occurred at this time, is apparent from his mentioning the call and their response to it (5:10, 11), which cannot be supposed to have occurred on more than one occasion.

23. This is not a statement of what took place upon any one occasion, or a direct continuation of the narrative immediately preceding, but a general description of our Saviour's ministry in Galilee, after he had fairly entered on it (as related in vs. 12–17). and had selected certain persons to attend him (as recorded in vs. 18–21). Being thus provided with the necessary aids, he began the systematic work which was continued till he bade farewell to Galilee, and set out upon his last journey to Jerusalem (see below, on 19:1). This ministry is here described as itinerant or ambulatory, not confined to one spot or a few, but covering the whole of Galilee, no doubt in the widest sense of the expression (see above, on 2:22, 4:12–15). Went about, a verb originally meaning led about, of which sense there is only one example in the Greek of the New Testament (1 Cor. 9:5). In every other case it has the neuter sense of going about, which some regard as an ellipsis for the phrase led (himself) about, but which more probably implies that he led others, that he did not go about alone but as a leader, with a suite or retinue, composed in this case of the four disciples whose vocation is recorded in the previous context (vs. 18–21), and perhaps of others. This is a summary description of our Lord's prophetic ministry, with its two great functions, which are there distinctly and particularly mentioned. Teaching, imparting knowledge, i. e. as the context here demands, religious knowledge, or the knowledge necessary to salvation, not in the completed form subsequently given to it in the apostolic preaching and epistles, but in such a measure as to make those who received it wise unto salvation. (See below, on 5:1.) In their synagogues, i. e. those of Galilee, the country being put for its inhabitants (see above, on 3:5). Synagogues, a Greek word which originally means collection, and is properly applied to things, but in the Hellenistic dialect to persons also, like our English meeting. It is frequently applied in the Septuagint version to the whole congregation of Israel, as an aggregate and corporate body. During the Babylonish captivity, it seems to have been transferred to the divisions of this body, in their separation and dispersion, and more especially to their assemblies for religious worship. After the second great dispersion of the Jews, occasioned by the Roman conquest and destruction of Jerusalem, the synagogues assumed the form of organized societies, with a peculiar constitution and discipline, from which that of the Christian Church is commonly supposed to have been copied. It is doubtful, however, whether synagogues, in this later sense, existed in the time of Christ and the Apostles, when the word, though sometimes, like the English church, school, court, etc. transferred to the place of meeting, properly denoted the meeting itself, not as an organic body, but as an assembly of the people for a special purpose. In Jerusalem, where multitudes of foreigners were gathered, to attend the feasts or as permanent settlers, it was natural that those of the same race and language

should convene together, both for worship and for social intercourse; and this accounts for the extraordinary number of synagogues, alleged by the Jewish tradition to have existed in Jerusalem before its downfall (480), an incredible number if we understand by synagogues distinct organizations of a public and a formal nature, but possible enough if nothing more be meant than gatherings of the people, in larger or smaller circles, for religious purposes. Of this truly national and sacred usage, that of meeting on the sabbath for religious worship, our Lord immediately availed himself, as furnishing the most direct and easy access to the body of the people. The service of the synagogue appears to have been eminently simple, consisting in prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, with occasional or stated exhortation. That our Lord was permitted to perform this duty without any seeming opposition or objection, may be owing to a customary license of instruction, or to his universal recognition as a gifted teacher and a worker of miracles (compare Luke 4:16, Acts 13:15). Preaching (announcing or proclaiming) the gospel (glad news or glad tidings) of the kingdom (the Messiah's reign, the new economy or Christian dispensation). This was one great function of his ministry; the other is described in the remainder of the verse. Healing, a Greek word which originally means serving or attending (as a servant does a master); then tending, nursing (with particular reference to sickness); and then healing, curing, which last word (derived from curo) primarily means to take care, but like the Greek one here used is specially applied to the treatment and removal of disease. Sickness, the Greek corresponding to disease in English, while the one so rendered means originally softness, and then languor, weakness, or infirmity. Some suppose a distinction to be here intended between chronic and acute disease; others between positive disease and mere debility or sickness; but most probably the two terms are combined as synonymous, or nearly so, in order to exhaust the whole idea of sickness or disease. All manner, i. e. every kind, is not a version but a paraphrase, intended to preclude the extravagant idea that our Saviour really healed all the sickness then existing. This is better than the old device of making all mean many, which it never does directly, though it often denotes all within a certain limit, then suggested by the context. So in this case, all disease and all infirmity may mean all that was brought within his reach or presented to his notice by the sufferers themselves or by others representing them; the rather as there is not the remotest intimation that the Saviour ever finally rejected such an application. (See below, on 9:35, where the very same words are translated, every sickness and every disease.)

24. Having thus related the beginning of Christ's ministry, and described in general terms its two great functions, the didactic and the thaumaturgic, Matthew tells us the effect of his appearance in these official characters, i. e., as a Teacher and a Healer. This effect was an extensive fame or reputation (literally, hearing), not confined to Galilee, nor even to the land of Israel, but penetrating into the surrounding region on the north and east, here denoted by the vague but comprehensive name of Syria, as applied to the great Roman province, of which Palestine was then a part or a dependency. Its precise limits are not only doubtful but of little exegetical importance, as the fact recorded is the wide extension of our Lord's fame, not to a specific distance but in a particular direction. The effect and proof of this celebrity was a vast concourse needing his Divine help, either for themselves or others. Here again the pronoun (they brought) has respect not to the formal antecedent (Syria), but to that for which it stands, the whole surrounding population. (See above, on v. 23.) Sick people, literally, those having badly, i. e., having themselves (or being) ill. These miraculous cures were not confined to any one form of disease, but included all varieties. Divers, a Greek word, originally signifying parti-colored, piebald, but used by the best writers in the wider sense of various, different in kind. This phrase may be grammatically construed either with what goes before (having themselves ill with various diseases), or with what follows (with various diseases seized); but the latter construction is preferred by the best philological authorities. Torments, a word which originally means a touchstone for the trial of the precious metals; then any mode of inquisition or discovery, especially by torture; and then discarding the original idea, and retaining only that of torment or extreme pain. It is here applied to painful bodily diseases, as it is to the pains of hell in the only other place where it occurs in the New Testament (Luke 16:23–28). Taken, seized, or, as the stronger term in Greek suggests, held fast, confined, oppressed.* To show still further the variety of cases thus presented to our Saviour as the Great Physician, the evangelist enumerates three classes, as among the most severe and yet the most familiar. Those which were possessed with devils, six words answering to one in Greek, which may be rendered demonized, i. e., subjected to the power of demons. This specific malady is mentioned on account of its extraordinary prevalence at that time, its peculiarly distressing character, its strange complication of moral and physical disorder, and, above all, its mysterious connection with the unseen world and with another race of spirits. These are called unclean or impure in a moral sense, essentially equivalent to wicked, but suggesting more directly the idea of corruption, as existing in themselves and practised upon others. These are the angels or ministering spirits of the devil, who fell with him, have since been added to him, as believers are added to the Lord and are cooperating with him as the tempters and accusers of mankind. To these fallen and seducing spirits our race has ever been accessible and more or less subjected; but when Christ was upon earth, they were permitted to assume a more perceptible, if not a more complete ascendency, extending to the body and the mind, and thus presenting the worst forms of insanity and bodily disease combined. That these demoniacal possessions are not mere poetical descriptions of disease or madness, but the real acts of spiritual agents, is apparent from the personality ascribed to them, as well as from their being so explicitly distinguished from all other maladies, as in the case before us; while the fact that they did really produce disease abundantly accounts for their being sometimes so described and constantly connected with corporeal illness. The extraordinary prevalence of these disorders in the time of Christ, while we scarcely hear of them in any other period of history, may be partly owing to the fact, that what is always going on in secret was then brought to light by his authoritative interposition; and partly to the fact, that the stupendous strife between the "seed of the woman" and the "seed of the serpent" (Gen. 3:15), which gives complexion to all human history, then

reached its crisis, and these demoniacal possessions were at once the work of Satan, as a means of doing evil, and of God, as a means of doing good, by glorifying him whom he had sanctified and sent into the world. (See John 10:36, 17:1, 5.) Every expulsion of a demon by our Lord himself, or in his name by his Apostles, was a triumph over his great enemy, not only in the unseen world but upon earth, in the sight of men as well as angels (Luke 10:17, 18. John 12:31, 16:11). This immediate relation of these strange phenomena to Christ's person and official work, accounts for their absence both before and since, as well as for the impotent resistance of the evil ones themselves, and their extorted testimony to the character and rank of their destroyer. (See below, on 8:29–32. Mark 5:7, 9:26. Luke 4:33–35, 41, 8:28, 29.) It explains likewise the distinct mention of this class of miracles, both here and elsewhere (e. g. 8:16, 9:33, Mark 1:34, 6:13, 16:17, 18. Luke 8:2, 36), as being in themselves the most surprising of all cures, and at the same time the most palpable of all attestations to the Messiahship and Deity of Jesus. Those which were lunatic, another single word in Greek, which might be rendered moonstruck, i. e. morbidly affected by the changes of the moon, applied in English (lunatic from luna) to insanity, but in Greek to epilepsy. (See below, on 17:15. the only other instance of the term in the New Testament.) The word may here be used in its secondary sense, without regard to its original import, just as we use lunatic for madman, without even thinking of its derivation; or it may denote a real physical connection, which, although inscrutable to us, is not more incredible in itself than the effects of the moon upon the tides, or of certain atmospheric changes upon some constitutions. At all events, there is no ground for the charge of connivance at a popular or superstitious error, any more than in the case of demoniacal possessions. Those that had the palsy, literally, paralytics, a word which seems not to have obtained currency in English when the Bible was translated, as we never meet with it or its cognate noun, paralysis, but always with its earlier corruption, palsy. Another difference of usage in the Greek itself is that the corresponding verb (to paralyze) is used exclusively by Luke (5:18, 24, Acts 8:7, 9:33.) and Paul (Heb. 12:12), while the adjective is equally peculiar to the other Gospels,* The Greek words, according to the medical authorities, denote all morbid relaxation of the nerves, including what the modern nosology distinguishes as paralysis and apoplexy. And he healed them, without any limitation as to number or implied discrimination, which omission, although in itself merely negative, must be interpreted by what was positively, said before, viz., that he healed every sickness and disease, not merely some of every kind, but every case presented to him. (See above, on v. 23.)

25. This is not a mere tautology or varied repetition of the statement just made, but the record of another fact of great importance, serving to connect the previous description of Christ's ministry with the great discourse contained in the ensuing chapters. This important fact is, that besides the multitudes who came to obtain healing for themselves and others, there was soon formed a permanent or constant body of disciples in the wide sense, who not only came to him while in their neighbourhood, but followed him from place to place, of course with many fluctuations and mutations as to individuals, so as to keep him constantly surrounded by a multitude. This is one of the most singular yet certain facts of our Lord's ministry, to wit, that even in his most profound retirements the multitude was never very far off.* Great multitudes, literally, many crowds, i. e. promiscuous assemblies, as distinguished from organic bodies or selected companies, whether great or small. From is not to be connected with the verb (followed), but denotes the quarters whence the multitudes or crowds came, who did follow or attend him in his journeys throughout Galilee. Besides the three great divisions of the land of Israel, at that time, Galilee, Judea and Perea (beyond Jordan), which have been already mentioned,† Matthew specifies Decapolis, a Greek word meaning Ten Towns and analogous in form to Tripolis, Tetrapolis, and Pentapolis, all of which occur in Greek geography, as names of tracts in different countries, so called from their having three, four, or five important towns respectively.‡ Pliny and Ptolemy enumerate the ten towns here meant, coinciding as to eight (Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Dion, Pella, Gerasa, Philadelphia, Canatha), but differing as to the remaining two. This difference does not necessarily imply mistake upon the part of either, as the ten towns may not have been always reckoned in the same way, or Decapolis may have been a vague and popular rather than a technical and certain designation. All the cities named by Ptolemy and Pliny, except one (Scythopolis), lay east of Jordan, and south of the sea of Galilee. They seem to have been all Greek cities, i. e. chiefly occupied by Gentiles, some belonging to Perea, some to Cœlesyria, and here collectively referred to, not for the sake of geographical precision, but to show that this great confluence of hearers and disciples was made up both of Jews and Gentiles. How soon the concourse reached its height is not recorded either here or elsewhere; but the words of Matthew, taken in their whole connection, seem intended to suggest that it was at this interesting juncture, when the tide of popularity was at its height, and the representation of the regions and the races most complete, that he delivered for the first time the remarkable discourse recorded in the next three chapters.

CHAPTERS 5–7

THE next three chapters are occupied with a continuous discourse, traditionally known, from the place of its delivery, as the Sermon on the Mount. Different opinions have been entertained in reference to its connection with the previous context, and with Matthew's entire narrative. The obvious presumption is, that he is here recording what our Saviour said on one particular occasion. Besides the negative proof afforded by the want of any intimation to the contrary, this assumption is confirmed by the simple historical form of the narration, and the accompanying circumstances mentioned in the two first verses.

In opposition to this simplest and most natural presumption, some prefer to regard the Sermon on the Mount as a summary and sample of our Lord's instructions during the whole course of his public ministry. This hypothesis agrees well with our previous conclusion, drawn from other premises, that the immediately preceding context is a general description of that ministry, and not of its commencement merely; so that we might naturally expect what is there said of his miracles and journeys, to be followed by a similar account of his preaching. It also agrees well with what is now very commonly admitted to be Matthew's practice of combining matters of the same kind, whether consecutive in time or not. It is supposed to be further recommended by the light which it appears to throw upon the fact, that many of the dicta comprehended in this long discourse are also met with elsewhere in the Gospels, and often in what seems to be their original historical connection. This phenomenon, however, is susceptible of other explanation, at least in reference to some expressions which are aphoristical in form, and which our Lord appears to have employed in various applications and connections.

This same hypothesis is further recommended by the aid which it is thought to afford in the solution of another difficult inquiry as to the mutual relation of the Sermon on the Mount contained in Luke and Matthew. The old and obvious assumption, that these passages are two reports of one and the same sermon, is adhered to by the modern sceptical school of critics and interpreters, not only on the old ground, that they both begin and end alike, and have the same general drift and tone, and are followed by an account of the same miracle, but also on account of its affording an occasion and a pretext for disparaging the verbal inspiration of the two evangelists, by showing how they disagree in their report of the very same transaction. But even granting what is thus assumed, there is really no contradiction, nor even any variation, whether of the form or substance, which may not be reconciled by simply assuming what is natural and matter of experience in all such cases, namely, that one witness may preserve the substance and the other reproduce the very form, or both record the former only without any deviation from the truth of history or from the credit of the several historians. But although the difficulties which attend this supposition are by no means insurmountable, in case of exegetical necessity excluding every other, it cannot be denied that they are quite sufficient to command our preference of any doctrine unencumbered with them. Such is the theory that both Luke and Matthew's Sermon on the Mount are general descriptions of Christ's public teaching, gathered from his various discourses, and including many things recorded elsewhere in their true historical connection. This hypothesis admits of being modified without essential change by supposing only one to have this general comprehensive character, and the other to be really a record of a particular discourse delivered upon one occasion. The latter description may be then applied to Luke, while Matthew is supposed to have added many kindred sayings uttered upon different and various occasions. Still another view of the relation between these discourses is, that though originally one, they have been fully given only by Matthew for his Jewish readers, while much that was appropriate to them is omitted or curtailed by Luke as less appropriate to Gentiles. But as this diversity of purpose cannot be distinctly traced in all the variations, some still prefer the ingenious hypothesis suggested by Augustine, that the two discourses are entirely distinct though delivered on the same occasion; that preserved by Matthew on the mountain-top to a select circle of disciples, that by Luke upon the plain below to the whole multitude. This not only makes it easier to account for the omissions, as of matters not well suited to the ear of a promiscuous assembly but also enables us to reconcile the seeming disagreement of the two accounts as to the place where the discourse was uttered, without resorting to the less obvious though not impossible assumption, that he went up and down repeatedly, or that the place described by Luke was not a plain, as distinguished from a mountain, but a level place upon the mountain itself. It cannot be denied, however, that Augustine's supposition of two versions of the same discourse, delivered in immediate succession and almost upon the same spot, and to some of the same hearers, although not impossible or inadmissible in case of urgent exegetical necessity, is far from being obvious or natural, and therefore not to be insisted on, if any simpler and more probable solution of the facts can be suggested.

Such a solution seems to me to be afforded by a due consideration of the fact, that Christ's discourses were delivered not to one fixed audience or congregation, but to shifting multitudes, who all however were in need of substantially the same instruction, which would naturally lead him, not to utter new discourses upon every new occasion, like a settled pastor or a fashionable preacher, afraid or ashamed to repeat himself, nor yet to reiterate with slavish uniformity a fixed liturgical type or formula; but intermediate between these two extremes, to dispense the same substantial truth with that familiar mixture of diversity and sameness, to which even uninspired teachers are accustomed, who have frequent occasion to inculcate one unwritten lesson upon different assemblies and at various times and places. If the truth embodied in the Sermon on the Mount was needed by one multitude, it must have been by others, and it cannot be supposed, without detracting from the Master's wisdom and benevolence, that he dispensed it once for all, instead of frequently repeating it, at less or greater length, and with many unessential variations of expression. Two such variations on the same theme are preserved to us by Luke and Matthew; by the former as delivered in connection with the final designation of the twelve apostles, as a sort of inaugural discourse or ordination sermon; by the latter, as the very beginning of our Lord's public teaching, although its position in the Gospel may be rather historical than chronological.

On any of these suppositions, this discourse presents a sample of his preaching, and discloses to us what was its design and character, whether actually spoken upon some one occasion, or collected from his preaching upon many. Viewed in this light, it is important to observe that the Sermon on the Mount is not a system of theology or exhibition of the Christian doctrine in its full development, which was to rest upon his death and resurrection as its basis, and could only be matured by his apostles after his departure, but under his express authority and the direction of his Spirit, so that it is equally absurd and impious to draw invidious distinctions between what was taught by Christ himself and his apostles, as unequal in authority, whereas the only difference is that between an order uttered viva voce, and the same transmitted by a letter or message. The error here corrected is a common one

with sceptics and half infidels, who are neither willing to renounce all faith in Christ as an authoritative teacher, nor to receive all the teachings of his revelation. Another error, which prevails more among Christians, is that of regarding this discourse as a system, not of religious doctrine, but of ethics or morality, and endeavouring to find in it specific formal rules of duty for the various emergencies of common life, an end which can only be attained by forced and paradoxical constructions. It is true that the discourse is full of the most invaluable moral and religious truth, but in a shape more rhetorical than systematic; clothed in paradox and figure rather than in rule and definition, and conveyed incidentally rather than directly, as the primary immediate end in view, which was neither to expound the doctrines of religion, nor to lay down rules of conduct, nor to teach the true way of salvation, but to show the nature of Messiah's kingdom, which was near at hand, and by which the completed revelation of all saving truth was to be made known and perpetuated. Thus viewed, the Sermon on the Mount is here precisely in its proper place, if not chronologically yet methodically, as a fuller exposition of the theme which had already been propounded, as treated of our Lord's preaching and of John's before him, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." As to the nature of this kingdom there were various errors current, and to these the form of the discourse has reference throughout, but more especially to the almost universal error of supposing that the moral requisitions of the law were to be set aside, and the standard of duty as established by it lowered in Messiah's kingdom. In opposition to this fatal Antinomian delusion, it is here taught that the standard was rather to be raised than lowered, by a spiritual exposition of the law's demands, and a full recognition of its whole extent and constant obligation, so that no one must press into the Messiah's kingdom in the hope of sinning more securely. This brings the Sermon on the Mount into connection with the giving of the law at Sinai, which some writers push to an extreme as comprehending even the minutest outward circumstances. Other delusive expectations, no less really though less conspicuously combated and rectified in this discourse, are those of the bigoted Jew who thought the Gentiles could not possibly be saved; of the revolutionary zealot who expected all distinctions and relations to be utterly subverted in the change of dispensations; of the censorious moralist whose piety consisted in detecting and condemning the defects of others; and of the formalist who trusted in a ritual ceremonial righteousness. These and some other current notions with respect to the Messiah's kingdom, are corrected not always by formal refutation, but in part by pointed aphorism, vehement apostrophe, and striking figurative illustration. The plan or form of the discourse is determined not by technical or abstract method, but by natural association; so that the opposite charges of utter incoherence on the one hand, and of a plan so artificial on the other, as to show that the discourse was never actually spoken in its present form, but afterwards composed by the historian, neutralize and nullify each other. The multiplicity of ways in which the passage has been analyzed, with various degrees of plausibility, confirms the fact already stated, that it is neither desultory nor precise in its arrangement, but at once coherent and inartificial. Another consequence and proof of this is, that many of the schemes which have been thus proposed are perfectly compatible with one another, and may be combined as an assistance to the memory. The conventional division of the text throws the sermon into three great parts. The first, coincident with chapter 5, shows for whom the kingdom is designed, defines their relation to the world, and that of the Messiah to the law, showing that the moral standard of his kingdom would be higher than that recognized by the Scribes and Pharisees. The second, answering to chapter 6, pursues the same course with respect to great religious duties, which must be performed to God, and not to man; then extends this principle to every thing in life, and shows that this is the true remedy for anxious cares. The third part, chapter 7, after reproving the censorious contempt of Pharisaical hypocrites for others, prescribes prayer as the true expression of the faith before required, and encourages it by a cheering promise; then sums up all that has been said as to the law; exhorts to self-denial as essential to salvation; warns against false guides and false profession, and the fatal error of not acting upon these instructions. The details of this analysis can only be presented step by step as we proceed in the interpretation.

CHAPTER 5

THIS first division of the Sermon on the Mount, after giving the historical occasion of its utterance (1, 2), describes the characters or classes which had reason to rejoice in the approach of the Messiah's kingdom (3–10), the poor in spirit (3), mourners (4), the meek (5), the hungry and thirsty (6), the merciful (7), the pure in heart (8), the pacific (9), the persecuted in a good cause (10); all of whom are here pronounced blessed or happy in the prospect of the coming change. The last of these beatitudes is then applied directly to the hearers (11–12), which affords occasion to define their relation to the world, under the figures of salt (13) and light (14, 15); and to exhort them to good works (16). This, in its turn, suggests the moral claims and requisitions of the kingdom, and its relation to the law, which is declared to be unchangeable—no less binding in the new than in the old economy (17–19). Nay, the moral standard in Messiah's kingdom should be vastly higher than that of Pharisaical Judaism (20). This is then stated in detail with reference to several prevailing sins, which, far from being treated more indulgently, would meet with a severe censure (21–48). These are murder (21–26); adultery (27–30); unauthorized divorce (31, 32); unlawful swearing (33–37); revenge (38–42); and hatred (43–47); the whole enumeration being wound up by presenting the divine perfection as the standard of morality and the model to be copied in the kingdom of Messiah (48).

1. This verse is to be read in the closest connection with the one before it. There followed him great multitudes … and seeing the multitudes, i. e. the same which had just been mentioned, any other reference being wholly arbitrary and unnatural. This

construction, however, decides nothing as to the chronology, since the last verses of the preceding chapter are not descriptive merely of the first crowds which attended him, but of the concourse which attended his whole ministry. Those who regard Luke and Matthew as reporting the same sermon, adapt the chronology of one to the other, and insert here various incidents recorded elsewhere. But even upon that hypothesis, we cannot improve Matthew's narrative by introducing what he was directed or permitted to leave out. It was a part of his plan to put together what we find together in the text, and all additions aliunde belong not so much to the interpretation as to a chronological synopsis. He went up, ascended, not habitually, but, as the form of the Greek verb denotes, on one particular occasion. A mountain, literally, the mountain,* which may either mean the one above the place where the people were assembled, or the highlands as distinguished from the lowlands of Palestine, in which generic sense the Hebrew word for mountain frequently occurs.† If a particular mountain is intended, it cannot be identified, and for that very reason is of no importance. The tradition of the church of Rome has designated as the Mount of the Beatitudes, a hill of singular configuration, now called the Horns of Hattin; but as the Greek church has no similar tradition, and the Roman cannot be traced further than the thirteenth century, it is probably a mere conjecture of some medieval traveller. It is not even certain, as interpreters infer from 8:5, that it was near Capernaum, since the intervals of time are not determined by the text or context. Having sat down, either for repose, or as the customary posture of a teacher. His disciples, not in the restricted sense of his apostles (as in 10:1, 11:1, and elsewhere), who may have been appointed (compare Luke 6:12, 13), but have not yet been referred to in this narrative (see below, on 10:2); but in the wider sense of hearers, pupils, those who listened to him as a teacher come from God (John 3:2). Some suppose him to have gone up to avoid the multitude, but to have been followed by them, as their presence is implied in the statement at the end of the discourse. (See below, on 7:28.) Others understand him simply to have gone up higher on the hill-side so as to address the multitude below more easily. If disciples be here taken in its widest sense, no distinction may be needed between them and the multitude, who were all, for the time being, his disciples, i. e. learners in his school or listeners to his instructions. Came to him, as he sat upon the mountain, not implying that they had been absent and now joined him, but that they came nearer or followed him when he changed his place. This might be said either of a smaller number, or of the whole multitude.

2. Opening (or having opened) his mouth, is not a pleonasm, i. e. an unmeaning phrase; nor simply a periphrasis for spake (or began to speak); nor in antithesis to silent teaching by his looks or deeds (Chrysostom); nor an intimation that he meant to speak long (Augustine); but, as every reader feels, although he may not be able to express it, a formula denoting the commencement of a solemn and authoritative utterance on an important subject. This is not only in agreement with Scripture and Hebrew usage * but with that of the classics, the same expression being found both in Æschylus and Aristophanes, and with the circumstances of the case before us, in which the nature of Messiah's kingdom was about to be set forth by the Messiah himself. Taught, in the imperfect tense (was teaching), may appear to favour the assumption of a general description of his ministry, rather than of a particular discourse; but it may also denote continued speech as distinguished from a momentary utterance.

3. The exposition of the nature of his kingdom opens with a designation of the characters and classes, who had reason to rejoice in its erection. Not the rich and worldly, not the prosperous and selfish, not the formal and self-righteous, would be rendered happy by the great approaching change, but the opposite of all these, who are now described in a series of beatitudes or macarisms,† so called from the word with which they severally open (vs. 3–11). That there are seven of these beatitudes, has been sometimes reckoned a significant circumstance, connected with the frequent use of seven as a sacred or symbolical number. The beatitudes are so far uniform in structure, that each begins with a description of the class or character, pronounced by the Saviour to be blessed, and concludes with a statement of the ground or reason of the benediction. Blessed, a word originally applicable to the divine blessedness, and that of men admitted, as it were, to share it, but often used in the New Testament to represent the welfare or felicity of men in this life, yet always probably with reference to its dependence on the divine favour, as expressed in English by the participle blessed, rather than the adjective happy. The first beatitude (v. 3) seems intended to correct the false impression, that the blessings of Messiah's kingdom were reserved for the rich and higher classes of society; whereas it was intended more particularly for the poor, but not in the more obvious and ordinary sense of the expression, which is therefore qualified by the addition of the phrase in spirit. Of the various constructions which have been proposed, e. g. 'blessed to the Spirit,' i. e. in God's estimation —'blessed in spirit,' though distressed in body—the only one that is entirely natural, is that which has been commonly adopted in all ages, and which construes in spirit, not with blessed, but with poor, of which it is the necessary limitation, as the blessing here pronounced is not on poverty as such, or as a mere outward state, but on poverty of spirit, or, in modern phraseology, spiritual poverty. This does not mean intellectual weakness or destitution, but a conscious deficiency of moral goodness and of spiritual advantages. The antithesis to outward wealth and worldly prosperity, lies not in the unlawfulness of that condition, or the merit of its opposite, but partly in the well-known fact of general experience, that spiritual poverty more generally coincides with that of an external kind, than with its opposite, and partly in the scriptural usage of the term poor, and some of kindred import to denote the people of the Lord collectively as sufferers, and inevitably destitute of much that is essential to the worldling's happiness. The poor, in this sense, and in that of feeling their own want of spiritual food, and consequent dependence on divine grace, are pronounced in this verse blessed; happy, because those for whom that grace is in reserve, and on whom it is now to be conferred by giving them the kingdom, for which Israel had so long been waiting, as their own rightful indefeasible possession. Theirs, belonging to them, as their own—so far from being forcibly shut out of it, they are the very men for whom it is intended and prepared. (See below, on 25,

34). The kingdom of heaven, literally, of the heavens, an allusion, not to the later Jewish notion of a definite series or succession of heavens (compare 2 Cor. 12:2. Eph. 4:10), but to the plural form of the Hebrew word (שָׁמַיִם) which has no singular; a like case being that of water, (מַיִם), which has led to the frequent use of waters in the Greek of the New Testament, where the sense is simply that of water. By heavens, therefore, we are here to understand nothing more than heaven, and by this the local residence of God, or that part of the universe where he sensibly manifests his presence to his creatures. And as the residence of earthly sovereigns is continually used to represent themselves or their authority, as in the phrases, the Sublime Porte, the court of St. James's, and a multitude of others equally familiar, so heaven, as the abode of God, is sometimes put for God himself (see Dan. 4:26, Luke 15:18, 21), and the kingdom of heaven, is precisely what Matthew elsewhere, and the other evangelists everywhere, call the kingdom of God (see above, on 3:2, 4:17, and compare Mark 1:14, 15, Luke 4:43, John 3:3, 5, Acts 1:3), with particular reference to its approaching restoration or erection by the hands of Christ himself and on the principles set forth in this discourse, beginning with the pointed declaration here made, that its rights and benefits were not to be monopolized, or even shared, as a matter of course, or of prerogative by the rich, but appropriated to the poor, i. e. the poor in spirit, whether rich or poor in outward circumstances and condition.

4. Another contradiction to the cherished expectations of the worldly Jews. The Messiah's kingdom, far from being regulated by existing differences of condition, would, in many instances, reverse and nullify them. What was said before of poverty, is now said of sorrow, its habitual concomitant. Blessed, in the same sense as above, i. e. blessed of God, or rendered happy by his favour. The verb, which is not expressed in Greek in either case, is not to be supplied in the future, but the present form, as in the English version. The declaration is not that they shall be happy, but that they are already so, in certain prospect of the coming consolation. Here again the limitation of the terms expressed in the preceding verse must be considered as implied or understood. Those mourning, the (ones) mourning, in a spiritual manner, both for sin and for the evils which flow from it. They, in the last clause, is emphatic, because not necessary to the sense in Greek as it is in English. It is therefore equivalent to even they, the very persons who seem now least entitled to be called or reckoned happy.

5. Another popular mistake to be corrected in relation to Messiah's kingdom, was the notion that its honours and advantages were in reserve for those who could contend for them and claim them, the ambitious, arrogant, courageous class, who commonly monopolize the benefits of earthly kingdoms. In antithesis to this erroneous expectation, Christ pronounces his third blessing on a character the opposite of all this. Blessed, happy in the prospect of Messiah's reign, and as its chosen and most favoured subjects (are) the meek, or mild and gentle (Wiclif, mild men), as opposed by an apostle (1 Peter 3:4) to a vain ostentation and connected with a quiet spirit, as of great price in the sight of God, which seems to imply that it is not so in the sight of men, who rather pity and despise than value or admire this temper. More especially is this the case, where courts and kingdoms are in question, so that prophecy makes this a characteristic point of difference between Messiah's kingdom and all others (see below, on 21:5. and compare Zech. 9:9.), that its sovereign was to come to it, not as a warrior and a conqueror, but as a meek and gentle man of peace. No wonder, therefore, that a kindred spirit is here represented as a preparation for the benefits and honours of that kingdom, here expressed, in accordance with the usage of the old dispensation, by inheriting the land, i. e. the land of Canaan, as the sum and local habitation of all blessings, secular and spiritual, promised to the old believers. It is unnecessary, therefore, to adopt the wider meaning (earth), in reference either to the universal spread of the Messiah's kingdom, or to the renovated earth as the literal and future heritage of all true Christians.

