furnace: but Israel alone shall be preserved.”

**his floor**] i.e. *the contents of the barn-floor*. Thus in Job xxxix. 12, “he will  
bring home thy seed, and *gather thy  
barn*” (literally). Or perhaps owing to  
the verb (**shall cleanse from one end to the other**), the *floor itself*, which was an open  
hard-trodden space in the middle of the  
field. See “The Land and the Book,” p.  
538 ff., where there is an illustration.  
“Very little use is now made of the *fan*,  
but I have seen it employed to *purge the  
floor* of the refuse dust, which the owner  
throws away as useless,” p. 540.

**chaff**] Not only *the chaff*, but also *the  
straw*: see reff.: ‘all that is not wheat.’

**13–17.**] JESUS HIMSELF BAPTIZED BY  
HIM. Mark i. 9–11: Luke iii. 21, 22.  
It does not appear exactly *when the baptism of our Lord took place*. If the comparative age of the Baptist is taken into  
account, we should suppose it to have been  
about six months after this latter began  
his ministry. But this is no sure guide.  
The *place* was *Bethany* (the older reading), *beyond Jordan*; John. i. 28.

**13. to be baptized**] Why should our Lord,  
who was *without sin*, have come to *a  
baptism of repentance?* Because He was  
*made sin for us*: for which reason also  
He suffered the curse of the law. It became Him, being *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, to go through those appointed rites  
and purifications which belonged to that  
flesh. There is no more strangeness in  
His having been baptized by John, than  
in His keeping the Passovers. The one  
rite, as the other, belonged to sinners—and *among the transgressors He was  
numbered*. The prophetic words in Ps, xl.  
12, spoken in the person of our Lord, indicate, in the midst of sinlessness, the most  
profound apprehension of the sins of that  
nature which He took upon him. I cannot  
suppose the baptism to have been sought  
by our Lord merely t*o honour John*, or as  
*knowing that it would be the occasion of a  
divine recognition* of his Messiahship, and  
thus pre-ordained by God: but *bonâ fide*,  
as bearing the infirmities and carrying the  
sorrows of mankind, and thus beginning  
here the triple baptism of water, fire, and  
blood, two parts of which were now accomplished, and of the third of which He  
himself speaks, Luke xii. 50, and the beloved Apostle, 1 John v. 8.—His baptism,  
as it was our Lord’s *closing* act of obedience under the Law, in His hitherto  
concealed life of legal submission, His  
fulfilling all righteousness, so was His  
*solemn inauguration and anointing for the  
higher official life of mediatorial satisfaction* which was now opening upon Him.  
See Rom. i. 3, 4. We must not forget  
that the *working out of perfect righteousness in our flesh* by the entire and spotless  
keeping of God’s law (Deut. vi. 25), was,  
in the main, *accomplished during the  
thirty years previous to our Lord’s official  
ministry.*

**14. forbad**) Rather, **tried  
to hinder**: the word implies the active  
and earnest preventing, with the gesture,  
or hand, or voice. There is only an *apparent* inconsistency between the  
speech of John in this sense, and the assertion  
made by him in John i, 33, ‘I knew him  
not.’ Let us regard the matter in this  
light :—John begins his ministry by a  
commission from God, who also admonishes him, that He, whose Forerunner he  
was, would be in time revealed to him by  
a special sign. Jesus comes to be baptized by him. From the nature of his  
relationship to our Lord, he could not but  
know those events which had accompanied  
his birth, and his subsequent life of holy  
and unblamable purity and sanctity. My  
impression from the words of this verse  
certainly is, that he *regarded Him as the  
Messiah*. Still, his belief wanted that  
full and entire assurance which the occurrence of the predicted sign gave him,  
which the word **knew** implies, and which  
would justify him in announcing Him to  
his disciples as the Lamb of God.

**15. now**] The exact meaning is difficult.  
It cannot well be that which the A. V. at  
first sight gives, that something was to be  
done *now*, inconsistent with the actual and  
hereafter-to-be-manifested relation of the  
two persons, Rather—‘*though what has  
been said* (ver, ]4) *is true, yet the time is*