prayer was for the salvation of Israel by  
the appearance of the Messiah: but the  
former view appears more probable.

**John**—i.e. *God is favorable:* we have  
it under the form of Johanan, 2 Kings  
xxv. 23; 1 Chron. iii. 24; 2 Chron. xxviii. 12.

**14.]** The words of the original  
here may be rendered two ways, either  
**there shall be to thee,** i.e. **thou shalt  
have**, as A. V.: or, **he shall be to thee,   
. . . joy and gladness.**

**15. in the sight of the Lord]** signifying the spiritual  
nature of his office and influence.

The  
priests were similarly prohibited to drink  
strong drink; and the Nazarites even  
more rigidly.

**strong drink]** the word  
is *sikera*—‘*any liquor not made  
from grapes.*’

Wiclif renders, ‘*he  
schal not drynke wyne ne sidir.’*

**he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost** is a  
*contrast to,* and a reason for, the not  
drinking wine nor strong drink: compare  
Eph. v. 18.

Olshausen and Meyer  
think that (comparing ver. 44) the meaning is, the Holy Spirit should in some  
wonderful manner act on the child even  
*before* his birth. But this is not necessary,—nay, would it not rather be in this case  
“*in* his mother’s womb....?” The  
**from** seems to fix the prior limit of the in-  
dwelling of the Spirit, *at his birth.*

**16.]** The work of John was  
one of preparation and turning men’s  
hearts towards God. For full notes on  
his office, see on Matt. xi. It may  
suffice here to repeat, that it was a *concentration of the spirit of the law,* whose  
office it was to *convince of sin:* and  
that he eminently represented the law and  
the prophets in their work of preparing the  
way for Christ.   
  
**17.] before him**—i.e. “*the Lord their God*,” manifest in the  
flesh. De Wette denies this interpretation, as contrary to all analogy: and yet  
himself explains the expression by saying  
that what the Messiah does, is in Scripture *ascribed to God as its doer* (similarly  
Meyer). But *why?* because Messiah is  
GOD WITH US. This expression is besides  
used (see Zech. xiv. 5) in places where the  
undoubted and sole reference is to the  
Messiah.

**in the spirit and power]**  
As a type of partial fulfillment, of the personal coming of Elias in the latter days  
(see note on Matt. xi. 13, 14). Bleek  
remarks that it was not in the wonder  
working agency of Elias that John was  
like him, for ‘John did no miracle,” but  
in the power of his uttered persuasion.

**to turn....]** The first member only  
of the sentence corresponds with Malachi.  
The angel gives the exposition of the  
second member,—which stands in the  
LXX, “*and the heart of a man towards  
his neighbor*” (in A.V. “*and the heart  
of the children to their fathers*”):—for  
of course that must be understood in the  
better sense, of the prevailing, and  
the bad becoming like them.

**18.]**The birth of John, involving *human generation,*  but *prophetically announced,* and  
*supernatural,* answers to the birth of  
Isaac in the O.T. But Abraham’s faith  
was a strong contrast to the unbelief of  
Zacharias: see Rom. iv. 19.

**an old  
man]** The *Levites* (see Num. iv. 3; viii.  
24, 25) became superannuated at the age  
of *fifty*: but it appears, by extracts from  
the Rabbinical writings given by Lightfoot, that this was not the case with the  
priests.

**19. Gabriel]** meaning, *Man of  
God:* see Dan. viii. 16; ix. 21, also Tobit