the Kingdom—*standing on the threshold*  
—but *never having himself entered ; these,*  
“*in the Kingdom,*” subjects and citizens  
and indwellers of the realm, *whose citizenship is in heaven*. He, the *friend of the Bridegroom:* they, however weak and  
unworthy members, *His Body, and His  
Spouse*.

**12.**] The sense of this  
verse has been much disputed. (1) the  
verb rendered “*suffereth violence*” has  
been taken in a *middle sense*; ‘*forcibly  
introduces itself, breaks in with violence,*’  
as in the similar passage Luke xvi. 16.  
Certainly such a sense agrees better with  
“*is preached*” which we find in Luke,  
than the passive explanation: but it seems  
inconsistent with the latter half of the  
verse to say that *it breaks in by force*, and  
then that *others break by force into it*.  
(2) the verb is taken *passively*; ‘**suffereth  
violence.**’ And thus the construction of  
the verse is consistent: ‘and the violent  
take it by force.’ Believing this latter  
interpretation to be right, we now come  
to the question, *in what sense are these  
words spoken?* Is the verb in a good or  
a bad sense? Does it mean, ‘*is taken by  
force,*’ and the following, ‘*and men violently press in for their share of it, as for plunder;*’—or does it mean, ‘*is violently resisted, and violent men tear it to  
pieces?*’ (viz. its opponents, the Scribes  
and Pharisees?) This latter meaning  
bears no sense as connected with the discourse before us. The subject is not the  
*resistance made* to the kingdom of heaven,  
but *the difference between a prophesied  
and a present* kingdom of heaven. The  
fifteenth verse closes this subject, and the  
complaints of the arbitrary prejudices  
of ‘this generation’ begin with ver. 16.  
We conclude then that these words imply  
**From the days of John the Baptist un!  
now** (i.e. inclusively, from the beginning  
of his preaching), **the kingdom of heaven  
is pressed into, and violent persons—**  
eager, ardent multitudes**—seize on it.**Of the truth of this, notwithstanding our  
Lord’s subsequent reproaches for unbelief,  
we have abundant proof from the multitudes who follow and outwent Him,  
and thronged the doors where He was,  
and would (John vi. 15) take Him by  
force to make Him a king. But our Lord  
does not mention this so much to commend the *violent persons*, as to shew the  
undoubted fact *that He that should come  
was come*:—that the kingdom of heaven,  
which before had been the subject of distant prophecy, a closed fortress, a treasure  
hid, was now *undoubtedly upon earth*  
(Luke xvii. 21 and note), laid open to the  
entrance of men, spread out that all might  
take. Thus this verse connects with ver.  
28, “*Come unto Me all,*” and with Luke  
xvi. 16, “*every man presseth into it.*”  
Compare also with this throwing open of  
the kingdom of heaven for all to press  
into, the stern prohibition in Exod. xix.  
12, 13, and the comment on it in Heb.  
xii. 18–24.

**13, 14.**] The whole body  
of testimony as yet has *prophetic*,—  
the Law and Prophets, from the first till  
Zacharias the priest and Simeon and  
Anna prophesied; and according to the  
declaration of prophecy itself, John, in  
the spirit and power of Elias, was the  
forerunner of the great subject of all prophecy. Neither this—nor the testimony  
of our Lord, ch. xvii. 12—is inconsistent  
with John’s own denial that he was Elias,  
John i. 21. For (1) that question was  
evidently asked as implying a *re-appearance of the actual Elias upon earth*: and  
(2) our Lord cannot be understood in  
either of these passages as meaning that  
the prophecy of Malachi iv. 5 received its  
*full completion* in John. For as in other  
prophecies, so in this, we have a partial  
fulfilment both of the coming of the Lord  
and of His forerunner, while the great  
and complete fulfilment is yet future—  
at the great day of the Lord. Mal. iv. 1.  
The words here are not “*which was for  
to come,*” but are *strictly future*, **who  
shall come**. Compare ch. xvii. 11, where  
the future is used. {14} The **if ye will (are  
willing to) receive it** must be taken as  
referring to the partial sense of the fulfilment implied: for it was (and is to this  
day) the belief of the Jews that Elias in  
person should come before the end.