controverted verses seems to be, between  
1) the sin and blasphemy which arises  
from culpable ignorance and sensual blindness, as that of the fool who said in his heart ‘There is no God,’—of those who,  
e.g. Saul of Tarsus, opposed Jesus as not  
being the Christ; which persons, to whatever degree their sin may unhappily advance, are capable of enlightenment,  
repentance, and pardon:—and (2) the blasphemy of those who, acknowledge God, and seeing his present power working by  
his Holy Spirit, *openly oppose* themselves  
to it, as did, or as were very near doing  
(for our Lord does not actually imply that  
they *had* incurred this dreadful charge),  
these Pharisees. They may as yet have  
been under the veil of ignorance; but this  
their last proceeding, in the sight of Him  
who knows the hearts, approximated very  
near to, or perhaps reached, this awful  
degree of guilt. The principal misunderstanding of this passage has arisen from the prejudice which possesses men’s minds  
owing to the use the words, ‘the *sin*  
against the Holy Ghost.’ It is not a particular species of sin which is here condemned, but a definite act shewing a *state*  
of sin, and that state a wilful determined  
opposition to the present power of the  
Holy Spirit; and this as shewn by its  
fruit, *blasphemy*. The declaration, in substance, often occurs in the N.T. See  
1 John v. 16, and note on “*sin*” there:  
2 Tim. iii. 8: Jude 4, 12, 13: Heb. x.  
26–31; vi. 4–8.

{32} No *sure* inference can be drawn from the words **neither in  
the world to come**—with regard to forgiveness of sins in a future state. Olshausen remarks that a parallel on the other  
side is found in ch. x. 41, 42, where the  
*recognition* of divine power in those sent  
from God is accompanied with promise of  
eternal reward. He himself however understands the passage (as many otHers  
have done) to imply forgiveness on repentance *in the imperfect state of the dead* before the judgment, and considers it to  
be cognate with 1 Pet. iii. 18 ff. Augustine  
speaks very strongly: “It could not be  
said with truth of any, that ‘it shall not  
be forgiven them neither in this world  
nor either in the world to come,’ unless there were some who are to be forgiven not in this world, but in the world  
to come.” See, on the whole subject, note  
on 1 Pet. iii. 18 ff. In the almost entire silence of Scripture on any such doctrine, every principle of sound interpretation requires that we should hesitate to support it by two difficult passages,  
in neither of which does the plain construction of the words absolutely require it.

The expressions **this world** (equivalent to “*this present world,*” Tit.  
ii, 12: 2 Tim. iv. 10; “*this time,*”  
Mark x. 30; “*the course (age) of this  
world,*” Eph. ii. 2; “*this present evil  
world,*” Gal. i. 4) and **the world to come**  
(see Mark x. 30; equivalent to “*that  
world,*” Luke xx. 35; “*the ages to come,*”  
Eph. ii. 7) were common among the Jews,  
and generally signified respectively the  
time before and after the coming of the  
Messiah. In the N.T. these significations  
are replaced by—*the present life*, and *that  
to come*: the present mixed state of wheat  
and tares, and the future completion of  
Messiah’s Kingdom after the great harvest. These terms seem to differ from  
“*the kingdom of heaven,*” or “*of God,*”  
in never being spoken of, or as in, individuals, but as an age of time belonging to the universal Church.

**33,34.**] {33} not, as generally understood, equivalent to ‘*represent.....as:*’ for then the clause ‘*for out &c.*’ loses its meaning:—  
but literally, **make**. The verse is a parable, not merely a similitude. ‘There are but two ways open: either *make* the *tree and its fruit* both *good,* or both *bad: for* by the fruit the tree is known.’ How