

7. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8. Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: 9. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10. And even now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; 12. whose fan is in

his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14. But John would have hindered him saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15. But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffereth him.

16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

GOLDEN TEXT.

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 3: 17.

PROVE THAT.

Jesus was divine. John 10; 30.

DAILY READINGS.

- M. Jesus and John, Matt. 3: 1-9.
- T. Jesus and John, Matt. 3: 10-17.
- W. Prepare the way, Isa. 40: 1-8.
- T. A voice from heaven, Luke 9: 23-36.
- F. John's witness, John 1: 15-28.
- S. Behold the Lamb, John 1: 29-37.
- S. Sent before, John 3: 23-36.

CATECHISM.

- Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?
- A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

LESSON HYMNS.

Nos. 481, 476, 105, 412, in the new Book of Praise.

HELPS FOR LESSON I, BY REV. PROF. ROSS, B.D., MONTREAL.

INTRODUCTORY: Matthew (Gift of God) the author of this gospel was the Son of Alphaeus (Mark 2: 14, and consequently the brother of James the Less. "He was a Galilean by birth, a Jew by religion, and a publican by profession." He was called by Christ from the toll booth, on the main road, near the Sea of Galilee. (Matt. 9: 9-13.) His name was originally Levi.) Mark 2: 14. (Luke 5: 27) but in accordance with a common

custom he changed it to Matthew when he became an apostle. This book, which is his enduring monument, has been called the Gospel for the Jew; and clearly the main purpose of it is to represent Christ as the greatest of the prophets, the predicted Messiah, the true King of Israel. Its key note may be found in the words "I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." (5: 17.) It is a connecting link between the Law and the Gospel and forms a fitting transition from the Old Testament to the New.

- LESSON PLAN. {
- I. The Pharisees and John. vs. 7-12.
 - II. Jesus and John. vs. 13-15.
 - III. Father, Son, and Spirit. vs. 16.

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

7. He saw many.—John the Baptist had now been for some time preaching repentance and the near approach of the Kingdom of Heaven and it had become fashionable for all classes to go out to hear him. Perhaps those who caught his eye had come to discover something which they might find fault with. **Pharisees.**—Separatists or Ritualists, who believed that all true religion and righteousness consisted (1) in the observance of the outward ceremonies of

Judaism with many minute and unauthorized additions. Not many of this class, certainly none of its leading men, were baptized by John, (Luke 7: 30.) **Sadducees:** Rationalists, somewhat similar to certain persons now who will not believe in anything that they cannot see. They acknowledged, in theory, the authority of the Old Testament but denied the resurrection of the body (Matt. 22: 23,) and with it the immortality of the soul and the existence of the Spirit world, (Acts 23: 8.)