



## LESSON VI.—FEBRUARY 11.

## Jesus and Nicodemus.

John iii., 1-18. Memory verses 14-17.  
Read John 11.

## Golden Text.

'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'—John iii., 16.

## Daily Readings.

M. First Miracle. Jn. 2: 1-11.  
T. First Cleansing. Jn. 2: 13-22.  
W. First Discourse. Jn. 3: 1-21.  
T. Love of God. 1 Jn. 4: 7-14.  
F. The Serpent. Nu. 21: 4-9.  
S. The Saviour. 2 Cor. 5: 12-21.

## Lesson Text:

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: (2.) The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. (3.) Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (4.) Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? (5.) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (6.) That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (7.) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (8.) The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (9.) Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? (10.) Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? (11.) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. (12.) If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things? (13.) And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven even the Son of Man, which is in heaven. (14.) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; (15.) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (16.) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. (17.) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (18.) He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

## Suggestions.

Nicodemus is mentioned only in the gospel of John and the three glimpses given of him (John iii., 1-9; vii., 50; xix., 39.) show a character of natural caution and honest conservatism. Tradition says that he did not openly own himself a disciple of Christ until after the Resurrection, but that then he received baptism at the hands of Peter and John. He was a man of important position, probably a member of the Sanhedrin and a teacher of the law.

This man came to inquire of Jesus about the new doctrines which he was teaching. He recognized Jesus as having power from God to perform miracles, and realized that his teaching was not such as would emanate naturally from a human mind. Not that he recognised Jesus as literally having come from God, for then he must needs have at once accepted him as the Messiah, but he regarded him rather as a prophet with a message from God. Our Lord read the heart of this man, and answered the

unspoken questionings of his inmost soul. Nicodemus had probably been reasoning with himself that it was little use coming to this new teacher, for he was himself well instructed in the Law which he so zealously taught to others, his life was exemplary, he had always kept the law, he had been born into a family of good people, of course he was good. But down deep underneath all this self-gratulation there was an indefinable longing for something which he did not understand. He had been born and brought up in righteousness, what could he yet lack?

'Except a man be born again, (or from above) he can not see the kingdom of God.' With this emphatic assurance Jesus answered the heart questionings of the ruler. How can a man be born again, asked Nicodemus. He belonged to the most religious people that he knew about, and the new birth was a difficult question to him even if he understood that it was a change in heart and mind, not of his body. He knew that physically he could not become a little child again, and it seemed to him just as impossible that such a change could take place in his spiritual make up. Perhaps Nicodemus had in his own mind been combating the preaching of John which declared that every man must repent and be baptized in preparation for the kingdom of heaven. Again Jesus answered the unspoken question with the double assurance, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God.' The outward sign of baptism is but a symbol of the inward grace of regeneration. Baptism has of itself no efficacy, a man may be baptised a dozen times and still remain selfish and hard hearted toward God. The new birth requires an absolute yielding of oneself to Christ, that he may cleanse and put within us a new heart wherein he shall reign and rule our lives.

Long and arduous culture will not produce a rose from a stone, you must start with a seed or a slip from a rose bush. You can not take a flower or a bird and train it into being a man, neither will training and culture suffice to make a man a Son of God. You may be very fond of the pretty little bird that sings in your window, but it is not one of your children, and never can be. So you may be handsome, talented, and a general favorite, but if you are not born again, you are no more a child of God than that little bird is a child of your father. Will you not just now ask God to make you his own child, for the sake of his Son who died that you might have this unspeakable privilege? Ye must be born anew. The story of the serpent in the wilderness (Num. xxi., 6-9.) should be studied in this connection. Those who would not look at the uplifted serpent of brass, died of their wounds in spite of the free provision for salvation.

