

model of what Sunday-school teachers ought to be. Notice :

1. John's preparation for his work. It was (a) in retirement, (b) in self-denial.

2. What his work was. To "prepare the way of the Lord" by levelling the hard hearts of the Jews and straightening their crooked ways. See Isa. xl. 3, 4; Luke iii. 4, 5.

3. How he did his work. (a) He told of sin—practically (Luke iii. 11-14—searchingly (Matt. iii. 7-10.) (b) He urged a public profession of repentance by submission to his baptism. (c) He told of the Saviour—"Behold the Lamb of God!"

4. His estimation of his work. He "preached not himself but Christ." (See 2 Cor. iv. 5.) He was not content with drawing disciples to himself, he pointed them and sent them to Christ. See John i. 35-37; Matt. xi. 2; and especially John iii. 26-31.

Let it not be thought that all this is unsuitable for Sunday scholars. It is well for the teacher from time to time to speak to the children about himself—about his objects and desires in relation to them—in order that they may learn the better to appreciate his office and work.

Berean Notes.

I. GENERAL STATEMENT.

John the Baptist being in prison sends a message of inquiry to Jesus. Jesus returns an answer, and delivers to the multitudes an eulogy on John.

II. TOPICAL AND EXPOSITORY NOTES.

Topic: The light, sent to bear witness of the LIGHT.

1. THE LIGHT IN THE DARK PLACE, ver. 2. (1.) *The prisoner.* JOHN the Baptist. In prison now for many months, by reason of his fidelity in reproving the licentious Herod Antipas. Matt. iv. 12; xiv. 3. In his dungeon he HAD HEARD . . . THE WORKS OF CHR'IST. Every prisoner shall yet hear of Jesus. Isa. lxi. 1. (2.) *The prison.* The castle of Machærus, nine miles east of the northern part of the Dead Sea, near the southern extremity of Herod's dominions. Ancient prisons were cells under castles and palaces. (3.) *The messengers.* Long confinement, the delay of Christ in developing the glory and power of his mission; anxiety, not concerning the divinity of Jesus, but concerning the precise nature of his kingdom; these things evidently

moved John to send some OF HIS DISCIPLES to make inquiry of Christ. (*Illus. 1, 2.*)

2. THE LIGHT LIGHTING THE WORLD, ver. 1. (1.) *Lawgiver.* COMMANDING. By divine right Jesus makes commands for the whole world. Heaven's laws are not only for God's glory, but equally for man's highest welfare. Law and Christ—our two best friends. The TWELVE obey the commands of Jesus and fill the world with joy. (2.) *Teacher.* DEPARTED. Jesus ever active. TO TEACH. To tell an ignorant race what they knew not before; to explain eternal truth; to guide the lost into the right way; to counsel; to illustrate with the light of heaven the path of duty and the way to immortality. Christ the GREAT TEACHER. (3.) *Preacher.* TO PREACH IN THEIR CITIES sermons filled with divine wisdom; to arouse men from the sleep of sin; to warn and to invite; to cry aloud the glad tidings that Jesus came to save from the power of sin and death. Thus as Lawgiver, as Teacher, as Preacher, Christ is THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. John i. 9. (*Illus. 3.*)

3. THE MESSAGE AND THE ANSWER, vers. 3-6. (1.) *Messiah expected.* For centuries the Jews had looked for one THAT SHOULD COME to save their nation. Gen. xlix. 10; Dan. ix. 24; Mal. iii. 1. John asks, ART THOU the long-promised Messiah? OR DO WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER? John believes in the divine power of Jesus, but he wants the question of Messianism to be settled by Jesus himself. (2.) *Christ's affirmation.* GO . . . SHOW . . . HEAR . . . SEE. Jesus willing to answer any reasonable question—to listen to any honest doubt. On this vital point his reply is not in words. "Deeds are mightier far than words." (3.) *Attestation of miracles.* Crowds surround Jesus. "In that same hour," (Luke vii. 21,) in presence of the messengers, Jesus wrought miracles. Thus the disciples may report to John the wonders performed on THE BLIND . . . THE LAME . . . THE LEPERS . . . THE DEAF . . . THE DEAD. Especially may they relate the crowning glory of Christ's works, that THE POOR—for whom sects and systems never cared—now HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED UNTO THEM. Thus Christ's deeds fulfil prophecy: He is THE MESSIAH. Isa. xxix. 18; xxxv. 5, 6; lxi. 1, 2. (*Illus. 4.*)

4. THE QUESTION TO THE FOLLOWERS, vers. 7-9. (1.) *What the people think of John?* Christ asks the MULTITUDES their motive for going INTO THE WILDERNESS of Judea. Did you