identity of the two rites, as also against  
the idea derived from Acts xix. 4, that  
John used the formula “*I baptize thee in  
the name of Him who is to come.*” His  
whole mission was calculated, in accordance with the office of the law, which gives  
the knowledge of sin (Rom. iii. 20), to  
bring men’s minds into that state in which  
the Redeemer invites them (ch. xi. 28),  
as weary and heavy laden, to come to Him.

**in the wilderness**] Where also he  
had been brought up, Luke i. 80. This  
tract was not strictly a *desert*, but thinly  
peopled, and abounding in pastures for  
flocks. This *wilderness* answers to “*all  
the country round about Jordan*” in Luke  
iii. 3. See note on ch. iv. 1.

**2. Repent**]  
Used by the Baptist in the O.T. sense of  
*turning to God as His people*, from the  
spiritual idolatry and typical adultery in  
which the faithless among the Jews were  
involved. This, of course, included personal  
amendment in individuals. See Luke iii.  
10–14. Josephus describes John as “‘commanding the Jews to practise virtue, and  
justice to their neighbour, and piety towards  
God, and thus to receive his baptism.”

**the kingdom of heaven**] An expression peculiar in the N.T. to St. Matthew.  
The more usual one is “*the Kingdom of  
God:*” but “*the Kingdom of heaven*” is  
common in the Rabbinical writers, who do  
not however, except in one or two places,  
mean by it *the reign of the Messiah*, but  
*the Jewish religion—the theocracy*. Still,  
from the use of it by St. Matthew here,  
and in ch. iv. 17, x. 7, we may conclude  
that it was used by the Jews, and understood, to mean *the advent the Christ*,  
probably from the prophecy in Dan. ii. 44;  
vii. 13, 14, 27.

**3. For this is he**]  
*Not the words of the Baptist*, meaning  
“*for I am he,*” as in John i. 23, but *of the  
Evangelist*; and “*is*” is not for “*was,*”  
but is the prophetic present, representing  
to us the place which the Baptist fills in  
the divine purposes, Of **for**, Bengel says  
well, that it gives tho cause why John  
then came forward, as described in ver. 1,  
2, viz. because it had been thus predicted.  
—The primary and literal application of  
this prophecy to *the return from captivity*  
is very doubtful. If it *ever had* such an  
application, we may safely say that its predictions were so imperfectly and sparingly  
fulfilled in that return, or any thing which  
followed it, that we are necessarily directed  
onward to its greater fulfilment—the announcement of the kingdom of Christ.  
Euthymius remarks, that the ways and  
paths of the Lord are men’s souls, which  
must be cleared of the thorns of passion  
and the stones of sin, and thus made  
straight and level for His approach.

**4. And the same John**] rather, **now John  
himself**, recalling the reader from the prophetic testimony, to the person of John.  
As John was the Elias of prophecy, so we  
find in his outward attire a striking similarity to Elias, who was “*an hairy man,  
and girt with a girdle of leather about his  
loins.*” 2 Kings i. 8. The garment of  
camel’s hair was not the camel’s skin with  
the hair on, which would be too heavy to  
wear, but raiment woven of camel’s hair.  
From Zech. xiii. 4, it seems that such a  
dress was known as the prophetic garb:  
‘neither shall they (the prophets) wear a  
rough garment to deceive.’

**locusts**]  
There is no difficulty here. The locust,  
permitted to be eaten, Levit. xi. 22, was  
used as food by the lower orders in Judea,  
and mentioned by Strabo and Pliny as  
eaten by the Æthiopians, and by many  
other authors, as articles of food. Jerome  
mentions it as the custom in the East and  
Libya: and Shaw found locusts eaten by  
the Moors in Barbary. (Travels, p. 164.)

**wild honey**] See 1 Sam. xiv. 25.  
Here again there is no need to suppose  
any thing else meant but honey made by  
wild bees. Schulz found such honey in  
wilderness in our own time. See  
Psalm lxxxi. 16: Judg. xiv. 8: Deut.  
xxxii.13.

**5.**] **all the region round about  
Jordan** means all the neighbourhood of