« Pythagoras said this, Plato said it... Well, if any of them is found to have  
said a thing which Christ also said, we  
congratulate him, we do not follow him.  
But, it is said, he *came before* Christ.  
So then, if a man speaks truth, he is  
to be esteemed prior to truth itself.”

**Therefore** is the inference indeed  
from the preceding eleven verses, but *immediately* from the **give good things to  
them that ask him**, just said,—and thus  
closing this section of the Sermon with a  
lesson similar to the last verse of ch. v.,  
which is, indeed, the ground-tone of the  
whole Sermon— ‘ Be ye like unto God.”

**even so**, viz. *after the pattern of* all  
**things whatsoever**: not *those* *things*  
*themselves*, because what might suit ***us***,  
might not suit others. We are to think  
what we should like done to ***us***, and then  
apply that rule to our dealings with  
others: viz. by doing to them what we  
have reason to suppose *they would like  
done to them*. This is a most important  
distinction, and one often overlooked in the  
interpretation of this golden maxim.

**13—27**.] THE concLusIon oF THE DISCOURSE :—*setting forth more strongly and  
personally the dangers of hypocrisy,* bothin *being led aside by hypocritical teachers*,  
and in *our own inner life*.— The *gate*  
stands at the end of the *way*, as in the  
remarkable parallel in the Table of Cebes ;  
“Do you see a certain small door, and a  
certain path in front of the door, which  
is not much frequented, but only a few  
walk in it? . .. this is the way which  
leads to true discipline.”

**14**.] **because**  
gives a second reason, on which that in  
ver. 13 depends: **strive, &c., for broad is,  
&c., because narrow is, &.** The *reason* *why* the way to destruction is so broad,  
is *because so few find their way into the  
narrow path of life*. This is not merely an  
arbitrary assignment of the *because*, but  
there is a deep meaning in it. The reason  
why so many perish is not that it is eo  
ordained by God, who will have all to come  
to the knowledge of the truth, but because so few will come to Christ, that they  
may have life ; and the rest perish in their  
sins. See notes on ch. xxv. 41.

**strait**] literally, **restricted,—crushed** in,  
in breadth.

**15**.] The connexion is,—  
*strive to enter &c.: but be not misled by  
persons who pretend to guide you into it,  
but will not do so in reality*.

These  
**false prophets**, directly, refer to those who  
were soon to arise, to deceive, if possible,  
even the very elect, ch. xxiv. 24; and  
indirectly, to all such false teachers in all ages

**in sheep’s clothing**] There may  
be allusion to the prophetic dress, ch. iii. 4;  
but most probably it only means that, in  
order to deceive, they put on the garb and  
manners of the sheep themselves.

**16**.] The **fruits** are both their corrupt  
doctrines and their vicious practices, as  
contrasted with the outward shews of  
almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, their  
sheep’s clothing to deceive. See James iii.  
12; ch. xii. 38, 34.

**17. a corrupt  
tree**] See also ch. xiii. 48. From these  
two verses, 17, 18, the Manichmans defended their heresy of the two natures,  
good and bad: but Augustine answers  
them, that such cannot possibly be their  
meaning, as it is entirely contrary to the  
whole scope of the passage (see for example  
ver. 13), and adds, “A bad tree then cannot bear good fruit: but it may, from bad,  
become good, in order to the bearing good