exceedingly improbable.

**36.]** The exact time and place are indeterminate—  
the occasion of St. Luke's inserting the  
history here may have been the **friend of  
publicans and sinners** inver. 34. Wieseler  
places it *at Nain*, which certainly is the last  
*city* that has been named: but it is  
more natural to suppose **in the city** to refer  
only to **the house** before—the city where  
the house was. Meyer thinks that the  
definite article points out Capernaum. The  
position of the words **in the city** in the  
amended text requires a different rendering  
from ‘a woman in the city which was a  
sinner.’ We must either render, ‘which  
was a sinner in the city,’ i.e. known as such in   
the place by public repute,—carrying   
on a sinful occupation in the place,—  
or (2) regard **which was in the city** as  
parenthetic, ‘a woman which was in the  
city, a sinner.’ The latter seems prefer-  
able.

**37.]** **a sinner**, in the sense usually  
understood—a *prostitute*: but, by the   
context, *penitent*.

**was is** not however to be rendered as if it were “*had  
been*.” She *was*, even up to this time (see  
ver. 39), a prostitute—and this was the  
first manifestation of her penitence. “What  
wonder that such should fly to Christ, seeing  
that they had also come to the baptism of  
John?” Matt. xxi. 32 (Grotius). It is possible,  
 that the woman may have just heard  
the closing words of the di concerns  
ing John, Matt. xi. 28—30; but I would  
not press this, on account of the obvious  
want of sequence in this part of our Gospel.  
The behaviour of the woman certainly   
implies that she had heard our Lord, and  
been awakened by His teaching.

**an alabaster box**: for the word, &c., see Matt. xxvi. 7.

{38} Our Lord would,   
after the ordinary custom of persons at  
table, be reclining on a couch, on the left  
side, turned towards the table, and His  
feet would be behind Him. She seems to  
have embraced His feet (see Matt. xxviii.  
9), as it was also the Jews’ custom to do  
by way of honour and affection to their  
Rabbis (see Wetstein on this passage), and  
kissed them, and in doing so to have shed  
abundant tears, which, falling on them,  
she wiped off with her hair. From the  
form of expression in the original (see in  
my Greek Test.), it does not appear that  
this latter was an *intentional* part of her  
honouring our Lord. It was the tears,  
implied in the word **weeping,—the tears  
which she shed**,—not *‘her tears,’* which  
would be otherwise expressed. The *ointment*  
here has a peculiar interest, as being   
the offering by a penitent of that which  
had been an accessory in her unhallowed  
work of sin.

**39.]** The Pharisee *assumes*  
that our Lord did not know who, or of  
what sort, this woman was, and thence   
doubts His being a prophet (see ver. 16);   
—the possibility of His is *knowing this and  
permitting it*, never so much as occurs to  
him. It was the *touching* by an unclean  
person, which constituted the defilement.  
This is all that the Pharisee fixes on: his  
*offence* is merely technical and ceremonial.

**40.] answering**—perhaps to the  
disgust manifested in the Pharisee’s countenance