6. The fourth class, paradoxically represented as the destined heirs and subjects of Messiah's kingdom, are the hungry and thirsty, as contrasted with the rich and well supplied. As this is really a mere specification of the poverty already mentioned, by presenting in relief and in a strong light, one of its familiar incidents, we learn that these are not be regarded as precise definitions of distinct conditions which exclude each other, but as varied aspects of the same great object. The relation of the clauses is precisely similar to that in v. 3, and expresses what is only implied in the intervening verses. The first words, taken by themselves, might seem descriptive of an outward condition, that of extreme destitution even of the ordinary sources of subsistence, and a promise of relief from this, as one main purpose of the coming kingdom. But lest this should be received in too confined and low a sense, it is immediately explained by adding righteousness, i. e., conformity to God's will as a tide to his favour, and making this the object, both grammatical and moral, of the hunger and thirst upon which our Lord had just pronounced his blessing. This remarkable construction, as well here as in v. 3, besides its rhetorical beauty, answers the important purpose of extending the beatitude to those who literally suffer, while at the same time it suggests the necessity of higher aims and of more spiritual tastes and appetites. As if he had said: 'Do not imagine that my kingdom is meant only for those now in the possession and enjoyment of abundance, to the utter exclusion of those suffering for want; it is designed for these especially, but only on condition that their hunger and their thirst extend to spiritual objects also, to conformity with God's will and experience of his favour. Those who have this hunger, whether rich or poor, shall assuredly be filled (Cranmer, satisfied—Rheims, have their fill). The last verb (χορτασθήσονται) is applied to the older classics only to the feeding of animals, but in later Greek to that of human subjects also, and in every case with the accessory idea of full feeding or satiety. The sense here is not a different one from that which the verb has elsewhere (see below, 14:20, 15:33–37), though applied by a lively figure, to the satisfaction of a moral or spiritual appetite.

7. This is not a general declaration of the principle so clearly stated elsewhere, that a forgiving disposition is an indispensable condition of our own forgiveness (see below, 6:14, 15), which would here be out of place; but a continued designation of the characters or classes, for whose benefit the kingdom was to be erected, although commonly excluded from all such advantages. The most successful and distinguished in the kingdoms of this world are too often the revengeful and implacable, the clement and forgiving being, as it were, disqualified for such distinction by this very disposition. But in my kingdom it shall not be so. Happy already, in the prospect of its prompt erection, are the merciful, the very class so shamefully neglected in all other kingdoms, but in mine to be treated according to their nature. As they have been merciful to others, so will I be merciful to them. As they have spared others, so will I spare them, and give them a distinguished place among my subjects.

8. There is more obscurity in this verse than in those immediately preceding, both as to the meaning of the clauses and their mutual relation, or the reason given for the benediction. Pure in heart (Rheims, clean of heart) is a phrase precisely similar to poor in spirit (v. 3), and determines its true construction, as the dative here (τ καρδί) must qualify the adjective before it, by denoting where the purity required resides, or wherein it consists. But although the words admit of only one grammatical construction, there is some diversity of judgment as to the precise sense of the whole phrase, pure in heart, which may be taken either specifically, as denoting freedom from particular impurities, or more generically, as denoting freedom from the polluting influence of sin. On the former, which is the more usual supposition, the particular impurity denied is commonly assumed to be what the Scriptures call uncleanness, comprehending all violations of the seventh commandment, in heart, speech, or behaviour. Some, however, who admit the specific import of the phrase, apply it to hypocrisy, deceit, and falsehood, and by pure in heart understand sincere and guileless; while a third interpretation gives it the generic sense of sinless, holy. The first, which is the usual explanation of the phrase, assumes as the necessary meaning of the word pure what is rather a modern limitation of its import, and is also less in keeping with the context, as we have no reason to believe, that any of Christ's hearers thought that the lascivious or incontinent would have any advantage over the modest and the chaste in his kingdom. The same objection lies in some degree against the third interpretation, as too vague and comprehensive, and as no one could imagine that impurity in this wide sense would profit them as subjects of the kingdom. The remaining sense of freedom from deceitfulness and falsehood avoids both objections, being sufficiently specific or descriptive of a particular moral quality, and that one which is too much slighted and too often outraged in the kingdoms of this world.—It may be that the cunning and the hypocritical are commonly successful, and that the honest and sincere are losers by that very quality; but I say, happy are the pure in this respect, for they shall see God. Some who understand pure in heart as meaning free from carnal lusts, suppose an intimate connection between that exemption and the capacity to see God, or a peculiar tendency of such sins to obscure the view of His divine perfection. But however correct this may be in point of fact, it is irrelevant in this connection, where analogy requires that this clause should assign a reason for the class in question being counted happy; and as the corresponding clauses in the five preceding verses all express in various forms the fact that those referred to shall experience the divine favour in the reign of the Messiah, the most natural interpretation of the clause before us is, that the sincere and undisguised shall stand in the divine presence as his honoured servants and the objects of his special favour. There is then no allusion to the beatific vision, or to chastity as specially preparing the soul for it, but a simple intimation that sincerity and simplicity of purpose, which often shuts men out from the service and the presence of an earthly sovereign, will in this case have the contrary effect of enabling and entitling those who practise it to see God.

9. Another current fallacy in reference to the kingdom of Messiah, was the notion that like other kingdoms it must rest on war and conquest, with the necessary consequence that those who make war are its most distinguished subjects, and entitled to its highest honours. Our Saviour teaches, on the contrary, that this pre-eminence belongs to the opposite character of those who make peace, not merely in the secondary sense of practising or cherishing it, but in the primary and proper sense of reconciling those who are at strife. Xenophon and Plutarch use the same word of ambassadors commissioned to negotiate a peace. This, while it includes the other sense of peaceable, pacific, strengthens the expression by suggesting a positive act, strongly demonstrative of such a disposition. Nothing can so clearly prove one to be peaceful in his own temper and practice as an effort to make peace or maintain it between others. The English version therefore is correct, and to be taken in its proper sense.—There is no need of assuming any definite relation between this specific character and the reward promised to it in the last clause; as if the peaceable were in any peculiar sense the sons of God. According to the context, this is only another varied statement of the fact, that those who have this character, instead of being slighted as in earthly kingdoms, shall be highly favoured. As the pure in heart shall see God, i. e. be admitted to his royal presence, so the peacemakers shall be reckoned as his sons and heirs. Shall be called is not a Hebrew idiom for shall be, but suggests the additional idea, in the present case, of oral recognition, and perhaps of formal registration. They who practise and make peace, however little honoured in the kingdoms of this world, shall be named, and accosted, and proclaimed in the kingdom of Messiah, not only as the servants but the sons of God!

10. The last class mentioned, who might seem to be excluded from the honours of a kingdom, but whom Christ exalts to high distinction in His own, are the persecuted, those vindictively pursued by enemies superior in power. The figure, borrowed from the chase and war, denotes not simply violence, however cruel, but persistent enmity and power to indulge it. Men are not said to be persecuted by inferiors, nor with strict propriety by equals, but by those above them, as by a hostile government or ruler. This

concluding macarism or beatitude may seem at first sight out of keeping with the rest, as it describes not a character but a condition arising from the act of others. But a sufficient bond of union or assimilating circumstance, is the supposed unfitness of the class described to share the honours of a mighty kingdom. As the poor, the sorrowful, the meek, the hungry, the sincere, the peaceful, are the least likely to attain distinction in an earthly state, the same may be still more emphatically said of those who are under its displeasure, nay, subjected to its persecution. Another answer to the same objection, which is merely one of form and not of substance, is that the condition mentioned in the first clause is converted into a description of character by the qualifying words that follow. The blessing is not pronounced on all who suffer persecution for whatever cause, but on those who are pursued for righteousness' sake, i. e. because of their own rectitude, or conformity to the divine will, as in v. 6 above. There can be no reference here to justification or to justice in the abstract, but to what is right in character and conduct, as opposed to what is wrong. So far are such from being shut out of the Messiah's kingdom, as the Jewish rulers might imagine in relation to their own rebellious subjects that, the kingdom really belonged to them, was theirs, the same expression that had been applied already to the poor in spirit (v. 3). Thus, by a beautiful reiteration of his own expressions, he comes back to the point from which he started, in declaring for whose sake His kingdom was to be erected, or of whom it was to be composed.—Not the rich, the gay, the fierce, the full, the cunning, the warlike, or the favourites of earthly rulers, were as such, to be distinguished in His kingdom; but the poor, the sorrowful, the meek, the hungry, the sincere, the peaceful, and the persecuted, who endured all this for His sake, and who longed for spiritual no less than for secular relief.

11. Thus far the macarisms have a general or abstract form, without special reference or application to the hearers. But our Lord now takes occasion, by the sudden introduction of the second person plural, to remind them that these vague propositions, as they may have seemed to them, had a specific and a proximate bearing on their own condition. This he does by repeating and applying to themselves the last benediction in the series, but by implication making the same use of all the others. Having said in general, that even the persecuted, if for doing right and not for doing wrong (compare 1 Peter 2:20, 3:17), are to be counted happy on account of their prospective honours in his kingdom, he turns as it were, suddenly to his disciples, in the wider sense of such as listened to his teachings with respect, and tells them that this is true of them as well as others. Blessed are ye, happy are you, when this is your experience. This is at once an intimation that the previous instructions are not merely theoretical but practical, and a benignant warning to his followers of what they must expect if they continued in his service. 'I speak of persecution as of something real, something known to the experience of men, and hereafter to be not unknown to yours, but entitling you to share in the blessing which I have just uttered.' When, &c., is in Greek a more contingent expression than in English, the verb being not in the future, but the aorist and the whole phrase approaching very near to the English, 'if they should at any time revile,' &c., but suggesting more distinctly the idea that they certainly will do so. The full sense may be thus expressed in paraphrase: 'if they ever should revile you, as they will,' &c. The form of expression is still more indefinite in Greek, where men is not expressed, nor even they, the person and number being indicated by the verbs themselves. They is, however, more exact than men, which makes the statement too generic, as relating to mankind at large, whereas the pronoun already suggests the real subject of the verbs, to wit, the unbelieving Jews, and more especially their rulers. Revile, reproach, abuse you, to your face, as distinguished from the backbitings afterwards referred to. Persecute, may either be generic, and include the other form of evil treatment mentioned in this verse; or, which agrees better with its intermediate position, a specific term, denoting acts of persecution, not expressed by either of the others, or active as distinguished from oral persecution. All manner of evil, literally, every wicked word, which last (ρ μα) is omitted by the latest critics, and by most interpreters explained as an example of the Hebrew idiom, which uses word as an equivalent for thing. But such cases, which have been unduly multiplied even in Hebrew, are extremely rare in the New Testament, and not to be assumed without necessity, which certainly has no existence here, as the strict sense is entirely appropriate, and far more expressive than the secondary and diluted one. The epithet wicked then applies, not to the conduct charged by the calumniator, but to the malignant calumny itself. Falsely, literally, lying, is omitted by the latest critics, but on insufficient grounds, and is necessarily implied, if not expressed. For my sake, because (or on account) of me, i. e. as being my disciples, or believers in my claim to the Messiahship, and therefore avowed subjects of my kingdom. Such is the treatment which he warns them to expect, as his professed followers, and such the consolation which he gives them. They must have tribulation in his service; but for that very reason he pronounces them blessed.

12. So far was this premonition of their sufferings in his cause from requiring or justifying grief, that they were positively bound to glory and rejoice in the assurance, as he here encourages and orders them to do. Be exceeding glad (the adverb wanting in the older versions) is a paraphrastic version of a single word (γαλλι σθε), a Hellenistic verb, supposed by some to be made out of a Hebrew one, and often used in the Septuagint version to represent one of the synonymous expressions for extreme joy or triumph. Combined with the ordinary Greek word for rejoicing (χα ρετε), it denotes the highest and most active exultation, as opposed to the depression and alarm, which such a prospect might naturally be expected to produce. The reason of this paradoxical command is given in the next clause. Reward here means compensation or indemnity for what they were to suffer, without any implication of legal merit or even moral worthiness. In heaven, not in a state of future blessedness, which makes the consolation too remote, but in the court or presence of God (see above, on v. 3), and in his present favour. Rejoice even in your sufferings, because there is abundant compensation in reserve for you, secured by the divine decree, and ready for you in the divine presence. The last clause

may be dependent in construction, either on the first or second. On the latter supposition, it assigns a reason why their compensation would be great; on the former, an additional reason for rejoicing, namely, that they only shared the fate of the best men before them. The subject of the verb here is the same as in the first clause, to wit, the unbelieving Jews, as represented by their wicked rulers. Those (literally the) before you is an explanatory phrase subjoined to specify the prophets, though the reference is of course, and necessarily, to those who went before them, unless we assume an implied allusion to the prophets, or inspired men, who were yet to suffer. From the mention of the prophets, some infer that these words are addressed to the apostles, or to such as were to hold that office, and who might be represented as successors to the prophets. But it seems more natural to understand the prophets as the representatives of all good Jews, or of the spiritual Israel, and the priority ascribed to them as simply chronological, and not that of official succession. The sense will then be, that the followers of Christ had no cause to despond, or even to be cast down, in the prospect of inevitable suffering for his sake, since the same distresses had befallen the most pious of their predecessors, as they well knew from the history of the ancient prophets in the books of the Old Testament. Another purpose answered by this verse, besides that of direct encouragement, is that of intimating to the hearers, the connection of the new kingdom now to be established with the old theocracy or Jewish church, whose most authoritative representatives the prophets, are here mentioned as belonging to the same class and experiencing the same opposition as awaited all the followers of Christ.

13. Having now applied directly to his hearers and disciples the preceding promises and benedictions, and particularly that which had respect to persecution, our Lord takes occasion to define still more precisely the relation of his followers, as a separate body, to mankind at large. Their distinct existence, as a peculiar people, if not as an organized society, had been implied already in the warning against persecution, presupposing two antagonistic parties, and at once suggesting the inquiry, how are they related to each other? The solution of this question, far from being designed merely to indulge an idle curiosity, is strictly and immediately promotive of our Lord’s main purpose in this whole discourse, which was, as we have seen, to set forth the true nature of his kingdom, and the principles on which it was to be administered. To this end it was obviously necessary that his hearers should be taught, of whom the kingdom was to be composed, and what effect it was to have upon the world around it. This is here propounded in two beautiful comparisons, or rather metaphors, derived from every-day experience, and admirably suited to illustrate the important truth to be communicated and enforced (vs. 13–16.) The first of these similitudes is given in the verse before us. Ye, not the apostles, of whose organization we have yet had no account, much less the Christian ministry, except so far as what is true of the whole body is emphatically true of its chief members. The immediate objects of address are still the multitudes, or rather the disciples, of the first verse, i. e. such, among his many hearers, as acknowledged his authority to teach, and received his doctrine as divinely sanctioned. The scope of the discourse is greatly narrowed, and its force impaired by making it a mere official charge, while every advantage that can be regarded as attending that mode of interpretation, is abundantly secured, without the loss of others equally important, by a simple application of the principle already stated, that the same thing which is absolutely true of all, may be specially or relatively true of some. Ye (or you) then, who now hear me, or at least so many of you as believe my teachings and profess to be my followers. This is the first trace of a distinguishing profession in the narrative, although the separation may have taken place before and only been formally recognized on this occasion. Are, not are to be or shall be, but already are, and that not merely in my purpose and your own destination, but in actual and present influence, implying that the sifting process had begun, and that the line was drawn between the world and the church, though not yet so expressly called. (See below, on 16:18, 18:17.) Salt is among the most familiar and necessary substances employed in common life, and therefore admirably suited to illustrate truth, for the instruction of a great mixed multitude, like that which Christ addressed on this occasion. The domestic use of salt is twofold; first, to season that which is insipid; and then, to preserve that which is corruptible. In both respects there is an obvious analogy between the physical effects of salt and the moral influence exerted by the church or the collective body of Christ’s followers. They give or ought to give, a spiritual relish or sapidity to what would otherwise be stale, flat, and unprofitable, in the knowledge, occupations, and enjoyments of mankind; and by so doing, they preserve society, or what the Scriptures call the world, from that disintegration and corruption, to which all that is human naturally tends, except so far as this destructive tendency is counteracted by the antiseptic remedies which grace employs, and among which is the influence exerted by the followers of Christ considered as the salt of the earth. This last expression does not imply, that salt is here referred to as a manure or fructifying substance in the processes of husbandry. The phrase cast out, which afterwards occurs, points rather to domestic uses, the idea naturally suggested to the mind of every reader; and the word earth, as in many other cases, may be put for its inhabitants, and correspond exactly to the world of the next verse. All this is readily suggested by the metaphor itself, as given in the first clause. But in order to prevent their looking merely at the honour and distinction necessarily implied in the position thus assigned them, he proceeds to set forth, still more fully and expressly, the responsibility and danger which accompany this eminence, employing for this purpose the same figure which he had already used, and carrying out into detail the metaphor of salt. The first clause, by itself, supposes that the salt performs its office and accomplishes its purpose; but the next suggests the possibility of failure and its necessary consequence. But, introducing quite a different hypothesis from that of the preceding clause, if, implying not a certain but a possible contingency, the salt, employed for either of the purposes before described, hare lost his savour, or in modern phrase, its taste (Cranmer, saltness.) This is a paraphrastic version of a single Greek word (μωρανθ), a passive verb derived from an adjective (μωρὸς) which commonly means foolish (as in v. 22 below), but is also applied to inaminate objects, in the sense of tasteless or insipid, by the same natural analogy which leads us to employ the noun taste, to describe both mental and bodily impressions. It matters not which of these uses is

regarded as the primary, and which as the derivative. The verb, according to its etymology and form, means to deprive of sense in one case, and of taste or savour in the other; and the passive tense, here used in reference to salt, can only mean, be made insipid, rendered tasteless, or, to coin a single word for the occasion, be unsalted. There is no need of appealing to the fact, alleged by travellers, that large masses of such saltless salt have been actually met with in the east. The force of the comparison does not depend upon the literal occurrence of such changes, but is rather enhanced by their supposed impossibility. Even supposing that salt cannot lose its savour, and that its doing so is merely mentioned as a monstrous and imaginary case, it only serves the better to illustrate the contingency, here meant to be suggested, of a body or society created to preserve and season all around it, and itself becoming destitute of what it was intended and commanded to impart to others. The question which follows has been variously interpreted. Tyndale's version (what can be salted therewith?), and Cranmer's (what shall be seasoned therewith?), not only weaken, but entirely change the sense, and are wholly ungrammatical, without an arbitrary change of text (τί for ν τινι.) The Geneva Bible renders it, wherewith shall one salt? (or, as it might have been translated more exactly, wherewith shall be salted?) i. e. if the salt have lost its saltness, what can be substituted for it in the seasoning of food or in its preservation? This is a possible construction and a good sense, but less striking and emphatic than the one extracted from the words by the oldest and most usual interpretation, which makes salt itself the subject of the verb, and understands the question to be, what shall season it, when it has lost its savour? Wherewith, literally in what, i. e. in (the use of) what (means)? Shall it be is not so strong as can it be, but more expressive, as the impossibility is really suggested by the certain futurity. What never will be virtually never can be. The inevitable answer, Nothing, is more forcible when left to be supplied, than if it were expressed. But in the last clause it is amplified and carried out in positive expressions, which apply directly to the salt, but more remotely to the person or the body which it represents. Thenceforth, literally, yet, still, longer, i. e. after it has lost its saltness. Good for nothing, the phrase used in all the English versions, but the oldest (Wiclif, to nothing it is worth ever) is an idiomatic or proverbial expression, not exactly corresponding to the form of the original, which strictly means not good but strong, suggesting the idea not of worth or value merely, but of strength or efficacy. It avails (σχύει) for nothing more. This negation is made still more striking by a sort of ironical exception in the last clause. But (not δὲ or λλά, but ε μή), except, if not, to be cast out, &c. It is only good enough and strong enough to be thrown away, and instead of being used, to be trampled on, or trodden under foot. Of (i. e. by) men, does not seem to be emphatic, unless the definite expression, the men, be supposed to mean the very men who might have used it or did actually use it till it lost its savour. The allusion, which some find here, to the formal degradation of unworthy ministers, supposes a restricted application of the passage, which has been already shown to be untenable, and is only true as a particular example of the general truth taught, that when the church, or any of its members, fail to exercise the salutary influence for which they were created, they become not only absolutely worthless, but just objects of contempt to those who ought to have revered them, and been benefited by them.

14. To the metaphor of salt is now added that of light, a still more essential element of comfort in domestic life. The form of the declaration is the same as in v. 13, with the single change of earth to world. The Greek word (κόσμος), which primarily signifies order or symmetrical arrangement, is applied to the structure and harmonious system of the universe (as in 13:35, 24:21 below); then to that part of it which man inhabits (as in 4:8 above); and by a natural metonymy to men themselves, as in the case before us. There is no prominence here given (as in John 17:9, 14, and often elsewhere) to the fact that this world is a wicked world, though really implied or presupposed. The main idea is that of mankind or of human society, of which our Lord declares his followers to be the light. In this, as in the other case, the reference is not to recondite or latent but to obvious and familiar points of correspondence. The thought necessarily suggested to the mass of hearers would be that of communicating knowledge, rectifying error, and dispelling the gloom which is inseparable from a state of spiritual ignorance, implying alienation from the only source of truth and goodness. This office was to be performed, this influence exerted, by the followers of Christ, as individuals and as a body. But again, as in the former case, the simple lesson, taught by the similitude itself, is amplified and guarded against all abuse, by carrying the illustration out into detail. What is thus added is essentially the same in either case, to wit, that the agency which fails of its effect is worthless. Salt, in order to be valuable, must have saltness. Light, in order to be valuable, must be seen. The illuminating influence of Christ's disciples is a nullity without actual diffusion upon their part, and actual perception on the part of others. To claim the character without acting in accordance with it, were as foolish as to build a town upon a hill and then expect it to be unseen. Its position is designed to make it more conspicuously visible, and any thing at variance with this design is not only inconsistent but self-contradictory and suicidal. It is in vain, therefore, for the church or any part of it, in theory or practice, to repudiate the very end for which it was established. If it is not a visible and bright church, it is not a church at all. Set on an hill is better rendered in the Rhemish version, situated on a mountain. The first word strictly means lying, and the last word is applied to the highest as well as to the lowest elevations, which is not the modern usage of the English hill. The opinion of some writers, that our Saviour had particular allusion to the lofty situation of the city Saphet, then perhaps in full view, is refuted by the fact that it was not yet built. It is moreover perfectly gratuitous, and most improbable, that all or any of our Saviour's illustrations of divine truth were suggested, as it were, at random, by fortuitous and unexpected sights or sounds. It is enough that they were drawn from real and familiar life, without ascribing to them an impromptu character, which might perhaps do credit to the genius of an uninspired teacher, but which only detracts from the honour of omniscience.

15. The preceding illustration drawn from a city on a mountain, by its very beauty and sublimity, departs from the domestic character

of what had just been said in reference to salt. From this momentary deviation the discourse is now brought back by the addition of a second illustration, to the same effect with that just given, but derived from ordinary household habits. The essential meaning still is that an object, which exists in order to be seen, must be seen, or it fails of its effect, and might as well not be at all. The illustration here is from the obvious absurdity of lighting a candle and then hiding it from view. Neither connects it with the last clause of v. 14, as another negative proposition of the same kind but distinct in form. As if he had said, ‘equally unheard of is it in domestic life to light,’ &c. Men is here put indefinitely, as in v. 11, for the simple pronoun they, which is continually so used in colloquial English, as a succedaneum for the French on and the German man (on dit, man sagt, they say), which last is identical in origin with men, as here used in the English Bibles. Light, the Greek verb usually rendered burn, but sometimes causative in meaning (make burn, kindle). Candle, a word denoting any movable artificial light, whether candle, lamp, or lantern, any of which terms may represent it, though the first is entitled to the preference from long familiarity. The corresponding Greek word in the next clause is related to this, as candlestick to candle, lamp-stand to lamp, although nothing is gained by the substitution of the latter. Put (or place), not on any one occasion but habitually, it is not the custom of men so to do. The bushel, or in Greek the modius, with the definite article to designate the measure found in every house as one of its utensils. The precise capacity of that here mentioned is of no importance. That it really came nearer to our peck than our bushel, can have no effect upon the meaning of the passage, which would be the same if the word used had been basket, box, or bed (as it is in Mark 4:21). The point of comparison is not the size but the concealing power of the subject, so that the dimensions of the modius are of as little exegetical importance as those of the bed. A candlestick, or more exactly, the candlestick, i. e. the one found of course in every house, not only in the East but elsewhere. And (then, in that case, when put into its proper place), it giveth light, a single word in Greek, the theme or root of the noun lamp, which may be here translated shines, as the same verb is in v. 22, and 17:2 below, and several times elsewhere. Stripped of its figurative dress, the meaning of the verse is, that as Christ’s disciples are to be a source or channel of divine and saving knowledge to the world, they must not endeavour to defeat the very end of their existence by concealing or withholding what they have received, not only for themselves but for the benefit of others.

16. The original order of the words, disturbed by Tyndale, has been partially preserved in the Rhemish version (so let your light shine), and still more perfectly by Wiclif, although scarcely in accordance with our idiom (so shine your light). So is not to be construed merely with what follows (so as, so that), but with what precedes, thus, likewise. As men do with lamps or candles in their houses, so must you do with the light of truth in this dark world, Your light, in the tropical or moral sense, represented in the context by the literal material light of lamps or candles. ‘So let the saving knowledge you possess be spread abroad to others also.’ Before, i. e. before their faces, not behind their backs, or wholly out of sight, as if a lighted candle should be covered with a peck or bushel measure. The men, i. e. other men, or more specifically, those within your reach, or under your immediate influence. The last clause urges a new motive for so doing in addition to that drawn from the very nature and design both of material and moral light. That it was light, was enough to show that men must see it or they could not profit by it. But a higher reason for the same thing is presented. By a beautiful transition we are led, through a laudable regard to our own credit, up to the ultimate and most coercive principle of action. That they may see your good (fair, beautiful, fine) works (or actions). This undoubtedly implies that we are not to do good, as a general rule, by stealth, but with a view to being seen by others; and that in this sense a regard to character or reputation is not only lawful, but incumbent upon all disciples. Lest, however, they should rest in this as the supreme end to be aimed at, he defines this end in the closing words by adding, and may glorify your Father (the one) in heaven, literally, in the heavens (see above, on v. 3), as distinguished from all earthly fathers or superiors whatever. The term Father tenderly suggests m the new and intimate relation which was to exist through Christ himself, between his followers, and that God who without his intervention is not only inaccessible to man but “a consuming fire.” (Heb. 12:29. See below, on 6:9.) Glorify, a Greek verb derived from a noun which originally means opinion, whence the verb in classical Greek usage means to think or to be of opinion. But as the noun acquired the more specific sense of the opinion entertained by one man of another, and especially a favourable, flattering opinion, admiration, reputation, fame, or glory; so the verb, in Hellenistic usage, means to promote or propagate this glory. When applied to God, as it usually is in the New Testament (compare 6:2 with 9:8, 15:31), it means to give him glory, in the only intelligible sense of that expression, not to make him glorious in himself, which is impossible, but in the sight of creatures, by acknowledging and praising him as glorious. Thus the Saviour winds up this division of his great discourse, by leading his disciples through the homeliest and most familiar every-day analogies of common life, to the sublime and final end of all action and of all existence.

17. In opposition to the notion entertained by some, that this is an abrupt transition, and that no connection can be traced with the foregoing context, either because Christ spoke incoherently, or because the words were never uttered in this order; there is no need of insisting on a formal logical progression in the thought, as some have done, and thereby been betrayed into a forced and disingenuous construction of the passage. The association of ideas, if there is one, must be on the surface, not concealed beneath it, and it seems to be afforded by the phrase good works in the preceding sentence. Down to that clause, the allusion seemed to be to knowledge rather than to practice, and by letting their light shine the disciples might have understood exclusively the diligent diffusion of the truth in their possession. This is undoubtedly the primary import of the figure, but our Saviour, with consummate wisdom, guards against the natural proclivity to rest in speculative wisdom or divorce it from its natural effect upon the life and conduct, by introducing, as a necessary part of the illumination which they were to practise, the exhibition of a luminous example, so

that men may see your good works and (by them be led to) glorify your Father in heaven. This reference to good works, as a necessary means of glorifying God, in the new as well as in the old economy, would naturally raise a question as to their mutual relation, and particularly as to the continued force of the Mosaic law under the reign of the Messiah. Now to this point, we have reason to believe, related one of the most prevalent and dangerous delusions of the day, to do away with which was a main design of the discourse before us. This was the idea, natural in all such cases, and often actually reproduced in revolutionary times, both civil and religious, that the new régime would bring with it, not merely the correction of abuses, but a change of moral principles, a relaxation of the claims of justice, and a greater license of indulgence in things hitherto forbidden. This spirit of libertinism, which was afterwards revived in the period of the Reformation, and again in that of the French Revolution, is the natural spontaneous growth of man's aversion to restraint, promoted by a no less natural confounding of restraints imposed by human tyranny with those imposed by divine authority.* As human nature is the same in every age and country, it is not surprising that this Antinomian delusion should have mingled with the Jewish hopes of the Messiah's advent, or that Christ should have devoted to its refutation an extensive space in this great exposition of the nature of his kingdom, beginning with the verse before us. Think not implies a disposition so to think, and may therefore be considered an implicit confirmation of the previous statement as to the existence of the error here referred to. That I came, when I appeared among you as "a teacher come from God." (John 3:2.) A direct allusion to his Messianic office is less probable so early in his ministry, although that sense would necessarily be put upon his words by his disciples at a later period, as in other cases where we are expressly told that what he said was not fully understood till rendered clear to them by subsequent events.† Came to destroy, a combination of the finite and infinitive familiar to our idiom, in which the second verb defines the end or object of the first. In this connection, the whole phrase relates to the design of the Messiah's advent, and by parity of reasoning, to the principles or nature of his kingdom. Destroy, so rendered also elsewhere in this gospel (see below, on 26:61, 27:40), is in Greek peculiarly expressive, as originally signifying dissolution or disintegration, the destruction of a whole by the complete separation of its parts, as when a house is taken down by being taken to pieces, the very act denoted by the verb in the passage just cited. In the same sense, but with a figurative application, Paul employs it to describe the dissolution of the body (2 Cor. 5:1), and of a system of belief and practice (Gal. 2:18), which last is precisely its use here. To destroy the law is not to break it, in the way of personal transgression, which would be otherwise expressed, as it is elsewhere (Rom. 3:23, 25, 27), but to abrogate (or as Wiclif says, undo) it, as a whole and as a system. The law would of course be understood to mean the law of Moses, under which they lived, and from the restraints of which the class here addressed were longing to be free. That it does not mean the ceremonial law, as such, or as distinguished from the moral law, is evident, not only from the want of any such distinction, which is therefore wholly arbitrary and gratuitous, but also from the words expressly added, or the prophets, which may either mean the prophets in the strict sense, as expounders of the law, or more indefinitely, all the inspired writers of the Old Testament, by whom, and not exclusively by Moses, the law, as the expression of the will of God, had been revealed to Israel. The disjunctive (or) is not, as some explain it, here equivalent to and, but has its proper force, expressing an alternative negative, 'neither in the narrower nor in the wider sense, the law as originally given by Moses, or as afterwards expounded in the later Scriptures.' Not content with warning them against this error, he solemnly propounds the corresponding truth, both in a negative and positive form. I am not come, the same verb that occurs in the first clause (λθov), and which strictly signifies I came, i. e. when I appeared officially among you, and began my public ministry; or possibly there may be a remoter reference to his incarnation and nativity, of which he elsewhere speaks as his coming forth from the Father (John 16:28). In either case the phrase describes the object of his Messianic work and mission, which was not to destroy (in the sense before explained) but to fulfil. The object of the verbs is suppressed, not only because it is so easily supplied from the preceding clause, but because the proposition here is a more general one. He did not come to abrogate the law or the prophets; for the end and design of his whole work was not destructive but completory. Fulfil, from its restricted use in English, is less ambiguous than the Greek verb, which usually means to fill or fill up (see above on 1:22, 2:15, 17:23, 3:15, 4:14), either in a literal or figurative sense. Its precise sense here must be determined by the obvious antithesis or contrast to destroy. As that does not mean simply to transgress or violate, so this cannot simply mean to keep or obey. And as that means to abrogate or undo the whole system, this must mean the opposite, not only to continue its existence, but in some sense to perfect or complete it. This fulfilling of the law, however, may be either subjective or objective, the supplying of omissions and defects in the law itself; or the supplying of omissions and defects in its observance or its execution. The first of these ideas is at variance with the nature of the law, as a divine revelation and economy, as well as with the uniform teaching of both Testaments.* Even as an expression of God's will for a temporary purpose, it cannot be called imperfect or defective; for it is of that expression that the Scriptures predicate perfection. To complete the law, then, cannot mean to make it better, but to cause it to be better kept and carried out, which is the very thing required by the connection, as our Lord is combating the false idea, that the law would be relaxed or disregarded in the kingdom of the Messiah.

