to these conjectures, because the text gives  
us no further insight into the fact, than  
what the circumstances and the answer of  
John render probable.

**26.]** Compare ch, i. 28.

**all men come to him]** Not, probably, any who had been  
baptized already by John; but multitudes  
of persons. The baptism now carried on  
by the disciples appears to have stood very  
much in the same position as that of John.  
It was preparatory to the *public ministry*of our Lord *properly so called*, which  
began in Galilee after the imprisonment of  
John. It was *not accompanied with the  
gift of the Spirit*, see ch. vii. 39. As  
John’s commission was now on the wane,  
so our Lord’s was expanding. The solemn  
cleansing of the temple was its opening;  
and now it is proceeding onwards, gathering multitudes around it (see ch. iv. 1).

**27.]** The subject of this answer  
is,—*the divinely-appointed humiliation  
and eclipsing of the Baptist himself before  
the greater majesty of Him who was come  
after him*. Accordingly he begins in this  
verse by answering to the zeal of his disciples, ‘that he cannot go beyond the bounds of his heaven-appointed mission.’  
“I cannot arrogate to myself and take  
upon me what God has not given.” Wetstein. Some apply the words to Jesus:—  
“If His circumstances are more illustrious,  
and all men come to Him, it is no matter  
of wonder; for such would be the case  
with Divinity.” Chrysostom. But the  
whole tone of the answer makes the other  
view more likely. Of course the remark,  
being general, may in the background have  
reference to the greater mission of Jesus;  
but not primarily. The parallelism of  
“*a man*” here, and himself, as the subject  
of “*I said*” in the next verse, also supports this view; see Heb. v. 4.

**28.]** “Not only so, but I have always  
given the same consistent testimony; that  
I was only the forerunner of One greater  
than myself.’ The word **him** in the  
original does not refer to “*the Christ*:”  
but *to Jesus*, as the subject of ver. 26;  
and thus is not merely a *general* testimony  
with regard to the Messiah, but a *personal*one to Jesus. In reading this verse therefore, strong emphasis should be laid on the  
word **him**.

**29.]** Here first, (and  
here only in our Gospel,) comes, from the  
mouth of the Forerunner, this great symbolical reference, which is so common in the  
other Gospels and in the Epistles. It is  
remarkable that our Lord brings it forward in His answer *to the disciples of  
John* respecting fasting, Matt. ix. 15:  
where see note on the further import of  
the terms used.

The **friend of the  
bridegroom** was the regular organ of communication in the preliminaries of marriage, and had the ordering of the marriage  
feast. It is to this last time, and not to  
any ceremonial custom connected with the  
marriage rites, that this verse refers. The  
friend rejoices at hearing the **voice of the  
bridegroom**, (see Jer. vii. 34; xvi. 9; xxv.  
10: Rev. xviii. 23,) in his triumph and  
joy, *at the marriage*. He **rejoiceth with  
joy** because he hears in the voice of the  
Bridegroom an assurance of the happy  
completion of his mission, and on account  
of the voice itself,—“so sweet, so lovely,  
so telling of salvation.”

The words standeth and belong merely to the graphic  
setting forth of the similitude.

**this my joy therefore is fulfilled]** “Because I  
have presented the bride to Him, and fulfilled, as is elsewhere said, the ministry  
entrusted to me.” Euthymius.

**30.] decrease**, ‘as the morning-star at  
the rise of the sun.” Euthymius. See note