

**JOHN THE  
BAPTIST: IN VERSE**

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John the Baptist: In Verse by Geo. A. Lofton

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**GEO. A. LOFTON**

**JOHN THE  
BAPTIST: IN VERSE**



# JOHN THE BAPTIST

(In Verse)

BY  
GEO. A. LOFTON

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*"Semen est sanguis Christianorum"*  
—TERTULLIAN

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## PREFACE.

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The author's aim in this short production is to bring out the grandeur of life and character pictured in the brief career of John the Baptist; to develop the evangelicity of his doctrine and work as symbolized in his baptism; and to demonstrate that he was a heroic Baptist martyr who sealed his testimony, as such, with his blood—who left us the imperishable treasury of Baptist doctrine and practice, first taught in the gospel—and who bequeathed to us the sacred name we bear, the symbolic patronym of all saving truth and grace contained in the word of God. The merit of the poem is left to the judgment of the reader—its effect for good to the blessing of God.

G. A. L.

(3)

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## JOHN THE BAPTIST.

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### I. JOHN'S CHARACTER. :

#### I

Of noblest birth, in priestly line, was John  
The Baptist, manhood's greatest son; for none  
Of woman born than he was greater save  
The Son of Mary who than man was more.  
With Spirit filled from mother's womb and framed  
In sturdy mould and stern, Elijah come  
Again was he—the antitype of that  
Ideal prophet flamed of God in word  
And deed and chariot-borne above in fire,  
Not born as other men to die.

#### II

Elijah-like he was and sudden came  
Unknown of men, in desert bred, and pure  
From touch of earth and times corrupt, afraid  
Of none, Ahabs nor Herods dread, nor men  
Of any state. Though clad in camel's hair



And leathern girt, on locusts fed—though ne'er  
To kingly palace known or raiment soft—  
Within him lived a princely soul that lodged  
A man of men, a man of God imbued  
And kept that none could taint or terrify,  
Though born, unlike his prototype, by hands  
Of men to die.

## III

Within that soul enshrined was virgin life  
And truth unsoiled by human cult, or creed,  
Or doubtful custom. Freedom-bred was he,  
Unshackled was in thought and purpose high  
His God alone to serve and glorify,  
And faithful prove to mortal man.  
As desert lion lone, with shaggy lock  
And beard, he lived the king of self and men,  
And scorned the prey of meaner things that taint  
The baser sort. Upon his pallid face  
And wan that flashed with eagle eye, there reigned  
The holy mien of godly life and force  
Of character that mystery enthrone,  
And men attract, and sinners move. About  
His rugged brow that knit with student care,  
There gathered fast and deep the pregnant clouds  
Of earnest, anxious thought that vivid broke

With lightning flash and thunder peal, and flood  
Of grace upon the multitudes that heard  
Entranced, repented and believed.

## IV

With fervid lip and burning tongue, and filled  
With God, he spake with eloquence divine  
That pierced the heart of Judah's frozen pride  
And darkest Galilee. From far and near—  
From mountain, hill and dale—from city great  
And village small—the hosts of Israel dead  
Were quickened and moved to hear the magic voice  
And feel the magic touch of John whose might  
No earthly charm possessed—no earthly force  
Endued—no earthly law controlled.

## V

And whence this power of John the Baptist great?  
This lonely hermit of the wilderness?  
The desert wild and solitude his home  
And college were, where God and Nature taught  
And whence he drew his creed of righteousness  
And truth that mercy warmed and love, unwarped  
By policy of men or priestly craft,  
By science or religion falsely called.  
The beasts and birds so free on Judah's hills,

The fish that sport in Jordan's stream and glad,  
To him companions closer were than men,  
And friendlier to God. The bloom of Spring  
And Summer's fruit—the fading Autumn leaf  
And Winter's grave—that varied seasons brought,  
To him revealed the constant laws of God  
And changeless order fast in sun and moon  
And star, that good and mercy wrought for man  
Through providential care. He heard the voice  
Of God in thunder peal, and saw his glimpse  
In lightning gleam, and felt his power in storm  
And tempest grand that swept the verdant vale  
Or tore the mountain side; and through the change  
Of desolating death and nascent time,  
Beheld the shadowed curse and cure of sin,  
And felt afar the resurrection joy  
Of life renewed.

## VI

Within his hand he clasped with open page  
The Word of God—the Testament of old;  
And thus he looked and clear, with eye undimmed  
By fleshly film or worldly hue, into  
The books of God and Nature true—the old  
And oldest revelation—both divine  
And pure. By nature true and Spirit-filled—