

Who was made flesh and lived among us? **Jesus, the Word.**

Who came to bring God's law to us? **Moses.**

Who came to show God's love to us? **Jesus.**

How did he show that love? **By living and dying for us.**

Words With Little People.

THE WORD OF GOD.

How good it is to hear loving words spoken by a

dear friend! And when we are away from those we love most, how glad we are to get a letter containing words of love!

God spoke many loving words to his children on earth. At last he sent a living Word, Jesus, to show his great love! Jesus is God's Word to us. Do we watch to hear what that Word says to us?

Whisper Motto.

"God speaks to me, and I will hear."

General Statement.

We turn from the Old Testament to the New, from King Zedekiah to John the Baptist, yet our first step is not forward, but backward. The fourth gospel takes its station, not with the first and the third, at the cradle of Christ, but at the beginning of time. The writer seems to be standing upon the newly created world, and as he turns his eyes back into the darkness of the past he beholds One living as the Word of God, sharing in the divine nature before the universe began to be. By his hand the worlds were shaped and swung in space, and by him, long before man came, man's ransom was provided. He is the Light which, coming into the world, lights every man. The days of his incarnation draw near, and the messenger comes forward. John the Baptist appears to bear witness, not to himself, but to One greater, who, though following him, was nevertheless before him in rank. After him appears the Word himself, God's Son in mortal flesh. He comes to his own nation, a nation prepared by twenty centuries of training, yet he is rejected. Only a few out of the multitudes recognize him as the Light of the world, and these few receive as their reward the adoption of sons in the kingdom of God. The apostle pauses in his story to tell of the fullness which they receive, and the grace which is lavished upon them—grace added to grace. God was indeed revealed dimly in the ancient days, but in the manifestation of Jesus Christ he is shown in all his glory.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. The beginning. Before all history. **The Word.** As a word is the usual expression of men's thoughts toward each other, so Jesus Christ is the expression of God's thought toward men. In ordinary life actions are said to speak louder than words; and in truth the actions of great men are the only adequate utterance of the causes they represent. That the term "Word" had been previously used in somewhat similar sense by Greek and Hebrew writers is interesting, but not important. Jesus alone was the Word of God. It is still more interesting to note that John the Baptist is described as "a voice;" Jesus, as "the Word." **With God . . . was God.** This is, as Dr. Abbott has said, an unfathomable mystery. The doctrines of the individuality of the Word, as distinct from God, and of the identity of the Word with God, are not easy to be reconciled by the human mind. We can apprehend God—his unity and his trinity—for both conditions of his being are plainly stated in his word; but no mortal can comprehend him. Efforts to explain this mystery add to it. This, at least, is plainly set forth: (1) *Our Lord was truly and essentially divine*; "not merely godlike in that loose sense in which great men and their great thoughts and deeds are sometimes spoken of as being 'divine.'"—*Coxes*.

2. In the beginning with God. A repetition of the second clause of the preceding verse to emphasize the truth that while there is but one

God, there is more than one personality in God. (2) *God's love is as eternal as his power.* The divine attribute which was manifested on Calvary dates back as far as that manifested on Sinai.

3. All. "A grand word," says Bengel, "by which the whole universe is denoted." **Were made.** The Greek student will note that a different verb is used in this verse from that in the preceding verses. Hitherto the word is "was;" now it is "began to be." **By him.** The New Testament uniformly declares that (3) *Christ is always the executor of his Father's will.* Comp. Luke 2: 49; John 5: 22, 23, 27; 6: 37, 44, 57; 8: 28, 42; 10: 29; 14: 10; 17: 18, 24; 1 Cor. 15: 27, 28; Phil. 2: 9; Col. 1: 19; Mark 10: 40. **Not any thing made.** Literally, "not even one thing." John takes ground against those thinkers, ancient and modern, who assert that matter is eternal. He declares that every being and every atom in the universe came from the creative hand of the Son of God.

4. In him was life. The Greek word here is used in the New Testament exclusively of spiritual life, never of animal life. This verse, therefore, means that Christ is the source of divine life among men. **The light.** The revelation of Christ glimmered in the dawn of the Old Testament, and blazes in the glorious noontide of the Gospel. **Of men.** Not of Hebrews merely, but of all men in every age and every clime. (4) *The Word is the going forth of God to the*