

stones to raise up children. God was able to shut the Jews out of His kingdom, if they became unworthy of it, and bring others into it, even from the stones.

10-12. Mightier than I; as will be shown by His baptizing with the Holy Ghost. **Shoes;** sandals for the bottom of the feet, fastened on with strings or thongs. **To bear;** "to stoop down and unloose," says Mark; the work of the lowest slave. **With the Holy Ghost.** John's baptism with water was only a sign of cleansing from sin. Christ was to give the Holy Ghost, who would really cleanse. **With fire.** The meaning is, that, through the gift of the Holy Ghost, Christ would (1) purify; (2) fill with zeal; (3) enlighten. **Fan;** a sort of wooden fork for throwing the grain into the air against the wind, after it was threshed, to separate it from the chaff. **Purge;** cleanse, by letting the chaff blow away, gathering the straw to be burned and the wheat to be stored up. **Threshing floor** (Rev. Ver.); on which the grain was threshed by being trodden with oxen.

DAILY READINGS

M.—The preaching of John the Baptist, Matt. 3: 1-12. T.—The messenger, Mark 1: 1-8. W.—The prophecy, Isa. 40: 1-11. Th.—Preaching repentance, Luke 3: 1-14. F.—John's record of himself, John 1: 19-23. S.—The song of Zacharias, Luke 1: 67-80. S.—Exhortation to repentance, Isa. 1: 10-20.

***Prove from Scripture**—That sin should be confessed.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 26: 144; 40 (Ps. Sel.); 105; 553 (from Primary Quarterly): 111.

Shorter Catechism—Ques. 3. *What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?* The word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Juniors—What was the name of John the Baptist's father? Of his mother? How much older was he than Jesus? At what age did he begin to preach and baptize? Who had foretold his coming?

1, 2 Why was John called the Baptist? Where did he preach? What did he tell the people to do? What is meant by "the kingdom of heaven?" What similar titles used?

3, 4 What ancient custom referred to in v. 3? How was John clothed? What was his food?

5-7 Who went to hear John? What did he do? what did they do? Who were the Pharisees? Who were the Sadducees? What did John call them? What did he mean?

8-12 From whom were the Jews descended? What does John call Jesus? (ch. 11.) What does He say of Himself? With what did John baptize? Jesus?

Seniors and the Home Department—Where is the "wilderness of Judaea? Describe it.

1-4 How does Luke date the ministry of John? What is repentance? (Shorter Catechism, Ques. 87.) Show that it is necessary to salvation. (Mark 1: 15, Acts 20: 21.) Explain "the voice."

5-7 Give an instance of baptism among the Jews. What should precede baptism? (Mark 16: 16.)

8-12 In what did the Jews trust for salvation? What does John say about this? Contrast the baptism of John with the baptism of Christ? What aspect of Christ's work does John make prominent?

Seek-Further Questions—Give another example of John's humility. When did Christ give the Holy Spirit?

Topics for Brief Papers (To be ready on the day of the Lesson)—1. John the Baptist as Christ's forerunner. 2. What true repentance is. (Consult Luke 8: 10-14.)

THE LESSON IN LIFE

1. The world's great reforms and "mighty works" are accomplished, not by God or man, but by God and man.

2. Wherever there is sin there is a wilderness in which each brave person should be crying, "Repent!"

3. The lifting up of one voice against sin may mean the lifting up of many hands for Christ and holiness.

4. Even without a voice, we may prepare the way for Christ's coming into the hearts of others. A pure and holy life is often more powerful than many words.

5. Let us not deceive ourselves by supposing that we shall be saved because our parents are pious, God-fearing people. We must accept Christ for ourselves, if we are to become heirs of salvation.

6. Should we become Christians through a sense of fear? Jesus said so, when he gave his description of the last judgment (Matt. 25). Paul said so, 2 Cor. 5: 11. Common sense says so, for fear of consequences is simply one form of common sense.

FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS

1. What prophecy did John fulfil?

2. In what respects did He resemble Elijah?

3. Briefly describe his work.