

to show the dark prospects of those who are simply born once into the world and know nothing of the new birth.

Now go back over the passage, and show in what sense Christ is Life and Light.

See it in His creative power, vs. 1-5. He spoke. Suns and worlds came into being at His word. The deadness and darkness of chaos disappeared. Trace all forms of life to Christ. Your class may be more accustomed to think of Him as Saviour and Lord, than as Creator. Disabuse their minds of the idea that He only began to be when He was born at Bethlehem. "Before Abraham was, I am," ch. 8:58.

See it in His inspiring power, vs. 6-11. Before He came into the world, He inspired messenger after messenger to dispel the moral darkness and spiritual gloom of the early centuries and give light to men upon their course of duty. John is specially named, but do not here enlarge upon his mission. You have a lesson in reserve that will afford a better opportunity for that.

See it in His saving power, vs. 12-18. Show how, through the new birth, man's natural inability and hopelessness are overcome by Christ, and those who are by nature in a state of deadness and darkness are given life and light, ch. 8:12.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

By Rev. R. Douglas Fraser, M.A.

Why back again so soon to the Gospels? We began 1904 with them; why once more now? Every child knows the answer; and teachers and scholars alike rejoice when the lessons bring them to the "old, old story" of Jesus' life on earth.

But this is a new Gospel. It was Matthew, Mark and Luke before. What is the difference between their story and John's? This, perhaps, chiefly, that they give more of what Christ did, John more of what He said. Explain why this was. John wrote long after the others. There was no need to repeat. Besides, John was the very closest to his Lord, loving most, and most loved; and therefore remembering most clearly the very words He spoke. There is still another charm to John's Gospel. It is the gospel of an old man. He was quite young when

he followed Jesus in His earthly ministry. He was very old when he wrote his gospel. He had meditated for a lifetime on the wonderful words of his Master and Lord; they had become more and more precious to him. His gospel, therefore, has a sweetness and richness all its own.

It is not quite an easy gospel to teach children. All the more need to find the key. Have the class turn to ch. 20:31. The lock has three wards:—Was Jesus the promised Messiah, or Christ? Was He the Son of God? Does He give eternal life? John's gospel, like a key, fits into them all, and unlocks the treasure-house of God's love.

This first Lesson, which sums all up that follow, is, of course, about Jesus. A lifetime would not exhaust it. We can, perhaps, catch a little bit of the grandeur and glory and grace of it from THESE FOUR WORDS:—

I. HE WAS. Always was; eternal ages before there was any created thing, v. 1. He was "the Word" (v. 1), the voice through which God spake. He was "with God," and was Himself God vs. 1, 2. (See S. Catechism, Ques. 6.) We are on the very mountain tops of mystery here; but children are surer-footed on such heights than grown people. There are no mists of doubt to obscure *their* vision.

II. HE MADE. Have the class read v. 3; and then Gen. 1:1. Again, the child has no difficulty. Why not? Jesus was God; and perhaps the easiest thought of God to the child is that of God as Creator. The child's constant admiration of older people is that they can *make* things. Develop the greatness of the Creator by taking a snow-flake, a flower. No man can make even these least things. But the Creator made ALL things.

III. HE CAME. Came to this poor earth, to bring life and light, v. 4. John the Baptist was a wonderful man; but he was only a little lamp-light. Jesus was the great Light, the very sun itself for glory and power, vs. 6-9. Every light, alas, has its shadow. The shadow of this light is in vs. 10, 11: The world He had made, and the people He had chosen, rejected Him.

IV. HE GAVE,—surely some marvellous gift. Verse 12 tells the story; and 1 John 3:1, 2 reveals how marvellous the gift is.