

The Lesson Hymns

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 70.

The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin,
The Light of the world is Jesus!
Like sunshine at noon-day his glory shone in,
The Light of the world is Jesus!

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 342.

Conducted by thy hand
Safe through another year,
Again, behold, we stand,
O Lord, to worship here.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 115.

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

The Lesson Outline

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH.D.

I. The Relation of the Word to God and to the World (verses 1-5).

Looking back into eternity, with eyes and ears divinely quickened, the first fact that John is aware of is the ETERNAL MESSAGE; then he recognizes that this is God's MESSAGE (the Word); and then that it is God, really God himself (verse 1). And lest we fail to understand so wonderful a statement he turns it about and says it over again (in verse 2).

1. This Word is Creator of all things, and this fact John also turns around and repeats (verse 3).

2. This Word is more than merely Creator, he is the Fountain of life—of all life.

3. This Word is the source of all light—physical, mental, and spiritual (verse 4). "The Light does not banish darkness; the darkness does not overpower the Light" (verse 5).

II. The Activity of the Word from the Creation to the Incarnation (verses 6-13).

Coming back to things of this world, John the Apostle calls attention to John the Prophet—a man sent from God (verse 6). This man, whom we know as John the Baptist, was a witness of the Light (verse 7). This statement also is quaintly turned about and repeated (verse 8).

The true Light, identified with the Word of God in verses 1, 4, 5, and with Jesus Christ in verses 14-17, is identified with God present in the world before Christ in verse 10.

He came with spiritual illumination to every man (verse 9), so that every human being had opportunity to choose the best—to reach "sal-

vation." He was not generally recognized and accepted (verse 10).

Even those who were specially chosen [the Hebrews] did not as a class receive him (verse 11). But to those who received him he gave a right and potency to become sons of God—not by any sort of physical descent, but spiritually (verses 12, 13).

III. The Incarnation of the Word (verses 14-16).

1. The Incarnation is vouched for by John the Evangelist (verse 14). This Word (God, Creator, Life, Light, Saviour) became a man, and *we* (John the Apostle and his associates), watching him, saw that he was as glorious as the only begotten Son of God might be expected to be.

2. The Incarnation is testified to by John the Baptist (verse 15).

3. The Incarnation is corroborated by the experience of believers (verse 16).

IV. The Supreme Purpose of the Incarnation (verses 17, 18).

God was incarnated in Jesus Christ for one purpose, to reveal God to humanity. Through all the ages of darkness with more or less earnestness men had sought God; but God had never been rightly apprehended (verse 18). Even the law of Moses, a great illuminator, could not perfectly reveal God (verse 17). Divine grace and truth (comp. verses 14 and 17) were first clearly seen in the human life of the Word—Jesus Christ—who is in a unique sense the Son of God (verse 18), the "only begotten."

The Lesson Word Studies

BY HENRY H. MEYER, A.M., B.D.

PURPOSE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL.—The fourth gospel presents the mature reflections of the apostle John, already well advanced in years, upon the character and work of Jesus as the God-man. John's purpose was not so much to write a connected narrative of the life of our Lord, as it was to present to his readers a pen picture of that life such as would indelibly impress upon their minds the great central truths which the Christ had come to reveal. He would bring every disciple to realize that in Jesus God the Father has become accessible to human thought and affection (love), that in Christ God has tabernacled among men, revealing himself to men, teaching them, loving them, and giving himself for them. His is preeminently the gospel of *Life*, of *Light*, and of *Love*, but of these only as they are manifested in Jesus Christ, who, as John shows, is of a truth the Incarnate Son of God, the Saviour of men, and to man the only Revealer of the Father. "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20. 31), is the apostle's avowed purpose in writing.

THE PROLOGUE.—The first eighteen verses of the first chapter of this gospel constitute what is generally called the prologue to the gospel proper. In this prologue John gives his conclusions concerning the person and character of Christ in the form, as it were, of a theological proposition which he intends to unfold and to demonstrate in the gospel itself.

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