

elation, tempered by serious concern, to this, the first great crisis of His life.

Perhaps there is no other outstanding event in Christ's life of which the significance is so slightly appreciated as that of His baptism. We may readily perceive the meaning of the ordinance so far as the multitude was concerned. Their baptism was the sign of their repentance and of their faith in a coming Messiah. John's mission to the nation had this double purpose to serve: it was meant to stir the national conscience, grown sluggish and feeble, to a keener sense of sin; and it was meant to revive the Messianic expectation, formerly the great, distinctive national hope, but which had long been blanching and for centuries had been voiceless. But what purpose could be served by the baptism of the Messiah Himself? He was separate from sinners and harmless and undefiled. And He knew Himself to be the Messiah. What meaning, then, could the rite of baptism have for Him? The answer is a four-fold one.