18. Not only was the mission of our Lord completory and not destructive in its end or purpose, but the law itself, as the expression of God's will which is immutable, must be essentially perpetual and constant. This proposition is co-ordinate to that in the last clause of v. 17, and not dependent on it; so that the for assigns another reason why they should not think he came to abrogate the law, to wit, because it was not, in the sense which they attached to the word destroy, susceptible of abrogation. This is not simply stated in didactic form, but solemnly propounded as a most important principle, with all the authority belonging to the speaker as a teacher come from God. Amen, here translated verily (or truly), is a Hebrew adjective, originally meaning sure or certain, but employed as an

ejaculatory particle of assent or concurrence, at the close or in the intervals of prayers, benedictions, curses, vows, or other forms of a religious kind, when uttered by one or more persons in the name of others. (Num. 5:22. Deut. 27:15. 1 Kings 1:36. 1 Chr. 16:36. Ps. 106:48. Jer. 28:6. Matt. 6:13. 1 Cor. 14:16. Rev. 5:14, 22:20.) But besides these cases, and some others where the word is retained without translation, there are many more in which it is translated verily, and stands not at the end but the beginning of a sentence. This is one of the most marked characteristics of our Saviour's manner which have been preserved to us, especially by John, who always writes it twice, a form not found in any of the other gospels. In the case before us, as in others, it invites attention to the following words as uttered on divine authority, and therefore truth itself. The same idea is often expressed in the Old Testament by a divine oath. I say unto you is an expressive formula, too often overlooked as pleonastic, but containing two emphatic pronouns. I, the Son of God, and yet the Son of man, declare to you, my hearers and disciples. The declaration thus impressively announced is, that the law shall never cease to be authoritative and obligatory. This idea is expressed by a comparison, familiar to the style of the Old Testament, with the frame of nature or the constitution of the universe, a standing emblem of immutability. The meaning cannot be that as the heavens and the earth shall one day be destroyed, so the law shall then be nullified, but not till then. Such an assurance, even if it could be naturally thus expressed, would be irrelevant in this connection, the whole drift of which requires an absolute assertion of immutability. The changes which the universe is yet to undergo are either left entirely out of view, or reckoned as mere changes of its form without annihilation of its substance, and therefore not unfitting it to be the emblem of unchanging perpetuity. Pass, or more exactly, go by, pass away, become invisible, and by implication cease to be. Jot or tittle, in the oldest editions of King James's Bible written iote and title, are expressions borrowed from the art of writing, and peculiarly appropriate in speaking of a written law, not even the minutest point of which should fail of its effect or be abolished without answering its purpose. As we in such a case might say, not a word, syllable, or letter, so the ancients said not an iota, the smallest Greek letter, corresponding to the Hebrew yod, from which it also takes its name. The other word (κεραία), translated tittle, properly denotes a little horn, but is applied to the minute points and projections by which similar letters are distinguished. In no wise, or by no means, not at all, is an intensive or emphatic formula, here used to represent the double negative in Greek (ο μή), which instead of cancelling enhances the negation. Pass (pass away) from the law, i. e. cease to be a part of it, or be obliterated from it. This is a natural hyperbole, which every reader understands at once as meaning that the law shall abide in its integrity without the least deduction from its actual contents and substance as a well-known systematic whole. That this is the true meaning of the strong expressions, is apparent from what follows, until all be fulfilled (or done, come to pass, or happen). Not literally every point and stroke of the writing, which are separately insusceptible of such fulfilment, but the whole law as a system, without any derogation or deduction from its absolute completeness. We have here another proof that to destroy and to fulfil in the preceding verse do not mean to obey and to transgress particular precepts, but to perpetuate or abrogate the law considered as a whole. Divested of its peculiar form, and intended to arouse attention and enforce the truth, our Saviour's declaration is that the law, from which they hoped to be delivered, should remain in its integrity and undiminished force, until its purpose was accomplished. This last phrase seems to solve the question how these strong expressions could be predicated of the ceremonial law, which was to be and was abolished by Messiah's advent. That peculiar system was a sensible and temporary form of the divine law, not the law itself, so that its abrogation when its purpose had been answered was a part of the fulfilment here predicted, not a deviation from it or a contradiction of it. It must be also observed, in explanation of this point, that Christ is evidently rectifying errors in regard to something deeper and of more intrinsic moment than the ceremonial law. He is refuting the erroneous and most dangerous impression, that the change of dispensations was a change not only of external institutions but of moral principles, in opposition to which error he declares that these can never change.

19. This is a practical and personal improvement of the principles just laid down, which might otherwise have been considered merely speculative, or at least without immediate bearing on the characters and lives of individuals. Our Saviour thus far has been speaking of the law as a whole or as a system, and of his own relation to it as an abrogater or fulfiller. But the immutability of God's law could not be a matter of indifference to those who heard him, and he now applies it in the most explicit manner. Therefore, since the law can never lose its binding force. Whosoever (or in modern phrase, whoever), without any personal distinction or exception. Shall break is in Greek a more contingent phrase (ς ν λύση), whoever may (at any time), &c. Break, the simple verb, of which a compound occurs twice in v. 17, where it is rendered by destroy. The essential idea is still that of loosening and dissolving, but without the preposition (down), suggesting the idea of a structure taken down or pulled to pieces. We are not therefore to identify the two verbs, and make that here used mean likewise to annul or abrogate the system. This is also forbidden by the express mention of a single precept as the thing dissolved, and not of the whole law or congeries of precepts, as in v. 17. The only dissolution that can be affirmed of one such precept is its violation by the individual, so that the term break, used in all the English versions, is correct, although the same word would be incorrect in rendering the compound verb before employed. We are not to overlook the exact use of precepts or commandments, as distinguished from the whole law. Least, not in compass or external form, which sense has been applied by some to the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, as the summary or basis of the whole law, an idea just the opposite of that conveyed to every unsophisticated reader, who can only understand by least commandments those of least importance either really or in the estimation of mankind. But however little in itself or in proportion to the whole law, if it really form part of it, the obligation to obey it is complete, and its wilful violation is a virtual violation of the whole, according to the apostolic dictum, that he who offends in one point is guilty of all (Jas. 2:10). And teach men so, by precept or example leading others into the

same false depreciation of the law, or even of what seem to be its least important precepts, as no longer binding in the kingdom of Messiah. That this last is the idea necessarily implied though not expressed, is clear from the form of the penalty denounced, which is not that he shall perish or be cast forth into outer darkness, but that he shall be called (i. e. recognized, described as being, see above, on v. 9) least in the kingdom of heaven, i. e. under the new dispensation or the reign of the Messiah (see above, on v. 3). The reference is therefore not to soul-destroying error or to absolute rejection of the truth, but to theoretical and practical offences which might be committed by those waiting for the kingdom, or admitted to it. Such an offender shall be justly designated least, not the least, in comparison with every other, but one of the least, belonging to the lowest class of those who are in any sense the subjects of Messiah's reign. This form of expression would be wholly unaccountable and unintelligible if we did not know from the preceding context, that our Lord is combating erroneous views upon the part of some who were impatiently expecting the Messiah and a simultaneous relaxation or entire abrogation of the law, as the rule of human duty. Such are here admonished that by the slighting even the minutest precept of the law, they would certainly degrade themselves to the lowest rank in that kingdom where they hoped to be pre-eminent. Their admission to it is assumed or presupposed, the alternative of salvation or perdition being not at all in question. If it had been, our Lord would not have represented them as least in the kingdom, but as utterly shut out of it. The last clause is the converse of the one before it, adding emphasis and clearness to the solemn affirmation. Great, i. e. one of a superior rank, corresponding to the indefinite superlative before used.

20. The discourse now takes a wide step in advance, and enters on a new and spacious field, but by a natural and obvious transition from the previous context. Thus far the Saviour had been speaking of the law and of its precepts, as they were in themselves, without any reference to the form under which his hearers were familiar with them, and on which their views of the divine law must be founded. This peculiar form had been imparted to the law by the traditional accretions and the superstitious practice of the Pharisees, the great prevailing sect or party (see above, on 3:7), and the official or professional instructions of the Scribes, the leaders of that party and the spiritual guides of the people (see above, on 2:4). They were ostensibly the strictest moralists, and much of the intolerable burden under which the people groaned, arose from their unauthorized additions to the law which their followers confounded with the law itself. These naturally looked upon the Scribes and Pharisees as too good, "righteous overmuch" (Ecc. 7:16), and hoped for a new state of things, in which this irksome and excessive righteousness would be dispensed with. But our Lord here warns them that instead of having less they must have more of this conformity to right and to the will of God, than any of their spiritual guides, and that as a condition not only of pre-eminence but even of admission to the kingdom. Here is the point of contact or connection with the previous context. He had told them who should be called least and great in the Messiah's kingdom. He now tells them who should be admitted to it or excluded from it. That the violator even of the least divine command should take a low place in the kingdom, was sufficiently alarming to these Antinomian expectants of Messiah's advent. But immeasurably more so was the declaration that instead of being freed from the intolerable task of trying to be righteous, they must be more righteous than the very Scribes and Pharisees themselves, or forfeit all participation in the blessings of the coming change. As if a Popish devotee should now be told that instead of looking to the supererogatory merits of his holiest superiors to eke out his own defects, he must surpass them all in holiness himself. The form of expression is intentionally paradoxical, requiring explanation of the terms before it could be fully or correctly understood. The prima facie meaning seemed to be, that they must imitate the Scribes and Pharisees, and go beyond them in the same direction, or they could not be admitted to the kingdom. The meaning, as afterwards explained, was that the Pharisees and Scribes, instead of having too much, had too little, nay, had nothing, of the quality required, so that instead of trying to be like them, they must seek in this respect to be as different as possible. For connects this sentence with the declarations in the three preceding verses. I say unto you, although without the verily of v. 18, gives solemnity and form to the expression. Righteousness is not to be taken in any technical or abstruse sense, but as simply meaning rectitude, conformity to some acknowledged standard, which with all Jews was the real or supposed will of God. There is no question here as to the method of salvation, or the Christian doctrine of justification, but simply as to a participation in the reign of the Messiah. Shall exceed, the same expression as v. 19, which might be rendered more exact by omitting the auxiliary verb. Tyndale's version (exceed), retained by all the Protestant translators, is inferior in strength not only to the Greek but to the Vulgate and its copyists in English (Wiclif, be more plenteous than. Rheims, abound more than). Their righteousness must be abundant absolutely, and also in comparison with the Scribes and Pharisees. In no case, the same Greek form (ο μή) that occurs in v. 18, and is there translated in no wise.

21. Having said in general, that the customary or prevailing righteousness, exemplified and sanctioned by the Scribes and Pharisees, was insufficient to secure admission into the kingdom of Messiah, our Lord proceeds to show this in detail, by contrasting the Pharisaic doctrine as to several most familiar sins, with his own requisitions in regard to the same matters, the result of the comparison in each case being, that the standard of morality in his church or kingdom would be vastly higher than among the strictest Jewish moralists of that day, so that no man need resort to him in the hope of greater license or indulgence as to moral duties. This important head of the discourse extending to the close of the fifth chapter, is subdivided by the different sins, which are successively brought into view, as differently treated by the Pharisaic and the Christian ethics. These are murder (vs. 21–26). adultery (vs. 27–30), unauthorized divorce (vs. 31, 32), unlawful oaths (vs. 33–37), revenge (38–42), hatred (vs. 43–48). Common to all these subdivisions is the general idea running through them, that the sins enumerated would be still more strictly censured and forbidden in the new than in the old theocracy. There is also a general similarity of form, without punctilious and unnecessary

sameness, the method being to present first the Jewish theory and practice as to each particular, and then the Christian in emphatic contrast. Some of the formulas, employed alike in every case, will of course need only to be once explained, to wit, when they first occur, leaving merely what is new or peculiar to be subsequently noticed. Ye have heard, not the perfect but the aorist (κούσατε), which, according to the theory and strict rule of Greek syntax, means ye heard (or did hear) at a given time, but is often employed, even in the classics, and still more in Hellenistic usage, to denote an act repeated or continued to the present time, especially in verbs which have no perfect tense in common use. The idea here suggested evidently is, that they had often or habitually heard it, and not merely once for all, on some particular occasion. The reference, which might be to mere minor or colloquial information, is determined by the context to the hearing of official or professional instruction. They had often heard it from the Scribes and Pharisees, already mentioned as their standards and exemplars of true righteousness or goodness; what follows, therefore, is the customary representation, whether true or false, of these acknowledged leaders. It was said (or spoken), in the way of a command, as appears from the words quoted. That it was so said, is not here affirmed directly either by our Lord or the evangelist, but given as an affirmation of the Scribes and Pharisees, familiar to the hearers upon this occasion. Them of old time, an unnecessary circumlocution representing two Greek words which simply mean the ancients, here referring to the fathers of the nation, and especially to that generation which received the law through Moses. The original expression never denotes personal age (Acts 21:16 being only an apparent exception), much less official dignity or eldership, but always a relation to some former period or previous state of things; as the ancient prophets, i. e. those of the Old Testament (Luke 9:8, 19); the old world, namely, that before the flood (2 Pet. 2:5); the old (things), the state of man before conversion (2 Cor. 5:17); the old (or ancient) serpent, i. e. the same that figures in primeval history (Rev. 12:9, 20:2); to which may be added the adverbial phrase, from ancient days, or generations (Acts 15:7, 21). This determinate usage is sufficient by itself to condemn the construction put upon the clause before us in the text of our translation (by them of old time), and to recommend that of the older English versions (to them), now omitted or found only in the margin. For by what ancients could this be said to have been uttered? The Scribes would never have attributed the precept to the whole body of the people, or applied the term ancients either to Moses or to God himself; while its application to contemporary elders is not only contrary to usage, but involves the incongruity of making these elders cite themselves. ‘Ye have heard (from the elders) that it has been said by the elders.’ But apart from these considerations, this construction is precluded by the fact, that in every other case where the same passive form is followed by the dative, that case denotes not the speaker but the hearer. Rom. 9:12, it was said unto her (ἠθη ντ)—ib. v. 26—it was said unto them (ἠθη ντο ς)—Gal. 3:16—to Abraham were spoken the promises—Rev. 6:11. it was said unto them—Rev. 9:4—it was commanded them, literally, said unto them. According to this usage, which is uniform and constant, the words now before us can only mean, it was said to the ancients, i. e. to the generation which received the law (Acts 7:53). This was probably a formula in common use among the Scribes and rabbies when they made a quotation from the law of Moses. Thou shalt not kill, the sixth commandment, here recorded in the words of the Septuagint version (Ex. 20:13). And or but (δὲ) introduces something added to the simple precept in the way of comment or interpretation, either by the Scribes and Pharisees themselves, or a part of the original legislation as reported by them. In the former case the phrase, it was said unto the ancients, extends only to the precept as it stands in the decalogue. ‘It was said of old, thou shalt not kill, and we say in accordance with it, he that kills, etc.’ On the other supposition, both these clauses are described as part of the original command, preserved in the Oral law or “tradition of the elders” (see below, on 15:2). The latter is in perfect keeping with the doctrine and the practice of the Pharisees, but not the necessary meaning of the language, nor perhaps the most obvious in this connection. As to the words themselves, thus added to the sixth commandment, whether by tradition of the elders or by later Pharisaic comment, they are either an unmeaning paraphrase, in which case they would hardly have been quoted, or an exposition of the sense in which the precept was to be applied. The only way in which the latter supposition can be justified is by laying stress upon the verb in its precise sense, which is that of murder or malicious homicide, as in the Hebrew of the sixth commandment. The whole may then be paraphrased as follows. ‘You have (often) heard (it said by the Scribes and leading Pharisees), that our fathers were commanded not to murder, and that consequently only he who murders (in the strict sense of the term) is liable to be condemned and punished under this commandment.’ This agrees not only with the obvious import of the terms and with the previous connection, but presents exactly such a limitation of the precept as our Lord appears to combat in the next verse. Shall kill is too categorical a form, like those in vs. 19, 20, and might be translated more exactly may kill, or still better by the simple present (kills) which is often used contingently in modern English, and is so used by our own translators in the next verse (whosoever is angry), although not to represent the same original construction. Shall be, on the other hand, exactly represents the next verb, which is future (σται). In danger of, obnoxious, liable, exposed to, the original expression primarily signifying held in, and then bound by, with particular reference in usage to judicial or forensic obligation. There is no need of giving to the judgment here its highest sense of final and eternal condemnation, or its lowest of a local secular tribunal. Far more obvious and suited to the context is the usual and wide sense of judicial process, without specification of the time, place, or form, in which it is conducted. ‘Whoever murders (and no other) shall be liable to trial and conviction in due course of law.’

22. Having stated the traditional or Pharisaic gloss upon the sixth commandment, which restricted it to actual malicious homicide, our Lord now gives his own far wider and more stringent exposition of the same law, reaching beyond the overt act to the malignant dispositions out of which it springs. But I say unto you, in opposition not to the Mosaic precept, but to this unauthorized confinement of its prohibitions to the ultimate result of murderous affections. Whosoever is angry, or retaining the peculiar form of the original,

every (one) angered (or enraged). The qualifying adverb (ε κ) usually means in the New Testament in vain, i. e. without effect, to no purpose (Rom. 13:4. 1 Cor. 15:2. Gal. 3:4, 4:11); but in one other place at least (Col. 2:18), it has the sense in which Polybius and Xenophon employ it, to wit, idly, inconsiderately, causelessly, unreasonably. The Vulgate and its followers omit it here entirely, in which they are sustained by the latest critics, who suppose it to have been introduced by certain copyists, in order to avoid an absolute condemnation of all anger, which is inconsistent both with apostolic precept (Eph. 4:26) and with Christ's example (Mark 3:5). It would seem to follow, therefore, that the limitation is implied if not expressed, which makes the textual variation exegetically unimportant. The truth, however, is that the question here is not between a groundless and a reasonable anger, but between all anger, as an inward affection of the mind, and its outward manifestation in unlawful acts of violence. As if he had said, men are to be judged, not only by their murderous acts, but by their murderous feelings. This is directly stated in the first clause, and then indirectly in the others, where instead of anger itself, we have natural and usual expressions of it in abusive and contemptuous language. This essential import of the terms is not affected by the specific sense attached to each, although the obvious and common explanations are no doubt the best. Racha (which Wiclif renders fy) is probably an Aramaic word (רִיקָ or ריקא), meaning vain, empty, which occurs in the later Jewish books as an expression of contempt. Fool is used for the same purpose in all languages, evincing pride of intellect to be an universal passion. There is no need, therefore, of attaching to the term the peculiar sense ascribed to corresponding Hebrew words, in which wickedness and folly seem to be identified. The whole question as to the specific import of these terms is without exegetical importance, as the meaning meant to be conveyed is simply, that the sixth commandment, as interpreted by Christ, forbids, not only the extreme act of murder, but the anger which impels to it, and the words by which that anger is betrayed, whatever be their primary or proper meaning. The disposition to insist upon that meaning is connected with an ancient and an almost universal notion of a climax in this sentence, which has led to many forced constructions, and obscured if not perverted its whole meaning. According to this usual assumption, we have here three gradations of unauthorized and sinful anger, with as many measures or degrees of punishment assigned to them respectively. The first degree of sin is simple anger (or according to the common text, unreasonable, groundless anger) not expressed at all; the second the expression of such anger by the use of the word raca; and the third, by the use of the word fool. The first or lowest form of punishment, attached to these offences, is the judgment, which is commonly explained to mean the local or inferior tribunal which existed in all Jewish towns, composed of three or seven judges. The next is the council, or synedrion, the Greek term commonly applied to the supreme court or national tribunal of the Jews (see below, on 10:17, 26:59). The third is the fire of hell, or more exactly, the gehenna of fire, a later Jewish name for the place of future torment, being really a Greek word made up of two Hebrew ones, originally meaning the Valley of Hinnom. As a local designation, it described the valley on the south side of Jerusalem, famous of old as a favourite place of idolatrous worship, and especially of the horrid service paid to Moloch by causing children to pass through the fire (Lev. 18:21, 20:2, 2 Kings 23:10, 2 Chr. 33:6, Jer. 19:2, 32:35). Hence in times of reformation, and especially under Josiah, the last good king of Judah, this valley was defiled, probably by being made a place of deposit for the refuse and offal of the city (2 Kings 23:10). It is often added that to consume this refuse fires were kept perpetually burning; but there is no sufficient evidence of this fact, and the latest writers suppose the sacrificial fires of Moloch to have given rise to the peculiar usage of the Gehenna, to denote the place of future torment, or what in modern English is called hell. This view of the passage, though entitled to respect from its antiquity and general reception, is unquestionably open to some serious objections. In the first place, it assumes a gradation in the sin condemned, which is not readily suggested by the terms employed. Interpreters have found it so impossible to show the greater guilt of calling a man fool than raca, or of saying either than of cherishing a silent but malignant anger, that they have been forced to put the most unnatural constructions on these words, without effect, because the difficulty still remains essentially the same, whatever be their meaning. In the next place, there is an offensive incongruity in coupling two degrees of Jewish criminal proceedings with eternal torments as the third degree of the same scale. However palliated or disguised the transition here is felt to be a salto mortale. It is really an indirect acknowledgment of this, that some propose to make the judgment and the council, although properly denoting human courts, mere figures for inferior degrees of what is afterwards called hell-fire. How gratuitous and arbitrary this is, may be gathered from the fact, that others just reverse the process, and make hell-fire a strong, Oriental figure for the worst or highest form of punishment in this world. Feeling the difficulties which attend the supposition of a climax, yet unwilling to renounce it, some have recently proposed to substitute an anti climax by reversing the gradation both of sin and punishment, or, what may be regarded as the furthest possible extreme in this direction, to assume a climax in the one case and an anti-climax in the other. Such diversities of judgment and extravagant inventions on the part of wise and learned men imply an error in the principle or basis of the exposition, which can only be rectified in this case by discarding the idea of a climax altogether, and explaining the three clauses as substantially equivalent though formally dissimilar expressions of the same idea, namely, that the law of God forbids not only murder but malignant anger and its oral manifestations. 'So far is this commandment from relating only to the act of murder, that it makes internal anger an offence deserving punishment. Yes, even such a word as raca, if expressive of an inward spite, may be a crime, obnoxious to the highest censures; and the use of the word fool may spring from such a state of mind, that he who utters it may be condemned to endless torments.' Retaining this as the essential meaning, there is some room for latitude of judgment as to the particular expressions. It is even admissible, though not so natural, to understand the judgment and the council as denoting human censures, while the fire of hell denotes the wrath of God, provided these unequal sanctions be connected, not with different degrees of sin, but with the same, as making men obnoxious both to present and to future, both to human and divine retributions. Into hell-fire, i. e. liable to be thrown into it. The lesson taught then as to murder is, that the law against it would be far more rigidly interpreted

and executed under the Messiah's reign than under the Mosaic law, as expounded and enforced by the contemporary Scribes and Pharisees.

23. The next four verses (23–26) contain a practical improvement of the view just taken of the sixth commandment, or the law of murder, rendered still more pointed and direct by the use of the second person singular, as if addressing some one individual among those present. If the law extended in its prohibitions to internal feelings and apparently unmeaning words, the mutual alienations of men ceased to be a matter of indifference, and demanded speedy reconciliation. This is first expressed (23, 24) by making such an act obligatory even in comparison with external duties of religion, as well as a prerequisite to their acceptance. Therefore, since the law of God takes cognizance of angry and revengeful feelings no less than of murderous acts. The word translated bring may either have its usual and general sense, or be technically used to denote the act of presentation (corresponding to the Hebrew הִקְרִיב). In the latter case the sense is stronger, as the worshipper is then supposed to be not merely drawing near but actually at the altar and engaged in the first act of oblation. And there rememberest, after thy arrival at the altar, which implies that it had not occurred to him before. Thy brother, not thy neighbour merely, but some still more near and intimate connection. Hath aught (any thing) against thee, i. e. any ground of litigation or complaint. It is not necessarily implied, though possibly intended, that the fault is on the side of the person here addressed. One may have something against another, i. e. something to say or to demand, though really his claim is groundless. Nay, the case is stronger upon that supposition, as the worshipper is then advised to come to an agreement even with a captious and unjust opponent, rather than incur the risk of hating him and murdering him in his heart.

24. Rather than incur this fearful risk of murderous affections, it is better to postpone or interrupt even a religious service which may be performed hereafter, while the opportunity of reconciliation may be lost forever. There, before the very altar and in the divine presence. It is evident that this is not suggested as a case at all likely to occur in real life, or even as a formal rule to be observed if it should occur, but rather as a strong assurance that it would be right and proper thus to act, if there were no other means of accomplishing the end required. The same mode of statement, still more strongly marked, occurs below in vs. 29, 30. Go thy way, an old English phrase, equivalent to go away, though it may seem to convey more to a modern ear. First and then, indicate the order of the acts prescribed. Be reconciled, not merely passively consent to be so, but use active means to bring about a reconciliation. Come and offer, literally, coming (having come for the purpose) offer, thus resuming and completing the act interrupted in the verse preceding.

25. By a natural transition and association, the imaginary case of an offended brother is exchanged for one of litigation, the vexatious incidents of which are then urged as a motive for preferring certain compromise to doubtful triumph in the courts of law. Both suppositions are intended to enforce the duty of avoiding alienations and enmities, as really at variance with the law of God, and, therefore, attended by the rise, or rather certainty, of his displeasure. Reduced to the form of a comparison, in which both sides of the analogy are fully stated, it may thus be paraphrased: 'As in the case of a contested law-suit, it may sometimes be expedient to make peace by sacrificing even your just rights, because these would be dearly purchased by the risk of failure, condemnation and imprisonment, perhaps forever; how much more ought such an issue to be sought when there is nothing to be gained and every thing to lose by cherishing the enmity of others.' There is no need then of making this a parable, in which the adversary (i. e. adverse party in a law-suit) represents either God or the offended brother of the previous context, and specific meanings are assigned to the judge and officer. It seems more natural to take it as an argument a fortiori, founded on a very common incident of real life, and not admitting of an emblematical interpretation. Agree, literally, be well minded or disposed, i. e. to reconciliation. Quickly, soon, without delay, before it is too late. Whiles, an old form of the common while or whilst, here used to render a phrase strictly meaning until when (or what time), followed by the present indicative (ε) because referring to an actual condition, not a future or contingent one. In the way with him, i. e. to the place of trial. Seize even that last opportunity of compromise and reconciliation. Lest at any time, the strict translation of a particle (μήποτε), which often denotes mere contingency without distinct reference to time (see below, on 7:6, 13:15, 29, 15:32, 25:9, 27:64.) Deliver to the judge, by prosecution or complaint, or by insisting on the judges giving sentence. Deliver to the officer, by passing sentence and ordering the ministerial attendant of the court to execute it. Deliver, in both cases, means to put it in the power of the judge or his executive officer to do their duty, or perform their functions in the case. There is of course no allusion to tyrannical or fraudulent betrayal of the prisoner by one of the parties named into the power of the other. Be cast, literally, shalt be cast, a deviation from the form of the original directly opposite to that in vs. 19, 20, 22, but equally gratuitous and needless. Thou shalt be cast, i. e. in that case, if that happen.

26. This verse might seem to be the mere completion of the ideal case described in the preceding verse, suggesting no unusual conclusion of such matters. But the solemn formula at the beginning, like that in v. 18, and still stronger than the one in v. 20, seems to show that while the words relate directly to the case supposed, they are intended to apply to the more awful case elucidated by it, and to remind the hearer that perpetual imprisonment for debt on earth is but a shadow of perpetual imprisonment in hell for sin, of which he is in danger, not only when he commits murder, but whenever he indulges feelings of hostility in which the germ of that great crime is latent, and from which it may eventually be developed; or continues wilfully a state of alienation which, however negative or harmless it may seem, is murderous in principle already, and may one day become murderous in actual effect. Till thou hast, though it implies the possibility of payment, at the same time suggests the debtor's hopeless incapacity to make it. The coin

mentioned is of still less value than a British farthing, or our own cent, and therefore was adopted to convey what is here the essential idea, that of an infinitesimal residuum.

27. The next sin to which our Lord applies his discriminating process is adultery, pursuing the same course as in the case of murder, i. e. first contrasting his interpretation of the seventh commandment with the common one (27, 28), and then deducing from this contrast an impressive moral lesson (29, 30.) The first sentence (v. 27), although not elliptical in form or syntax, is abridged in substance, and to be interpreted according to the parallel in v. 21. In itself considered it is simply a quotation of the seventh commandment, nearly in the words of the Septuagint version (Ex. 20:14). But it cannot be with this commandment that he here contrasts his own more rigid rule (v. 28); for this would be at variance with his own relation to the law, as just before defined (v. 17), and with the whole structure of this passage, which is obviously directed, not against the law itself, but against the customary Pharisaic view of it, although this object is more fully stated in some parts of it (e. g. in v. 21 above and v. 43 below, where the corrupt gloss is expressly cited), than in this place and in vs. 31, 33, 38, where only the commandment is expressed, but the erroneous view of it sufficiently disclosed by what is said in refutation of it. In the case before us, the form of expression may be thus assimilated to the one in v. 31: 'Ye have heard that it was said to the ancients, Thou shalt not commit adultery, and therefore only he who does commit adultery, in the strict sense of the term, is a transgressor of the law.' This completion of the sense not only brings the passage into harmony with those before and after it, but furnishes the requisite antithesis to v. 28, which otherwise contains no comparison at all between our Lord's interpretation of the law and any other, which, as we have seen, is here the very drift of the discourse.

28. But I say unto you, precisely the same formula employed in v. 21, and therefore to be understood in opposition, not to the commandment which had been expressly quoted, but to the usual interpretation of it, which is tacitly implied, as perfectly familiar to the hearers. Whosoever looketh, literally, every (one) looking, not simply seeing, which is otherwise expressed in Greek as well as English, but voluntarily and actively directing the sight towards an object. This idea of deliberate, spontaneous action is expressed still more distinctly by the words that follow, to lust after (or more simply, to desire, or as Wiclif renders it, to covet) her, in which the form is not that of a bare infinitive, but the stronger one of an infinitive preceded by an article and preposition (πρ ς τ πιθυμ σαι) and denoting purpose in the clearest manner, not merely so as to, but with a view to, the indulgence of illicit and corrupt desire.* A woman is more definitely rendered by Tyndale (a wife), and interpreted by Cranmer (another man's wife), which agrees well with the fact, that in Greek, as in French, the ordinary word for wife is simply woman (γυνή, femme), which is more than eighty times so rendered in our version. (See below, 22:24–28, where both words are correctly used in the translation of the same brief passage.) It is also recommended by the fact, that adultery is properly a violation of the marriage vow. But as the Greek word is in itself indefinite, and as our Saviour evidently puts a wide construction on the law, dealing rather with its spirit than its letter, it is not only morally more safe, but philologically more exact to give the term the widest sense which it will bear, and which is really its proper meaning, the specific sense of wife when appropriate being always suggested by the context. On the other hand, the verb (μοιχεύσεις, μοἰχευσεν) has in usage a specific meaning (to commit adultery) and must not be adjusted to the wide sense of the noun (a woman), so as to denote fornication, or illicit intercourse in general. The extension of the doctrine here laid down to other cases besides breaches of the marriage vow is not to be secured by tampering with the words, but by parity of reasoning, and by observing the extensive application of the principle involved. In form, the declaration relates only to adultery; in principle and spirit, to all lechery (as Wiclif here translates it), i. e. all illicit intercourse between sexes. Already, before any overt act takes place. In his heart, as the seat of the affections, or more generally, yet in strict accordance with the usage of the Greek word, in his mind, as distinguished from his body (see below, on 13:15). The doctrine here taught in relation to adultery is identical with that laid down in v. 22 respecting murder, namely, that the prohibition of the law extends, not only to the overt act, but to the inward disposition, provided this be truly murderous in one case and adulterous in the other. Thus explained, it is only a deduction from the principle, which all acknowledge, that external acts derive their moral character entirely from the motive which impels to them. If this be so, it is impossible that the guilt of any action should begin with its actual performance, and the sin may justly be described as already committed, in the sight of God, as soon as the purpose is distinctly formed, or even the unlawful wish deliberately cherished. In reference, therefore, to the two great cardinal offences, Christ here vindicates his kingdom from the foul aspersion of establishing a lower standard than the one erected by the Pharisees and Scribes in their theoretical and practical interpretation of the law.

29. Here again, as in v. 23, the plural pronoun is abruptly changed into the singular, as if the object of address were no longer the whole multitude, or even the disciples who formed part of it (v. 2), but some one individual hearer. The design of this change, which the English reader is too apt to overlook from his habitual confusion of the numbers in colloquial usage, is in either case to give a pointed, personal directness to the practical advices which now follow, and to render it impossible for any one who hears or reads the words to treat them as mere barren generalities. As if he had said, 'Such is my interpretation of these two commandments, which I state to all of you collectively; and now I will tell each one of you how he ought to act in consequence.' In this respect our Lord affords a model to his ministers, who ought neither to neglect the general exhibition of sound doctrine, nor to pretermit its practical and personal enforcement. The advice itself is similar, in form and substance, to an exhortation which has been preserved by Mark (9:43–48), as uttered on a subsequent occasion, and by Matthew himself (18:8, 9), perhaps upon a third, a striking instance of our Lord's didactic method of repeating the same lessons, more or less modified, to different assemblies. Of the three

forms in which this exhortation is recorded, that before us is the briefest, and most probably the oldest, thus exhibiting the theme, of which the others are majestic variations. Common to all, because essential to his purpose, is the solemn warning against being tempted and betrayed into sin by any thing belonging to themselves, however highly valued and however fondly cherished. This idea he expresses in a manner which may be described as characteristic of his teaching, i. e. by assuming an extreme case and supposing that a man's own members, even those which he particularly prizes, and to lose which would be little less than death itself, are incurable, incorrigible causes or occasions of transgression against God. The case is not presented as a real one, or one which there is reason to anticipate in actual experience; but if it should occur, if the only alternative presented to a man were deliberate habitual transgression or the loss of his most valuable members, what would be his choice? If he prefer his bodily integrity and purchase it at such a price, he has reason to believe himself a reprobate. But if in the extreme case here supposed, he would be ready to choose mutilation rather than a life of sin, that choice includes all minor cases, as the whole includes the part, and as the greater comprehends the less.

