

NO. 4. ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

To read—*St. Matthew iii.*

I. HIS MISSION. (Read 1—12.) St. Matthew omits his miraculous birth, told by St. Luke. (Luke i. 13—17.) Was a Nazarite—dedicated to God from his birth. Twofold mission—to preach repentance, and prepare for Christ. Begins by preaching repentance, *i.e.* confession of sin, contrition for sin—change from sin—declares also coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, *i.e.* of Christ the King.

St. John's mission prophesied of by Isaiah (Isa. xl. 3) as road prepared for a king, high places levelled and valleys raised, so preaching repentance prepared for coming of Christ by turning hearts to Him.

John's mode of life simple—living in wilderness of Judæa—*tunic* of camel's hair—*food*, locusts, allowed to be eaten by Jews (see Leviticus xi. 22), and wild honey, still gathered from trees in same wilderness. His mission a great success. Pharisees, great observers of the Law—Sadducees, aristocratic sect—came for Baptism—all alike warned and taught—must *amend* lives—not *trust* to privileges—*prepare* for future judgment—*believe* on Christ, Who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. Notice the numerous similes used by St. John—vipers, stones, trees, the slave, the threshing-floor.

Difference between baptism of John and that of Christ. 1. St. John baptized with water only. Christ

with the Spirit also. (St. John iii. 5.) 2. St. John baptized in name of Christ. Christ in name of the Trinity (xxviii. 19) 3. St. John's baptism did not bestow grace. Christ's baptism gave Holy Ghost. (Acts xix. 5, 6.)

LESSONS FROM ST. JOHN'S LIFE.

1. *Humility.* Thinks himself unworthy of a slave's part to Christ. (Verse 11.) 2. *Boldness* in attacking sins of rich and powerful.

II. BAPTISM OF CHRIST. 1. *Circumstances.* Christ came, was not urged—asked for baptism—proving exception to the rule, that the less is blessed of the better. (Heb. vii. 7.) Overcomes St. John's scruples—submits to baptism, the outward sign of the new life. St. Luke adds that the Holy Spirit descended in bodily shape, and that Christ was praying. (St. Luke iii. 21, 22.) Thus at beginning of public life, at age of thirty (St. Luke iii. 23), Christ anointed with the Holy Ghost and hears his Father's voice, and heavens opened above Him. 2. *Cause.* (a) *To set an example* of obedience—Christ passed through each kind of baptism, *water* now, the *Holy Ghost* (Acts x. 38), *fire* at His Crucifixion. (St. Luke xii. 50.) (b) *To be dedicated* for His work. Prophets, priests and kings all anointed with oil when set apart for their office, *e.g.*, Elisha (1 Kings xix. 16), Aaron (Ex. xxx. 25), Saul (1 Sam. x. 1). Christ combined all three offices.

LESSONS. 1. *Obedience* to Christian ordinances. 2. *Dedication* of ourselves to God's service.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

WE reprint this month an article which lately appeared in the *Week* from the pen of Mr. Haultain. Mr. Haultain acted this year as one of the examiners for the University of Toronto, and feels it to be his duty

to give to the public the benefit of the impression made upon his mind by the reading of the answers of candidates for junior matriculation and teachers' certificates. During vacation we made arrangements to have