Egypt.

**23. that it might be fulfilled**]These words refer to the *divine* purpose in  
the event, not to that of Joseph in bringing it about.

**which was spoken by the prophets**] These words are nowhere  
verbatim to be found, nor is this asserted  
by the Evangelist; but that the sense of  
*the prophets* is such. In searching for  
such sense, the following hypotheses have  
been made—none of them satisfactory:—  
(1) Euthymius says, “Do not enquire what  
prophets said this: for you will not find  
out: because many of the prophetic books  
have perished, some in the captivities, some  
by neglect of the Jews, some also by foul  
play.” So also Chrysostom and others.  
Bar the expression “*by the prophets*”  
seems to have a wider bearing than is thus  
implied. (2) Others say, the general sense  
of the prophets is, that Christ should be  
a *despised person, as the inhabitants of  
Nazareth were* (John i. 47). But surely  
this part of the Messiah’s prophetic character is not general or prominent enough,  
in the absence of any direct verbal connexion with the word in our text, to found  
such an interpretation on: nor, on the  
other hand, does it appear that an inhabitant of Nazareth, as such, was despised;  
only that the obscurity of the town was,  
both by Nathanael and the Jews, contrasted with our Lord’s claims. (3) The  
*Nazarites* of old were men holy and consecrated to God; e.g. Samson (Judg. xiii. 5), Samuel (1 Sam. i. 11), and to this the  
words are referred by Tertullian, Jerome,  
and others. But (*a*) our Lord did not (like  
John the Baptist) lead a life in accordance  
with the Nazarite vow, but drank wine,  
&c., and set himself in marked contrast  
with John in this very particular (ch. xi.  
18, 19); and (b) the word here is not  
*Nazarite*, but *Nazarene*, denoting an inhabitant of Nazareth. (4) There may be  
an allusion to the Hebrew “*Netser,*” a  
branch, by which name our Lord is called  
in Isa. xi. 1, and from which word it appears that the name Nazareth is probably  
derived. So “*learned Hebrews*” mentioned by Jerome on Isa. xi. 1, and others.  
But this word is only used in the place  
cited; and in by far the more precise prophecies of the Branch, Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12:  
Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15, and Isa. iv. 2, the  
word “*Tsemach*” is used.—I leave it, therefore, as an unsolved difficulty.

**CHAP. III. 1–12.**] PREACHING AND BAPTISM OF JOHN. Mark i. 1–8: Luke iii.  
1–17 (John i. 6–28). Here the *synoptic  
narrative* (i.e. the narrative common to the  
three Evangelists) begins, its extent being  
the same as that specified by Peter in Acts  
i. 22, ‘*from the baptism of John unto that  
same day that He was taken up from us.*’  
For a comparison of the narratives in the  
various sections, see notes on St. Mark.  
In *this* Gospel, I have generally confined  
myself to the *subject-matter*.

**1. In those days**] The last matter mentioned was  
the dwelling at Nazareth; and though we  
must not take the connexion strictly as  
implying that *Joseph* dwelt there all the  
intermediate thirty years, “*those days*”  
must be understood to mean that we take  
up the persons of the narrative where we  
left them; i.e. dwelling at Nazareth.

**came**] literally, **comes forward—**‘makes  
his appearance.’ Euthymius asks the question, *whence?* and answers it, *from the recesses of the wilderness*. But this can  
hardly be, owing to the “*in the wilderness*” following. The verb is used absolutely. The title “John *the Baptist*” shews  
that St. Matthew was writing for those  
who well knew John the Baptist as an  
historical personage. Josephus, in mentioning him, calls him “*John who is called  
the Baptist.*” John was strictly speaking  
a *prophet*; belonging to the legal dispensation; a rebuker of sin, and preacher of  
repentance. The expression in St. Luke,  
“*the word of God came to John,*” is the  
usual formula for the divine commission of  
the Prophets (Jer. i. 1: Ezek. vi.1; vii. 1,  
&c.). And the effect of the Holy Spirit on  
John was more in accordance with the O.T.  
than the N.T. inspiration; more of a  
sudden overpowering influence, as in the  
Prophets, than a gentle indwelling manifested through the individual character,  
as in the Apostles and Evangelists.—The  
baptism of John was of a deeper significance than that usual among the Jews  
in the case of proselytes, and formed an  
integral part of his divinely appointed  
office. It was emphatically the baptism of  
*repentance* (Luke iii. 3), but not that of  
*regeneration* (Titus iii. 5).

We find in Acts xviii. 24–26; xix. 1–7, accounts of  
persons who had received the baptism of  
John, who believed, and (in Apollos’s case)  
taught accurately the things (i.e. facts  
concerning the Lord; but required instruction (in doctrine), and rebaptizing in  
the name of the Lord Jesus. Whether the  
baptism practised by the disciples before  
the Resurrection was of the same kind, and  
required this renewal, is uncertain. The  
fact of our Lord Himself having received  
baptism from John, is decisive against the