considerations of the *truest self-interest*,—  
**it is profitable for thee**. See ch. xviii.  
8, 9, and notes.  
  
**31 32.**] THIRD EXAMPLE. *The law of  
divorce*. See note on ch. xix. 7–9. Lightfoot gives a form of the “*writing of divorcement*” which was a divorcement a *mensâ  
et thoro*, and placed the woman absolutely in her own power, to marry whom  
she pleased. In Deut. xxiv. 1, the allowable reason of divorce is ‘some uncleanness.’ This the disciples of Shammai interpreted only of adultery; those of Hillel of any thing which amounted to uncleanness in the eyes of the husband.

**32.**] **fornication** must be taken to mean  
sin, not only before marriage, but after it  
also, in a wider sense, as including *adultery*  
likewise. In the similar places, Mark x.  
11; Luke xvi. 18, this exception does not  
occur; see however our ch. xix. 9. The  
figurative senses of *fornication* cannot be  
admissible here, as the law is one having  
reference to a definite point in actual life;  
and this, its aim and end, restricts the  
meaning to that kind of fornication immediately applicable to the case. Otherwise this one strictly guarded exception  
would give indefinite and universal latitude.

**causeth her to commit adultery**] viz. by her second marriage, thus  
put within her power.

**and whosoever**] How far *the marriage of the innocent party after separation* (on account of fornication) is *forbidden* by this or the  
similar passage ch. xix. 9, is a weighty  
and difficult question. By the Roman  
Church such marriage is *strictly forbidden*, and the authority of Augustine much cited, who strongly upholds this view, but  
not without misgivings later in life. On  
the other hand, the Protestant and Greek  
Churches *allow* such marriage.

Certainly it would appear, from the literal  
meaning of our Lord’s words, that it  
*should not be allowed*: for if by such  
divorce the marriage be altogether dissolved, how can the *woman* be said to  
commit adultery by a second marriage?  
or how will St. Paul’s precept (1 Cor. vii.  
11) find place? for stating this as St. Paul  
does, prefaced by the words “*not I, but  
the Lord,*” it must be understood, and has  
been taken, as *referring to this very verse*,  
or rather (see note there) to ch. xix. 6 ff.,  
and consequently can only suppose fornication as the cause. Besides which, the tenor of our Lord’s teaching in other places (see  
above) seems to set before us the state of  
marriage as absolutely *indissoluble as such*,  
however he may sanction the expulsion *a  
mensâ et thoro* of an unfaithful wife. Those  
who defend the other view suppose **divorced**  
to mean, *unlawfully divorced*, not for fornication: and certainly this is not improbable. We may well leave a matter in  
doubt, of which Augustine could say, that  
it was so obscure, that error on either side  
is venial.

**33—37.**] FOURTH EXAMPLE. *The law  
of oaths*.

**33, 34.**] The exact meaning of these verses is to be ascertained by  
two considerations. {33} (1) That the Jews  
held all those oaths *not to be binding*, in  
which the *sacred name of God did not  
directly occur*:—see Philo and Lightfoot  
cited in my Gr. Test. A stress is to be  
laid on this technical distinction in the  
quotation made by our Lord; and we  
must understand as belonging to the  
quotation, ‘but whatever thou shalt swear  
not to the Lord may be transgressed.’ (2) Then our Lord passes so far beyond  
this rule, that He lays down (including in it the understanding that all oaths must, be kept *if made*, for that they are all