

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

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SUBJECT: THE NEW BIRTH.

I. **The need of it.** Nicodemus, to whom the conversation of our Lord was directed, had characteristics which shew how much a man may have without the experience of a new birth. He was a religious man, of the strictest and most religious sect of the Jews. The Pharisees, of which he was a representative, were distinguished for their zeal in maintaining the ceremonies of the Jewish law. He was also a man of learning, being a Master in Israel; a man of influential position and of respectful manner. To this man of so many good qualities our Lord, no doubt addressing the whole class represented by Nicodemus, says "Ye must be born again." Thus declaring that nothing will do as a substitute for the new birth.

II. **The nature of it.** The new birth implies a change that is (a) *Radical*. Vs. 6-7. It cannot be regarded as simply an improvement but a complete and radical change of nature as Hodge says, "a change of inward immanent disposition or spiritual state which is back of all voluntary or conscious activity and which, in the things of God, determines that activity." It is the infusion of a new spiritual principle.

(b.) *Spiritual*. Vs. 4-7. "Of the Spirit." It is a divine work. Man inherits from his earthly parents his fleshly and physical nature; from the divine Spirit alone he can receive the divine life. Spiritual life in us can only come from God's spiritual life. Thus we learn that the Divine Spirit alone is the cause of the great and important change which takes place in the heart of man.

(c.) *Mysterious*. Vs. 8-9. It is not to be wondered at that there is much about the new birth that is to us mysterious, all nature is full of mysteries. If we cannot understand nature how can we understand Spirit. The new birth cannot be apprehended by the natural man, for only the spiritual can discern spiritual things. The Spirit's methods we cannot know, but the facts of the new life, which result from the aspirations of the Spirit are as plain and certain as the bending bough before the blast. The only real knowledge we can have of the new birth is that which comes through the channel of experience.

III. **Its condition.** Vs. 15-16. The only condition for the possession of this new, divine life is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We must look to Christ as our Saviour; surrender ourselves to Him as our Master if we are to possess Spiritual and Eternal life.

IV. **Its Evidence.** We know that the wind blows from the effect produced. So the changed life is an evident token of a changed heart.

When the Holy Ghost enters the soul and there abides as a principle of a new life, the result will be without doubt that the soul will be possessed of *light*, by which truth is more clearly comprehended; of *love* by which the soul is drawn out to God and Christ; of *power* by which the world is overcome—sin conquered—God's will obeyed and made the rule of life.

John tells us that he that is born of God, believeth (1 John 5:1) loveth (1 John 4:7) overcometh (1 John 5:4) doeth righteousness (1 John 2:1-9.)

Ten Minutes Normal Drill

Based on the text-book, "The Sabbath School Teacher's Handbook; or, The Principles and Practice of Teaching, with special reference to the Sabbath School," and prepared by Principal Kirkland of the Toronto Normal School.

PRINCIPLES OF MEMORIZING.

Amongst the Principles of Teaching Dr. Morrison includes the principles of Association. This is a principle of memorizing, rather than a principle of teaching, and it is one of the important principles, for no piece of mental or spiritual experience is isolated. Every thought and action in our life is associated with some other thought or action.

Different kinds of Association.

- (1) *Contiguity of place*, by which the locality is associated with events that happened there. Ex.—Patmos with John; Jacob's Well with Jesus, &c. Give other examples.
- (2) *Association by Similarity*.—When two objects that resemble each other have been contemplated together, the one cannot be recalled without recalling the other. Give examples.
- (3) *Association by Contrast*.—By this is meant that one impression, object or event tends to call up image of its opposite or contrast. Ex.—The house on the rock suggests the house on the sand; Peter boasting suggests Peter denying.
- (4) *Cause and Effect*.—This is the most important principle of association. The cause suggests the effect, and the effect should lead us to look for the cause. See Judg. 3: 28. What is the Association here? Give other instances.