

Sabbath School Lessons.

June 2nd, 1861.

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY
TO JESUS.—JOHN I. 19-34.I. *John's statements regarding himself.*—

These statements were made to the officers of the Jews, v. 19. The Priests and Levites were the two classes employed about the temple service,—Josh. iii. 3.—and on this occasion some of them were sent officially to inquire into the pretensions of John.

1. John said that he was *not the Christ*. The Messiah had been expected, and such was the popularity of John that many thought that he might prove the Messiah. He might have claimed to be the Messiah, as Christ had not yet appeared.

2. John said that he was *not Elias*, v. 21. Elias is the Greek term for Elijah, whom the Jews expected to come down from heaven in person to anoint the Messiah. The personal appearance of John reminded them of Elias.—See Matth. iii. 4. 2 Kings i. 8. John denied that he was Elias in any such sense, though he was personally the Elias prophesied by Malachi, chap. iii. 1-4-5. That he came in the power of Elias was the most that could be said.

3. That he was *not that Prophet*, v. 21.—The Jews looked for *one of the old prophets risen again* to herald the advent of Christ.—Some thought it Jeremiah. Some one and some another,—Matth. xvi. 14. Or *that prophet* like unto Moses which was promised, Deut. xviii. 15-18.

4. That he was the voice &c., v. 23. John applies the prophecy to himself which the Evangelists apply to him,—Isa. xl. 3.—Those who were sent were of the Pharisees, and as John was only what he claimed to be, they wished to know on what authority he baptized. They ought to have known that being Christ's forerunner he had a right to baptize, but this they did not understand.

II. *John's statement regarding Christ.*—

John said.

1. That Christ stood in their midst, v. 26, though they did not know Him. This testimony of John was, doubtless, delivered often and in different terms and circumstances. The testimony given in this lesson was *after* Christ's baptism, when John had already recognised him. And the sign given at the baptism was not for the people but for John; so that he might make Him known to them,—See v. 33.

2. That Christ was superior to him, v. 27. He was *preferred*. Whose shoe's latchet, &c. The people of the East wore only the sole of a shoe, bound fast to the foot by strings passed

over and around it. This was more pleasant for hot countries. But it was the work of the lowest servants to stoop and untie this sandal. This shows John's true humility.

3. That Christ was the Lamb of God, v. 29. *The next day*, i.e. the next day after the delegation of the Jews inquired of John. This was just after Christ's return from the temptation in the wilderness.

Christ a Lamb. A lamb was killed and eaten in commemoration of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Christ was predicted by Isaiah as a Lamb led to the slaughter, chap. liii. 7, who hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. In this lesson he is announced as bearing or taking away the sins of the world. This *bearing* of sin is frequently referred to in the Old Testament, and signifies, to remove the guilt or penalty of sin by expiation,—Lev. x. 47. Exod. xxxiv. 7. Num. xiv. 8.

Christ the Lamb of God. He was God's lamb, as the sacrifice provided by God,—John iii. 16,—and accepted by the Father as a satisfaction for sin, according to the plan of grace. It was not any private offering like the lamb which any sinner brought to the altar, but it was God's unblemished offering, furnished by His infinite love.

Christ the lamb of God *that taketh away the sin*. The sacrificial lamb which bears the sin, also takes it away. There is no bearing of sin as Mediator without removing it. This cannot be done by mere teaching, nor even by Christ as a teacher, but only by Christ as "our Passover," whose blood must be sprinkled on our conscience. The doctrine of *substitution*, that is, of one's punishment endured by another, was clearly taught in the Old Testament. In this light Isaiah sets forth the suffering Messiah. He was wounded for our transgressions,—See chap. liii. John here says, "Behold the sacrificial lamb," the great appointed sacrifice prepared by God, predicted and brought forward by Him to bear the sin of the world. *Of the world*. The Messiah's work was extended to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

Learn 1. Christ is the only sacrifice once offered for sin.

2. That every one who would be saved must look unto Christ.

3. That it is your duty to behold Christ, with wonder, with admiration.

"Blessed, holy, spotless Lamb!
Seated on the rainbow'd throne,
Wilt Thou take me as I am?
Wilt Thou one so guilty own?"

Yes; it was for such as I
That Thy precious blood was spilt;
Nothing brought Thee here to die—
Nothing but our woe and guilt."