In the verse before us, the antithesis presented is between the loss of one eye, with salvation or admission into heaven, and the use of two eyes, with perdition or the everlasting pains of hell. That this is the original connection or occurrence of this striking passage, may be gathered from the otherwise unimportant circumstance, that the eye, which stands last in the other cases (Matt. 18:19, Mark 9:47), here stands first, in obvious and beautiful connection with the previous condemnation even of an unchaste look as virtual adultery. We thus learn, as it were, the very genesis or origin of this divine injunction, as developed in the natural succession of our Saviour's thoughts and words in his organic or inaugural discourse, and afterwards repeated in an amplified and finished but essentially unaltered form on different occasions. The right eye seems to be particularly mentioned as commonly reckoned the most valuable, either from a natural difference or one produced, in all the double members of the body, by more constant use. Offend, not in the ordinary modern sense of displeasing or alienating in affection, but in the Latin and old English sense of stumbling or being made to stumble. The nearest root or theme to which it can be traced in classic Greek, denotes a trap or snare, but in the Hellenistic dialect a stumbling-block or any hindrance in the path, over which one may fall. In like manner the derivative verb means to make one fall or stumble, a natural figure both for sin and error, and often representing both as commonly connected in experience. 'If thy very eye, and that thy right eye, incurably betrays thee into sin.' The present tense (σκανδαλ ζει) brings the supposition home with great force to the hearer's actual experience. Not 'if it should so do hereafter,' but 'if it is so doing now.' Cast it from thee, with abhorrence and contempt, not only as a small price to be paid for your deliverance from sin, but as intrinsically hateful on account of its supposed abandonment to sin itself. It is profitable (or expedient, as the Rhemish Bible renders it), i. e. comparatively, as appears from the remaining clause, but is not expressed in the verb itself, though so translated in the older English versions (better it is, Tyndale, Cranmer, Geneva). Perish, or be lost, suggesting the idea of perdition or eternal misery, though strictly inapplicable to an amputated or exscinded member. And not, i. e. not expedient, profitable, good for thee, conducive to thy happiness. Cast, the same word that was previously applied to the eye, and thus suggesting the immense disparity of loss and gain, the disproportion between voluntary rejection of a single member and coercive or compulsory rejection of one's self forever. Hell, an English word originally meaning the unseen world, or the world of spirits, or the state of the dead, and thus corresponding to the Greek word hades (see below, on 11:23, 16:18), but in later usage limited to the place of future torment, and employed to represent the Greek gehenna, which has been explained already. (See above, on v. 22.)

30. The same supposition is then made as to the right hand, with an exhortation to cut it off (or more exactly out, which is a stronger expression) in the case assumed, to wit, if it cannot be retained without a certainty of sinning against God. The remainder of the verse is an exact repetition of the twenty-ninth, except that the conjunctive particle (και) with which it opens indicates the close connection and resemblance of the two, whereas that at the beginning of the verse preceding (δὲ) rather introduces an addition somewhat different in form, or marks the transition from our Saviour's doctrine to its application. It is not necessary to repeat that this is no formal rule of duty, or provision for a case to be expected in real life, but the strongest possible expression of the principle which ought to govern even the extremest case conceivable, much more the usual emergencies of every-day experience. That principle is simply the unsparing and indignant sacrifice of any thing, however dear and to appearance indispensable, which necessarily incites to sin. The special reference in this connection is, of course, to all indulgences, however lawful in themselves, which experience has shown to be promotive of unhallowed passion.

31. Closely connected with the sin of adultery, and often leading to it, as explained below, was the practice of the Jews as to Divorce, which is the next topic in the series of comparisons between the Pharisaic and the Christian ethics. Here again the abridged form of citation is employed, the words actually quoted being those of the law itself, and the false interpretation being only given indirectly in the refutation. The idea entertained by some, that in these cases there is nothing omitted or to be supplied, but the antithesis is simply between Christ and Moses, is not only inconsistent with our Lord's position as defined by himself in this discourse (v. 17), but utterly destructive of the symmetry which so remarkably distinguishes this portion of the Sermon on the Mount. It is indeed incredible, without the clearest demonstration, that while other things are so exactly balanced, this should have been left at random; or that while our Lord begins and ends by combating the Pharisaic exposition of the law, and placing his own interpretation in the strongest contrast with it, he should in the intervening parts attack the law itself and introduce a rival legislation. This hypothesis is immeasurably more improbable than the supposition that the introductory formulas are in some places more

laconic than in others, and in that case to be supplemented from the parallels. Where so simple an assumption removes all the difficulties of the case and makes harmonious what would otherwise be hopeless discord, every principle of sound interpretation, and indeed of common sense, requires that it should be made. But although we are authorized by these considerations to supply the tacit reference to the prevalent corruption of this precept, it does not follow that the corruption was itself the same as in the other cases. This is a point to be determined by the circumstances and connection of the case before us, with due regard to the precise meaning of the first clause. It was said (to the ancients in the law) that (the Greek particle of citation not expressed in English) whosoever shall, the same use of the future as in the translation of vs. 19, 20, 22, which might be more exactly rendered, whoever puts away. This phrase, however, is much stronger than the Greek verb (πολ ση), which is variously rendered elsewhere, send away (Matt. 14:15), loose (18:27), release (27:15), let depart (Luke 2:29), forgive (Luke 6:37), let go (Luke 14:4), dismiss (15:30), and set at liberty (Heb. 13:23). It is another compound of the verb used in vs. 17, 19, with the same essential sense of loosening or undoing, to which the preposition (π) gives the accessory notion of releasing (as an object bound by untying), letting go, without the implication of violent expulsion, which can hardly be separated from the phrase put away. But whatever be the import of the term in general usage, it is certainly employed here to describe repudiation or divorce. The precept quoted is still found in Deut. 24:1, the form here given being that of the Septuagint version. Writing of divorcement answers here to a single Greek word (ποστάσιον), which in Attic law denoted the apostasy or criminal defection of a freedman from his patron, but is used in the Septuagint with writ or writing (β βλιον ποστασίου),* to translate a Hebrew phrase (סֵפֶר כְּרִיתֻת), which strictly means a writ of excision, the certificate or document required in the law (Deut. 24:1) to be given to the wife by her repudiating husband. According to the Jewish traditions, it was, even in the time of Christ, a controverted question between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, whether the obscure phrase (עֶרְוַת דָּבָר), rendered some uncleanness, but literally meaning nakedness of word (or thing), was to be taken in a moral sense as meaning lewdness, or in the vague sense of something disagreeable. The latter doctrine (that of Hillel) is said to have been afterwards carried by the famous Rabbi Akiba so far as to allow a man to put away his wife on finding one who pleased him better. That the bill or writing was not a charge of infidelity, but rather a certificate of innocence in that respect, is clear, because it was to be delivered to the wife herself, and because the law required an adultress to be punished (Num. 5:31), not to be thus quietly dismissed. The writing of divorcement, therefore, was itself no hardship, but a benefit, protecting the divorced wife from unfounded imputations, and declaring her repudiation to be founded upon something less than violation of her marriage vow. This was the requisition of the law; but what was the corruption or the false interpretation of it, tacitly implied and afterwards refuted? This, we learn from a fuller declaration of our Saviour on a different occasion, which has been preserved by Mark (10:2–12), consisted in regarding the Mosaic precept as a license to repudiate at will; whereas it was a merciful provision in behalf of the repudiated woman, designed to mitigate the hardship of divorces, even when unlawful. It was not a general permission to repudiate, but a stringent requisition that whoever did so should secure his wife from injury by certifying that she was not chargeable with unchaste conduct, but divorced upon some minor pretext.

32. In opposition to this prevalent perversion of a merciful provision m the law, our Saviour teaches that so far from making divorce easier, he intended to forbid it altogether as the law did, with the single exception of those cases where the contract had already been annulled by the conduct of one party, i. e. by desertion (1 Cor. 7:15) or adultery. The latter is here designated, not by a specific term (μ ιχεία) corresponding to the verb in the last clause and to the kindred one in v. 27 above,* but by a more generic term (πορνεία), which however is not incorrect, as it does not properly mean fornication in the strict sense, as distinguished from adultery, but lechery or whoredom, as including both. Saving because of, literally outside of the word (cause or reason) of unchastity. The exceptive particle (παρεκτος) belongs to the later Greek or Hellenistic dialect, and is only used in this figurative way. Causeth, literally makes, a use of the verb common to both idioms. To commit adultery, i. e. to violate her marriage vow against her will, by forced separation or compulsory desertion. Or the words may have prospective reference to the case mentioned in the last clause, that of a re-marriage on the part of the repudiated wife, who thereby violates the vow by her own act, but by the procurement, if not under the coercion, of her husband. The Church of Rome regards this as an absolute prohibition of re-marriage, even in the case here mentioned, that of fornication in the wide sense, which in the case of married persons is adultery. The Protestant and Oriental Churches hold re-marriage to be lawful in all cases where divorce is, and explain this verse accordingly. (See below, on 19:9.)

33. The next item in this catalogue of sins is that of swearing or unlawful oaths, in reference to which there seem to have been two prevailing errors in the theory and practice of the Jews. The first was the opinion or belief, that no swearing was unlawful except false swearing; the other, that no swearing was unlawful except swearing by the name of God. In opposition to these errors Christ here teaches that the sin, where there is any, consists not in swearing falsely, which is a distinct offence punished both by God and man, nor in any particular form of oath, but in swearing at all without necessity or warrant. The introductory formula is here the same as in v. 21, with a single word prefixed (again), making the transition to another prohibition of the law. This is not found in the decalogue, nor totidem verbis elsewhere in the Pentateuch, but is a pregnant summary which the people may have often heard from their instructors as the teaching of the law upon the subject. The first or prohibitory clause (thou shalt not perjure or forswear thyself, i. e. swear falsely) is an abridgment of the precept in Lev. 19:12 “Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God, I (am) the Lord;” or, as the second member of the sentence might be rendered, “and (thereby) profane the name of thy God. (even) me, Jehovah.” The second or preceptive clause (thou shalt perform, literally pay or give back, to the Lord

thine oaths, not merely what has been directly promised to himself, but all engagements sanctioned by an oath in his name) is a paraphrase or condensation of the command in Numb. 30:2 (Heb. 3): “If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond (literally, to bind a bond upon his soul), he shall not break (literally, profane, the same word that occurs in the citation from Leviticus) his word; according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth (see above, on 4:4) shall he do.” The same command is found in Deut. 23:23, in a more general form, “That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and do,” which the last clause then applies to a specific case already mentioned in the context. Of these commands, both negative and positive, the verse before us is a correct summary. To assume that our Lord is combating the law itself, we have already seen to be absurd, and it is doubly so in this case, as his own injunction in the following verses does not contradict this precept in the least, and must therefore be directed against some erroneous explanation of it, not expressly stated but implied in his correction of it. This erroneous view of the law in question seems to have arisen from the fact, that in Leviticus (19:12) the sin forbidden is the profanation of the name Jehovah by false swearing. Hence it was inferred that where either of these elements was wanting, or in other words where the swearing was neither false nor expressly by the name of God, there was no sin at all committed.

34. In opposition to this too restricted view of the divine prohibition, he declares, as its true import and the sense in which he should himself enforce it, that they should not swear at all (λως), wholly, altogether, an adverb which qualifies the negative and makes it absolute, as in the somewhat different phrase here used in English. The only question has respect not to its meaning but to the extent of its application. By a possible construction, not at all (μ λως) may have reference to the form of the oath, as being in the name of God or not—‘I forbid not only oaths in the divine name, but others which are really disguised forms of the same thing,’ and of which he then proceeds to give examples. By another possible construction, not at all refers not to the form but to the act of swearing. This, which is the usual construction, really includes the other, since a prohibition of all forms of swearing is a prohibition of swearing itself. The particular oaths which follow are no doubt familiar samples of those then in common use, and must be understood as representing the whole class of frivolous and uncommanded modes of swearing. By heaven, literally, in the heaven, a Hebrew idiom, the preposition (בְּ) usually answering to v being also used in other combinations, and among the rest in swearing. (Gen. 22:16. בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי, by myself have I sworn.) In other parts of the New Testament we find the classical construction of the same verb with the preposition κατὰ (Heb. 6:13) and with the accusative (Jas. 5:12). The throne of God, a beautiful description of heaven, also found in the Old Testament (Isai. 66:1). It is not here given as a reason why heaven is too holy to be sworn by, but to show that swearing by it is in fact to swear by God himself. An oath, as a religious act, consisting in the solemn invocation of an omniscient witness to attest the truth of what is uttered, cannot, from its very nature, terminate on any creature, much less on a lifeless and material object. Swearing by heaven, therefore, either has no meaning, or derives it from the fact that heaven is the residence, the court, the throne of God. (See above, on v. 3.) This is designed to show that an unlawful oath, judicial or colloquial, is not divested of its criminality by any euphemistical evasion or disguise of the divine name, which is really involved, not merely in the form but in the substance and the very definition of the oath itself. Hence the simple phrase, I swear, or its equivalents, is as real and direct an appeal to God, as if his names and titles were expressly uttered.

35. The same thing is here said of the earth, described as God’s footstool (or retaining the pleonastic form of the original, the footstool of his feet) in the sublime passage of Isaiah (66:1) previously quoted or referred to. The design is not poetical embellishment, but the suggestion through a familiar part of Scripture, that as the throne and its accompanying footstool derive all their dignity from him who sits above them, so the heavens and the earth, which bear a similar relation to the Most High, are entirely dependent upon that relation for the least significancy in religious acts, and more especially in that of swearing. In other words, he who swears by the earth either swears by God or does not swear at all. In the last clause the same thing is said of Jerusalem, but with a slight change of expression not retained in the translation, namely, the substitution of another preposition (ε ς) which properly means into after verbs of motion, but has frequently the weaker sense of to or towards, expressive of direction without actual entrance. This is probably the meaning here, involving an allusion to the ancient although uncommanded practice of praying towards the holy city. (See 1 Kings 8:38, 42, 44, Dan. 6:10.) As if he had said, ‘neither swear (turning) towards Jerusalem,’ which is the more natural as uttered by our Lord in Galilee. Because it is the city of the great king, the capital or royal residence of Jehovah, as the immediate head of the theocracy, and owes to that relation all its sanctity and even its significancy as an object to be sworn by; so that he who swears by it either swears by God or does not swear at all.

36. The third and last familiar form of oath prohibited is by a man’s own head; but here the reason given is not only more obscure, but at first sight altogether different from that suggested in the other cases. Instead of showing the relation of the object to the majesty of God, he points out its relation to the littleness of man, and his utter incapacity to exercise the least controlling power over it. However true this may be, it does not at once commend itself to every mind as a sufficient reason for the prohibition. The difficulty may be somewhat lessened by explaining white or black as a proverbial expression, meaning any kind whatever, and giving to the verb its strongest sense, that of creation. ‘Thou canst not make (or bring into existence even) one hair (whether) white or black.’ It is then a denial of man’s power, not to change the colour of his hair, which is continually done by artificial means, but to produce one of any colour, which, however trivial the effect may be, is a creative act. The object of the clause may then be to suggest, in an indirect and possibly proverbial form, the correlate or converse of this proposition, namely, that the head of man is not a creation of his own but of God, and exclusively at God’s disposal; so that if it can be sworn by, it is only as a needless and an uncommanded oath by

God himself, the more to be avoided because destitute of even that slight pretext which might seem to justify the oaths just mentioned by his throne, his footstool, and his royal city, all which may be used to represent him in a way that seems entirely inappropriate to the human head.

37. But to what conclusion does all this point? That the forms of swearing here forbidden were irreverent and needless substitutes for solemn oaths by God himself, and, therefore, ought to give place to the latter? This is certainly included, and if this were all, it would determine not at all in v. 34 to mean in none of these accustomed forms, but only in the name of God. The passage then would be a simple prohibition of all indirect and covert modes of swearing, as if these could lessen or destroy the guilt of either perjury or blasphemy. But that this is not the true sense, or at most the full sense of the prohibition, becomes absolutely certain from the verse before us, which is to be taken in connection with the first clause of v. 34, the intervening clauses being mere specifications of familiar modes of swearing comprehended in the prohibition. 'But I say unto you, swear not at all (not even by the use of customary petty oaths), but let your word (talk, form of speech) be yea, yea, nay, nay' (or in modern English, yes and no), the duplication of the terms denoting frequency or constancy. 'Be always saying yes or no, and nothing more.' If the preceding context were a simple prohibition of the customary oaths there mentioned, with an implied permission or encouragement to use the solemn form of oath by God himself, the verse before us would be utterly irrelevant if not directly contradictory to such a purpose. The conclusion must have been in that case, 'let your oaths be in the name of God alone,' whereas it is in fact, 'let your speech be without oaths,' with a positive suggestion of the simple affirmations and negations which should take their place. Whatsoever (whatever, or simply what) is more than these (or more exactly, the abounding, the excess, of these), i. e. whatever goes beyond these simple affirmations and negations. Cometh of, literally, is from or out of, which is obviously meant to indicate the source or origin of such expressions. Evil is definite in Greek, the evil, or the wicked, and agreeably to usage may be either abstract, out of wickedness, from moral evil (as in Rom. 12:9, 1 Thes. 5:22, 2 Thes. 3:3, Jas. 4:16), or personal and concrete, from the evil (one), so called by way of eminence, because he was the tempter of mankind and the source of human sin and misery (as in 1 John 2:13, 14, 3:12, 5:18). See below, on 6:13, where the same ambiguity exists. In either case, the habit of exceeding the most simple forms of affirmation is prohibited, not merely by an arbitrary rule or absolute authority, but as intrinsically evil in its source and moral quality. Unless we deny to the discourse all coherence and consistency, in which case it would not be worth interpreting, we must admit that vs. 34 and 37, taken together, do contain a prohibition of all swearing. But in what sense and with what extent of application? As to this point there has always been a great variety of judgments, which however may be readily reduced to these four classes. 1. The Quakers and some others understand the passage as an universal prohibition of all oaths, or appeals to God in attestation of the truth, as well judicial as colloquial. 2. Some suppose the prohibition to be absolute, but applicable not to the existing state of things but to a future condition of society, when the Messiah's reign shall reach its consummation. 3. The great mass of Christians in all ages have understood the prohibition as extending only to the use of oaths in conversation, or to their irreverent and needless use in courts of justice and in other public offices. 4. A fourth view of the passage understands it as prohibiting all voluntary swearing, both judicial and colloquial, the latter being never right, the former only when imposed by adequate authority, and in prevention of a greater evil. The first of these opinions is refuted a priori by the fact that an oath is a religious act and therefore cannot be intrinsically evil, or at all unless universally prohibited; that such a prohibition is at variance with the oaths so constantly ascribed to God himself in Scripture,* and with the practice of our Lord himself† and that of his apostles. The second explanation is refuted by its fanciful and arbitrary character, the same assumption being equally admissible in reference to every prohibition of the decalogue, and by the danger thence arising of an universal relaxation of the principles of morals, founded on the pretext that society is still imperfect; and by the arbitrary treatment of a simple categorical prohibition, as being practically no prohibition at all. The objection to the third and common view is, that it leaves too great a license to judicial swearing, and apparently connives at the most hideous abuses in official practice. All these objections are avoided by the fourth interpretation, which sufficiently provides for all official and judicial oaths when really expedient, but condemns perversion and excess in these, as well as all oaths used in conversation, and is further recommended by the obvious analogy of the sixth commandment, which prohibits homicide in terms as strong and universal, though almost unanimously understood not only to excuse the act of killing under certain circumstances, but to require it as a duty under certain others.

38. A fifth sin, as to which they were to look for less indulgence in Messiah's reign than under the corrupt administration of the law by scribes and pharisees, was the indulgence of a vengeful and vindictive spirit. The legal pretext under which this vice was practised was the lex talionis, or rule of retribution found in Ex. 21:24. Lev. 24:20. Deut. 19:21. Ye have heard (from the expounders of the law) that it was said, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The indefinite article need not be expressed, and weakens the whole sentence. Here again, there is assumed a false interpretation of the dictum, which is really a part of the Mosaic law, and an erroneous practice founded on it. What this prevailing error was has been disputed, some supposing that it was the transfer of a rule designed to govern the proceedings of the magistrate to private life, the substitution of personal revenge for public punishment. Another supposition is that it consisted in regarding as a rule at all, to be acted upon even in judicial process, what was only a proverbial expression of the general principle of righteous retribution underlying all law, and repeatedly exhibited in that of Moses rather in terrorem than as something to be carried out in practice. This opinion is defended on the ground of the severity and cruelty supposed to be involved in such a principle of punishment; by the difficulty of applying it in practice; by the absence of any one

recorded instance of its execution; and by the reason of it given in Deuteronomy (19:20), “those which remain shall hear and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.” But the terror here referred to is that arising from the execution, not from the mere threatening, of retaliation. The rule, moreover, stands recorded in the midst of laws which were evidently meant to be literally understood and acted on. See Ex. 21:22–26. Lev. 24:17–21, in the latter of which places it is moreover clothed in as direct and positive a form as any proper law could be—“breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused (literally, given) a blemish in the man, so shall it be done to (literally, given in) him.” If these considerations are not sufficient to outweigh those previously stated, and to prove conclusively that the lex talionis was a law in the proper sense and habitually carried into execution; it may at least serve to deter us from too hastily asserting the contrary, and lead us to adopt an explanation of the passage now before us, not involving either supposition as to the precise design of this terrific law or the fact of its literal execution. This seems to be the case with the first interpretation mentioned which, without deciding the disputed question either way, assumes merely that the lex talionis, whatever its legitimate design and use, had been adopted as a rule of private justice, authorizing every injured person to redress his own wrongs, an abuse not peculiar to the east but singularly rife there, as appears from the practice of the Bedouins at this day. It is essentially the same wild justice that is known among ourselves as lynch-law, whether administered by one or many, and too often justified, not merely by the clamor of excited mobs, but by the verdict of enlightened juries. It is needless to observe that what is eminently right and wholesome in the hands of a divine or a divinely aided judge, may be the height of tyranny in any other.

39. But I say unto you, in opposition not to the lex talionis as a maxim of the law, but to this abuse of it as justifying personal revenge. That ye resist not is in Greek simply not to resist. Evil, the same ambiguous expression that occurs above in v. 37, and admitting here too of the same constructions, namely, evil (in the abstract), or the wicked (man), by whom you have been injured. But, on the contrary, so far from thus retaliating. This is then more positively and specifically stated by supposing a familiar case which might occur in any man’s experience, and therefore furnishes a surer test of the dispositions here required. The only question of interpretation is one running through the next three verses, which are filled with other cases of the same kind, calling for the application of the same rule and the display of the same spirit. This question is, whether the duty here enjoined is that of absolute and passive non-resistance in all cases of oppression or injurious treatment. The affirmative can be defended only on the general principle or law of language, that its obvious and proper sense must always be entitled to the preference, and can only be deprived of it by positive considerations, showing that some other sense was really intended. The question, therefore, is whether there are any such considerations in the case before us, and how far they go in weakening the general presumption and antecedent probability in favour of the literal and strict sense. 1. The first consideration of this nature that presents itself is one derived from general experience, the fact, that the commandment, strictly understood, has never been habitually carried into execution, even by the most devoted exemplary Christians. The apparent exceptions to this statement have been either too confined or shortlived to affect its general truth, or have extended only to the negative command of non-resistance, without including the more positive injunction to encourage and solicit further injury. Now a precept which has never been reduced to practice must be impracticable or impossible, and cannot therefore have been uttered in the sense thus put upon it. 2. To this argument a posteriori may be added another a priori, drawn from the unreasonableness and injustice of the law, as thus explained, as violating general principles of right, deliberately sacrificing that of the injured and oppressed, facilitating and encouraging injustice, and subverting all the principles on which society has been constructed. 3. A third consideration adverse to the strict interpretation, is that Christ himself did not act upon his own rule thus explained, but when smitten by a servant of the High Priest, instead of courting further outrage, arrested it by strong expostulation (John 18:22, 23); and that Paul, when treated in like manner, still more earnestly resented it (Acts 23:2, 3). 4. It should also be considered, that the use of strong and paradoxical expressions, to arouse attention and provide for extreme cases, is not only an occasional phenomenon but a standing characteristic of our Saviour’s didache or mode of teaching, not without examples in this very chapter, which creates a presumption opposite to that arising from the general law of language now in question. 5. Lastly, the peculiar structure of this part of the Sermon on the Mount, makes it almost if not absolutely certain, that in this, as in the similar injunctions which precede, we are not to look for absolute or abstract rules, extending to all cases, but to some peculiar case, suggested in the context. What that case is, we may learn from the preceding verse, where the text or theme of this particular passage is the lex talionis, with its popular perversion as a legal pretext for revenge. If there be any kind of logical coherence or consistency between the two successive verses, the second no less than the first, must have respect to this specific sin, and the abstinence commanded must be, not from simple self-defence or self-protection, but from such as would be necessarily vindictive or revengeful in its character. The limitation really implied though not expressed, is probably the same as in vs. 29, 30, where the language is still stronger and more paradoxical, and, therefore, more available in explanation of that now before us. As no sane man has ever understood those verses as a formal rule of ordinary duty calling for the literal excision of the eye or hand as soon as either has become the cause or instrument of sin; so no sane man has any right or reason to insist upon a similar interpretation of the words before us. Nor would any such disparity of treatment ever have existed, if the duty supposed to be enjoined had been equally startling and revolting in both cases. But the man who is fanatical enough to let himself be robbed and beaten, in supposed obedience to our Lord’s command, though few have ever gone so far as to turn the other cheek, or press the spoiler to take more, may not be quite fanatical enough to amputate his own right hand, though no less explicitly required by the very same authority and almost in the very same form. But even if it be admitted, as a negative conclusion, that the precept now

before us is not to be strictly understood as a general and formal rule of duty, it may still be asked how we must understand it and obey it? The solution of this question is afforded by the same analogy already cited, that of vs. 29, 30. If, as we have seen already, what is there said has respect to an extreme case, not to be expected, much less sought for, in our every-day experience, namely, that of an incurable incompatibility between obedience to the will of God and the retention of our dearest members, and in that case requires us to exscind them without mercy; so the words before us may be understood to mean that rather than become our own avengers, or indulge a spirit of vindictive retribution, we must suffer any form or measure both of wrong and insult; whether that recorded in the last clause of the present verse, or those enumerated in the three that follow, which are mere additional specifications or examples of the rule propounded here. Should it be objected that this explanation arbitrarily restricts a precept general in form, by introducing a specific application, not required or indicated in the text, the answer is, that this specific application is the very subject of the passage as propounded in v. 38, and that the notion of an absolute and general command could only have arisen from the insulation of the precept and habitual neglect of its connection.

40. Rather than indulge the revengeful spirit here condemned, be ready to endure not only personal indignity but legal wrong. If any man will sue thee at the law is a needless paraphrase, made more enfeebling by the constant use of will in modern English as a mere auxiliary, whereas it is here an independent verb, and the participial construction definite and unconditional. To the (one, or the man) wishing to sue thee, or to go to law with thee. The Greek verb primarily means to separate, discern, distinguish, then to decide or exercise discriminating judgment; then to try judicially, to judge, to sentence. The middle voice, which here occurs, is used by Homer in the sense of fighting or contending, either by a transfer from the forum to the field of battle, or, as the lexicographers prefer, by immediate deduction from the first sense of separating, differing, &c. Willing or wishing, i. e. desiring, and by necessary implication here, insisting on the litigation, the subject or occasion of which is then brought home to every bosom as involving the most necessary articles of dress or clothing, which consisted in the east of two chief garments, the χιτών and the μάτιον, here translated coat and cloak, but more exactly corresponding to our shirt and coat. The form and shape are unimportant, as the two are only put together to express the general idea of necessary clothing. And (wishing, as the object of his suit) to take thy inner garment (shirt or tunic). Let him have is Tyndale's version, less exact and expressive than the Rhemish, let (it) go to him. The Greek verb is the one employed above in v. 24, as well as in 3:15, 4:11, 20, 22, and there explained. Thy is not repeated in Greek, but the first (σου) may be regarded as extending to both nouns (the coat and cloak of thee). The case here stated would have more effect upon a Jewish audience, because the upper garment was expressly exempted in the law of Moses from the claims of creditors in ordinary cases, partly for the reason that the poor at least used it also as a covering at night (Ex. 22:26, 27). The idea really suggested therefore, would be that of giving up even what the law reserved for the use of the unfortunate debtor. Even this must be abandoned, though it might be legally retained, if its retention or defence would be a gratification of the natural resentment at such conduct, on the ground of the lex talionis, as the Pharisees and Scribes explained it. This injunction of our Lord undoubtedly condemns much defensive litigation, which appears to be prompted by a simple sense of justice, but is really vindictive in its origin and spirit.

41. A third specification of the general command to suffer wrong rather than assert right in a spiteful or revengeful spirit. This allusion is derived from an ancient Oriental custom, of which there may have been some recent instance known to our Lord's hearers. The usage was that of pressing man and beast into the public service for the purpose of conveying news with greater speed. This, which seems to be the germ or origin of modern posting, in the wide sense of the term as used in Europe, is ascribed by Greek historians both to Cyrus and Xerxes, under whom there seems to be a trace of its existence still preserved in Esther 8:10, 14. The public couriers, or bearers of despatches, who possessed this power of impressment, when required to furnish the relays of horses and of horsemen, were called by a name of Persian origin (γγαροι), from which was derived in later Greek the verb here used (γγαρεύω) in the sense of forcing one to go upon a journey. Shall compel, not will, as in v. 40, because here there is but one verb in the future tense. The arbitrary will expressed in that case by the will is here included in the meaning of the verb itself. Mile, the Roman mile of a thousand paces (which is Wiclif's version here), and according to the latest authorities, about 140 yards shorter than the English. The important point in this case is the proportion between one and two. Rather than refuse, in an angry and vindictive spirit, to go one mile by constraint, go two and make the hardship double. Twain, an old form for two, retained in all the English versions here, and in a few other places. (See below, on 19:5, 6, 27:21, 51.)

42. To these occasional and rarer instances of hardship or annoyance, he now adds one of less violence, but more intolerable if continued or repeated often. The precept must be understood with the same qualification as the others. Rather than refuse from a vindictive motive, or to gratify a spirit of retaliation, give to the (one) asking thee. This may denote free gifts as distinguished from the loan referred to in the last clause, as the latter may be merely an expansion of the other. The one wishing, willing, perhaps with the same implication of persistency and overbearing urgency as in v. 40. Here again, the change of usage should be noted, would being not a mere auxiliary, but an independent verb. Borrow, a Greek verb meaning to lend, but in the middle voice, to have lent to one, to receive on loan. According to the lexicons, it always means in classic Greek to lend on interest, the absolute sense (which here occurs) belonging only to the Greek of the New Testament. But a trace of its earlier existence may be found in the fact that Demosthenes adds on interest (π τόκοις), which would be superfluous and therefore out of place in so concise a writer, if the verb itself included that idea. Turn not away, in Greek a passive, strictly meaning, be not turned away, but according to the best grammarians used in the middle sense of turn not thyself away. The passive in such cases is peculiarly expressive, having nearly

the same force as if it had been said, ‘do not let thyself be turned away.’ (Compare σώθητε, Acts 2:40.)

