

The Sabbath School.

LESSONS FOR JULY.

FIRST SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Word made flesh*, John 1 1-14. Golden Text, 1st Tim. 3, 16. Par. pass. Isa. 9, 6. Luke 2, 11. John 3, 16.

This lesson contains, first, the most elaborate statement of the *divinity of Christ*, which is given to us in God's Word. Indeed, while in Matthew He is presented chiefly in the aspect of the Messiah promised to the Jews, in Mark as the active servant of God, in Luke as the Saviour of mankind at large—one leading feature of John's gospel is, the exhibition of his divinity.

Gen. 11, coupled with verse 3 of the lesson, tells us that in the beginning he made the heavens and the earth. In verse first we are told that He *existed* in the beginning. That is, He is eternal. He is declared to be distinct from the Father, to be equal with the Father, (see Chap. 13, 7) and to be as truly God as the Father. He is called *the Word*, an expression used only by John; and this name indicates his official work, as the second person of the Trinity. As man's words disclose his character and intentions, so the Son of God reveals to His creatures the character and purposes of the Father.

Secondly, the lesson describes the manner in which this great work was carried on, and the results which followed. As the Creator the Son of God had been the source of all natural and spiritual life, and now when that spiritual life had been lost, it could be restored only by Him. His life on earth, through His teaching and His example, was the light of man; and by His words and spirit he still communicates all that in men is true light, knowledge, integrity, purity, obedience to God, love to Him and to man, holy joy, rational happiness. By His word and His messengers He had sent this light from the Creation, but the darkness comprehended it not. The ignorance and moral corruption of men were so thick and gross that the light made little impression. So it was before the incarnation, and so, to a large extent, has it been since. The world had not been left in ignorance of the advent of its august visitant. The predicted forerunner had come, preparing the way of the Lord, and preaching with such wonderful fervour and success, that His positive disavowal was necessary to hinder the people from proclaiming Him to be the Messiah. And yet when the true light really came—the only source of light to men—into His own world which He had made, to his own temple and priesthood which He had consecrated for His service, to His own people, whom He had chosen out of all nations, and many times saved from impending ruin, the world knew Him not, the people rejected Him, and the priests persecuted and slew Him. Still, there were, and are, some who receive Him, that is, believe that He is able and willing to save them; come to Him as sinners, accept of His salvation, draw their spiritual life

from Him, and thus, receiving power to become sons of God, become members of that glorious family, of which He is the eldest brother. That the number of those so far has been few, does not arise from any deficiency either of wisdom or of power, on the part of the Eternal Word. The principle of gradual development reigns in every department of His works. As the dawn brightens only by slow degrees into the effulgence of noon-day, so ages may be required to bless the nations with the meridian splendour of the Sun of Righteousness. But we know that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

In the 14th verse we have the most wonderful feature of this wonderful manifestation of God. The Word was made flesh. Our nature was taken into such intimate union with the divine nature that they became one person. His manhood was not a mere appearance, taught by ancient heretics; nor did His divinity supply the place of a human soul. Mr. Beecher teaches; but He had a true body and a reasonable soul. For more than thirty years he lived on earth, displaying, not material, but spiritual glory—"the glory of a passing grace, love, tenderness, wisdom, purity, majesty, meekness, riches and poverty." Plentitude of grace marked His purpose regarding our lost race, full and perfect to mark His teaching, both necessary, the first to pardon the utterly helpless and lost, the second to banish the delusions respecting God and themselves, which prevent sinners from seeking salvation.

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*Following the Lamb*, John 1 46.

John the Baptist was a cousin to our Lord Jesus, yet it was so arranged in the wisdom of God that John was not personally acquainted with Him. See verse 31. The next day here refers to the day after that mentioned in v. 39. Of the two disciples here mentioned one was Andrew, and it is likely that the other was John himself. See v. 40. It is remarkable that John, throughout the whole of the Gospel story, keeps back his own name, and he can do so,—out of modesty.

V. 36.—*Looking*: the looking here is intense, steady. It might be translated "gazing attentively." John the Baptist looked at Jesus, and so must all who would know Him. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed into the same image. "We shall see Him as He is." "Whom not having seen ye love, whom though now ye see Him not, ye believe, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."—No sooner does John the Baptist see and know the "Lamb of God" than he points Him out to others. (Let the Teacher again and again explain the meaning of the name *Lamb of God*. See Isaiah, 53: 7. Exod. 12: 4, 5. 10: 10. Rev. 5: 6. The types under the Old Testament were but feeble foreshadowings of the Lamb of God.)

V. 37.—See the promptitude of the disciples. They loved John the Baptist