

natural church of Science. To this day, therefore, Natural Theology affords a defence against false philosophy and apostate belief; but still the Christian must return as soon as possible from this Egypt, into the Israel of God's Revealed Theology in the Holy Scriptures.

The passage from Hosea 11: 1., referred literally to the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt. See also Exod. 4: 22, 23. But that deliverance was itself a prophetic type of the conversion of man from naturalism to regeneration, of which our Lord's return from Egypt was the antitypical fulfilment. In this spiritual sense, the deliverance from Egypt is introduced into the Moral Law as an eternal principle (Exod. 20: 2,) signifying, "That God is the Lord, our God and REDEEMER."

Vv. 16-18.—The infernal fury of Herod then broke out in one of the most hideous and monstrous massacres recorded in all the sad pages of mortal shame and woe! And no marvel. Herod was of the seed of that old Serpent that deceived Eve, and who now felt from Judah's land the dreaded Infant's hand, which was predestined to bruise that treacherous serpent's head.

Verse 17 is quoted from Jeremiah 31: 15, where it literally referred to the miseries of the Babylonish captivity. But here also, as well as in verse 15, we find that even the historical scriptures have also a typical and prophetic sense; and that, whatever may be their letter, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Rachel, well-beloved but often unhappy in her life, had died at Bethlehem Ephratah, at the birth of Benjamin (Gen. 35: 16-20) and here, as if disquieted and shocked by the unspeakable atrocities of Herod's massacre, she cannot find rest even in the grave, but weeps inconso-lably for her slaughtered infants once more, in the person of the bereaved mothers of Bethlehem. How tender is the Lord's message to her (Jer. 31: 16-17.) No doubt these infants were all saved: See Mat. 18: 14.

Vv. 19-23.—But the miserable Herod dies and the infant Lord returns, by Divine Providence, and dwells in lonely little Nazareth of Galilee, almost unnoticed and unknown, for many long and toilsome years. There, "subject to his parents," the matchless Ideal of all human perfection lived and laboured in silence, daily preparing himself for the mighty work of Redemption, till he had reached the age of thirty years.

#### DOCTRINES.

1. The wicked rage and plot and persecute, but in vain.

2. The spirit of every prophecy is a testimony of Jesus (Rev. 19: 10; Luke 24: 17; Acts 10: 43.)

3. If we would be like our Lord, we must be content to labour and suffer long alone, in silent obscurity to prepare us for doing glorious works of usefulness at last.

#### THIRD SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Baptism of Jesus.* Mat. 3: 13-17.

How divinely amiable is this humility of Christ the Lord of all, in submitting to be baptized by His servant John! He longed to fulfil all righteousness, whether of the Moral or Ritual Law of God. He would not break one of the least commandments of God (Mat. 5: 17-19.)

Christ was now about thirty years of age (Luke 3: 21-23,) which was the age prescribed by God for entering on the Priestly office: (See Numb. 4: 23, 30, 35, &c.) Christ therefore began his public ministry at this proper time, whenever his hour had come. It was also commanded by God that those entering on the Priestly office should be purified by the sprinkling of water (Numb. 8: 6-11.) Christ's baptism appears therefore to have been a sacred initiatory rite by which he entered upon his public ministry as our Great High Priest, according to the Law of God. His baptism could not be for repentance or remission of sin, for "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," (Pet. 2: 22.) He therefore did not need to offer sacrifices for Himself, as other priests did, but he offered Himself once for all, a sacrifice perfect and spotless to take away the sin of the world (Heb. 5: 1-9.)

V. 14.—John shrinks at first from the thought of baptizing the Holy One of God, but obeys with true humility, at the Saviour's request and explanation.

V. 16.—The words translated, "*out of the water,*" might be more properly translated, "*from the water,*" both here and in Mark 1: 10. But it is probable enough that John and his disciples may have stepped into the edge of the water. The most ancient pictures represent John as pouring water upon the head of Jesus, standing in the brink of the river. And there are still living in Turkey and Persia, many thousands of the followers of John the Baptist, who still step into the water to be baptized by sprinkling; never by immersion. And they declare that they thus follow the mode used by John the Baptist, and handed down to them from generation to generation with the unchanging manner of the East. See the article "Sabians, or Mendaits" in Buck's Theological Dictionary.

After his baptism with water He is baptized with the Holy Spirit descending from heaven and lighting upon him. This is