43. The last particular here specified, in which the moral standard of Messiah’s kingdom was to be far higher than the one then recognized among the Jews, was that of friendship or benovelence to others. In this case the distinction is clearer than in any of the others, between the requisition of the law and its perversion by the Scribes and Pharisees. Ye have heard (from these your spiritual leaders) that it was said (through Moses, to your fathers), thou shalt love thy neighbour, an abridged form of the precept still recorded in Lev. 19:18, from which our Lord afterwards derived the second part of his reply to the question, which was the great commandment of the law (see below, in 22:39). As it was not his intention to remind them of this clause exclusively, and as it would at once suggest the rest to any well instructed Jewish hearer (see above, on 4:6), it will aid us in interpreting the passage now before us to complete our Lord’s quotation and transcribe the whole verse in Leviticus, “Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; I (am) the Lord.” The prohibition of revengeful grudges in the first clause makes the connection still more close and obvious between this part of Christ’s discourse and that before it. It may even lay bare the association of ideas which occasioned the transition in his thoughts and words to the concluding topic in this long enumeration. Here, too, as in the case immediately preceding (see above, on v. 38), the simple recital of the law in its original connection, shows at once the source of the perversion which our Lord condemns. In its letter and its primary design, this precept was intended to promote benevolent affections among the chosen people, or from one Jew to another, as appears from the specific phrase, the sons (or children) of thy people. This specification had been always open to abuse, but more particularly after the rise of Pharisaism, even in its earlier and purer form, which was that of an exclusive nationality and dread of all assimilation with the heathen (see above, on 3:7). Before and at the time of Christ this spirit had become one of fanatical antipathy, not only to the faith and worship, but to the persons of all Gentiles, founded on a plausible though false deduction from the precept of the law just quoted. As its requisition of benovelent affections is expressly limited to fellow Jews (“the children of thy people”), it was easy for the Pharisees, and even for the Scribes of their persuasion, in the exposition of this law, to argue from its silence as to others their express exclusion, nay to make a duty and a virtue of regarding them with positive hostility, as enemies of God and of his people. This perversion, which could scarcely be avoided in the case supposed, or rather known to have existed, is precisely the one indicated in the last clause of the verse before us (and thou shalt hate thine enemy). It is not necessary to assume, nor even probable, that such a proposition, in its revolting harshness, ever formed a part of their religious teaching. It is sufficient to regard it as our Lord’s own summary expression of the substance and spirit of that teaching, or the practical conclusion to which their less revolting glosses and distinctions tended: ‘You have heard that as the law commands you only to love the children of your people, you are of course at liberty, if not in some sense bound, to cherish opposite affections towards all others.’ Such a spirit of national repugnance could not fail in its turn to generate analogous antipathies between one class and another even of the chosen people, and eventually also between man and man; so that the Pharisaic doctrine finally assumed the character, in which it is here set forth, “thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy.” The word translated neighbour properly means near, but is as old as Homer in its application to persons, and especially to those with whom we have more intimate relation than with others, whether the precise connection be a local, a domestic, or a national one. This relative and wide use of the term affords occasion for our Saviour’s beautiful reply to the question, Who is my neighbour? as recorded in another gospel, with immediate reference to this precept of the law (Luke 10:27, 29, 36), and will also throw some light upon his teaching in the present instance.

44. But I say unto you, in opposition to this false and wicked corollary added by the Pharisees to the Mosaic law of love. Love your enemies, not only national but personal, private as well as public. By this wide interpretation of the law all pretext for invidious exceptions and distinctions is precluded. But is not this an extension of the law itself, as well as a correction of the false gloss put upon it? Can the precept in Leviticus be truly said to mean all this, without a violation of its very terms, which so particularly name the children of thy people, as the neighbours to be loved and cherished? This is an important question, as relating to the last ground on which it can be plausibly maintained, that our Lord, in this discourse, is not merely showing the true sense bat supplying the deficiencies of the law itself (see above, on v. 17). It may be answered by reverting to the ground and purpose of the separation between Israel and the other nations, which was not perpetual but temporary, and intended not to aggrandize the chosen people, but to make them instruments of good to the whole race. This is clear from the patriarchal promises; from the means used to keep up the remembrance of their œcumenical relations in the minds of the more favoured race; from the representative character assigned to them, as being not so much the church of God as a peculiar people representing it; and from the continual reproof and refutation of their narrow prepossessions, not merely in the New Testament, but in the Prophets, and the law itself. The virtues which they were required to practise, then, among themselves, were exhibitions on a small scale of the duties which they owed to all alike, and not the right side of a picture, the reverse of which was turned to others. The true correlative of the love required between Jew and Jew, was not contempt or hatred of the Gentiles, but a still more comprehensive love to them too, bearing the same proportion to the first that national or social charities sustain to the more intimate affections of the family. The pious Jew was not required to love the Gentiles as he loved the Jews, but still to love them, not to hate them; and the least degree of love is the negation of all hatred. The bare correction of this error would have been a vast advance upon the Pharisaical theory and practice of benevolence. But Christ goes vastly further still, and shows that the Mosaic (i. e. the divine) law of love extends not only to multitudes whom they considered as excluded by their birth or nationality without regard to personal demerit, but to those whose personal demerit was the greatest

possible, not only against God but towards themselves. After saying generally, love your enemies, which might be negatively understood as meaning those who are not your friends by any social, national, or private tie, he specifies this vague term by adding as synonymous expressions, those cursing you … those hating you … those insulting you … those persecuting you. This cuts off all misapprehension and evasion as to the extent, not only of our Lord's own requisition, but of the Mosaic law, as he expounds it. The same end is secured in reference to the positive and active nature of the love required, by coupling with each hostile act (already quoted) a corresponding act of friendship or benevolence. Bless those cursing you, do good to those hating you, and pray for those despitefully using you, or more exactly, insulting or abusing you. The Greek word always has specific reference to speech or words, and originally means to threaten, from which the transition is an easy one to contumelious talk as the expression of a spiteful scorn in general. Besides the parallel passage in Luke (6:28), it occurs only once again in the New Testament (1 Pet. 3:16), where it is too specifically rendered, falsely accuse. It seems to be here joined with persecute, in order to express the two ideas of hostile speech and hostile action.*

45. The true law of benevolence having been laid down in all its length and breadth, and in contrast with the narrow Pharisaic rule and practice, is now shown to be reasonable from analogy. The appeal is a twofold example, that of God and man. The demonstrative power of the first rests not merely on the general principle of God's perfection and authority as the standard and exemplar of all excellence, but also on the filial relation borne to him by all believers, and here obviously assumed by Christ as necessarily belonging to his true disciples. As if he had said, 'In coming to me, you come to the Father, not mine merely but your own; for if you believe in me, you are his children, and the child must imitate the father in all imitable qualities and acts. But he does not confine his rain and sunshine to the good or righteous, i. e. those who are conformed to his will, but gives them also to the wicked and unrighteous.' The implied conclusion is that we are not to regulate our love by the merit of the object but extend it to all. From this it follows that the love here meant is not the love of complacency, involving moral approbation, but the love of benevolence, involving only a desire of the object's welfare. Maketh to rise, an unavoidable periphrasis of one Greek verb (ναπέλλει), which is used both in a transitive and intransitive sense (see above, on 4:16. and below, on 13:6), the former of which is applied in the classics to the growth of plants, the rise of water, and the shedding forth of light. Sendeth rain (Tyndale, his rain), on the other hand, might be more simply and exactly rendered rains (or raineth). Evil and good, just and unjust, are not be carefully distinguished, but regarded as synonymous descriptions of the one great universal contrast which exists in human character.

46. The other analogy is drawn from human conduct, and that not of the best but rather of the worst men in the hearers' estimation, publicans and Gentiles. Even these could feel and act with kindness towards their friends and nearest relatives; and therefore Christian charity must reach further and rise higher, namely, to the love of enemies, before enjoined. The logical connective (for) refers back, not to the immediately preceding verse, but to the one before it. We have here the reason, not for God's impartial gifts to all his creatures, but for man's imitation of it as required in v. 44. Them which love you is in Greek a participial construction like that in v. 44, those loving you. Reward, not merely compensation as in v. 12, but implying merit and a condign retribution. What claim to extraordinary approbation and to the advantages attending it? Have ye, more exact than Tyndale's and the Rhemish version, shall ye have, which supposes the reward to be wholly future; whereas the reference is to present right and security in the sight of God. Publicans, whose very name was a proverbial expression for the want of character and standing in society. This excommunication of a whole class or profession arose from the singular political condition of the Jews at this time. The Romans, to whom they had been virtually subject since the occupation of Jerusalem by Pompey, and particularly since the coronation of Herod as king of the Jews by order of the senate, with their usual wise policy, suffered them in most things to govern themselves. The two points in which their domination was most sensibly felt were the military occupation of the country and the oppressive system of taxation. This branch of the imperial revenue was farmed out to certain Roman knights, and by them to several gradations of subordinate collectors, each of whom was required to pay a stated sum to his superior, but with the privilege of raising as much more as he could for his own benefit. This financial system, which still exists in some oriental countries, must from its very nature be oppressive, by offering a premium for extortion and rapacity. To this was added in the case before us the additional reproach of being instruments and tools, not merely of a foreign despotism, but of a gentile or heathen power. The odium thus attached to the office of a publican, or Roman tax-gatherer, prevented any Jews from holding it except those of the most equivocal and reckless character, who, being thus excluded, by their very occupation, from respectable society, were naturally thrown into that of wicked and disreputable men. Thus a business, not unlawful in itself, and only made oppressive by the cupidity of those engaged in it, came by degrees to be regarded by devout Jews as intrinsically evil, and gave rise to that familiar but without reference to these facts unintelligible combination, "publicans and sinners." To do no more than such men did implied a very debased moral standard, or at least a very narrow view of what our Lord required in his disciples. The two interrogations in this verse are much more pointed than a simple denial that they had no reward, and a simple affirmation that the Publicans did likewise.

47. This is a rhetorical reiteration of the last verse with a slight change of expression. Instead of love, we have salute (or greet), as one of its habitual expressions. Our version here correctly substitutes a literal translation of the Greek verb for the gloss of Tyndale (if ye be friendly) and of Cranmer (if ye make much of your brethren). Brethren, not merely brothers in the strict sense, but near relatives. (See above, on 1:25, and below, on 12:46, 13:55.) What more, literally, what abundant (or excessive), i. e. what beyond the ordinary practice, even of the worst men. The original expression (περισσόν) is the same as that in v. 37. Tyndale and his

followers, who there translate it more than, have here the paraphrase or gloss, what singular thing do ye? Instead of Publicans (τελ ναι), the Codex Vaticanus and some others, followed by the latest critics, here read gentiles or heathen (θνικοί), which not only varies the expression without varying the sense, but anticipates the striking combination in 18:17 below, where an excommunicated brother is required to be treated as a heathen and a publican. As so is here equivalent to the same in the preceding verse, the sense is not affected by their transposition in some ancient copies and the latest critical editions. The argument contained in these two verses is, that the benevolence required in the law, as expounded and enforced in the Messiah's kingdom, must be something more than that habitually practised, from the force of selfish motives or mere natural affection, by the very classes whom the Jews regarded as the most abandoned and most desperately wicked.

48. In conclusion of his argument, if such it maybe called, in favour of a large benevolence, vastly transcending, both in quantity and quality, the natural, conventional, or selfish kindness practised by the worst of men, our Lord reverts to the divine example, previously set forth in v. 45, and to the filial relation of his followers to God, as making that example an authoritative standard. It is not, however, a mere repetition of the language before used, but a generic statement of the principle there partially applied to one specific case of human conduct and divine administration. All that was there said was that, as God does not confine his providential gifts to those who in any sense deserve them, so his people need not be afraid of sinning if they love their enemies, repaying their most hostile enmity with acts of kindness. The great truth there implied is here propounded in its whole extent and simple grandeur. They were not to copy the imperfect models furnished even by the best of men, much less those furnished by the worst, but the perfect model set before them by their heavenly Father, i. e. by God, not as an absolute sovereign or inexorable judge, but in that parental character which he sustains to all the true disciples of his Son. The imperative form used in all the English versions (be ye), though it gives a good sense and may be defended by the passive meaning of the Hebrew future in the ten commandments, and throughout the law of Moses (see above in vs. 21, 27, 33, 43), must nevertheless yield to the exact form of the Greek verb which is future (σεσθε), and may here be taken in its strict sense as denoting not so much what should or must as simply that which is to be. The ideas of certainty, necessity, and moral obligation, may be all implied, but they are not expressed; nor would they here be so appropriate to the context as the purpose of the whole discourse, which is not, as some imagine, to enact laws or prescribe rigid rules of conduct, but to set forth the true nature of the coming kingdom, and especially to rectify the false impressions which prevailed respecting it, even among many who were soon to enter it and rise to high distinction in it. Having shown, in execution of this purpose, that instead of lowering the standard of morality erected by the Pharisees and Scribes in their interpretation of the law, he should enforce it in a far more comprehensive, spiritual, stringent sense, and having urged them to the practice of an almost superhuman charity, transcending that of sinful man, and resembling that of God himself; he now explains this paradoxical and startling requisition, by assuring them that what he had prescribed was no empirical expedient to secure a special end in some extraordinary case, but the organic law or constitution of his kingdom, the fundamental principle of Christian ethics, making God the model and his will the rule, and suffering even the imperfect to aim only at perfection. Therefore, because all human models are essentially imperfect, and unfit to be copied even by those who in this respect resemble them. Ye are to be (in my kingdom and my service), i. e. must be in your aims and efforts now, and shall be really through grace hereafter, not essentially deficient in your principles and motives, as the best of men are when abandoned to themselves, but perfect, or complete, wanting nothing that is absolutely necessary to your ultimate perfection, because acting on the same principles, and aiming at the same ends, as your Father in heaven, or according to the latest text, your heavenly Father.

CHAPTER 6

HAVING set forth the difference between the standard of morality acknowledged by the Scribes and Pharisees and that to be erected in the kingdom of Messiah, and exemplified this difference in the treatment of several prevailing sins, our Lord proceeds, in this division of the Sermon on the Mount, to do the same thing with respect to several religious duties, namely, charity or almsgiving (1–4), secret prayer (5–15), and private fasting (16–18). Assuming the necessity of all these duties, he exposes the hypocrisy and ostentation which characterized the Pharisaical performance of them, and exhorts his followers to avoid this error by performing them exclusively to God and not to man, and in the single hope of a divine reward, without the least view to mere secular advantage. This advice is then extended to the whole course of life, which can be truly happy only when the object of supreme affection is an undivided and a heavenly one (19–21). This is illustrated by an analogy derived from the economy of human sight (22–23), and by another from domestic service, with a formal application to the case in hand (24). Far from losing by this undivided consecration, they would gain immunity from wasting care by trusting in God's constant care of them, which is established by two arguments of opposite descriptions, from the greater to the less, and from the less to the greater. He who gave us life and bodies will not fail to supply food and raiment (25), and he who provides for the inferior creation, animal and vegetable, will not fail to do the same for man (26–30). Undue solicitude is not only useless (27) but irreligious, heathenish, dishonouring to God (31–32); whereas by seeking first to do his will and to promote his glory, these inferior favours may be best secured (33). And as these considerations ought to banish from the minds of Christ's disciples all excessive care about the present, they ought still more to prevent it in relation to the future,

which instead of lessening can only multiply the evil by accumulation (34).

1. There is no want of coherence or abrupt transition here, but an obvious extension of the previous teachings about certain sins to certain religious duties, highly valued by the Jews, as they are now by the Mahometans, with whom they constitute almost the whole external part of their religion. The connecting thought may be thus supplied: ‘such is the difference between the treatment of these sins by me and by the Scribes and Pharisees; but you must also learn to differ from them in the performance of religious duties.’ Take heed, a Greek verb strictly meaning to apply, i. e. to hold one thing to another, and with a corresponding noun, to apply the mind, to attend; then elliptically even when the noun is not expressed, to take heed, to be cautious. As the reference is commonly to danger, physical or moral, it is usually rendered in this Gospel by the English verb beware (7:15, 10:17, 16:6, 11, 12), and elsewhere by take heed (Luke 17:3), give heed (Acts 8:6), give attendance (1 Tim. 4:13), have regard (Acts 18:11), in all which versions the original idea of applying the mind to any object is distinctly traceable; nor is it wholly lost in 1 Tim. 3:8, where it is rendered, given to (much wine), but really means, giving, i. e. giving one’s attention, or one’s self, to that indulgence. Its use at the beginning of this verse suggests at once the importance of the caution and the difficulty of observing it. It cannot be denied that the reference to alms is here somewhat abrupt, and that there is something like tautology in the recurrence of the same word at the opening of the next verse. Although these are mere rhetorical minutiae, not affecting the essential meaning, it is worthy of remark that they are both removed by what the latest critics give us as the true text, instead of alms (λεημοσύνην) reading righteousness (δικαιοσύνην), on the authority of the Vatican and Beza manuscripts, the oldest Latin versions, and some Fathers. This external testimony is remarkably confirmed by the internal evidence, i. e. by the improvement in the sense, or at least in the symmetrical structure of the passage, which then opens with a general precept as to all religious duties (v. 1), and afterwards proceeds to alms-giving, as the first specification (v. 2). There is no need therefore, of making the two terms synomymous, as in the later Hebrew usage. It is altogether better to give righteousness its full generic sense of right doing, or conformity to the will of God, with special reference in this connection to religious duties. (See above, on 3:15, 5:6, 10, 20.) Your righteousness, that which you habitually practise and acknowledge as incumbent on you. That ye do not, more exactly, not to do, the infinitive depending in construction on the verb (take heed) at the beginning of the sentence. ‘Be careful not to practise your religious duties in the sight (before the face) of men,’ i. e. of other men, but not without a sensible antithesis with God, as mentioned in the other clause. The consistency of this charge with the positive command in 5:16, is saved by the difference of end or motive. There it was to glorify God; here it is, not merely to be seen by men, but to be gazed at as a show or spectacle, the Greek verb (θεαθ ναι) being that from which come theatre, theatrical, &c. (See below, on 11:7, 22:11, 23:5.) The idea of deliberate intention, as distinguished from a mere fortuitous result, is expressed precisely as in 5:27, by a preposition and an article prefixed to the infinitive πρ ς τ θεαθ ναι). The general precept then, even as to external duties, is that although men may see them, and in certain cases ought to see them (see above, on 5:16), they are never to be done directly, much less solely or supremely, for that purpose. This prohibition equally extends to the religious duties subsequently mentioned, and by parity of reason to all others. The ground or motive is assigned in the last clause of the verse before us. Otherwise (the older English versions have or else), literally, but if not, with a particle annexed (ε δ μ γε) which can scarcely be expressed in English, but is used in Greek to qualify or limit what is said, and often corresponds very nearly to our phrase, at least. ‘Take heed … or at least if you do not,’ &c., which is nearly equivalent to saying, ‘take heed if you regard your own true interest, as well as duty.’ Reward, not meritorious or condign recompense, as in 5:46, but simply compensation or retributive advantage, as in 5:12. ‘If you do not guard against this formal ostentation in religious duties, you have nothing to expect from them in the way of a divine blessing.’ With your Father, i. e. laid up, in reserve for you, in his presence or his purpose. The idea is the same with that expressed in 5:12 by the phrase in heaven. The (one, i. e. the Father) in the heavens, as distinguished from all human parents, whether natural or spiritual (see above, on 5:16).

2. The negative precept as to alms is then repeated in a more specific form. Or according to the other text already mentioned, the generic rule relating to all duties is now specially applied to one. Therefore, because all such duties must be done to God and not to man. When thou doest, implying that it would be done and must be done of course, provided it were well done. Alms is itself a contraction, technically called a corruption, of the Greek word here used (λεημοσύνη), and of which we have a more direct derivative in the somewhat uncouth adjective, eleemosynary.* The Greek noun, according to its etymology, means first mercifulness, then its exercise, especially in the relief of want. An analogous usage is that of charity in English, as denoting both a disposition or affection of the mind and its material effect or product. The pronoun (thine alms) is supplied by the translator from v. 4 below. The translation of the next words (cause not a trumpet to be sounded), is still more paraphrastic than the version in the text. Better, because more exact, than either would be, trumpet not before thee, if the English verb (to trumpet) could be used without an expressed object. There is no need of resorting to the doubtful and improbable assumption of a literal trumpeting, in ancient times or Oriental countries, either by the beggars or their benefactors; much less to the farfetched and unnatural allusion to the trumpet-shaped money boxes in the temple-treasury, and to the ringing of the coin as it fell into them! The phrase requires no elucidation beyond that which it receives from the figurative use in various idioms of the trumpet, as a loud and brawling instrument, to represent an ostentatious boastful exhibition of ourselves or others. Before thee is a trait derived no doubt from actual military usage, or the general practice of trumpeters preceding those whom they announced or heralded: ‘Do not give alms, as a general goes to battle, or a king before his people, with a trumpeter to lead the way and arouse attention.’ In the last clause this negative command

is made still more specific by presenting, as the thing to be avoided, the habitual practice of a certain class, apparently referred to as well known to all the hearers. The hypocrites, a Greek noun, the verbal root of which means properly to answer or respond, e. g. as an oracle, or in dramatic dialogue, from which last usage the derivative acquires the specific sense of actor, one who acts a part, to which the later Hellenistic usage† added the moral application to dissemblers, false pretenders, which is the only meaning of the word in modern languages. It is here applied by implication, as it elsewhere is expressly (see below, on 23:13–29) to the whole class of Pharisees and Scribes, with whose false morality and spurious religion, our Lord, throughout this passage (from 5:20 to 6:18), is contrasting the morality and piety which were to be required and promoted in the kingdom of Messiah. Do, i. e. habitually, as a constant and notorious practice. He is evidently not communicating new and unknown facts, but fearlessly appealing to his hearers as the witnesses of what he says, q. d. 'as you well know that the Pharisees and Scribes do.' In the synagogues, or meetings for religious worship (see above, on 4:23), which have always been the chosen scenes for the display of formal ostentatious piety. And in the streets, a Greek word which in the early classics has a meaning altogether different (that of violent or rushing motion), but in later and especially in Hellenistic usage, has obviously acquired the meaning here attached to it by all translators. From a supposed antithesis to broad ways (πλατείας) in one passage (Luke 14:21), it is there translated lanes, and commonly explained to mean narrow and confined streets. But the contrast even there is doubtful, as the terms may be substantially synonymous, and does not occur either here or in Acts 12:10; while in Acts 9:11, the only other instance of its use in the New Testament, the implication is the other way. Nor is it probable that these ambitious formalists, who sought the honour that proceeds from men and not from God (John 5:44), would seek it in the lanes and alleys of the Holy City, as distinguished from its wider streets and open places. As connected here with synagogues, the word more readily suggests the thought of crowded thoroughfares, if not as its specific import, yet as comprehended in its wider sense of streets in general. This ostentatious charity was not fortuitous or unsought, but deliberately purposed. Have glory is in Greek a passive form of the verb translated glorify in 5:16, that they may be glorified by men, i. e. admired, applauded, flattered, not in private but in public. With significant allusion to his own words in the close of the preceding verse (ye have no reward, &c.), he affirms the contrary of these theatrical religionists, and with a solemn formula suggestive of some deep and hidden meaning. Verily (amen, as in 5:18, 26) I say unto you, and with authority, as claiming your attention and belief of something paradoxical yet true, and of the highest moment. They have, not the simple verb commonly so rendered (as in v. 1), but a form compounded with the preposition (πὸ) from, away from, and therefore frequently denoting distance (15:8, Luke 7:6, 15:20, 24:13), but in other cases giving an intensive force to the essential meaning of the verb, by suggesting the accessory idea of completeness, fulness (see Luke 6:24, Phil. 4:18, Philem. 15). According to this second usage, it may here mean that they have already, or already full, without the prospect of increase hereafter. Their reward, i. e. all that they can claim or hope for, namely, the applause of men. As this is all that they have sought in their devotions, it is all they are to have, in the way of benefit or personal advantage. In this verse, as in 5:23, 29, 36, 39, there is a sudden change from the plural to the singular, as if to give the exhortation more point by addressing it to one and not to many.

3. This verse presents, in contrast with the Pharisaic mode of giving alms, the Christian manner of performing the same duty. The personal contrast is more prominent in Greek, because the pronoun stands at the beginning of the sentence. When thou doest, or retaining the original construction, which is that of the genitive absolute, thou doing alms, or practising the grace of charity. The last clause seems to be proverbial and expressive of the utmost secrecy, so close that one part of the body may be said not to know the movements of another. This is still more striking when affirmed of parts so much alike and near together as the double members. The force and beauty of this clause are greatly weakened by supposing a continued allusion to the trumpet, held in one hand while the other gives the alms, or even to the more familiar act of taking money with the right hand from the purse held in the left, or vice versa, or to that of pouring small change from the one into the other. The very strength of these expressions might have taught interpreters that they are not a formal rule of duty, but a hyperbolical negation of all morbid appetite for vain publicity and popular applause in the performance of religious duties. 'Far from trumpeting your charities, or doing them in order to be seen of men, let the very members of your body keep the secret from each other.' The idea that the right hand means the man himself, and the left hand those who are his nearest and most intimate associates, is not only gratuitous, but unsupported either by Scriptural or classical usage. Such a mode of treating proverbs, with their strong and often paradoxical expressions, would be quite destructive of their point and power, as well as offensive to a truly refined taste.

4. To those who had been brought up under a formal, ostentatious system, like that of the Scribes and Pharisees, it might have seemed that the foregoing precept nullified the main design of charitable giving, namely, that of exhibiting a charitable spirit. But our Lord here teaches that this loss of notoriety is not an incidental evil, but an object to be aimed at. So that, expressing not merely the result, but the purpose of the action. Thy alms, as distinguished from the alms of the hypocrites denounced in v. 2. In secret, literally, in the hidden (place), again suggesting not an accidental but an intentional concealment. The remainder of the verse assigns the motive or inducement for this sacrifice of notoriety and human praise. The principle involved is, that as all religious duty is performed to God, and is dependent on his blessing for its good effects, it matters comparatively little whether man is cognizant of it or not. It is enough if God beholds it and will bless it. Thy father, the (one) seeing in secret, no less certainly and clearly than in public, being independent of man's efforts either to disclose or hide. This is set forth in the Old Testament as ft necessary incident of God's omniscience (Ps. 139:12). Himself (omitted in the older versions), without reference to human knowledge or opinion, will reward, or

rather will repay thee (so the Rhemish Bible), will make good whatever loss may seem to be sustained by thus relinquishing the praise of man. Openly, in public, corresponding to in secret in the other clause. This seems to circumscribe the promise too much, and may therefore have been added to the text by ancient copyists, as it is not found in the Vatican and Beza codices, and is omitted by the latest critics.

5. The same rule is now applied to prayer, which from its very nature is addressed to God not man, so that whoever acts as if the latter were the case, thereby proves himself a hypocrite, a mere performer, one who acts the part of a true worshipper of God, but in his heart is courting the applause of man. Such an example, only too familiar to his hearers, Christ exhorts his followers to shun. When thou prayest, assuming that they would pray and must pray, not merely in obedience to a positive command, nor even as a necessary means of spiritual growth, but as a vital function of the new life, which can no more be dispensed with than the body can live without breath or without blood. Thou shalt not be, or the future may be taken as in 5:48, thou art not to be, this is not what I look for and require in the subjects of my kingdom, for the reason given in the next clause. Because (τι) they love, implying not an error of judgment but a perverse will and a corrupt state of affection. They delighted in theatrical and ostentatious worship, which to them was the essence of devotion, so that secret prayer was none at all and therefore probably neglected altogether, as it often is where ritual religion reigns. The synagogues are not named as improper places of devotion, for which end they were established, but simply as the places where these hypocrites exhibited their formal worship. The corners of the streets were in themselves unsuited to devotion, as the noisiest and most crowded parts of every city, so that the very choice of such a place for prayer betrayed a want of the right spirit and a disposition to worship man rather than God. The word here rendered streets is not the one employed in verse 2, but the one referred to in the note there as denoting strictly broad (ways), wide streets. These are evidently mentioned as the most frequented, which confirms our previous conclusion that the other word does not mean lanes or alleys, which the hypocrites would scarcely have selected for their alms, while they prayed at the corners of the widest thorough fares. Standing is no part of the hypocritical display, which would rather have affected genuflexion in the public highway, but is simply mentioned as the customary posture of the Jews in prayer, ascribed by our Lord elsewhere, not only to the boasting Pharisee, but also to the broken-hearted Publican (Luke 18:11–13). That, not merely so that, but in order that, to the intent that, they may be seen of (more exactly may appear to) men. The use of this verb may be intended to suggest that they appear to pray when in truth they are only acting. Verily I say, the same solemn formula as at the close of the preceding topic, in the last clause of v. 2, and with the same return to the plural pronoun (μ ν), though the singular is used before and after.

6. Here, as in reference to alms, the description of the practice of the hypocrites introduces a prescription of the method to be used by Christ's disciple. But thou, in opposition to the ostentatious prayers which he had just described. Closet, an English word denoting properly a room within a room, and here used to translate a Greek one meaning store-room, the essential idea being that of an innermost and most retired apartment. Thy closet, that belonging to thyself and subject to thy own control. Having shut the door, not only closed but fastened it, which is the proper meaning of the Greek verb. No one perhaps has ever deemed that the external acts here mentioned are essential to acceptable devotion, or that the Lord's Prayer cannot lawfully be used in any place but a closet, or even there with open doors. All feel that these are merely strong expressions for the strictest privacy, although consistency requires the same strict interpretation here that some would put upon the strong terms of other precepts in the Sermon on the Mount, e. g. 5:34, 39. The promise in the last clause is precisely similar to that in v. 4, with the same doubt overhanging the last words as a possible interpolation. These expressions limit the whole passage to personal or private prayer and make it wholly inapplicable to common prayer or public worship, which is a distinct and independent duty, resting on express divine command. It may however be a question, whether we are not here forbidden to confound the two kinds of devotion by performing private prayer in public places so as to attract attention and be "seen of men."

7. Having taught precisely the same lesson with respect to alms and prayer, to wit, that they must be performed to God and not to man, and, therefore, unless otherwise required, in private not in public; our Lord goes further with respect to prayer, and adds a warning against heathenish as well as pharisaical abuses. In this additional instruction, he resumes the plural form, which had been dropped at the close of the first verse, excepting only the repeated formula, Amen (or verily) I say unto you (vs. 2, 5). This remarkable interchange of number without visible necessity, would seem to point to one of two conclusions; either that the difference of number in the second person is itself unmeaning, and that the later Greeks had begun to use the singular and plural indiscriminately, as we now do; or that what follows has respect to common not to private prayer. The latter view is favoured by the circumstance, which always has to some appeared surprising, that the plural form is used throughout the Lord's Prayer (vs. 9–13), while in the subsequent directions as to fasting (vs. 16–18), both are used successively. But when ye pray might also be translated, praying moreover, (δὲ), i. e. in addition to the previous warning against ostentation and formality. Use not vain repetitions is a paraphrase and gloss but not a version, giving probably the sense but not the form of the original, consisting of a single word, a verb unknown to classic Greek and variously derived, the older writers tracing it to Battus, a Cyrenian king and stammerer, mentioned by Herodotus; the moderns making it what the grammarians call an onomatopoetic word, i. e. formed in imitation of the natural sound, like babble, which is here used by Tyndale and his followers. This is expressly represented as a heathen practice, of which two remarkable examples are preserved in Scripture; that of the priests of Baal, in Elijah's time, who "called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, Oh Baal, hear us!" (1 Kings 18:26); and that of the worshippers of Artemis or Dian at Ephesus, in

Paul's time, who "all with one voice, about the space of two hours, cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:34). The heathens, or gentiles, not the noun which is commonly so rendered (δνη) and which properly means nations (see above, on 4:15), but an adjective derived from it and strictly meaning national, but absolutely used in the same sense as the primitive noun, or possibly with more explicit reference to individuals. (See above, on 5:47, where the latest critics substitute it for the common reading, publicans). The last clause gives the origin or motive of this heathen practice. For they think (are of opinion) that in (i. e. in the use or in consideration of) their much speaking (or loquacity), in Greek a single but compound word (πολυλογιά, polylogy). They will be heard, or listened to, a compound verb, applied especially to audience in prayer and implying a favourable answer. (See Luke 1:13, Acts 10:31, Heb. 5:7, but compare 1 Cor. 14:21.) This notion is but one form of the wide-spread heathen error, which has also found its way into the Christian world, that religion, and especially that prayer or worship is rather a magical charm than a rational or reasonable service (Rom. 12:1), and that as the opus operatum has intrinsic efficacy, its effect will bear proportion to the quantity, and hence the value of mere repetition. It has often been remarked that in corrupted Christian churches one of the earliest and worst perversions of the truth is the adoption of the very error, which our Lord here describes as heathenish, and in relation to the very prayer here given to prevent it.

8. Therefore, because the practice is thus heathenish, and rests upon an ethnic superstition. Be not like them is in Greek still stronger from the passive form and meaning of the verb, be not likened (or assimilated) to them, i. e. by your own act, or by voluntarily following their example.* The last clause gives a still deeper reason for the vain repetitions of the heathen, which is at the same time a more cogent reason why the Christian cannot practise them, to wit, because they rest upon a grovelling and contracted view of the divine perfections, an idea that the wants of men can only be made known to God by constant iteration. The disciple must not, therefore, do as they do, for he has not even their excuse of ignorance. Your father, not an empty form of speech, but intended (as in 5:16, 45, 48, 6:1, 4, 6) to remind them of the filial relation which, as Christ's disciples, they sustained to God, and which is here peculiarly appropriate in speaking of their wants and his ability and willingness to help them. This relation was familiar to the saints of the Old Testament. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Ps. 103:13). Before ye ask him, or before your asking him, so that if prayer were intended to inform him of our wants, it would be altogether useless and absurd; how much more the notion, that he needs not only to be told, but to be often told, of man's necessities. The true use and effect of prayer, though fully explained elsewhere, it was no part of our Lord's design to set forth here, but only to deny that it had any such design as that which lay at the foundation of the heathenish battology.

