

## The Sunday School

## BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Fourth Quarter.

## CHRIST THE TRUE LIGHT.

Lesson I. January 1, 1899.—John 1:1-14.

Study John 1:1-34; 8:12-18; 12:44-50.

Commit Verses 9-12.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men, John 1:4.

## EXPLANATORY.

SUBJECT: OUR PERFECT, DIVINE REDEEMER. HIS PECULIAR QUALIFICATIONS.

I. HIS ETERNAL EXISTENCE WITH GOD AND AS GOD BEFORE HE CAME INTO THIS WORLD.—Vs. 1, 2. 1. IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD.—"With evident allusion to the first word of Genesis, the primal beginning of things. But the Word then already 'was.' He was also the efficient principle, the beginning of the beginning."

Was the Word. "No translation of the Greek term 'Logos,' here translated 'Word,' is at all adequate. But 'word' as the expression of the thought within us, in order to make it known to others, is the best term for us to use. 'Logos' has the double meaning of, 'thought' and 'speech,' the inner reality, or nature, or idea, expressed in outward form. Jesus Christ, the Word (v. 14), is therefore, the intermediate agent through which God communicates his nature, his character, his heart, his will to man. Thus he is 'the mediator between God and man.' AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD. The Greek preposition here translated 'with' originally denotes motion towards, and hence 'with' as the result of the motion. 'Not merely as being beside, but as a living union and communion; implying the active notion of intercourse.'

2. THE SAME. The Word that was God was also with God. A distinction and yet unity. WAS IN THE BEGINNING. The relation was not new with the coming of Christ. "Ask the sun if ever it were without its beams. Ask the fountain if ever it were without its streams. So God was never without his Son."

II. HIS PREVIOUS WORKS.—V. 3. ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM. Through him. Creation was his work, his department. In Genesis, in describing the creation, the expression "And God said" is used eight times. WAS NOT ANYTHING. "No, not one (not even one)"; stronger than "nothing." THAT WAS MADE. Came into being. All creation was a revelation of God.

III. THE NATURE OF HIS WORK.—TO GIVE LIFE AND LIGHT.—Vs. 4, 5. 4. IN HIM WAS LIFE. "He was the well-spring from which every form of life—physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, eternal—flows." He was especially the source of eternal life. The life of God in the soul, the life described in John 3:3, 5, the new birth, the beginning of the true life. AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN. Life comes first, then light. According to Scripture and according to the latest science, some living force first set the particles of matter into motion, and the first result was light. Light is a form of motion, and motion comes from life. This is equally true of the soul. There is first life, then light. Dead eyes cannot see, nor dead minds know.

5. AND THE LIGHT SHINETH IN DARKNESS. R. V., "the darkness," of sin, and ignorance, and hopelessness without heaven, or God, or peace. AND THE DARKNESS COMPREHENDED (R. V., "apprehended") IT NOT. Did not admit or receive the light so that the darkness would be removed.

Another translation, in the margin of the R. V. is interesting—"the darkness overcame it, not." The light, though sometimes apparently overcome, was really victorious; it withstood every assault, and shone on triumphantly in a darkened world.

Jesus Christ brings to men the two great fundamental needs of men without which salvation is impossible—life and light.

IV. THE HERALD OF HIS COMING.—Vs. 6-9. 6. A MAN SENT FROM GOD. As "an envoy with a special commission." Hence he was a prophet. How he came and was sent is described in Luke and Matthew. He was foretold in Mal. 3:1; 4:5. John's name expresses this fact, as it means "the grace (or gracious gift) of God," like "Theodore."

7. THE SAME CAME FOR A WITNESS, rather, a witnessing, for testimony to BAPTIST, in order that he might bear WITNESS OF THE LIGHT, because, the light being spiritual, and men's eyes closed, or intent on seeing worldly things, they would not notice the light which shone in the humble Jews.

THAT ALL MEN THROUGH HIM MIGHT BELIEVE in the light, first by his witness, and then by seeing for themselves.

8. HE WAS NOT THAT LIGHT, rather, 'the light.' He was "a burning and a shining light," or rather, "lamp." (John 5:35); for the words for "light" in the two passages are different.

