the believing Christian will find it far  
more natural thus to apply it, especially in  
connection with Matt. i. 21.

**77.] in remission,** the element in which the former  
blessing was to be conferred. The *remission of sin* is the first opening for the **knowledge of salvation**: sec ch. iii. 7.

**78. dayspring]** *The springing up,*  
or, *the East,* is in Jer. xxiii. 5, Zech. iii.  
9, vi. 12, the LXX rendering for the  
Hebrew word for a *branch* or *sprout*—and  
thus, ‘*that which springs up or rises,*’ as *Light:*—which, from the clauses following,  
seems to be the meaning here.

**from on high** may be taken with **dayspring**,  
as in A. V.:—or perhaps with the verb **to  
give light**. But however taken, the expression is not quite easy to understand.  
The word had come apparently to be a  
name for the Messiah: thus in Zech. iii.  
9 (LXX, see above), behold a man, his  
name is *“the springing up,”* or *“the East”*(the A.V. has *the branch*): and then figures  
arising from the meaning of the word  
itself, became mixed with that which was  
said of Him. The dayspring does not  
come *from on high*, but from beneath the  
horizon; but the Messiah *does*. Again,  
*to* *give light*, &c. of the next verse belongs  
to the dayspring, and only figuratively  
to the Messiah.

**79.]** Care must be  
taken on the one hand not to degrade the  
expressions of this song of praise into mere  
anticipations of temporal prosperity, nor,  
on the other, to find in it (except in so far  
as they are involved in the inner and  
deeper sense of the words, unknown save  
to the Spirit who prompted them) the  
minute doctrinal distinctions of the writings of St. Paul. It is the expression of the aspirations and hopes of a pious Jew,  
waiting for the salvation of the Lord, finding that salvation brought near, and uttering his thankfulness in Old Testament  
language, with which he was familiar, and  
at the same time under prophetic influence  
of the Holy Spirit.

That such a song should. be *inconsistent* with dogmatic  
truth, is *impossible*: that it should unfold  
it minutely, is in the highest degree *improbable*.

**80.]** A very similar conclusion to those in ch. ii. 40, 52, and  
denoting probably the termination of that  
record or document of the birth of the  
Baptist, which the Evangelist has hitherto  
been translating, or perhaps transcribing  
already translated.

That this first chapter is such a separate document,  
appears from its very distinct style.  
Whether it had been preserved in the  
holy family, or how otherwise obtained by  
St. Luke, no trace now appears. It has a  
certain relation to, and at the same time  
is distinguished from, the narration of the  
next chapter. The Old Testament spirit  
is stronger here, and the very phraseology  
more in unison with Hebrew usage.

**in the deserts**] The *hill* *country* of Judæa  
was very near this wilderness, and from  
the character of John’s official life afterwards, it is probable that in youth he  
would be given to solitude and abstemiousness. It cannot be supposed that the  
*Essenes*, dwelling in those parts, had any,  
or only the most general kind of influence  
over him, as their views were wholly different  
from his.

**his shewing]** i.e. the opening of his official life: the same word is used of  
the *appointment* of the seventy in ch. x. 1.

**CHAP. II. 1–20.]** BIRTH OF CHRIST.  
ITS ANNOUNCEMENT AND CELEBRATION  
BY THE HOSTS OF HEAVEN.

**1, 2.]** We go back again now to the birth  
of John, or shortly after it.

In annotating on these verses, I will first state the difficulty in which they appear to be  
involved,—then the remarkable way in  
which a solution has recently been found.

{1} The assertion in these verses is  
*this—that a decree went forth, &c., and  
that this enrolment first took place when  
Cyrenius* (Quirinus) *was governor of Syria.*  
{2} It would then appear, either that *this*  
*very enrolment took place under Quirinus,*