convincing grounds. The truth seems to have  
been apprehended by Olshausen,—that the  
declaration of John that the Messiah was  
standing among them at that moment unknown to them, *was an answer to their  
question demanding a legitimation of his  
prophetic claims ;—a sign* that he was  
sent from God :—see ch. ii. 18. Olshausen  
also suggests that this may clear up the  
saying of the Jews in ch. x, 41 (see note  
there). In repeating this saying at other  
times (see Matt. iii. 11 and parallel places),  
the Baptist plainly states of the Messiah,  
that he should baptize them with the Holy  
Ghost (and fire), as here in ver. 33. Here,  
in speaking to those learned in the offices  
of the Messiah, he leaves that to be supplied.

**whose shoe's latchet....]**See note on Matt. iii. 11. ‘The **latchet** is  
the *thong* of the shoe or sandal, with which  
it was bound to the foot.

**28.]** The  
common reading, *Bethabara*, is owing to a  
conjecture of Origen, the grounds of which  
he thus states:— *“We are not ignorant,  
that in almost all our copies it is stated,  
‘these things were done in Bethany;’* and  
this seems to have been so read even before  
our time: for I have read it so in Heracleon. But I am persuaded that we ought  
not to read *Bethany, but Bethabara* ; for  
I have been on the spot, in my desire to  
track the footsteps of Jesus and of His  
Apostles and of the prophets. Bethany,  
as the Evangelist himself says, is only fifteen  
furlongs from Jerusalem, far away from  
the river Jordan, about 180 furlongs,  
roughly stated. Nor is there any place  
near the Jordan of the same name as  
*Bethany*: but *they say that a place is  
shewn* on the bunks of the Jordan called  
*Bethabara*, where they relate that John  
baptized.” He goes on to shew from the  
*etymology of the names* that it must have  
been Bethabara; an argument which modern  
criticism will not much esteem. It will be  
seen that his testimony is decisive for the  
universality and authority of the reading  
**Bethany**, while for the other he only produces a tradition, and that only at second-hand: *‘they say* that such a place is  
shewn.’ That no Bethany beyond Jordan  
was known in his time proves but little;—  
for 300 eventful years had changed the  
face of Palestine since these events, and  
the names and sites of many obscure  
places may have been forgotten. I abstain from enumerating modern conjectures on the identity of the two, or the  
etymology of the names, as being indecisive and unprofitable. The objection of  
Paulus, that *beyond Jordan* the Sanhedrim had no authority, appears not to be  
founded in fact.

The question whether  
this testimony of the Baptist is identical  
with that given by the other three Evangelists, especially by St. Luke (iii. 16), is,  
after all that has been said on it, not of  
great importance. The whole series of  
transactions here recorded, from ver. 15  
onwards, certainly happened *after* the baptism of our Lord ;—for before that event  
John *did not know Him as He that was  
to come*: and *“standeth among you,”*ver. 26, shews that *he had so recognized  
Him* (see below on *“the next day”*):  
whereas the testimony in Luke iii. 16 and  
parallel places, is as certainly given *before*the baptism. But since the great end of  
John’s mission was to proclaim Him who  
was coming after him, it is not only probable, but absolutely necessary to suppose, that he should have delivered this  
testimony *often*, and under varying circumstances: *before* the baptism, in the  
form given by St. Luke, “*One mightier  
than I cometh*,” &c., and *after* it in this  
form, “*This is He of whom I said*,” &c.  
(ver. 15), where his former testimony is  
distinctly referred to. And among John’s  
disciples and the multitudes who frequented his baptism, many reports of such  
his sayings would naturally be current.  
So that there is neither a real nor even an  
apparent contradiction between John and  
the other Evangelists.

It is a far  
more important question, *in what part  
of this narration the forty days’ Temptation is to be inserted.* From ver. 19 to  
ch. ii. 1 there is an unbroken sequence of  
days distinctly marked. Since then ver.  
19 must be understood as happening after  
the baptism, it must have happened *after  
the Temptation* also. And in this supposition there is not the slightest difficulty. But when we have made it, it still remains to say whether at that time our  
Lord had returned from the Temptation  
or not. The general opinion of Harmonists has been, that the approach of Jesus  
to John in ver. 29 *was His return after  
the Temptation.* But this I think questionable, on account of the “*standeth  
among you*,” ver. 26; which I can only  
understand literally. I therefore believe

-

–

—