9. THAT WAS THE TRUE LIGHT, WHICH LIGHTETH EVERY MAN, each individual man THAT COMETH. Every man that cometh, or more probably, as R. V., "the true light that cometh." When John began to preach the true light was just coming into the world. The lighting every man was the test and proof that the light to which John bore witness was the true light. The test of the true religion is that it is adapted to all needs, all circumstances, all ages, all races, all degrees of intelligence. It is the sun, not an electric lamp.

V. PURPOSE OF HIS WORK.—TO MAKE MEN THE CHILDREN AND HEIRS OF GOD.—Vs. 10-13. 10. HE, the Word, the Light. WAS IN THE WORLD.—In all the past ages, in every manifestation of God, in the history of the chosen nation, but especially when he appeared as the man Christ Jesus, the Saviour of the world. This is one reason why the world ought to receive him, for he was among men teaching, inviting, and helping them.

11. HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN. His own possessions, his inheritance, his peculiar people, the Jews, whom he had created, whom he had chosen from the rest of the world, whom he had trained and cared for as his peculiar people, and who were his brethren according to the flesh. His own (own people) even these. RECEIVED HIM NOT.—The nation as a whole did not receive him as the Son of God, their promised Messiah, their King, their Redeemer. They might today be walking as kings and princes, the central power and glory of the world, had they only received him.

12. BUT AS MANY (individuals) AS RECEIVED HIM. Accepted him as their Saviour and King, acknowledged his claims, and yielded obedience to his teachings. TO THEM GAVE HE POWER (R. V., the right). The original word combines the two ideas, both "the right and the power." TO BECOME THE SONS (better, with R. V., "children") OF GOD. On the divine side, God adopts us as children (Rom. 8:16, 17), and makes us children by imparting to us his own life (John 3:3, 5). On the human side, we must be born again, from above (John 3:3, 5) by believing. EVEN TO THEM THAT BELIEVE ON HIS NAME. Only those are children who receive the divine life and the divine nature by true faith.

13. WHICH WERE BORN. Lit., "were begotten," as in 1 John 2:29; 3:9. Receiving the divine spiritual life from God, as the child receives his from his parents. NOT OF BLOOD. This life is not received by natural inheritance from parents or ancestors. NOR OF THE WILL OF THE FLESH. Not by their own efforts or exertions. NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN. It is beyond the will of man to bestow this spiritual, eternal life. He can only lead others to the source from which it comes. BUT OF GOD. He alone can impart the new life, for it is a spiritual divine life like his own.

VI. HIS COMING INTO THE WORLD. THE INCARNATION.—V. 14. AND THE WORD. With all the powers and qualifications described above. WAS MADE. Became. The same verb as in v. 3. FLESH. Human nature in and according to its corporal manifestation. "He did not cease to be the eternal Word. His divine nature was not laid aside. Retaining all the essential properties of the Word, he entered into a 'new mode' of being, not a new being."

AND DWELT AMONG US. "Tabernacled" among us, dwelt as in a tent, as the divine Presence dwelt in the tabernacle in the wilderness. AND WE BEHELD. "We," John and many other people. Those who were most intimate with him, who imbibed most of his spirit, saw most clearly his glory. But multitudes of people saw something of it. These were witnesses to a fact. His GLORY is the outshining of those qualities which form the excellency and splendor of his true nature, as the glory of the sun is radiance, the outshining of the very nature and heart of the sun. GLORY AS OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER. It was the glory of goodness, of wisdom, of love, of power controlled by these qualities.

The Word dwelt among us. FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH these were his glory. "Full," overflowing with, able to bestow them without measure. "Grace" primarily means that which gives joy, the beauty, loveliness, goodness, which bring delight; then kindness, favor, good-will. Hence the gifts and favors which are the expression of good-will, and thence, still more fully, the free, loving bestowal of this favor and these good gifts. AND TRUTH. "As being the perfect revelation of God the Father: combining in himself and manifesting all divine reality, whether in the being, the law, or the character of God. He embodies what men ought to know and believe of God; what they should do as children of God, and what they should be."

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