9. Not contented with the negative injunction which precedes, our Lord provides his hearers with a positive preservative against the vain repetitions of the heathen, by giving them a specimen of brief, simple, comprehensive prayer, adapted in its form to their actual position on the threshold of the new dispensation, and therefore containing no direct allusion to himself or his peculiar work, yet so constructed as to furnish for perpetual use a framework into which all lawful prayers might readily be fitted, or a model upon which they might be newly fashioned. But the primary design of the Lord's Prayer, as it is traditionally called, was to show the disciples, by example no less than by precept, how the ethnic battology might be avoided. Therefore, because you will not be permitted to use vain repetitions. After this manner is Tyndale's paraphrastic version of the single Greek word meaning thus or so, and here referring, not, as it sometimes does, to what precedes (e. g. 5:16, 19), but wholly to what follows. Pray ye, with stress upon the pronoun, which is not required in Greek to indicate the person, and must therefore be regarded as emphatic. Ye, my followers and disciples, as distinguished from the ignorant and superstitious heathen. That this is not a requisition of punctilious adherence to the form, much less of its exclusive use, is clear from the existence of two equally authoritative forms (see Luke 11:2–4), a circumstance which has occasioned much embarrassment to scrupulous liturgists. Our Father, the (one) in the heavens, a description repeatedly employed by Christ before in this discourse, and now put into the mouths of his disciples, as an explicit recognition of their filial relation to God, not only as their maker and their providential benefactor, but as the Father of our Lord himself, through whom they are adopted into a more intimate and spiritual sonship, which is here by implication represented as their only warrant for approaching him. Hallowed, sanctified, made holy, i. e. treated as such, recognized as sacred, reverenced and thereby glorified, a corresponding use of which verb may be seen above in 5:16. Name is not to he diluted or explained away, as meaning everything by which God is made known to his creatures, but to be primarily taken in its proper sense of title, appellation, with particular allusion to the name Jehovah, by which he was distinguished from all false gods and described not only as a self-existent and eternal being (which that name denotes), but also as the God who was in covenant with Israel, the God of revelation and the God of grace, or in New Testament language, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 11:31). Thus understood, the name of God can be hallowed only by his reverent and believing recognition as the Saviour, no less than the maker, judge, and ruler of the world. It is one of the most prominent and striking features of this model-prayer, that it begins with God's own glory, as the great end to be sought, with the necessary means of its promotion, and then, as something secondary or subordinate, asks those things which relate to the petitioner himself. This is not to be regarded as an accidental circumstance, but as a practical lesson with respect to the comparative importance of divine and human interests, and to their relative position in our prayers, as the expression of our wishes and our governing affections.

10. Thy kingdom, that of the Messiah, which was now about to be erected. This expression shows that the Lord's Prayer was originally designed and suited for the actual condition of affairs, before the church was formally reorganized and the written

revelation of divine truth closed; so that whatever light may be reflected upon its language from events of later date, we must not lose sight of its historical occasion and its primary sense, as understood by those to whom it was first given. Come, into existence, into view, as something introduced ab extra, as descending from above. This petition virtually comprehends all the ulterior effects of the Messiah's advent, and may be legitimately used by us with special reference to these, provided that in formally interpreting the prayer in its historical connection, we distinguish what has thus been added to it from its simple meaning as originally uttered. There is less difficulty as to this point in the third petition, which is couched in universal terms, no more restricted then than now, and having no specific reference, even in expression, to a temporary state of things. Thy will, a Hellenistic noun derived from a classical Greek verb of frequent use and in conformity to classical analogy and usage as to termination. In this connection it of course means neither the faculty nor exercise of will, but its objective product, that which is willed, as embodied in the law, or made known through a revelation. Be done, a passive form, referring more directly to the agency of man than the original (γενηθήτω), which is also passive but derived not from the active verb to do, but from a neuter verb (γίνομαι) originally meaning to become, or to begin to be, and so to happen, come to pass, in which sense it is very common but is variously rendered (see above, on 1:22, 4:3, 5:18, 45). The passive form adds to the idea of occurring, happening, that of its being brought about by the agency of other beings, although not so strongly or distinctly as our English passive (done), which however is substantially correct. The recognition of God's name and the erection of God's kingdom, although not identical, are certainly coincident with the fulfilment of his will. In earth as (it is) in heaven is the sense but not the form of the original, in which the order is reversed, the model being placed first and the copy afterwards, as in heaven, also upon earth. As the reference is evidently not to mere physical results, but also if not chiefly to the moral accomplishment of the divine will, heaven and earth may be explained as meaning the abode of angels and of men respectively, as by angels, so by men. The as may be understood as expressing similarity in kind and in completeness. 'Let thy will be done as cheerfully and fully in this lower world as in the upper.'

11. Here begins the second part of the Lord's Prayer, relating to the wants of the petitioners, which, though subordinated to the glory and the sovereignty of God, are not in conflict with them, but included in them, and are now allowed to occupy the brief space which remains of this divine epitome. The first prayer, under this head, is for bodily subsistence, represented, as it often is, by food, and this again by bread, the staff of life, and the main staple of subsistence among all but the most degraded nations. The epithet prefixed to it is one of the most doubtful and disputed words in Scripture. Of the various meanings which have been attached to it, interpreters are mainly divided between two, both which are very ancient, and both founded on the etymology. The first supposes the original expression (πιούσιον), to be made up of a preposition (πί) and a noun (ο σία) denoting essence or substance, and the whole phrase to mean that which is required for support. The objection to this explanation, which affords a very good sense, and agrees well with the context, lies not in the form of the compound, which is justified by usage, but in the sense ascribed to the compounded noun (ο σία), which properly means essence or substance, not subsistence. The other explanation derives the word from a participle (πιο σα) coming, coming on, an elliptical expression for the coming or ensuing day (μέρα πιο σα). The objection to this is the apparent incongruity of asking for to-morrow's bread to-day. The Vulgate cuts the knot by copying the form of the original (panem supersubstantialem), and the Rhemish Bible follows it as usual (give us to-day our supersubstantial bread). Apart from this unmeaning imitation, there is little choice between the two interpretations, each of which affords a good sense and appropriate in this connection, nay, a sense which would have been suggested by the context if the doubtful word had been omitted. The bread for which we pray is of course that which supports us, and of which we stand in daily need. The prayer for spiritual nourishment may either be considered as included in the wide term bread, or as suggested by an obvious association and analogy, which furnishes a natural transition to the prayer of the next verse.

12. This petition has respect to the greatest and most urgent of all wants, the forgiveness of sin. And remit to us, the same verb that occurs above in 6:14, in the sense of let go, here applied by a natural figure to the remission of the claims of justice upon an offender. Our debts, another natural expression for moral delinquency or breach of obligation, though the Greek word, in the only other place where it occurs (Rom. 4:4), is no less naturally used to signify the obligation itself. The last clause is not conditional but comparative, explaining the remission asked as just the same with that habitually practised in the case of human debtors. This supposes the word debtors to have here its strict commercial sense, and the reference to mutual forgiveness of offences generally to be first made in v. 14. But as that purports to be an explanation of something previously said, which can only be the cause before us, most interpreters take debtors in a sense analogous to that of debts, to wit, offenders or transgressors. This may seem to make mutual forgiveness a condition of divine forgiveness; but it necessarily means no more than that those who ask for pardon must be ready to bestow it.

13. The sixth petition is for preservation and deliverance from future sin and its effects. Temptation means originally trial, but in usage more specifically moral trial or a test of character, especially by giving men the opportunity of choice between sin and obedience. A still stronger sense, predominant in modern usage, is that of direct solicitation to evil. In this sense, God is said to tempt no man (James 1:13), while in the others, it is expressly predicated of him (Gen. 22:1). The word here cannot mean mere trials, in the sense of troubles and afflictions, not even considered as tests of faith, but must include the opportunity of sinning and the peril of it, as an evil to be deprecated and if possible escaped. Lead us, not merely as the sense of letting us be led by others, but in that of providentially involving us in circumstances which afford us opportunities and motives to transgress, without coercing

us to do so. But, not a separate petition, but an antithetical division of the same, and as such necessary to complete it, the two parts interpreting each other. If temptation here means only trial in the lower sense of trouble and affliction, then the evil of the last clause must be natural evil or distress. But as temptation has respect to sin as well as suffering, evil must at least include that of a moral nature, whether we take it as an abstract or a concrete term. evil in general, or the evil (one), considered as the author of sin and as the tempter of mankind, which last idea agrees well with the prayer against temptation in the other clause. Deliver, rescue, save by drawing to thyself, a beautiful and most appropriate idea, which the Greek verb expresses in the usage of the classics. For assigns the ground of the whole prayer, or of its being addressed to God. 'We ask all this of thee because.' &c. Thine, belonging to thee, as thy right and as thy actual possession. The kingdom, the right to reign and actual dominion; hence the prayer, 'thy kingdom come.' The power, the ability to answer these petitions and to grant these gifts, implying absolute omnipotence. Glory, the acknowledgment or recognition of inherent excellence, the thing prayed for in the first petition, which is here justified by this ascription of it to the Father as his right and his prerogative. Forever, literally, to the ages, in Greek a word which properly denotes duration, sometimes definite, as an age, a lifetime, or a dispensation, but when limited by nothing in the context, indefinite and even infinite duration. Amen, the Hebrew word which occurs so often at the beginning of a sentence and is then translated verily (see above, on 5:18, 26, 6:2, 5), but here used as a particle of assent or concurrence, often found at the close of prayers and other forms of a religious kind when uttered by one or more persons in the name of others.* This doxology is wanting in some ancient codices (especially the Vatican and Beza), and omitted in quotation by some ancient writers, which has led the modern critics to regard it as an addition from some old church liturgy. Its great antiquity, however, and its constant use for ages, make it safer to retain it till some light is thrown upon the four centuries, or more, which intervene between the date of this gospel and the oldest extant manuscript.

14, 15. The next two verses, as already stated, purport to give a reason for something in the previous context, which can only be the last clause of v. 12. As if he had said, 'In asking for forgiveness, you must stand prepared to exercise it also, for unless you are, you cannot be forgiven, not because the one is the condition of the other, but because the two must go together, and the absence of the one proves the absence of the other.' The verb four times repeated here is the same with that in v. 12; but instead of the word debts, another figure is employed, that of a fall or false step, rendered in the English versions, trespass, and intended to express the same idea, that of sin, which may be considered either as a debt due to the divine justice, or as a lapse from the straight course of moral rectitude. The fulness and precision with which the alternative is here presented may appear superfluous, but adds to the solemnity of the assurance, and would no doubt strengthen the impression on the minds of the original hearers. In this, as in the whole preceding context, God is still presented in his fatherly relation to all true believers; as if to intimate that even that relation, tender as it is, would give no indulgence to an unforgiving spirit.

16. The contrast between formalism and genuine religion is now carried out in reference to a third great duty, that of fasting, the continued exercise of which, like that of charity and prayer, is here assumed, without distinguishing between the true and false mode of performing it, a subject treated by our Saviour elsewhere. (See below, on 9:14, 15.) The plural form, resumed in the preceding verses, is continued through the one before us, after which it again gives place to the singular precisely as in vs. 2 and 6 above. Here too, as there, the practice of the hypocrites is first described, with an injunction to avoid it. Be not, or more exactly, become not, the Greek word being not the simple verb of existence (as in v. 5), but the one explained above in v. 10, and employed here to suggest the idea of a change from their ordinary look and manner. Of a sad countenance (Geneva Bible, look not sour), in Greek a single word, denoting angry, sullen, or morose, not merely in feeling but in aspect, as the derivation of the term implies. This allusion to the habits of the Pharisees, though probably intelligible of itself to most of our Lord's hearers, is explained by the addition of a positive description. For, I say like the hypocrites, because, &c. Disfigure, literally, cause to disappear or vanish, either by changing the appearance, as in this case, or by destroying, as in vs. 19, 20. Appear to men to fast is neither the construction nor the sense of the original, or is at least ambiguous, as it may mean that they would seem to fast when they do not, whereas the meaning of the Greek is that they may appear to (or as the same verb is translated in v. 5 above, be seen of, i. e. by) men (to be) fasting. The fault here charged is not that of a false pretence, but that of ostentation. They did fast, and they took care that it should be known by their austere and mortified appearance. The last clause is the same as in vs. 2, 5, the emphatic repetition giving to this part of the discourse a rhythmical or measured structure, suited not only to impress the hearers at the time, but also to engrave it on the memory.

17, 18. We have here the usual antithesis or contrast (as in vs. 2, 6) between Pharisaical and Christian practice, with the usual transition to the singular number. But, in opposition to this hateful ostentation, thou, my individual disciple, not only as opposed to the hypocritical formalist just described, but as distinguished from the aggregate body of believers. When thou fastest, literally, fasting, at the time or in the act of fasting. There are two ways of interpreting the last clause, both of which are perfectly grammatical. The first and probably the common one is founded on the fact that fragrant unguents were a favourite luxury at ancient feasts, and that anointing is a frequent figure in the Scriptures for rejoicing. (See for example Ps. 45:7, Isai. 61:3, where the "oil of gladness" and the "oil of joy" are identical in Hebrew.) In accordance with this usage the command before us is to shun the sanctimonious ostentation of the Pharisees by going to the opposite extreme; instead of looking sad or sour, appearing to be more than usually gay and cheerful. The obvious objection to this is, that it prescribes a course of conduct inconsistent with that state of mind, of which religious fasting is the index and the counterpart, as stated by our Lord himself upon a subsequent occasion. (See

below, on 9:14, 15.) To require external mirth and gaiety of men who are suffering the pangs of spiritual grief, would be a mockery unworthy of our blessed Master, and without a parallel in his teachings elsewhere. But besides this incongruity between the inward state supposed and the outward acts enjoined, the requisition, thus explained, is one of positive deception, which is still more inconceivable. To let men see that they were fasting was hypocrisy in those who did it; how much more to seem to be rejoicing when they were in fact distressed. These objections do not lie against the other explanation, which supposes washing and anointing to be here not extraordinary festive usages, but ordinary acts of cleanliness and neatness, and the requisition to be simply to appear as usual, instead of that neglect or positive disfigurement, which told to all around that the religionist was in a state of spiritual discipline or conflict. Even in this case there would be concealment; but concealment is not falsehood; nor are we bound by any principle of morals or religion to disclose our secret exercises to the view of others. All this, however, presupposes that the fasting here intended, like the prayer in v. 6, is a personal and private duty, without any reference to public services of that kind to which we may be called in company with others. This presumption, founded on the context and the language of v. 17, becomes a certainty in that which follows, where the same reason for consenting to be unseen by the eye of man is given with respect to fasting, that was previously given with respect to alms and prayer in vs. 4, 6.

19, 20. There is no more incoherence or abruptness here than in 5:17 above, though both transitions have been so described. In either case, the nexus and association of ideas, if not obvious and patent to the superficial reader, may be readily detected, and, when once pointed out, seems natural and easy. The great principle propounded in the foregoing context, as the law which ought to govern our religious duties, is, that they are not performed to man, but to God, and that he alone can recompense, or make them fruitful. But this, though originally introduced to show how certain duties ought to be performed, admits of a much wider application. It is, in fact, a fundamental principle of all religion, and the secret of all happiness and comfort, even in the present life. To show this, is the drift of the discourse in the remainder of this chapter, the principle being first laid down in vs. 19–21, and then elucidated and applied in vs. 22–34. The connection, then, is this, that as almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, must, in order to have any value, or accomplish any good, be performed as duties which we owe to God, and in reliance on his blessing, so the same is true of every thing in life, and of the whole course of life itself, the entire security and happiness of which depend upon our doing all for God, and in dependence upon him exclusively. This is strikingly and beautifully set forth in the verse before us, under the figure of amassing wealth, i. e. providing for our future welfare. (See the same idea carried out in one of our Lord's parables, preserved by Luke, 12:16–21.) Lay not up treasures, is in Greek more pointed and expressive, because the verb and noun are kindred forms, store not away stores, or, retaining the derivative equivalent in English, treasure not up treasures, as the verb is actually rendered elsewhere (Rom. 2:5), and by Wiclif here. Upon earth, not merely of an earthly nature, but dependent on this present life, and terminating with it. (Compare Paul's analogous expression, worldly lusts, Tit. 2:12.) Divested of its figurative dress, the precept is, not to let our future happiness depend upon any thing belonging merely to the earth, or to the present life. The reason given in the next clause may be stated in the same way to be this, that such provision for the future shares in the precarious uncertainty and brief duration of the sphere from which it is derived, and to which it is restricted by its very nature. The figurative dress with which this reason is invested, has respect to the main figure in the other clause. Treasures of money and of clothing, almost equally valued in the ancient East, whose flowing garments, not exposed to the vicissitudes of fashion, were even transmitted by inheritance, are liable to be destroyed by rust and moths, respectively, or secretly abstracted by the thief and robber. The word translated rust, according to its etymology, means eating, and is used metonymically, both in Classical and Hellenistic writers, to denote what is eaten. (John 4:32, 6:27, 55.) Here it may mean corrosion, and particularly that of metals, though the old Greek translator, Aquila, applies it to the moth, in Isa. 50:9. (Compare with this clause James 5:2, 3.) Corrupt, the word translated disfigure in v. 16, and originally meaning to remove from sight, or cause to disappear, as in Jas. 4:14, but continually used in the best writers, by a kind of euphemism, for destruction. Thus, Thucydides applies it to the razing of a house, and the erasure of a writing; Herodotus and Xenophon to the secret execution of state prisoners; with which may be compared the English phrases, to despatch, to make away with, and the Greek, to lead away, as used in Acts. 12:19, Tyndale's word (corrupt), retained by all the later English versions, is not only contrary to usage, but suggests to the modern reader the incongruous idea of putrefaction. Here again the oldest English version is the best (Wiclif: distrieth—destroyeth). Break through, literally, dig through (Wiclif: delven out), with probable allusion to the mud walls and the unburnt brick often used in eastern houses. Thieves, in old English, like the corresponding Greek word, has a wider meaning than the one which we attach to it, including all who lawlessly deprive men of their property, by force or fraud, including what we commonly call robbery. (See below on 21:13, 26:55, 27:38, where the same word is employed to represent a very different Greek one.) The meaning of the clause is, that the usual forms of human wealth are liable to loss, both from natural and human depredation.—V. 20 is the converse of v. 19, written with a solemn repetition of its terms, like that already noticed in v. 15, and intended to produce the same effect. The point of variation, upon which the contrast turns, is the phrase, in heaven, corresponding to on earth, and meaning just the opposite, to wit, beyond the sphere of this world and of this life, in the presence of God, and in his gracious purpose. (See above, on 5:11.) Provision thus made for the future, is beyond the reach of change or loss, the necessary incidents of earthly good and secular advantages.

21. This verse gives a still deeper insight into the great principle or law of human conduct laid down in the two foregoing verses. It was not, as might have been imagined without this addition, merely as a safeguard against loss, that Christ advised his followers to

make provision for the future, not in this world, but a better. It was also as a necessary means of fixing their supreme affections on the proper objects, and of thus determining their character and destiny. The principle here stated is the obvious but momentous one, that what men value they will love, and that the two things cannot be divided in experience. Theoretically, this may seem to be an identical proposition, or, at least, a truism; but experience demonstrates its necessity, and man's native disposition practically to deny it, as evinced by their professions to love God supremely, while the objects which they value most belong to this world. To this universal, soul-destroying error, Christ opposes a familiar truth, which all admit in theory and all deny in practice, namely, that, the two things thus divorced must go together; that the man who loves God will inevitably seek his happiness in him, both for the present and the future, while the man that seeks it in this life, thereby proves himself a lover of the world, and not of God, which two affections are declared by an apostle to he wholly incompatible.* The reference, of course, is not to friendly or benignant dispositions, but to governing affections, as in Luke 14:26, one of the strongest of our Saviour's divine paradoxes, and intelligible only in the light of the great principle here laid down, that the treasure and the heart will always go together; that the quarter to which men now look for happiness is that in which they place their best affections. Where and there, are terms properly belonging to the figure of a local treasure, but admitting of an easy application, in all languages, to spiritual subjects and relations. The distinction in the tenses, here, is not unmeaning, but indicates a necessary logical connection. 'Where your treasure now is—where you now look for the sources of your future happiness—there will your heart, or your supreme affections, as a necessary consequence, be found to be.' Thus completed, the whole doctrine of these verses (19–21) is, that not in reference merely to religious duties, such as alms, and prayer, and fasting, but to all religion, and to all life, the only security for future good, is to be found in God—in absolute reliance on him, and in absolute devotion to him.

22. Here again it has been not unusual to imagine an abrupt transition, or a total breach of continuity, arising either from the incoherence of our Lord's discourse, or from the fragmentary manner in which Matthew has reported it. The whole assumption is gratuitous and groundless. Without seeking any subtle artificial means, which would be as much displaced and out of character as desultory unconnected talk, it is easy to demonstrate an association of ideas between this and the foregoing context, amply sufficient to repel the charge of total incoherence, without any violence to the thought or language. This desirable result may be attained by simply viewing the remainder of this chapter (22–34) as an extended illustration and enforcement of the truth taught in the three preceding verses (19–21). The illustration, properly so called, is twofold, being partly drawn from the animal economy of man (22–23), and partly from his domestic habits and relations (24). The part of the human constitution thus made use of is the sight, and that not in a technical or scientific, but a popular and superficial way, as usual in Scripture, which refers to natural phenomena and facts, not as philosophers explain them, but as other people see them. The particular fact here used to illustrate spiritual truth, is the familiar one, that sight is simple, that the eye, in order to perform its office, must concentrate its visual power on the object, and that whatever tends to mar this unity by making it see double or confusing its perceptions, tends to vitiate its action and defeat the very end of its existence. The reason for selecting this particular comparison is intimated in the first clause of the verse before us, namely, the importance of the eyesight in the animal economy. The light, or luminary, source of light, the same word that is used above in 5:15, and there translated candle, as it is here in the Rhemish Bible, and by Wiclif lantern. The meaning obviously is that this part of the body is the only one by which man can enjoy the light, by which he must be guided in his movements and made acquainted with external objects. Therefore, since this is the office and importance of the eye in the human constitution. Thine eye, suddenly returning to the singular pronoun, as in v. 17, and no doubt for the same purpose of impressive individualization. Single, in the strict and proper sense as opposite to double or to manifold, the only meaning justified by usage or the context. The sense of sound or healthy, given by some writers, is a mere conjectural deduction from the supposed meaning of the corresponding epithet, which, as we have seen before (on 5:11, 37, 39, 45, 6:13), may denote either physical or moral evil, and must therefore, it is hastily concluded, when applied to a bodily organ, mean diseased, disordered, and the parallel of course can only mean the opposite condition. But the true deduction is the inverse one, from the specific to the vague term. As the former (πλο ς) certainly means simple, single, the indefinite term evil means of course defective or diseased in this particular respect, i. e. double, mixed, confused. Or rather this is not the specific meaning of the adjective itself, but only the restriction of its meaning as required in this connection. The indefinite sense put upon the term by some not only violates all usage and the laws of lexicography, but utterly obscures the connection, and affords a pretext for the charge of incoherence. If there is no allusion to simplicity or singleness of sight, but only to its sound or healthy state, the illustration loses all its point, and must be treated as a mere digression or interpolation. On the other hand, if single have its proper sense, and evil be interpreted according to it, the comparison is perfectly adapted to its purpose, namely, that of showing, by a physical analogy, the vast importance, nay, the absolute necessity, of such a single and exclusive trust and love to God as had been just before enjoined upon our Lord's disciples. Full of light is Tyndale's paraphrase of our word simply meaning light or luminous, and better though not perfectly expressed by Wiclif (lightful) and the Rhemish version (lightsome). The essential meaning is that if the eye be single it will answer its purpose or perform its office with respect to the whole body, which is not represented as all eye (1 Cor. 12:17), but merely as deriving through the eye from the light whatever benefit that element or substance was intended to impart. The future (shall or will be), as in v. 21, denotes a necessary consequence.

23. This is the alternative or converse supposition of an evil eye, not in the moral application of that phrase occurring elsewhere (see

below, on 20:15, and compare Mark 7:22, 2 Pet. 2:14), but in the physical sense of a bad eye, i. e. one diseased, and here still further specified by single in v. 22, so as to mean destitute of that simplicity or singleness essential to the healthy function of the organ and its undisturbed effect upon the animal economy. Full of darkness is still more objectionable here than full of light in the preceding verse, because it seems necessarily expressive of a total obscuration or stark blindness, which is not the natural effect of the duplicity, complexity, or confusion here supposed. The difficulty lies exclusively in Tyndale's paraphrase, retained by all the Protestant translators. The original expression is a single word (σκοτεινόν) corresponding exactly to the English dark, and so translated in these very versions of Luke 11:36, although in v. 34 of the same chapter, it is rendered as it is here, full of darkness! These capricious variations ought to make us vigilant in constantly comparing even the most perfect versions with the one inspired original. Thy whole body shall be dark is here the true translation, i. e. not entirely destitute of light or vision, but obscured, confused, and dimmed in its perceptions, by the want of singleness or oneness in the visual organ. As in v. 23, this is said of the whole body, only as losing the advantage which it would have otherwise enjoyed. When the whole frame suffers from the darkness of the eye, it may, almost without a figure, be itself described as dark. Therefore, since the safety and the comfort of the whole frame thus depend upon the singleness and clearness of the vision. The light (the one) in thee, not the light in general, but that part of the animal economy by which its blessings are secured to the whole body. Darkness, the correlative of light, and used in the same way, not to denote absolute privation, but any obscuration, caused by the diseased state of the organ. That it is not to be absolutely understood, appears from the very exclamation or interrogation in the last clause, which would then contain an anticlimax, the darkness being first described as total and then apostrophized as very great; whereas, if the body is first spoken of as dark, and then the darkness as a great one, there is a natural and striking climax. There is something in the very collocation of the Greek verbs here peculiarly impressive:—the darkness, how great! i. e. how great is it! The interrogative construction, how great (is it)? is essentially the same, the exclamation, in such cases, being only an impassioned question. But the main force and beauty of the last clause arise from its relating not so much to the physical case supposed as to the spiritual case which it was brought in to illustrate. Without any formal application of the figure, which would only have impaired the illustration, the divine instructor far more forcibly suggests it by an exclamation, applicable both to the imaginary and the real case, but infinitely more impressive in relation to the latter. This rhetorical device, if it may be so called without detracting from its godlike authority and wisdom, may be rendered clear, though necessarily enfeebled, by a paraphrase of this kind. 'Such is the effect of double or confused sight on the body, not unlike that of a double or divided heart upon the soul. How great must be the darkness even in the one case, but how infinitely greater and more fatal in the other! Let your heart and treasure therefore be together; not on earth, where both must one day perish, but in heaven, in God, beyond the reach of such a danger; not divided between both, which is indeed impossible, for though you may imagine that you love God while you seek your happiness in this world, you will one day know, and by your own experience, whether saved or lost, that where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

24. Another illustrative argument in favour of an undivided trust in God and devotion to him, is derived from a familiar fact in social or domestic life, to wit that the efficiency and value of a servant are dependent on a like concentration of his powers and affections in the service of one master. The apparent inconsistency between this statement and familiar cases of a different description, where a man does seem efficiently to serve more than one employer, may be easily removed by two considerations. The first is, that the service here described is that of a slave, the Greek verb meaning, both in classical and Hellenistic usage, to be a slave or to act the part of one. What might be true, then, of a freeman labouring for hire, now in this man's service, now in that man's, or in both at once, would be untrue and impossible of one whose time and labour are the property of another. The only way in which such a bondman could serve two masters is by virtue of a partnership between them. But this is precluded by a second consideration, namely, that the two masters here are evidently two whose rights and interests and orders are in conflict, as appears from the alternative prediction in the second clause. The first case there supposed is stronger than the second, love and hatred indicating more disparity than simply cleaving to the one and looking down upon the other. The former verb is used in the classics to denote a special devotion to some one god, and more correctly rendered in our Bible than by Tyndale and his followers, who use the weaker and more inexact form, lean to, or by the Romish versions, which follow the Vulgate in translating it sustain. The meaning seems to be that even where there is not love and hatred, in the strict sense, to the different masters, there will be a preference of one and a correspondent slighting of the other, when their orders or their wishes are in conflict. The application here is more express than in the previous illustration. Instead of using terms directly applicable to the case of real human service and leaving the hearers to apply it to the higher case illustrated by it, he winds up by expressly and most pointedly declaring, Ye cannot serve (both) God and Mammon. This last, written in some manuscripts with one m (μαμων), is an Aramaic word applied to wealth or riches, but according to the most probable etymology, originally meaning trust or confidence, and thus describing wealth, not simply in itself as a material condition, but in its moral aspect as a ground of hope, which brings the passage into beautiful agreement with our Lord's explanation of his own paradoxical assertion that a rich man cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (Mark 10:24). Mammon being here referred to as a master, is of course personified or treated as a person; but that such a god was actually worshipped by the Syrians, like the Plutus of the Greek mythology, has never been established, though familiarized to all minds by the poetry of Milton, which has given personality, not only to this Aramaic word, but to the Hebrew Belial, meaning good-for-nothing, worthless.

"Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,

Counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake."
PARADISE LOST, Book ii., vs. 226–228.

25. A natural and almost unavoidable misapprehension of the foregoing exhortation to live only for God and heaven was the notion, that it necessarily involved the loss of every thing belonging to this life; whereas it was in fact a deliverance from all care, and the strongest possible assurance that even their earthly wants would be provided for. Therefore, literally, for this, i. e. for this cause, for this very reason. So far was entire devotion to God from leaving those who practised it in want or in danger of it, that it was the strongest reason for dismissing all anxiety about the subject, because he who serves God will be cared for by him. I say unto you, as ray disciples, with the authority belonging to me as your master. Take no thought for, an old English phrase, employed by Bacon and Shakspeare in the sense of being anxious or excessively solicitous. The idea of excess is here essential, so that ordinary thought or care is not excluded. Life, in Greek a word which signifies the soul considered as the vital principle, and therefore rendered both by life and soul in different connections. Compare 2:20 above with 10:28 below, where being in antithesis to body, it is rendered soul. The same combination occurs here, and therefore soul would seem to be the proper version. The only objection is that as food belongs no less than clothing to the body, the antithesis would be a false one. This objection might perhaps be met by the scriptural use of soul and heart for the inner as distinguished from the outer man; but on the whole it may be better to remove the difficulty, if there be one, by assuming no antithesis, but simply a distinct mention of the life and body, because dress is not essential to the life, as food is, although needed for the decency and comfort of the body. Shall eat and shall drink, English futures used to represent the aorist subjunctive, which is properly suggestive of doubt and contingency. Perhaps the best translation as to sense, although not perfectly exact in form, would be, what ye are to eat and drink. The last clause is an argument from greater to less. He who gives us life may be expected to sustain it; he who made the body may be trusted to protect it and provide for it. Instead of being stated as a formal proposition, this reasoning is made at once more pointed and more popular by being compressed into a question. The same interrogative form is employed by Paul in an argument of precisely the same kind, though relating to the most "unspeakable" of all gifts. (Rom. 8:32.)

26. This is an argument from less to greater. He who cares for the inferior creation cannot fail to provide for his intelligent creatures, and especially for those who serve and trust him. This argument, extending through v. 30, has a beautiful symmetry almost poetical in form, arising from a twofold parallelism or the sentences, the first illustration being drawn from the animal kingdom and relating to the care for food, the second from the vegetable world and relating to the care for raiment (28–30). Behold, look at, an expression strengthened by a double preposition, one before the verb and one before the noun, implying close attention, searching observation. Fowls, now restricted to edible, domesticated birds, was used in old English to denote birds in general, and is here employed to represent a Greek word strictly meaning winged or flying (things). The air, literally, the sky (or heaven) here put, as often in the classics, for the space above the earth, the visible expanse, the atmosphere, through which the birds fly. Sow not, &c., they do not even use the means which man is bound to use and does use, but are wholly dependent on their instincts and the bounties of their Maker. Sowing, reaping, and ingathering, are the three stages of agricultural employment and provision for the food of man, all which are here denied in reference to the birds, which is equivalent to saying that they use no means at all for the production of their own food. Your heavenly father is not a mere periphrasis for God, but suggestive of an almost infinite disparity between the cases. Instead of saying, their heavenly father feedeth them, which, in a lower sense, would be correct, he says, your heavenly father, intimating that the God who thus provides for the inferior animals, is bound by a peculiar fatherly relation to provide for man, and still more for those men who, as his Son's disciples, are his children in the most intimate and strictest sense. The conclusion from these premises is indicated in the last clause, and again in the form of an interrogation. Are ye not much better, Tyndale's version of an idiomatic Greek phrase not susceptible of close translation, the verb meaning properly to differ, with an adverb meaning more, and thus determining the difference to be in favour of the subject, which is then represented as excelling, being worth more, than the object of comparison (Wicl., more worthy—Rheims, more of price). The reasoning involved in this comparison and question is that he who thus takes care of what is less valuable, will of course take care of what is more so. Barns, in Greek, a wider term denoting any kind of storehouse or deposit (see above, on 3:12).

