The whole of the rest of our Lord’s sermon  
is a comment on, and illustration of, the  
assertion in this verse.

**scribes**] Persons devoted to the work of reading and  
expounding the law, whose office seems  
first to have become frequent after the  
return from Babylon. They generally appear  
in the N.T. in connexion with the  
Pharisees: but it appears from Acts xxiii. 9,  
that there were Scribes attached to the  
other sects also. In Matt. xxi. 15, they  
appear with the chief priests; but it is in  
the *temple*, where (see also Luke xx. 1)  
they acted as a sort of police. In the description of the assembling of the great  
Sanhedrim (Matt. xxvi. 3: Mark xiv. 53;  
xv. 1) we find it composed of c*hief priests*,  
*elders*, and *Scribes*: and in Luke xxii. 66,  
of *chief priests* and *Scribes*. The Scribes  
uniformly opposed themselves to our Lord;  
watching Him to find matter of accusation, Luke vi. 7; xi. 53, 54; perverting  
His sayings, Matt. ix. 3, and His actions,  
Luke v. 30; xv. 2; seeking to entangle  
Him by questions, Matt. xxii. 35 (see note  
there); Luke x. 25; xx. 21; and to embarrass Him, Matt. xii. 38. Their authority as expounders of the law is recognized  
by our Lord Himself, Matt. xxiii. 1, 2;  
their adherence to the oral traditionary  
exposition proved, Matt. xv. 1 ff.; the respect in which they were held by the people  
shewn, Luke xx. 46; their existence indicated not only in Jerusalem, but also in  
Galilee, Luke v. 17,—and in Rome, Josephus, Antt. xviii. 3.5. They kept schools  
and auditories for teaching the youth,  
Luke ii. 46; Acts v. 34, compared with  
xxii. 3; are called by Josephus *expounders  
of our patriarchal laws*, Antt. xvii. 6. 2;  
*sophists*, B.J. i. 33. 2. The literal rendering is “**shall abound more than the  
Scribes and Pharisees,**” i.e. more than  
that *of the S.* and *P.* Notice, that not  
only the *hypocrites* among the Scribes  
and Pharisees are here meant; but the  
declaration is, “ Your righteousness must  
be of a *higher order* than any yet attained,  
or conceived, by Scribe or Pharisee.”

**ye shall in no case enter, &c.**] A very  
usual formula (see ch. vii. 21; xviii. 3;  
xix. 17, 23, 24: John iii. 5 al.); implying  
exclusion from the blessings of the Christian state, and from the inheritance of eternal life.

**21—48.**] *Six examples  
of the true* FULFILMENT *of the law by  
Jesus*.—FIRST EXAMPLE. *The law of  
murder*.

**21. Ye have heard**] viz. by the reading of the law in the synagogues,  
and the expositions of the Scribes.

**by them of old time**] In this case, Moses  
and his traditional expounders are classed  
together; but the words may also be rendered, ‘*to* the ancients,’—which last interpretation seems to me to be certainly the  
right one. Meyer has well observed that  
“it was said to them of old time” corresponds to “but I say to you,” and the  
“I” to the understood subject of “was  
said.” He has not, however, apprehended  
the deeper truth which underlies the omission of the *subject* of *was said*, that it was  
the *same person* who said both. It will  
be noticed that our Lord does not here  
speak against the *abuse* of the law by  
tradition, but that every instance here  
given is either from *the law itself*, or *such  
traditional teaching as was in accordance  
with it* (e.g. the latter part of this verse is  
only a formal expansion of the former).  
The contrasts here are not between *the*  
*law misunderstood and the law rightly understood*, but between the *law and its  
ancient exposition*, which in their letter,  
and as given, were *empty*,—and *the same  
as spiritualized, fulfilled, by Christ*: not between *two lawgivers*, Moses and Christ, but  
between *they of old time* and *you*; between  
(the idea is Chrysostom’s) the children by the  
same husband, of the *bondwoman* and of the  
*freewoman*. The above remarks comprise  
a brief answer to the important but somewhat misapprehended question, whether  
a impugned the Mosaic law itself,  
or only its inadequate interpretation by  
the Jewish teachers? There is no inconsistency in the above view with the assertion in ver. 19: the just and holy and  
true law was necessarily restricted in  
meaning and degraded in position, until  
He came, whose office it was to fulfil and  
glorify it.

**the judgment**] viz. the  
courts in every city, ordered Deut. xvi. 18,  
and explained by Josephus Antt. iv. 8. 14  
to consist of seven men, and to have the  
power of life and death. But “*the judgment*” in the next verse (see note) is the court of judgment in the Messiah’s kingdom.

**23.**] The sense is: ‘There  
were among the Jews three well-known  
degrees of guilt, coming respectively under  
the cognizance of the local and the su e  
courts; and after these is set the Gehenna  
of fire, the end of the malefactor, whose  
corpse, thrown out into the valley of Hinnom, was devoured by the worm or the  
flame. Similarly, in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, shall the sins even of