**the wrath to come**] The reference  
of John’s ministry to prophecy concerning Elias, Mal iii. 1; iv. 5(Mark i. 2),  
would naturally suggest to men’s minds  
‘the wrath to come’ there also foretold.  
It was the general expectation of the  
Jews that troublous times would accompany the appearance of the Messiah.  
John is now speaking in the true character of a prophet, foretelling the wrath  
soon to be poured on the Jewish nation.

**8.**] **therefore** expresses an inference from  
their apparent intention of fleeing from  
the wrath to come: q.d. ‘if you are  
really so minded,’. . .

**9. think not to say**] Not merely equivalent to “*say not*:”  
but, **Do not fancy you may say**, &c. The expression **to say within yourselves**, as similar expressions in Scripture (e.g. Ps. x.  
6, 11; xiv.1: Eccl. i. 16; ii. 15, al. fr.), is  
used to signify the act by which outward  
circumstances are turned into thoughts  
of the mind.

**of these stones**] The  
pebbles or shingle on the beach of the  
Jordan. He possibly referred to Isa. li.  
1, 2. This also is prophetic, of the admission of the Gentile church. See Rom. iv. 16: Gal iii. 29. Or we may take the interpretation which Chrysostom prefers,  
also referring to Isa. li. 1, 2: *Think not  
that your perishing will leave Abraham  
without children: for God is able to  
raise him up children even from stones, as  
He created man out of dust at the beginning,* The *present* tenses, “*is laid,*”  
“*is cut down,*” imply the law, or habit,  
which now and henceforward, in the  
kingdom of heaven prevails: ‘*from this  
time it is so.*’

**ll. whose shoes,** &c.)  
Lightfoot shews that it was the token  
of a slave having become his master’s property, to *loose* his shoe, to *tie* the same,  
or to *carry* the necessary articles for him  
to the bath. The expressions therefore in  
all the Gospels amount to the same.

**with the Holy Ghost, and with fire**] This  
was literally falfilled at the day of Pentecost: but Origen and others refer the  
words to the baptism of the *righteous by  
the Holy Spirit*, and *of the wicked by fire*.  
I have no doubt that this this is a mistake in  
the present case, though apparently (to  
the superficial reader) borne out by ver. 12.  
The *double* symbolic reference of fire, elsewhere found, e.g. Mark ix. 50, as purifying the good and consuming the evil,  
though *illustrated* by these verses, is  
hardly to be pressed into the interpretation of *fire* in this verse, the prophecy  
*here* being solely of that higher and more  
perfect baptism to which that of John was  
a mere introduction. To separate off  
“*with the Holy Ghost*” as belonging to one  
set of persons, and “*with fire*” as belonging  
to another, when both are united in “*you,*”  
is in the last degree harsh, besides introducing confusion into the whole. The  
members of comparison in this verse are  
*strictly parallel* to one another: the *baptism by water*, the end of which is “*repentance,*” a mere transition state, a note  
of preparation,—and the *baptism by the  
Holy Ghost and fire*, the end of which is  
(ver. 12) *sanctification*, the entire aim  
and purpose of man’s creation and renewal. Thus the *official superiority* of  
the Redeemer (which is all that our Evangelist here deals with) is fully brought out. The superiority of *nature* and *pre-existence* is reserved for the fuller and more  
dogmatic account in John i.

**12. whose fan,** &c.] In the Rabbinical work  
Midrash Tehillim, on Ps. ii., the same  
figure is found: “The winnowing is at  
hand: they throw the straw into the fire,  
the chaff to the wind, but preserve the  
wheat in the floor; so the nations of the  
world shall be the conflagration of a