27. Before proceeding to his second analogical argument, our Lord corroborates the first by adding a suggestion as to the entire inefficiency and uselessness of anxious care in reference to human life, which cannot thereby be extended or prolonged. The form is still that of a question, here implying strong negation. By taking thought, in the original, a simple participle, caring, being anxious. Can, a distinct and independent verb in Greek, is able. To add, or put to, as the original expression etymologically signifies, Stature, a secondary meaning of the Greek noun, which primarily relates to time and corresponds to age in English, but is also used to denote corporeal growth, as an effect and sign of advancing age. There is a twofold objection to the version stature; first, that Christ is here speaking of the life and of food as necessary to sustain it, and passes in the next verse to the body and its raiment; a consideration of the more importance from the regular and balanced structure of the passage, as already noticed. In the next place, the addition of a cubit to one's stature is a very great one; whereas the one here mentioned is described in a parallel passage (Luke 12:26) as "that which is least." The only objection to the version age, is that cubit is not a measure of time but of space, being derived, like most measures of length, from the average dimensions of the human body (compare foot, pace, ell, handbreadth, span,

&c.) Cubit originally means the fore-arm, from the elbow to the wrist; then, as a standard of measure, from the elbow to the tips of the fingers, usually reckoned as a length of eighteen inches, or a foot and a half, more or less. But how could such a measure, the precise extent of which varied in practice and is wholly unimportant, be applied to time, or to the length of human life? Only with tacit reference to the figure of a race or journey, often used in Scripture and familiar in all languages: 'Who by anxious care can add even a foot or two to his appointed course on earth?' We then have the advantage of giving to the Greek noun (λικία) its primary meaning, and one perfectly consistent with the parallel in Luke; for though a cubit is a very large addition to one's stature, it is a very small one to the length of a journey, and still less to the duration of a lifetime.

28. Here begins the second illustration or comparison, which has respect to clothing and is drawn from the vegetable kingdom. The form of direct prohibition, used in v. 25, is here exchanged for that of interrogation, so predominant in this whole context, and implying a negation no less pointed than the other. Take thought, the same verb as in v. 25, and meaning anxious care, undue solicitude. Consider, an intensive compound of the verb to learn, originally meaning to learn thoroughly, and then, as a necessary means, to study closely, to observe attentively, a secondary sense as old as Herodotus. The use of the word here suggests that what is thus proposed is not a mere indulgence of the taste or curiosity, but a moral lesson to be learned by studying the works and providence of God, a method of instruction practised long before by Solomon (see Prov. 6:6–8, 30:24–31), to which there may be here an intentional allusion as his name is introduced just afterwards. Study the lilies of the field, wild flowers, without human care or cultivation. All speculation, as to the precise kind of lily here intended, is gratuitous and exegetically unimportant. There is no need of assuming an allusion to a gorgeous purple lily, found in some parts of the east, on account of the comparison which follows, and which is no less relevant and true of the most ordinary species. The point of comparison is not the colour, but the luxuriant growth and native beauty. How they grow, a use of the active verb found only in the later Greek, the older writers giving it the transitive or causative sense of making grow or causing to increase, which is also found in 1 Cor. 3:6, 7, while always elsewhere, as in this case, it is used as an intransitive or neuter.* The Greek verbs are in the singular number, but agree, according to a well-known idiom of the language, with a plural subject of the neuter gender. But the latest critics give the verbs a plural form, as found in the Codex Vaticanus and some others, and as quoted by Chrysostom and Athanasius. The difference is merely one of form, requiring no change in the English version. Toil and spin may either be generic and specific terms, denoting work in general and one familiar form of it; or toil may have the more restricted sense of work relating to the preparation of clothing, in addition to the primary operation of spinning, such as weaving, sewing, and the like. These terms then correspond with beautiful exactness to the processes of husbandry employed for the same purpose in the other illustration or comparison (v. 26).

29. And yet is not too strong a version of the particle (δὲ) here used to introduce a comparison or contrast. But, although they use no means to furnish their own clothing. I say unto you, implying not so much the importance of the thing said as its seeming improbability, requiring an authoritative asseveration to command belief. Even Solomon, with possible allusion, as already hinted, to his similar method of enforcing moral truth, but with a much more certain one to the proverbial splendour of his reign, still traditionally cherished in the East as the type of a magnificent Asiatic monarch. All his glory, great and unexampled as it was. Glory has here no reference to moral excellence, but only to external splendour, which is a frequent sense of the Greek word in the Septuagint version and of the corresponding Hebrew noun (כָּבוֹד), even when applied to God, describing not his absolute perfection, but his sensible manifestation to his creatures, as in the Shechinah or cloud of the divine presence in the tabernacle and temple, and still earlier in the patriarchal and primeval theophanies. Here it means the royal state of Solomon, especially his regal costume or official dress. Not even Solomon was arrayed, literally, thrown about or cast around, i. e. with clothing. Like, as, i. e. so splendidly and beautifully. One of these, not these collectively, or in the aggregate, but any one of them deserves to be compared with Solomon in all his glory.

30. The premises or data having been recited, the argument from less to greater is now stated, but again in the form of an interrogation. Wherefore, the logical connective between this and the preceding verses, is the word above translated and yet (in v. 29) and elsewhere but or and, as in vs. 16, 20, or omitted altogether, as in v. 27. If does not express a doubt or a contingency, but simply sets forth what is actually true as premises from which to argue, and is nearly equivalent to since or whereas, in English. Grass, a Greek word originally meaning an enclosure, then applied especially to pastures, and by another natural transition, to the grass itself. The term is here used in the wide sense of herbage, so as to include the smaller plants, as distinguished both from trees and from the larger shrubs or bushes. The point of comparison is fragility and brief duration, as expressed directly in the next clause. To-day and to-morrow, put for one day and the next, or by a natural figure of speech, for any two points of time not distant from each other. Is, literally, being, i. e. existing, living, and by necessary implication, flourishing, luxuriating, as before described. Cast into the oven, the precise shape or size of which has no effect upon the meaning, as the point of the comparison is nothing peculiar to the ovens of the East, but that which is common to all ovens from their very nature and design, to wit, that they are heated, and that this requires fuel. More peculiar to the East may be the use of withered grass and flowers for this purpose, as alleged by archæologists and travellers. The argument seems here to be drawn from the different duration of the human and the vegetable subject; but this is only mentioned to enhance the vast disparity between them, which extends to many other more important points of difference. Clothe, a distinct verb from the one in v. 30, but analogous in composition and in use. Shall he not clothe, supplied by the translators, weakens the expression, though it gives the sense correctly. Oh ye of little faith, in Greek a single word, a compound adjective, without exact equivalent in English. It has here specific reference to faith or confidence in God's protecting and providing care.

31. The practical application of the argument from God's care of inferior creatures. Therefore, since that care ensures a still more tender care for you. Take no thought, as in vs. 25, 27, 28, be not anxious, or excessively solicitous. The interrogative form is again used, but in this case as a natural expression of an uneasy doubt as to bodily provision and support. The future, as in v. 25, is not the form of the original, which more exactly means, what may (or can) we eat? but may be rendered as before, what are we to eat, or drink, or wear?

32. This verse assigns a further reason for not cherishing an anxious spirit, namely, that at bottom it is heathenish. The Gentiles, literally, nations, i. e. all besides the Jews. Seek after, a compound form of the verb rendered seek in the next verse, and probably intended to suggest the accessory idea of eagerness, solicitude, and importunity. Some throw this first clause into a parenthesis and connect the last directly with the prohibition in v. 31. But as such constructions are now regarded by the best philological authorities as very rare, it seems better to explain the first clause as a new and additional reason, and to connect the last with something not expressed though necessarily implied. 'I say be not thus anxious, for the heathen are so, and that for a reason which ought not to exist in your case, namely, a doubt of God's omniscience. You can have no such motive; for,' &c. Your heavenly father, as such and because he is such, with the genuine affection of a father towards his children. Have need of is in Greek a single word (ye) need. All these (things), literally, these all, a concession that the things of this life must be had and therefore may be sought, but not with an overweening estimate of their importance or a sceptical solicitude to gain them.

33. Having now prohibited, at great length and in various forms, the indulgence of a sceptical solicitude about even necessary things belonging to the present life, he shows them how it is to be avoided; not by mere negation, or attempting simply to abstain from such anxiety and unbelief, but by positively doing something else which will immediately correct the evil. This remedy for unbelieving doubts and cares consists in constantly subordinating all such personal consideration to the higher interests of the divine service, not as excluding all provision for this life but as including and securing it. Ye is not separately expressed in Greek, and therefore not emphatic as in vs. 9, 26, because there is here no comparison between different classes of agents, but only between different modes of action. The kingdom of God, as then about to be erected, and the cause which they were bound, as Christ's disciples, to promote. His righteousness, that which he esteems right or has made right by requiring it, conformity to God's will as the only rule of right. The more specific sense of justification is obtained by parity of reasoning or reflection from the apostolic teaching; but the simple meaning of the words as understood, and intended to be understood, by the original hearers, is that by seeking to do God's will and promote his cause, they would most effectually further their own interests, not only spiritual and eternal, but secular and temporal. All these (things), an expression twice used in the verse preceding, and applied to the necessary things of this life, with particular reference to food and clothing, as the subject of the previous context. Added (the same verb as in v. 27) i. e. given over and above the spiritual good directly flowing from devotion to God's service. The whole prescription, therefore, is, instead of anxiously and passionately hunting, like the heathen, for the good things or even the necessaries of this life, as if God were not aware of their necessities or able to supply them, to aim first, in time and preference, at those things which concern his service, and believe that by so doing, what appears to be neglected will be certainly secured.

34. The most important question here, is in regard to the precise connection between this verse and the previous context. The more obvious, and probably more common view of this connection, is, that we have here a summary recapitulation of the whole discourse about the cares of life, with an additional reason for avoiding sceptical solicitude. This may seem to be favoured by the logical connective (therefore), and the similarity of form between this and the exhortation in v. 31. Against it may be urged the qualifying phrase, for the morrow, to or towards, or with a view to, the ensuing day, which does not occur before, and which seems designed to introduce another class of cares, to wit, those for the future as distinguished from those for the present. It may be plausibly replied, that all care has relation to the future, though it may not be a distant one, and that the cares previously described by their objects (raiment, food, &c.), are here described in reference to time—for the morrow as a proximate futurity. But even granting this, which is by no means certain, there is a still more serious objection to the supposition that this verse relates precisely to the same cares that had been already more than once forbidden. This objection is, that the reason here assigned is altogether different from any that had been before expressed or implied, and one peculiarly appropriate to future, or more distant cares, as distinguished from proximate, or present cares. That reason is, that by letting our anxieties thus run ahead, we only accumulate the evil, and impose on each successive day, not only its own burden, but the burden of the days that follow. This seems to favour, though it does not conclusively establish the opinion that our Saviour, having wound up his warning against unbelieving cares in general, adds, as a sort of corollary, a specific warning against cares about the morrow, or the future, as distinguished from the present. Therefore (too), or on the same grounds, and by parity of reasoning, be not anxious for the morrow, or in the prospect, of remoter wants or dangers. The next clause cannot mean, as it has sometimes been explained, that the morrow (or the future) will provide for itself, and need not, therefore, be provided for beforehand. The verb does not mean to provide, but to be anxious, and unduly anxious, being identical with that in the preceding clause, and in vs. 25, 27, 28, 31. The only meaning that the words will bear, is, that the morrow will be just as anxious as to-day, so that by anticipating its anxieties, the present has a double load to bear. The (things) of itself is an exact translation of what might be more idiomatically rendered, its own (things or affairs) as opposed to those of the preceding days.* Sufficient is not to be grammatically construed with evil, as the two words are, in Greek, of different genders; but the former, which is neuter, must be

taken by itself, as meaning a sufficient thing, or in a single word, enough. Unto does not answer to a preposition, but is simply the sign of the dative case, and as such, might have been translated for. The day, in this connection, evidently means each or every day, as it arrives. Evil, like the cognate adjective, and the synonyme employed above, in vs. 13, 23, may denote either natural or moral evil, either suffering or sin, and more particularly malice. The former seems to suit the context here, and to afford a good sense, namely, that the suffering of each day is as much as it can bear, without gratuitously adding what belongs to others. In favour of the other explanation is the constant usage of the word in the New Testament, there being ten other causes of the moral sense, and not one of the natural,† It also adds point to the sentence by carrying out the personification of the day to the end. 'Sufficient for the day is its own malignity or mischief, without seeking to incur that of others.'‡ It cannot be denied, however, that the other is a simpler and more natural construction, and the argument against it from New Testament usage, may perhaps be outweighed by the twofold application of the cognate adjective,* and by the occasional occurrence of the noun itself, to denote suffering in the classics, the Septuagint, and the Apocrypha.† The evil thereof, means nothing more than its evil, this possessive pronoun never being used in our translation; but the former version gives a more sonorous close, retaining, at the same time, the order of the words in Greek.

CHAPTER 7

The first part of this chapter seems to be addressed to the censorious Pharisees, who were disposed to treat with a contemptuous rigour, the disciples of our Saviour, but are warned that he would judge themselves with equal seventy, and that the correction of their own faults should precede, if not prevent, the condemnation of others (1–5). He then warns his followers not to expose themselves or the gospel to the spiteful or ignorant contempt of such men, without evident necessity (6). From this digression he returns to the subject of provision for the future (6:34), and teaches them to banish unbelieving cares by a childlike trust in God, expressed in prayer, with a cheering assurance of success, derived from God's paternal kindness, as compared with that of men (7–11). He then, in winding up his whole discourse, reverts to the fulfilment of the law and prophets (5:17), showing how they are to do their part (12); exhorts them to pursue the course of right and safety, however self-denying (13, 14); warns them against their faithless spiritual leaders, proved to be so by their influence on others (15–19); against false profession in their own case (20–23); and against the fatal error of hearing without practising what he had taught them (24–27). To the sermon on the Mount, which closes here, is added an account of its effect upon the people (28, 29).

1, 2. It is commonly agreed that the connection of this chapter with the foregoing context, and of its parts among themselves, is less clear than in the previous divisions of the Sermon on the Mount. Hence some abandon the idea of connection altogether, and regard what follows as an incoherent, or at least a desultory series of advices, either added by our Lord, as a conclusion to the more continuous discourse which he had been delivering, or thrown together by the historian, as a further sample of his mode of teaching, not at any one time, but on different occasions. But besides the general presumption against such compilations, and in favour of a regular connected train of thought, there is a special presumption of the same kind here, arising from the ease with which the thread of the discourse can be detected and maintained unbroken in the two preceding chapters. It is highly improbable from all analogy, as well as from the general laws of thought and language, that a composition, so methodical to this point, should at once and altogether be deprived of its coherence. It becomes us, therefore, who have found an obvious plan and purpose in the previous part, to take for granted that it still exists and governs the remainder of the sermon, though it may not be so easily discerned, and ought not to be violently made out by gratuitous assumptions or unnatural constructions of the language. It is also proper in such doubtful cases to allow a certain latitude of judgment and liberty of choice between the different hypotheses which may be urged with any show of plausibility. Among these, one supposes that our Lord here turns to another class of those who were impatiently expecting the Messiah's kingdom, but with false conceptions of its nature, and corrects their errors as he had before corrected those of other classes (see above, on 5:3). The class here addressed would then be that of the censorious moralists, whose whole religion lay in finding fault with others, and who may have anticipated ample scope for the indulgence of this morbid appetite amidst the changes which the church was now to undergo. As this is a character which shows itself in every time and place, and one that was particularly apt to be engendered by the pharisaical abuse of the Mosaic system, there is nothing in the fact assumed by this interpretation that is antecedently or intrinsically improbable. Nor is there much weight in the sole objection, that if such had been our Lord's design, he would have carried it out earlier in the discourse, and in immediate connection with the other misconceptions there corrected. This would be to demand, not mere coherence in the thoughts, but a rhetorical preciseness and formality of method altogether out of keeping with the free and natural, though rational arrangement of his thoughts and language, which would not be in the least disturbed by such a separation of the topics, especially if suited to promote the general design of his discourse, or if susceptible of explanation from the known or even the conjectured circumstances of the case. Such explanation is afforded by the supposition, which is nothing more, and not to be relied on as a certain fact, that on this as on many similar occasions, there were foes as well as friends among his hearers, representing the great Pharisaical interest and ready to express their disagreement and contempt by looks if not by language. That this is no imaginary state of things, we learn from Luke's explicit statement on a subsequent occasion, that as he spake unto the people, "the Scribes and Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke

him to speak of many things" (Luke 11:53), and again, "the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him" (Luke 16:14). This parallel is the more exact, because among the things then spoken and derided was the very doctrine about serving God and Mammon which is laid down here in the preceding chapter (6:24). If they derided it at one time, why not at another? And if at this time, what can be more natural than the assumption, that our Lord, perceiving their contempt, both of his doctrine and disciples, addresses them directly in the first part of this chapter, though in terms admitting of a wider application. That the primary object of address was rather a censorious enemy than even a mistaken friend, is rendered still more probable, though not entirely certain, by the harsh term applied to him in v. 5, which we shall examine more particularly when we reach it. The first verse, however, as in 5:21, 27, 32, 33, 38, 43, 6:1, 7, is in the plural form, making it a general rule or admonition; while the personal application in the singular number follows in the next verse. The reappearance of this somewhat singular interchange of numbers, which has been already noted as a characteristic of the Sermon on the Mount, affords a further proof, if any were required, that the passage now before us forms part of a systematic whole, and of the same which we have been considering, and not of a fragmentary, miscellaneous compilation added to it. The first clause contains a prohibition or dissuasion and a motive for it, which is then more fully stated in the second verse. There can of course be no allusion either to official judgment and judicial functions, or to the mere formation of opinion, both which lie beyond the reason here suggested for not judging, and neither of which could be forbidden absolutely. The reference must, therefore, be to something intermediate between these, something neither unavoidable, like personal opinion, nor obligator, like official judgments, but dependent on the will and dispositions of the person judging. This applies exactly to voluntary and censorious judgments upon others, not required by personal or public duty. That ye be not judged, assigns the reason why they should not sit in judgment upon others. If you would not be judged, do not judge 'yourselves.' The only question of importance is, what judgment is referred to in the second clause, that of man, or that of God? If the former, this is a prudential maxim, warning us that we may look for treatment at the hands of others similar to that which they received from us. However true this may be, and important as a rule of worldly wisdom, and however it may seem to correspond to the positive command in v. 12, it is not the kind of motive commonly presented in the Sermon on the Mount, or elsewhere in our Lord's discourses. This appears to recommend another answer to the question, namely, that the judgment against which we are here warned is that of God himself; not merely as it is to be pronounced hereafter, but as it is conceived and executed now. The meaning then is, 'be not forward to condemn the character and acts of others; for a still severer standard will be faithfully applied to your own by a judge who cannot err.' We are not here taught that by shunning such censorious judgments of others, we can wholly avoid that of God in our own case, but simply that the latter will be rendered more severe by an uncharitable rigour towards our neighbours. (See above, on 6:14, 15.) This is more fully set forth in the second verse, where we learn that the same high standard, which all men recognize in judging of their neighbours, will be faithfully applied to their own conduct in the divine judgment. This presupposes a familiar fact in the experience of men, to wit, that however lenient they may be in judging their own acts and motives, they are always exacting in their estimate of others. Even he who denies all moral distinctions in the abstract or in reference to his own responsibility, will eagerly resent and punish any wrong or insult offered to himself. Judgment and measure are literal and metaphorical expressions for the same thing, to wit, the mode of estimating character and conduct.

3. Here, as frequently before, the exchange of the plural for the singular announces a more close and pointed application of the general rule to individual cases. The change is still more striking in the present instance if, as was hinted to be not improbable, this part of the discourse was immediately suggested by the presence and the looks, if not the words and actions, of censorious Pharisees, to one of whom, a real or ideal person, the discourse is now suddenly addressed. And, or but, if this be so, if thou art to be tried by the same rule and measured by the same standard, why art thou so censorious and exacting as to others, when thy own defects are not only equal but far greater? This idea is expressed, perhaps with some allusion to the figures of 6:22, 23, under the image of an eye disordered by the presence of a foreign body, such as a dry particle of wood, in one case a minute chip or mere splinter, compared with which the other may be hyperbolically called a beam. The word mote, used in all the English versions, is well suited to express the difference of size, but not the close correspondence as to substance or material, suggested by the usage of the Greek word, which although it properly means something dry, is specially applied by Herodotus and Aristophanes to dry sticks and twigs, such as birds use in the making their nests. Beholdest is in all the other English versions seest; but the true sense is that of looking at, of observing, taking notice of as a voluntary and officious act. The original construction is like that in 5:16, the mote, the (one) in the eye of thy brother, not merely of thy fellow-man, but of one sustaining a more intimate relation to thee, social or domestic. (See above on 5:22, 23, 24, 47.) The interrogation implies that there was no need of observing it at all, which shows again that the judgment here condemned is not official but officious. But, on the other hand, in reference to thy own case. Considerest, an emphatic compound verb in Greek, analogous to that in 6:28, although derived from an entirely different root and meaning primarily to understand thoroughly, and then, as a necessary means, to observe attentively. The antithesis between the verbs is not to be neglected. The censor had no occasion even to look at or to see the slight obstruction in his brother's eye, but every reason to observe and scrutinize the great one in his own. The hyperbole in beam is not to be explained away or softened down by any modification in the meaning of the Greek word, which is the same in Attic and Homeric usage. The case supposed is not a real but an ideal one, and the impossibility of this trait serves to strengthen the impression of a vast disparity. The language is proverbial, as in 19:24, 23:24, the hyperbole, instead of belonging to the artificial language of rhetoric, being really most frequent in the dialect of common life.

4. This verse presents another aspect of the case, introduced by the disjunctive (or). How wilt thou say? a more correct translation than the sayest thou of all the other English versions which mistake the future (ε ε ς) for a present form. The import of the question is, how canst thou have the face to say? How canst thou be so inconsistent and self-ignorant or self-indulgent as to say? The prohibition is not one derived from real life, but a translation into words of the supercilious and censorious spirit cherished by too many moralists. Let me pull (Tynd. suffer me to pluck, Cranmer, suffer me, I will pluck), is in Greek an imperative prefixed to a subjunctive, strictly meaning, suffer (that) I pull (cast) out. The first verb has the same sense as in 3:15, where it twice occurs. (For its other meaning, see above, on 4:11, 20, 22, 5:24, 40, 6:12, 14, 15,) Pull out, literally, cast out or expel, as in v. 22 below and often elsewhere. The essential idea is that of forcible removal. And behold, an expression of surprise, introducing something strange and unexpected. (See above, on 1:20, 23, 2:1, 9, 13, 19, 3:16, 17, 4:11.) As if he had said, 'who could have believed that this man, so officious in discovering a small speck in his neighbour's eye, has a greater but an unobserved obstruction in his own?'

5. Having pointed out by means of the foregoing questions the absurdity of such officious meddling, he proceeds in this verse to prescribe a better course, with an additional reason for it, i. e. over and above the one involved in the inconsistency and folly of the contrary proceeding. (Thou) hypocrite, explained above on 6:2, 5, 16, a word found in the three first Gospels, once in Mark, four times in Luke, and fifteen times in Matthew. In all these places, with the possible exception of Luke 12:56, it is applied to the unbelieving Jews, the enemies of Christ, and is not likely therefore to be here used of his followers and friends. This strengthens the assumption that the passage now before us has immediate reference to Pharisees then present, and perhaps cherishing the very spirit here translated into words and held up to contempt. At the same time, the language is so chosen as to make the lesson one of wider application, and even more remotely to charge with hypocrisy, not only the original offender, but all who are guilty of the same self-righteous and censorious inconsistency. Hypocrite has here its proper sense of one who acts a part, or personates a character not really his own, to wit, that of a rigid moralist and just judge, who impartially condemns sin where he finds it; while in fact he indulges in himself a greater evil of the same kind that he mercilessly spies out and rebukes in others. The prevalence of this hypocritical morality among the Jews, and the obstruction which it offered to the progress of the Gospel, may be learned from the Epistle to the Romans, where the second chapter, specially addressed to Jews (see v. 17), is an expansion of the very thought suggested in the verse before us. Instead of formally exposing the hypocrisy and inconsistency of such a practice, our Lord attains the same end more impressively by telling the censorious hypocrite in what way the reproach might be avoided, and his judgments at the same time rendered more correct. First, before condemning others, sit in judgment on thyself. This idea is conveyed by a continued use of the same figures introduced in the preceding verse. And then, when thou hast thus begun at home and brought thy own sins to as strict a standard as the one applied to others. See clearly, literally, see through, i. e. through all obstructions and concealments. This is mentioned as a further incidental benefit to be derived from an impartial self-examination and self-judgment, but not as the main reason why it should be undertaken. It is not merely, nor even chiefly on account of the obscuring influence of sin upon the moral judgment, that we are required to condemn it in ourselves before attempting to discover it in others; but because it concerns us more, and is essential to our own salvation. At the same time it is none the less true that the process of self-scrutiny and self-arraignment does prepare the mind for similar functions in the case of others, when we are legitimately called to them. But no amount of such improvement in capacity to judge aright, will justify an uncalled and censorious interference with the character of others, which is the error here immediately in question.

6. If the view just taken of our Lord's immediate purpose in the five preceding verses be correct, the natural connection with the sixth verse seems to be, that he here turns from the 'hypocrite,' addressed in vs. 3–5, to his own disciples, and exhorts them not to expose themselves, and that wherewith they were intrusted, to the ignorant or wicked scorn of unbelievers, without obvious necessity or urgent duty. With a boldness and severity, which only his omniscience and supreme authority could justify, and which is, therefore, no example for his followers, except to so far as they repeat or expound his own words, he describes the impure and ferocious enemies of truth and of his kingdom by the hateful epithets of dog and swine, the two species of domesticated animals for which the Orientals had the greatest abhorrence. The Oriental dog is more gregarious and savage than the western, less attached to man, and, being chiefly fed on garbage, more disgusting in its habits and appearance. Hence the dog is chiefly spoken of in Scripture as an object or expression of contempt. To swine, besides their natural and universal habits, there attached a religious odium as an unclean animal, excluded not only from the altar but the table. The two may either be promiscuously blended as a joint type of all that is abhorrent in human character; or so far separated that the dog shall represent the class of violent and savage foes, the swine those peculiarly impure and degraded. In favour of the former explanation is the fact, that both these species were regarded by the Hebrews as unclean, and that both are almost equally disgusting in the east, and then, that the very structure of the sentence makes it difficult to separate them altogether. The dogs and swine differ as to definiteness only in the version; the article standing before both in Greek. That which is holy, Tyndale's periphrastic version of the holy, or the holy (thing), here meaning no doubt any thing made sacred by appropriation to God's service, such as sacrificial food, which is here suggested by the context (see above, on 4:6, 5:25), as well as by the use of the word give, while in the other clause, where pearls not food are mentioned, the expression is to cast before. There is no need of supposing an allusion to the similarity between pearls and any kind of food for swine, and an intention to deceive them. The antithesis is clearly between things the most highly valued among men, and animals incapable of using or enjoying them. The last clause gives the reason of this prohibition, i. e. a reason in addition to the one arising

from the contrariety of nature. Lest is in Greek a compound particle, and strictly means, lest ever (or at any time); but later usage gradually weakened the reference to time and left that of contingency the prominent idea. Under their feet, literally, in their feet, an idiomatic phrase, which may mean in the use of them (see above, on 3:11, 5:13), which is substantially equivalent to with them, or by means of them. Or in may be intended to suggest more strongly the incongruous confusion of the costly pearls amidst the food and feet of the filthy swine. Turning away from what they cannot taste or value, or perhaps turning on you, as the object of attack. Rend, a Greek verb, which strictly means to break, but is applied by Æschylus to the tearing of a veil or robe, and by Pindar to the wounding of the human body. Some suppose this last clause to refer specifically to the dogs, a construction which has even been expressed in some of the old English versions (Tyndale and Cranmer, and the other turn again). But most interpreters either restrict it to the swine, as often savage and always voracious, or suppose both species to be meant, the distinction having been lost sight of. The essential ideas are those of blind contempt for what is really most sacred and most precious, and ferocious enmity towards those from whom it is received or offered. The lesson taught is, that even saving truth must be withheld from those who would certainly reject it with contempt and savage hatred. As cases of this sort are rare, and not to be assumed without necessity, the passage furnishes no pretext for an indolent or cowardly suppression of the truth in order to avoid a personal danger. The primary reason is the trampling of the pearls under feet; the risk of laceration is but secondary. Where there is no danger of the gospel being treated with a blasphemous contempt, the mere exposure of its preachers or professors to the violence of such despisers does not seem to warrant a withholding of the message.

7. This is one of the abrupt transitions here assumed by those who relinquish or repudiate the attempt to trace an unbroken train of thought or thread of the discourse. Admitting, as before, the comparative obscurity of the connection, and attempting only a conjectural solution of the problem, we may at least assist the memory, if not the understanding, by continuing the previous assumption or suggestion, as to the possible occasion and immediate object of address in the preceding verses. If, as we have there supposed without affirming it, that passage has respect to the censorious contempt of Pharisees then present, which became apparent at this stage of the discourse, there is nothing to forbid, though nothing to require, the further supposition, that as soon as this interruption, so to speak, had been disposed of, he resumes the thread which had been dropped or broken at the close of the sixth chapter, and completes what he had there left unfinished, in relation to the heathenish and Christian method of providing for the future. The absolute and peremptory prohibition of extreme solicitude and anxious care might seem to the disciples, as it has appeared to some interpreters, to cut off all endeavours to secure the divine bounty and protection, upon which they were required so implicitly to trust. But as Augustin said, in answer to this exegetical misgiving, that trust and prayer are not at variance but coincident, the one being only the expression of the other; so our Lord himself, according to the view now taken hypothetically, may be understood as guarding in this verse against the same misconception. Having pointedly forbidden unbelieving anxieties in general (6:31), and more particularly their accumulation by far-reaching apprehensions and forebodings (6:34), he may now, at least without unnatural perversion of his plan or language, be supposed to add that as the remedy for such forbidden cares is faith in God's paternal love, so the source as well as the expression of that faith is found in prayer. 'Instead of carking cares about the future, as if all depended upon chance or fate, ask, him who can alone provide for you, and it shall be given you.' This is of course to be restricted and explained by the consideration that all true prayer, being prompted by divine grace, is in strict accordance with the divine will. The same thing is then expressed in other forms, one literal, the other metaphorical. Seek, not as the heathen seek (6:32). but as he had already taught his followers to seek (6:33), giving his cause the preference, but even in promoting it securing their own interests, for time as well as for eternity. The last clause reiterates this thought a third time under the image of a door, behind which or within which lie the mercies that we need, and at which we are, therefore, called to knock, as the ancient and customary mode of gaining entrance.

8. Lest the strong but general assurance of the preceding verse should be neglected as a customary or unmeaning form of speech, it is repeated here in terms still stronger and more universal, not as a promise to be verified in future, but as a fact of actual experience. The change from the future to the present, therefore, is significant, and not to be neglected in the exposition. 'I say, not only that you shall receive hereafter what you ask, but that, in point of fact, whoever does ask, does receive accordingly.' That is to say, believing prayer is never vain or unsuccessful, and the knowledge of this truth is among the most efficient antidotes to sceptical misgivings and excessive care. The force of this remarkable assurance is enhanced in this, connection by its formal correspondence to the threefold promise in the verse preceding, which is very slightly, if at all impaired by the reappearance of the future in the last clause (shall be opened), which may be intended to remind us that the general fact here stated is a pledge that it shall continue to be so, and, therefore, to all intents and purposes, a promise.* The future of the common text, like that in v. 8, may be either construed with a noun understood (door, gate), or impersonally, as in our version.

9, 10. Lest even the preceding declaration should not satisfy them that it is so, he now shows them that it must be so; a necessity arising from the fatherly benevolence of God, and proved by the effect of analogous affections in the case of sinful, fallen man. The argument, like that in 6:26–30, is from less to greater. Or, if this is not sufficient to convince you, view the matter in another light. The favourite form of interrogation is again resumed, implying strong negation. Who is there? is equivalent to 'there is no one.' Of you, from among you, one of those now present. What man, i. e. what mere man, with the ordinary instincts of humanity about him. The original order of the words is, Who is there among you, a man (or though a mere man)? The grammatical authorities suppose two

questions, or two forms of question, to be here confounded. But however intricate the syntax, there is perfect clearness in the sense. Bread, probably the round cake now used in the east, and bearing some resemblance to a smooth, flat stone. The same resemblance may be traced between some kinds of serpent and some kinds of fish. The form of the interrogation in both cases, is that employed in Greek when a negative answer is expected, and therefore nearly equivalent to saying, he will not, will he?

