woman taken in adultery are forced and  
harsh. It was, say they, the early morning (ver. 2) and the sun was just rising, to which these words “*the light of the world*” allude, - and the walking in darkness is an allusion to the woman, whose  
  
proves nothing, or proves too much; for it  
is added, ‘and thrust thee through with  
their swords.’ I would rather suppose  
that from Deut. xxii. 21, 23, 24, an inference was drawn *what kind of a death*  
was intended in ver. 22, the crime being  
regarded as the same; “*he hath humbled  
his neighbour's wife*.” We have similar indefiniteness in ib. ver. 25, where evidently the same punishment is meant.

**6. wrote on the ground**] The habit was a  
usual one to signify pre-occupation of  
mind, or intentional inattention. The  
addition, “*as though he heard them not*,”  
is an explanatory gloss.

It does not  
follow that any thing was actually written.  
Stier refers to Jer. xvii. 13, but perhaps  
without reason.

This minute circumstance speaks strongly for the *authenticity*  
of the narration.

**7**.] The expression,  
“*without sin*,” is not here used in the  
general sense, meaning, *entirely sinless*,  
nor in the strictest, ‘*free from the crime of  
adultery*’ (it can hardly be that any of the  
Pharisees should have held themselves  
*sinless*,—or that *all* should have been *implicated in adultery*) :—but—as the word  
“*a sinner*,” in Luke vii. 37,—of the *sin of  
uncleanness* generally. Stier, who contends strongly for the *genuineness* of this  
narrative *in this place*, finds in ver. 46 an  
allusion to this saying. I cannot say that  
his attempts to establish a connexion with  
the subsequent discourse are to me at all satisfactory: I am much more inclined to  
think with Luthardt, that the whole arrangement and plan of our Gospel is broken  
by the insertion of this passage.

The Lord Jesus was not sent to be a ruler and  
a judge in this or that particular case of  
crime, see Luke xii. 14; but the Ruler  
and Judge of *all*: and His answer expresses this, by convicting them *all* of sin  
before Him. Some of our MSS. read, “ *the*  
stone:” in that case, our Lord refers to  
the *first* stone, which by Deut. xvii. 7 the  
*witnesses* were to cast.

**8**.] Euthymius  
remarks that our Lord adopted this gesture, of again writing on the ground, in  
His goodness, to allow them to pass out  
without being specially observed by Him.  
One of our MSS. reads, ‘‘ *He wrote on the  
ground the sins of each of them*.”

**9**.] They had said, ver. 5, “*such women*”—they now perceive that they themselves  
were *such men*. There is no historical  
difficulty in this conduct of the Pharisees,  
as Olshausen finds ;—they were struck by  
the power of the word of Christ. It was a  
case somewhat analogous to that in which  
His saying, “*I am he*,” struck His foes to  
the ground, ch. xviii. 6.

The variations of reading are very wide in the latter  
part of the verse. We can hardly (with  
some) lay any stress on “*beginning at the  
eldest*,” as indicating the *natural order* of  
conviction of sin. If the consciences of  
older sinners have heavier loads on them,