Jordan not included in “Jerusalem and  
Judæa” before mentioned. Parts of Peræa,  
Samaria, Galilee, and Gaulonitis come under  
this denomination.—There need be no surprise at such multitudes going out to  
John. The nature of his announcement,  
coupled with the prevalent expectation of  
the time, was enough to produce this  
effect. See, as strictly consistent with this  
account, chap. xi. 7—15.

**6. were baptized**] When *men* were admitted as  
proselytes, three rites were performed—  
*circumcision, baptism,* and *oblation*; when  
*women*, two—*baptism* and *oblation*. The  
baptism was administered in the day-time,  
by immersion of the whole person; and  
while standing in the water the proselyte  
was instructed in certain portions of the  
law. The whole families of proselytes, including infants, were baptized. It is most probable that John’s baptism in outward  
form resembled that of proselytes. See  
above, on ver. 1. Some deny that the proselyte baptism was in use before the time of John: but the contrary has been generally supposed, and maintained. Indeed the baptism or lustration of a proselyte on  
admission would follow, as a matter of  
course, by analogy from the constant legal  
practice of lustration after all uncleannesses: and it is difficult to imagine a  
time when it would not be in use. Besides, it is highly improbable that the  
Jews should have borrowed the rite from  
the Christians, or the Jewish hierarchy  
from John.

**confessing their sins**]  
From the form and expression, this does  
not seem to have been merely ‘shewing a  
contrite spirit,’ ‘confessing themselves sinners,’ but *a particular and individual confession*; not, however, made privately to  
John, but before the people: see his exhortation to the various classes in Luke iii. 10–15: nor in every case, but in those  
which required it.

**7. Pharisees and Sadducees**] These two sects, according to  
Josephus, Antt. xiii. 5. 9, originated at the  
same period, under Jonathan the High  
Priest (B.C. 159–144). The PHARISEES,  
deriving their name probably from “*Parash,*” ‘he separated,’ took for their distinctive practice the strict observance of  
the law and all its requirements, written  
and oral. They had great power over the

people, and are numbered by Josephus, as  
being, about the time of the death of Herod  
the Great, above 6000. We find in the  
Gospels the Pharisees the most constant  
opponents of our Lord, and His discourses  
frequently directed against them. The  
character of the sect as a whole was *hypocrisy*; the outside acknowledgment and honouring of God and his law, but inward  
and practical denial of Him; which rendered them the enemies of the simplicity  
and genuineness which characterized our  
Lord’s teaching. Still, among them were  
undoubtedly pious and worthy men, honourably distinguished from the mass of the  
sect; John iii.1: Actsv.34, The various  
points of their religious and moral belief  
will be treated of as they occur in the text  
of the Gospels.

The SADDUCEES are  
*said* to have derived their name from one  
Sadok, about the time of Alexander the  
Great (B.C. 323): but they were named  
from the Hebrew *Tsaddik, righteousness*,  
more probably. They *rejected all tradition*, but did not, as some have supposed,  
confine their canon of Scripture to the  
Pentateuch. The denial of a future state  
does not appear to have been an original  
tenet of Sadduceism, but to have sprung  
from its abuse. The particular side of  
religionism represented by the Sadducees  
was bare literal moral conformity, without  
any higher views or hopes. They thus  
escaped the dangers of tradition, but fell  
into deadness and worldliness, and a denial  
of spiritual influence. While our Lord was  
on earth, this state of mind was very prevalent among the educated classes throughout the Roman empire; and most of the  
Jews of rank and station were Sadducees.  
—The two sects, mutually hostile, are  
found frequently in the Gospels united  
in opposition to our Lord (see ch. xvi. 1,  
6, 11; xxii. 23, 34; also Acts iv. 1); the  
Pharisees representing hypocritical superstition; the Sadducees, carnal unbelief.

**come**] It would appear here as  
if these Pharisees and Sadducees came  
with others, and because others did, without any worthy motive, and they were  
probably deterred by his rebuke from  
undergoing baptism at his hands. We  
know, from Luke vii. 30, that the Pharisees in general ‘*were not baptized of him.*’