God so loved the world that he planned its salvation from the very beginning. If man could have been ransomed by silver and gold it would have been easily accomplished. If the destruction of the world could have atoned for man's sin, God could easily have made them into one immense burnt offering. If there had been any other possible way of saving men, God would not have taken upon himself the awful grief of allowing his Son, his only Son, to suffer. If you could have been cleansed and made ready to spend Eternity with God, by any other process, the Son of God would never have left his throne of glory and come down to this world to be mocked and crucified. There was no other way. God is not a man, to be judged by our small ideas of right and wrong. Most men have a sort of idea that they could arrange things better than God does if they only had the chance. They would welcome every one of decent character into heaven—they would not be so unjust as to condemn a man simply for selfishness and disobedience to God, if he had appeared all right before men! Such people do not put these thoughts very definitely into words or they might see the absurdity of supposing their judgment to be better than that of the One who gave them their reasoning faculties. Heaven would not be heaven if there were one person there who opposed the will of God. And until a man is born again he does oppose the will of God with all his might. (Rom. viii., 5-7.)

Whosoever accepts Jesus as his Saviour and the will of God as his guide, receives the gift of eternal life and the fellowship

of the Holy Spirit. He shall never perish, death has now no terrors for him, it is but the threshold to heaven. The Son of God came to earth for the purpose of redeeming souls, not for the purpose of judging them. His redeeming work is done, but the day is coming (we can not tell how near it is) when all the nations of those who have rejected or forgotten him shall be gathered before him to be judged.

## C. E. Topic.

Feb. 11. Seek first the kingdom of God. Matt. 13: 44-46. (Union meeting with the Juniors.)

## Junior C. E. Topic.

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Mon., Feb. 5.—To be sought first. Luke 12: 61.

Tues., Feb. 6.—Not far from the Kingdom. Mark 12: 32-34.

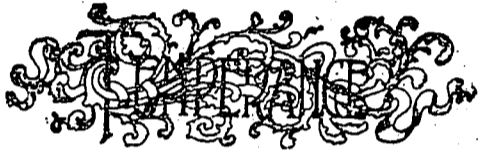
Wed., Feb. 7.—Entering into the Kingdom. John 3: 3.

Th., Feb. 8.—Children and the Kingdom. Mark 10: 14.

Fri., Feb. 9.—Obedience and the Kingdom. Matt. 5: 19.

Sat., Feb. 10.—Greatness in the Kingdom. Matt. 18: 4.

Sun., Feb. 11.—Topic—Seek first the kingdom of God. Matt. 13: 44-46. (A union meeting with the older society.)



## Alcohol Catechism.

(By R. H. Macdonald, of San Francisco.)  
CHAPTER III.—DISTILLED LIQUORS.

1. Q.—From what are distilled liquors made?

A.—From fermented liquors; wine, cider, or beer.

2. Q.—What is the first process?

A.—A fermented liquor is boiled until it nearly passes off in steam.

3. Q.—What is done next?

A.—This steam or vapor is caught and cooled and this makes a distilled drink which contains a great deal of alcohol.

4. Q.—Why does a distilled drink have so much more alcohol than a fermented one?

A.—A fermented liquor contains a little alcohol mixed with a much larger quantity of water. When this liquor is boiled, the alcohol comes off in the steam first, because it does not need so much heat to boil it as water does, and when alcohol stops coming in the steam, the distiller ceases collecting.

5. Q.—What are the chief distilled drinks containing alcohol?

A.—Brandy, whiskey, rum, and gin.

6. Q.—In Bible times when Christ was upon earth, were distilled liquors made?

A.—No, they were not known.

7. Q.—When were distilled liquors first made?

A.—About 1100 years after Christ, or nearly 800 years ago.

8. Q.—How many stages are there in the history of alcohol?

A.—Four stages.

9. Q.—Can you name them?

A.—First, fermentation or the production of wine; second, distillation, or the production of clear alcohol; third, applying alcohol to the arts and science; and fourth, producing brandy, whiskey, rum, and gin by distillation, as a poisonous beverage to man.

## A Tight Rule.

'Never! oh, never!' cried poor Mrs. Daly. 'Oh, don't say any more, Mrs. Jones! Think what it means! Oh the disgrace of it, and the ruin it will be to the children!'

'Well, my husband came in full of it. He said that the chief members met him reeling out of the Pheasant, and they are bound to report him, you know. Why, it is only abstainers who can belong to the club, so, of course, he has to be turned out.'

'He has kept straight till now. For