**41–46.**] THE PHARISEES BAFFLED BY  
A QUESTION RESPECTING CHRIST AND  
DAVID. Mark xii. 35–37. Luke xx. 41–44. [See also Acts ii. 34.] Our Lord  
now questions his adversaries (according  
to Matt.:—in Mark and Luke He asks  
the question not *to*, but *concerning* the  
Scribes or interpreters of the law), and  
again convicts them of ignorance of the  
Scriptures. From the universally recognized title of the Messiah as the Son of  
David, which by his question He elicits  
from them, He takes occasion to shew  
them, who understood this title in a mere  
worldly political sense, the difficulty arising  
from David’s own reverence for this his  
Son: the solution lying in the incarnate  
Godhead of the Christ, of which they were  
ignorant.

**43. in spirit**] i.e. **by the  
inspiration of the Holy Spirit:** “*by* (*in*) *the Holy Ghost,*” Mark. This is a weighty  
declaration by our Lord of the inspiration  
of the prophetic Scriptures. St. Mark (ver.  
37) adds to this “the common people  
heard him gladly.” Here then end the  
endeavours of His adversaries to entrap  
Him by questions: they now betake themselves to other means. “A new scene, as  
it were, henceforth opens.” Bengel.

**CHAP. XXIII. 1–39.**] DENUNCIATION  
OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES. Peculiar to Matthew.

**1.**] Much of the  
matter of this discourse is to be found in  
Luke xi. and xiii. On its appearance there,  
see the notes on those passages. There  
can, I think, be no doubt that it was delivered, as our Evangelist here relates it,  
all at one time, and in these the last days  
of our Lord’s ministry. On the notion  
entertained by some recent critics, of St. Matthew having arranged

the scattered sayings of the Lord into longer discourses,

see Introduction to Matthew. A trace of  
this discourse is found in Mark xii. 38–40: Luke xx. 45–47. In the latter place  
it is spoken *to* the disciples, *in hearing  
of* the crowd: which (see ver. 8 ff.) is the  
exact account of the matter. It bears  
many resemblances to the Sermon on the  
Mount, and may be regarded as the solemn close, as that was the opening, of  
the Lord’s public teaching. It divides itself naturally into three : (1) introductory description of the Scribes and  
Pharisees, and contrast to Christ’s disciples (vv. 1–12): (2) solemn denunciations of their hypocrisy (vv. 14–33): (3)  
conclusion, and mournful farewell to the  
temple and Jerusalem.

**2.**] **Moses’ seat**in the office of judge and lawgiver of the  
people: see Exod. ii. 13—25: Deut. xvii.  
9–13. Our Lord says, ‘In so far as the  
Pharisees and Scribes enforce the law and  
precepts of Moses, obey them: but imitate  
not their conduct.’

The verb rendered **sit** must not be pressed too strongly,  
as conveying blame,—‘*have seated themselves;*’—it is merely stated here as a *matter of fact*. Vv.8, 10 however apply to  
their *leadership* as well as their faults;  
and declare that *among Christians* there  
are to be *none sitting on the seat of Christ*.

**3. all therefore**] The **therefore** here  
is very significant:—*because* they sit on  
Moses’ seat: and this clears the meaning,  
and shews it to be, ‘all things which  
they, as successors of Moses, out of his  
law, command you, do;’ there being a  
distinction between their lawful teaching  
as expounders of the law, and their frivolous