idea that our Lord would have solemnly  
compared with his own miracles, and  
drawn inferences from, a system of imposture, which on that supposition, these  
Pharisees *must have known* to be such.  
I infer then that the *sons of the Pharisees  
did really cast* out devils, and I think this  
view is confirmed by what the multitudes  
said in ch. ix. 33, where upon the dumb  
speaking after the devil was cast out they  
exclaimed, “*It never was so seen in Israel:*” meaning that this was a more complete healing than they had ever seen before. The difficulty has arisen mainly  
from forgetting that miracles, *as such*, are  
*no test of truth*, but have been permitted  
to, and prophesied of, false religions and  
teachers. See Exodus vii. 22; viii. 7: ch.  
xxiv. 24, &c.: Deut. xiii. 1–5. There is  
an important passage in Justin Martyr, in  
which he says that the Name of the Son  
of God Himself never failed to cast out  
dæmons, whereas those of the Jewish  
kings, prophets, and patriarchs, failed.  
“But,” he adds, “if you used the Name  
of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,  
perhaps it might prevail.” Irenæus says  
that by this invocation the Jews cast out  
dæmons even in his time. Jerome, Chrysostom, and others understood “*your sons*” to mean *the Apostles*.

**your judges,**  
in the sense of *convicting you partiality.*

**28. by the Spirit of God**] equivalent

to “*by the finger of God,*” Luke; see Exod.  
viii. 9.

**is come**, emphatic in position:  
but merely, **has come unto (upon) you**: not  
‘is *already* upon you,’ i.e. ‘before you  
looked for it,’—as Stier and Wesley.

**29.**] Luke has the word “*a stronger*”  
applied to the spoiler in this verse; a title  
given to our Lord by the Baptist, ch. iii.  
11 and parallels; see also Isa. xl. 10; xlix.  
24, 25; liii. 12. Compare note on Luke xi.  
21 f., which is the fuller report of this  
parabolic saying.

**30.**] These words  
have been variously understood. Chrysostom and Euthymius understand them to  
refer to the devil: Bengel, Schleiermacher,  
and Neander, to the Jewish exorcists  
named above. Grotius and others understand it as merely a general proverb, and the “*me*” to mean ‘*any one,*’ and here to  
apply to Satan, the sense being, ‘*If I do  
not promote Satan's kingdom, which I  
have proved that I do not, then I must be  
his adversary.*’ But this is on all accounts  
improbable: see below on *gathereth* and  
*scattereth*. We must regard it as a saying setting forth to us generally the entire  
and complete disjunction of the two kingdoms, of Satan and God. There is and  
can be in the world *no middle party:*  
they who are not with Christ, who do not  
gather with Him,—are against Him and  
his work, and as far as in them lies are  
undoing it. See Rom. viii. 7. And thus  
the saying connects itself with the following verse:—this being the case, **Wherefore** *I say unto you*,—the sin of an open  
belying of the present power of the Holy  
Spirit of God working in and for His  
Kingdom, assumes a character surpassingly  
awful. This saying is no way inconsistent  
with that in Mark ix. 40: Luke ix. 50.  
That is not a conversion of this, for  
the terms of the respective propositions  
are not the same. See note on Mark  
ix. 40.

As usual, this saying of our  
Lord reached further than the mere occasion to which it referred, and spoke forcibly to those many half-persuaded hesitating  
persons who flattered themselves that they  
could strike out a line avoiding equally  
the persecution of men and the rejection  
of Christ. He informed them (and informs us also) of the impossibility of such an endeavour.

In the **gathereth** there is an allusion to the idea of gathering the  
harvest: see ch. xiii. 30: John xi. 52, and  
for **scattereth**, John x. 12, in all which  
places the words exactly bear out their  
sense here.

**31, 32.**] {31} **Wherefore, because this is the case**: see last note. Notice again the **I say unto you**, used by our  
Lord when He makes some revelation of  
things hidden from the sons of men: see  
ch. vi. 29, and xviii. 10, 19: and ver. 36  
below. The distinction in these much