11. This is the formal argument or inference from the facts indirectly stated in the two preceding verses. This connection is indicated by the therefore. Ye, being evil, i. e. ye mere men, and fallen, sinful men. Know (how) is not simply equivalent to can, as rendered in the older English versions, but suggests the distinct idea that they understood the matter from their own experience. Good gifts, in reference to this life, and in opposition to the evil gifts just mentioned. How much more, the difference is not defined, being indeed infinite. Your Father, the (one) in heaven, an essential description here, because the argument itself is one from the parental love of men to that of God. Shall give, or certainly will give, must give, from his very nature, and the relation which he bears to all believers, as his spiritual offspring. Good (things), a mere abbreviation of the phrase good gifts, in the preceding clause. The absolute use of the adjective without the substantive, is much more frequent in the Greek than in the English idiom. To them that ask him, literally, to those asking him, a phrase which seems not only to suggest the indispensable condition of God's favours, but to bring back this part of the discourse to the point from which it started (in v. 7), the necessity of prayer as a preventive of unbelieving and excessive care.

12. The connection is more difficult to trace at this point than at any other in the whole discourse; and yet the supposition of an abrupt transition seems precluded by the logical connective (therefore). As we have neither right nor reason to assume that this is used without a purpose, and as sound philology condemns all tampering with its meaning, we are under the necessity of looking for some natural if not very obvious association with the previous context. The prima facie meaning of the language is, that because God is more disposed to give what is good than earthly parents to their children, therefore, Christ's disciples ought to do to others what they would that others should do to them. It must be admitted that although the premises and the conclusion are both clear, the logical connection is obscure. One of the latest commentators has attempted to establish a connection by departing from the old and universal understanding of the verse before us, which refers even so to the preceding clause, and makes it mean, as they do, or as you wish that they should do, to you. The writer here referred to, on the contrary, refers it to the verse preceding, and supposes it to mean, as God does, i. e. freely and abundantly. 'Therefore, because God thus gives, do ye in like manner give to others whatsoever ye desire that they should do to you.' This ingenious construction has the great advantage of establishing a logical connection and removing all appearance of abruptness. The objections to it are, that it puts a meaning on the sentence which it probably has never yet suggested to an ordinary reader; and that it makes the first clause of the verse before us quite superfluous, if not irrelevant. If the meaning of the whole verse is, that men should do to others as God does to them, it is only obscured and interrupted by a reference to what others do or ought to do to them, which introduces an entirely different standard of comparison. 'Whatever you desire men to do to you, do ye to them, as God does,' is a very confused sentence both in thought and language. And yet there seems to be no other method of connecting this verse logically with the one before it. It is better, therefore, to renounce the thought of so immediate a nexus, and to seek for a remoter one. If this is done, by for the simplest and most natural hypothesis is that which makes this a deduction from the whole preceding context, the beginning of a general conclusion to the whole discourse. This is not only agreeable to usage in all long discourses, but particularly recommended here by the recurrence in the last clause to the language of 5:17, the text or theme on which he has been preaching. Having there disclaimed all purpose to invalidate the law or the prophets, and shown that on the contrary he came to honour and fulfill them, he now begins to wind up his whole argument by saying what the law and prophets are, i. e. how they may be best fulfilled in practice. Not by rigorous obedience to the letter, while the spirit is denied or slighted; not by doing as little for others and exacting as much from them as we can; but by doing to them as we desire that they should do to us; in other words, by loving our neighbour as ourself, which Christ has elsewhere represented as the second great commandment of the law (see below, on 22:39), and Paul as the sum and substance of the second table (Rom. 13:9). This explanation, while it yields the best sense and in perfect harmony with other Scriptures, requires no forced constructions or gratuitous assumptions, but a simple pause between the verses, and the commencement, in the one before us, of our Saviour's peroration or conclusion of his whole discourse. As if he had said: 'This, then, is the sum of what I have been saying. I have shown you that I came not to destroy the law or lower its demands, but to enforce them in their true and full sense. I have taught you that your alms and prayer and fasting, and the whole course of your lives, must have a reference to God and his exclusive service, that your anxious cares must be devolved on him, that you have only to ask, as children ask a father, with still greater certainty of being heard, and now I tell you, in review of all this, that the only way to keep the law and prophets is by doing to others as you wish that they should do to you.' This sentence has too commonly been insulated as an independent maxim, and even as peculiar to the Christian system; whereas the sentiment occurs in heathen writers of an earlier date,* and derives its value here from its connection with our Lord's interpretation of the law and his directions how to keep it.

13. What precedes was to many a 'hard saying' (compare John 6:60); or rather Christ's whole doctrine, as to the spiritual import and perpetual obligation of the law, was unwelcome and discouraging, even to the mass of those who were disposed to follow him. A merely human teacher, even of the truth, might have been tempted to extenuate the difficulty by concealment or by softening the harshness of the requisition. But our Lord, with merciful severity, discloses the whole truth, and far from representing this painful self-denial as an accidental or a temporary thing, or as dispensable in certain cases, holds it up, in the conclusion of this great discourse

as something absolutely necessary to discipleship in his school and to citizenship in his kingdom. What was afterwards announced by Paul and Barnabas to their Gentile converts as a formal proposition, that ‘we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God’ (Acts 14:22), is here declared by Christ himself to his Jewish disciples, in the form of an earnest exhortation and a positive command. ‘Instead of drawing back because the entrance is so narrow and the way so hard, strive the rather upon that account to enter in.’ Enter, go or come in, i. e. into my kingdom, as the new theocracy, begun on earth to be completed in heaven. At (literally, through) the strait (or narrow, not to be confounded with straight, which is the opposite of crooked) gate, used in Greek as in English for the entrance to a town or large enclosure, as distinguished from the door (θύρα) of a house or room. (See above, on 6:6, and below, on 16:18, 25:10, 27:60.) The image here presented, therefore, is not that of a palace to be entered at once, but of a city, or perhaps a country, passes into which the Greeks called gates, with a path or road beyond it. Homer indeed uses way for the way into, entrance, which would make the two things here identical. But it seems more natural and makes the imagery richer and more varied, to distinguish the gate, or original entrance, from the way, or path to be afterwards pursued, before arriving at the final destination. Some reverse this order, which is that of the text itself both in this verse and the next, and understand the way to be that leading to the gate, which then denote respectively the way or journey of the present life, conducting to the gate of death or of heaven. But the usual construction is more natural, which makes the gate the entrance to the way of life. The narrow gate, a definite expression which implies that there is also a wide one. This is then explicitly affirmed. Wide (is) the gate, or there is a wide gate, so that you must choose between them. Broad, in Greek a compound, meaning ample as to space or room (Vulg. spatiosa), and showing that the way is something more extensive than the gate, to which this epithet could scarcely be applied. This spacious way, with its easy entrance, would be naturally more attractive; but the reason for not taking it is given in the rest of the description, the (one) leading to destruction. The figure of two ways, to represent the life and destination of mankind, is introduced, with great force and beauty, at the close of the first Psalm. Leading, in Greek more expressive, leading off or away, suggesting the idea of great distance, and of scenes altogether different from the present. That the sense is not that of misleading, or leading out of the right path, appears from its application in the next verse to the way of life. Destruction, loss, perdition, an indefinite expression, applicable both to temporal and eternal ruin, and intentionally used here so as to suggest both, as included in the issue of this wide and crowded pathway.* A more exact translation of the last clause is, and many (are) those entering (or going in) through it. It is not to be avoided, therefore, either because difficult of access or unfrequented, but because, as just before said, leading to destruction. These last words are not to be connected with the gate alone, because they speak of going in; for though the gate was the entrance to the way, the way itself was the entrance to destruction.

14. Some of the oldest manuscripts and versions here read τί, instead of τι, which is then supposed to be an exclamation (how strait the gate! So the Vulgate and Peshito). But as this usage of the Greek word is denied by the philologists, another explanation makes the sentence interrogative, why (is) the gate narrow, &c.? an expression either of surprise or sorrow. But the latest critical editions have restored the common text (because), which makes this verse co-ordinate with the second clause of v. 13, ‘because there is a broad way, and because there is a narrow way,’ a twofold reason for the exhortation to press into the latter. Narrow in Greek is not a simple synonyme of strait, but more expressive, being a passive participle strictly meaning squeezed, compressed, contracted, and suggesting the idea of a difficult as well as inconvenient entrance. To a Greek reader it would also seem significant, that this verb is the root of the noun translated tribulation. (See below, on 13:21, and again compare Acts 14:22.) The (other) way (to wit) the (one) leading off (or away, i. e. from this world) into life, literally, the life, i. e. life by way of eminence, eternal life, the opposite of destruction. This exact correspondence in the terms of the description makes it more remarkable and certainly significant, that in the last clause there is a departure from this uniformity. Instead of saying, in exact antithesis to v. 13, few (are) those entering (or going in) through it, the expression here is, few (are) those finding it. As we have no right to consider this an accidental or unmeaning variation, so, on the other hand it greatly strengthens both the thought and the expression, by suggesting the additional idea, that not only few gain entrance to this narrow path and way, but few so much as find it. While the broad way of destruction is conspicuous and easy of access, the narrow way of life, besides being difficult of entrance when discovered, is not even discovered by the greater number. This agrees exactly with the moral or spiritual truth intended to be set forth by these figures. The course of life which ends in ruin, being simply the indulgence of man’s natural desires, needs neither search to find it nor exertion to pursue it, but is perfectly familiar and accessible to all alike. The course of life which leads to blessedness hereafter, being contradictory to human wisdom and to human inclinations, calls for a twofold painful effort, of the understanding to determine what it is, and of the will to choose it when it is discovered.

15. The danger of mistake as well as difficulty, hinted in the last words of the verse preceding, would suggest, by obvious association, the necessity of guidance, with its natural correlative, the risk of being misled to destruction. This fearful peril would be greatest where the guides possessed authority, and enjoyed the confidence of those whom they conducted. This was really the case with the religious leaders of the Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees, to whom there seems to be immediate reference, although, instead of being named, they are described in terms derived from the Old Testament, where false religious teachers, claiming a divine authority, are called false prophets. As prediction of the future is not even the original and primary functions of a prophet, but authoritative teaching in the name of God, the phrase is perfectly appropriate to those here characterized by it. At the same time it admits of a wider application to false teachers of a later date, confirmed by the constant use of prophet in relation to the Christian

church.* Beware, the verb employed above in 6:1, and there explained. Of, away from, so as to avoid connection or communication with them. Which come, not such of them as come, as if this were only true of some false prophets, but who as such (or because they are such) come, &c. This is the true force of the pronoun here used (ο τινες), which is carefully distinguished in Greek usage from the ordinary relative (ο). The highly figurative terms which follow are derived from the habits of pastoral life, with which many of the hearers were familiar from experience or observation. As the wolf is the natural enemy of sheep, it is elsewhere used as a figure for the cruel enemies of Christ's flock (see below, on 10:16, and compare John 10:12. Acts 20:29). But the stronger and more complete figure of a wolf disguised as a sheep, conveys the idea of deceit and treachery combined with cruelty and savage fierceness. In sheep's clothing, or garments of sheep, does not mean in literal sheepskins, in allusion to the dress of the old prophets; first, because this custom is assumed without proof; then, because this explanation would either destroy the correspondence of the clauses, or require us to understand the whole description literally, which would be absurd. The true sense is, that these false prophets come to (or approach) the people, claiming to be like themselves in point of harmlessness, simplicity, and intimate connection with the church or chosen people, often represented as the flock of God;† while in reality, within, inside (Vulg. intrinsecus), as distinguished from the outside appearance or profession, they are wolves, destructive enemies, and ravening (i. e. eagerly seizing and devouring) wolves. Within, or more exactly, from within, which may either be taken as equivalent to inside, an interpretation justified by classic usage, or explained more strictly as suggesting the idea of movement or action from within (ab intra). 'In appearance they are sheep, but by the actions which proceed from within, or by their inward character, as wrought out in their conduct, they are seen to be rapacious wolves.' This severe accusation was repeated and sustained at length near the close of our Lord's ministry. (See below, on 23:13–29.)

16. That the terms of the preceding verse were highly metaphorical, must have been self-evident to every hearer; but if any doubt remained, it would be removed by the total change of figure in the verse before us, where the savage beasts are suddenly converted into worthless plants, the ravening wolves into thorns and thistles. Fruits, taken by itself, might be applied to offspring (as in Acts 2:30); but the vegetable meaning of the figure is determined by the other clause, where thorns and thistles, grapes and figs, are particularly mentioned. The severe denunciation of their spiritual guides as unworthy of their confidence required some criterion of character, some test by which to justify their disobedience. This is here afforded in a figurative form. Know, not the simple Greek verb, but a compound, meaning sometimes to recognize, to know again (as in 14:35 below, Mark 6:33. Luke 7:37. Acts 3:10, 4:13, 12:14, 28:1), sometimes to discover or detect (as in Mark 2:8, 5:30. Luke 1:22. Acts 19:34), which seems to be the meaning here. By, literally, from, in reference to the premises, from which the conclusion is to be deduced. The form of interrogation, in the last clause, like the one in vs. 9, 10. presupposes or anticipates a negative answer, they do not gather, do they? It is, therefore, equivalent to a strong denial, rendered more emphatic by appealing to the hearer's own experience in proof of it. Men is applied, as in 5:15, not with any distinctive meaning as opposed to women or to other beings, but as simply representing the indefinite subject of the verb (they gather), which is used in various languages to signify the act of reaping or plucking fruit, with or without reference to that of storing it away. (See below, on 13:28, 48, and compare the cognate verb in 3:12, 6:26, 13:30.) Thorns and thistles are in Greek generic and specific terms, the former representing the whole class of armed or prickly plants, the latter a particular variety so called from being three-pronged. The distinction is of no importance here, where the two are put together as familiar instances of fruitless and forbidding plants, while grapes and figs are named as the best known and most highly valued fruits of Palestine. The fact thus interrogatively and figuratively stated, is that men know better than to look for valuable fruit on plants which cannot from their nature yield it.

17. Even so, or so, too, in like manner, introduces an extension of the previous statement, as to different species, so as to embrace individuals of one and the same species. A plant, in order to bear fruit, must not only belong to a fruit-bearing species, but itself be fruitful. Good is here used to translate two Greek adjectives, which differ somewhat in their primary import, but in general usage are almost synonymous. The former means originally good in its kind, adapted to its purpose; the other, beautiful, or pleasing to the sight; but both are constantly employed where we say 'good,' both in a physical and moral sense. In this case, we may either treat them as synonymous, or understand the first as meaning good for bearing, and the other fine, attractive to the senses. Bringeth forth, literally, makes, produces, in which sense and application the Greek verb is used by Aristotle and Theophrastus. The present tense denotes a general or universal truth, as if he had said, 'always bears good fruits.' The plural form of the noun is needlessly relinquished in the version, here and in the next verse, though retained in vs. 16, 20. That no particular significance attaches to the plural form, appears from the occurrence of the singular in v. 19, as well as from the use of the plural in speaking of a single tree. In the last clause, which is simply the converse of the first, there is also a difference in the epithets, but here retained in the translation. Corrupt, literally, rotten or decayed, which can hardly be intended in its strict sense, as a rotten or decayed tree bears no fruit at all, but rather in the somewhat wider sense of spoiled or vitiated, bad in quality, the simple opposite of good in the preceding clause. Evil, the adjective applied to sinful men in v. 11 above, and in 6:23 to a disordered eye, has here too, from the nature of the case, the sense of physical defect or worthlessness. The general fact here asserted is that plants, as well as animals, produce their like, so that the quality of the tree may be determined by the fruit, and vice versa.

18. The fact asserted in the previous verse not only is so, but it must be so. The bad tree not only does not but cannot produce good fruit, or the good tree bad fruit. This may seem at variance with the fact that even good trees are liable to fail, or to bear fruit of an

inferior value. But the reference is not to failures or exceptional cases, but to the legitimate and normal operation of the cause. The natural and proper product of a good or bad tree cannot differ from its source in quality. This is strictly true, and all that is intended. The four epithets occurring in v. 17 are here repeated, not at random, but with great precision, in accordance with their previous application, although not in the same order, which implies that they were meant to be distinctly understood, according to the proper sense of each.

19. The appeal to observation and experience is here carried a step further, so as to include not only the habitual estimate of trees according to their fruits, but the practical issue of that estimate, the treatment of the tree according to its fruits. Here again the present form of the verb denotes what is usual among men in such cases. Every tree not making (or producing good) fruit, i. e. never doing so, since men do not destroy trees for a single failure. Hewn down, literally out, implying absolute excision and removal from its place. The same verb is translated in the same way in 3:10, but in 5:30 where it is applied to members of the body, cut off. The last words indicate the use, to which the tree thus felled was commonly applied, to wit, as fuel. This specification of a custom so familiar makes the sentence more impressive, without excluding other purposes for which a barren fruit-tree might be cut down. ‘How many a tree, which failed to answer its original purpose, have we seen hewn down and converted into fuel?’ The specific reference to this use is intended to suggest the destiny of such false teachers.

20. Wherefore, not to be confounded with the similar word therefore, or at least not here used to represent the same Greek particle, but one, which, although an illative or logical connective, seems to point out a remoter antecedent, or to indicate an inference, but not from what immediately precedes. So here, the reference to human practice having been extended further than the point of comparison originally mentioned, namely, that men usually estimate trees by their fruit, our Lord now reverts to that point, for the purpose of applying the comparison to the case in hand. So then (as I was saying but a little while ago) by their fruits, i. e. by the fruits of these false prophets ye shall know (recognise, discover, or detect) them. It has sometimes been disputed whether fruits here means false doctrine or erroneous practice founded on it. It is clear, from the whole drift of the comparison that fruits, in the application, means the moral effect produced by the false teachers here denounced, both on the doctrinal belief and on the lives of their disciples: ‘That they are false prophets and rapacious wolves, you may easily convince yourselves, by looking at the influence exerted by them on your own character and that of others.’ The allusion commonly assumed to the personal character and conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees themselves, can only be admitted, if at all, as included in the general description of their influence, but not as the criterion itself, by which they must be judged; for this would make their character the test or touchstone of itself, and be equivalent to saying, ‘you may know that they are wicked by their being wicked,’ which is reasoning in a circle; whereas no such objection can be made to the prescription, ‘you may know that they are wicked by their making you and others so.’

21. The foregoing premonition might have seemed to be directed only against open enemies. But here our Lord proceeds to warn his hearers, that even some of his professed disciples would be finally rejected. This was the more important because many of the very class which he had been describing had assumed the name and language of his followers, either under shallow and short-lived impressions, or with the purpose of deliberate deception. Even in the college of Apostles this class had its representative, well known and tolerated by the Master, as a means of greater good than could then be effected by an earlier exposure and expulsion. (See John 6:64, 70.) So here he plainly intimates the presence of hypocrites and false professors in the ranks of his nominal disciples. (See below, on 13:24.) This was a most important and appropriate winding up of his organic or inaugural discourse, now drawing to a solemn and impressive close. Not every one, in classic Greek, might seem to be equivalent to no one, thus excluding all who profess to acknowledge Christ as Lord from admission to his kingdom. But this absurd sense is avoided by a due regard to the Hebrew idiom which, like our own, uses the phrase not every one to intimate that some but not all who made such a profession would be saved. Saying unto me, so addressing or accosting me. Lord, i. e. master, sovereign, the repetition making the acknowledgment more earnest and emphatic, or perhaps denoting frequent and habitual action, ‘not all who are continually calling me their Lord and Master.’ It is not improbable that this practice had already become common among those disciples whom our Lord knew to be hypocrites or false professors. That it was not of itself to be a ground of condemnation, but is here denounced only as insufficient without action answering to the profession, is expressly taught in the remainder of the verse. But the (one) doing, practising, the will of (what is willed and required by) my father, the (one) in heaven, literally heavens (see above, on 5:3). The same limitation or specification of the vague term father, so as to exclude all human paternity, had been used before to describe the spiritual sonship of believers (see above, on 5:16, 45, 48, 6:1, 9, 7:11), and is now applied, in a still more strict and proper sense, to that of Christ himself, implying oneness of nature and coincidence of will, so that his kingdom was the kingdom of the Father, and obedience to its law obedience to the Son himself. The (one) doing, not in contrast to the (one) saying, for the two things are entirely compatible, but the one both raying and doing, or ‘of those who call me Lord, the one who at the same time does my Father’s will.’

22. The exclusion just predicted would bring with it the severest disappointment to many now professing to be Christ’s disciples. There is no need of supposing that the very dialogue here given will be ever verbally repeated in the case of any one, much less of every one, belonging to the class in question. It is equally admissible, and more in keeping with our Lord’s accustomed mode of speaking on such subjects, to regard this as a lively embodiment in words of what will certainly take place in fact. (See below, on 25:31–46.) Their surprise and disappointment will be such as might be naturally clothed in these words. In that day, an indefinite

expression, purposely employed to make a vague but powerful impression on the hearers, while to us it conveys a more specific sense, determined and made clear by later revelations. Those immediately addressed might not, as we do, instantly associate the words with the idea of a final judgment or a great day of account, though this is really their import as interpreted to us, whereas to them they might suggest little more than if it had been said, 'the day is coming when many will be ready to exclaim.' The tone is that of serious and alarmed expostulation, rendered bold by the imminent danger of exclusion. The reiteration (Lord, Lord) is not only a renewal, as it were, of the original profession, but a natural evidence of present earnestness and importunity. Have we not, or retaining the original construction, which implies an interval, greater or less, between the acts described and this appeal to them, did we not, when thou wast upon earth, and we among thy followers. In thy name, may be strictly understood as meaning called and known by thy name, thy professed disciples; or agreeably to constant usage as denoting an appeal to Christ, an invocation of his name, as the authority by which they acted (see below, on 10:41, 18:5, 20, 21:9, 23, 39, 24:5); or both these senses, which are perfectly compatible, may be combined; as bearing thy name and invoking it, i. e. as nominal disciples and official messengers. Prophesy, not necessarily predict, though that might be included (as in Acts 11:28, 21:10), but authoritatively teach in the Church and under a commission from our Lord himself, authenticated by the gift of miracles. Of these the most remarkable is stated by itself, and then a general expression follows. See above, on 4:24, where the participle (demonized) is a derivative of the word here rendered devils, although not correctly, as the Scriptures recognize but one Devil, so called as the slanderer and false accuser of mankind (see above, on 4:1), while the other fallen angels are collectively described as demons. This word, in its primary form (δαίμων), means a deity (in Latin, numen), or rather any superhuman being, whether god, or gods, or demigods, &c., in which sense Socrates applied it to the genius, or good angel, by whom he believed himself to be attended. From this noun comes a corresponding adjective (δαιμόνιος), divine or superhuman, the neuter form of which, and not a diminutive as some have thought, is used absolutely, here and elsewhere, to denote the fallen spirits who were suffered to possess, or occupy and influence, the bodies and the souls of men, and whose expulsion was the strongest proof of Christ's superiority and triumph, as the seed of the woman, over the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15), or the devil and his angels. (See below, on 25:41.) That this power was not an incommunicable one, but actually imparted by our Lord to his disciples, is expressly stated in 10:8 below. Wonderful works, an inexact and needless paraphrase of one word, literally meaning powers (or as Wiclif, following the Vulgate, here translates it, virtues), but applied in usage to miraculous performances, as fruits and proofs of superhuman power, and therefore well translated in the other English versions, miracles. This is a generic or collective term, added to the specific one before it, so as to make dispossession prominent among the other wonders wrought, or claimed to have been wrought, by them. There is no need of supposing this to be itself a false profession, since we have reason to believe that miracles, as well as prophecy, were sometimes placed at the disposal of ungodly men.

23. As before suggested, this may be regarded either as the actual reply in some one case, or every case, to such expostulations; or, with more probability, as a translation into words of what will be impressed upon the minds of such unhappy hypocrites, in answer to their own unfounded claims. And, continues the description without interruption, so that and then is nearly equivalent to forthwith or immediately, though then, taken by itself, is the correlative of that day in v. 22, and to the same extent indefinite to those who originally heard it. Confess, a verb originally meaning to speak together, or the same thing with another, i. e. to assent, agree, to what is spoken. In this connection, it may either have the vaguer sense, in which it is occasionally used, of solemnly declaring, or be taken as a sort of solemn irony, 'I will assent to what you say, but only by denying it.' Or the verb may mean to profess, and there may be a strong antithesis between his profession and their own. As they had professed him, so he would profess them, but only by declaring that he never knew them. (See below, on 10:33.) Never, not even when I seemed to recognize your claims by suffering your presence. Knew, i. e. knew you to be mine, which is equivalent to saying, that he always knew them to be none of his. Depart, a Greek verb which denotes far more than locomotion, namely, separation and desertion, in which sense it is the root of the noun anchorite, meaning one who retires, or retreats, or is secluded from the world. (See above, on 2:12, 4:12, and below, on 27:5.) It here means, separate yourselves from my disciples, take your true place as my enemies. The ground of this severe denunciation is then added, as a designation or description of the persons so denounced. Ye that work, literally, the (ones) working, or those working, not simply doing once for all, or even habitually practising, but working at it as your daily business, or working it out as the product of your labour. (See below, on 21:28, 25:16.) Iniquity, or more exactly, lawlessness, the opposite of righteousness, conformity to law or to the will of God. (See above, on 3:15, 5:6, 10, 20, 6:33, and below, on 21:32.)

24. There was still a danger to which many were exposed who could not be accused of hypocrisy or false profession in the strict sense of the terms. Even after hearing all that Christ had said in correction of prevailing misconceptions and of practical abuses, some might after all content themselves with having heard it, and make no attempt to act upon it. Such he warns, in the ensuing verses (24–27), that mere knowledge of the truth and human duty without corresponding practice, only aggravates the doom of those who have it. This idea is beautifully carried out in parabolic form, by supposing two familiar cases, perhaps well known to the hearers. There is certainly no reason for regarding them as fictions. Therefore draws a conclusion not from what immediately precedes, but from the whole discourse; therefore, since all these things are so. Does them, acts upon them, acts them out, in his habitual conduct. I will liken, i. e. I will now compare, by way of illustration. Wise, a Greek word strictly meaning sane, not insane, but applied also to other less extreme intellectual distinctions, as in this case to discretion, practical prudence. Who, the compound

relative explained above (on v. 15), and which would readily suggest to a Greek reader the idea, who (as such), i. e. as being wise, because he was wise. Built, in Greek the aorist, referring to a definite past, and not the present, setting forth a general truth. This makes it the more probable that we have here a reference to real incidents, perhaps fresh in the memory of some who heard him. A rock, literally, the rock, not a rocky fragment, but a mass or bed of rock, as we sometimes speak of excavation in the living rock.

25. This verse describes the value of so solid a foundation, even in the midst of peril. Rain, in Greek a word denoting a shower or a storm of rain. Floods, the common word in Greek for rivers, here put for inundations, freshets, which is a frequent sense of the English plural. Came, as something extraordinary, not continually present. Beat upon, a good sense and good English, but not the exact original expression, which exhibits two cognate verbs, a simple and a compound. They fell upon it, but it fell not. Was founded upon a rock, or more exactly, had been founded upon the rock, which may here mean in addition the rock previously mentioned.

26. This is simply the converse of the case first stated, or its counterpart in real life. The same form of expression is retained, except in those parts where the contrast or antithesis must be brought out. Here, as in v. 4, he does not simply say my words, but these my words, i. e. those uttered upon this occasion, which confirms our previous conclusion as to the unity of the discourse and its delivery at one time (see above, on 5:1). Instead of I will liken we have here the passive, shall be likened, which may either be considered a synonymous expression, or express the additional idea that the likeness shall not be confined to this description, but extend to the reality, or be verified in actual experience. Foolish, a negative rather than a positive description, the Greek word, when applied to material objects, meaning tasteless or insipid (see above, on 5:13), when to intellectual, senseless or irrational (see above, on 5:22). The reference is here to want of common prudence or discretion in providing for one's own security. The sand, exactly corresponding to the rock in v. 24, each denoting not a definite or separate portion, but the substance or material itself. The contrast, as to this point, is made far more striking by the sameness of the other terms employed in the description.

27. The test applied to the foundation is again described precisely as before, or with a single variation, and even that does not appear in English. Beat upon is here a more exact translation than in v. 25, the Greek verb being different, and literally meaning, struck against, the double sense of falling being not expressed at all in this case. The antithesis is perfect, both in form and substance, and it fell not … and it fell; but in the added words there is a marked and striking difference. Instead of telling why it fell (as in the other case), to wit, because it had been founded on the sand, our Lord looks away from the cause to the effect, and intimates the total ruin of the baseless edifice, by simply adding, and its fall was great. The force of this fine apologue is greatly marred by giving a specific sense to each of its details, the rock, the sand, the wind, the rain, the floods, &c. Such minute interpretations may indeed be endlessly extended and diversified, to suit the taste or meet the wants of readers and expounders; but they must not be forced upon the text as any part of its essential meaning and design, which is to set forth, by familiar but impressive analogies from real life, the simple but momentous truth, that mere religious knowledge, without corresponding practice, is a baseless fabric doomed to swift destruction.

28, 29. That the Sermon on the Mount, which closes with the verse preceding this, is not a mere collection of our Saviour's sayings upon different occasions, put together to illustrate his peculiar mode of teaching, but a single continuous discourse delivered at a certain time and place, is clear not only from the way in which the writer introduces it (see above, on 5:1), and from its structure and contents, but also from the statement here made as to its conclusion and effect. And resumes the narrative suspended (5:2) for the purpose of recording this discourse at length. It came to pass (or happened) is not a mere unmeaning superfluity, but tantamount to our familiar phrases, 'the result was this,' or 'thus it turned out.' Had ended is in Greek an aorist, when he ended, finished, or completed, an emphatic compound properly denoting an entire accomplishment or consummation. Here again the language presupposes a continuous coherent whole, something that had a beginning and must have an end, expressions which could scarcely be applied to a desultory series of disjointed dicta. The effect described is that produced upon the people, or as it should have been translated, the multitudes, the vast promiscuous assemblage mentioned in 4:25 and 5:1 and not upon any select class among them. A highly important feature in the history of Christ's ministry is the impression or effect of his teaching on the multitudes who heard it. This is here described in reference to one particular occasion, but in terms admitting of a general application, and substantially repeated elsewhere. (See below, 13:54, 22:33, and compare Mark 6:2, 11:18, Acts 13:12.) The grand effect was that of wonder or astonishment, they were struck, literally struck out, driven from their normal or customary state of mind by something new and strange. The object or occasion of this wonder was his doctrine, not his learning, as Tyndale renders it in Mark 1:22, unless he uses that term in its old sense (now regarded as a vulgarism) of teaching, which is Wiclif's version; nor the truth taught, which is now the common use of doctrine: but as the Greek word usually means in the gospels, either the act or mode of teaching. That this is the meaning here, we learn from the reason given for their wonder. This is stated in the last clause negatively, for he was (then as habitually) teaching them not as the Scribes. His instructions are here brought into direct comparison with those of a certain well-known class, who must of course be teachers. This is a sufficient refutation of the error that the Scribes were either clerks to the magistrates, or mere transcribers of the Scriptures. As the successors of Ezra, the first Scribe of whom we read in this sense (Ezra 7:6), they were the conservators and guardians of the sacred text and canon, which implies a critical acquaintance with them, such as qualified the Scribes above all others to be expounders of the Scripture likewise. Although rather a profession than an office, they exerted a commanding influence on public opinion, and are repeatedly referred to as authoritative teachers of religion. (See below,

on 23:2–4, and compare Mark 12:35, Luke 11:52.) The point of difference is indicated in the positive statement that he taught (or was teaching) them as (one) having authority. This cannot refer to a dogmatical authoritative manner, as to which the Scribes most probably surpassed all others. Nor does it mean powerfully, as explained by Luther. The only sense consistent with the usage of the terms and with the context is, that he taught them, not as a mere expounder, but with the original authority belonging to the author of the law expounded. This is not a description of mere outward manner, but of that self-evidencing light and self-asserting force, which must accompany all direct divine communications to the minds of creatures. Even those who were most accustomed and most submissive to the teachings of the Scribes, must have felt, as soon as Jesus spoke, that he was speaking with authority, declaring his own will, and expounding his own law, not that of another. The distinction, therefore, is not merely between traditional and textual instruction, but between two forms or methods of the latter. Some of the old manuscripts here read, their Scribes (adopted by the latest critics), to which others add, and the Pharisees.

GO TO COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW 8-16