

International S. S. Lessons.

9th Sept.

Jesus and Nicodemus.

Les. John 3:1-16.
Mem. vs. 1-3.

Gol. Text, 3:16.
Catechism, 92, 93.

The Golden Text of this lesson is the Golden text of the whole Bible.

The story of this lesson, the meeting between Christ and Nicodemus, took place in Jerusalem, at the first Passover feast after Jesus began His public ministry.

At this feast Jesus was working many miracles and all the people were wondering, and talking about Him.

Nicodemus, one of the chief rulers of the Jews heard about Him and wanted to learn more of him, so he decided to call upon Him. Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrim or supreme court of the Jews, and perhaps, about Passover time, he was very busy all day, and Jesus was busy too. Besides he wanted a quiet talk with the great teacher, undisturbed, so he called upon Jesus one evening after the day's work was done.

Jesus was probably alone in a guest chamber in the house of some friend. This chamber would be on the second story, the house top, and would be reached by an outside stair, and Nicodemus could get to Him without disturbing any of the family.

After tea, Nicodemus told his wife that he thought he would go and call on this young teacher from Nazareth who was doing such wonders. See him making his way to where Jesus is staying. He climbs the stair. "Salaam alaku," he says, "Peace to you," as we would say, "good-evening." The courteous prophet returns his greeting "Alaku mah salaam," to you also peace.

Nicodemus does not begin cautiously making inquiry. He at once says, "We know from the works that you are doing that God sent you and that He is with you."

Jesus replies by telling him that a wonder greater than any he has seen must take place in the heart of every one before they can enter into the kingdom of God, a wonder so great as this, viz.: that he must be born again.

How can this be, said Nicodemus, this is impossible.

"It is in this way," said Christ, "he must be made new in heart, with new hopes, loves, desires, aims, and this making new can only be done by the power of the spirit of God."

Christ mentions water, but he does not mean that water, as is the Spirit, is necessary to the new birth. He mentions it because the outward use of water in baptism is a sign

or type of the inward baptism of the Spirit that cleanses the soul from sin.

Then Christ goes on to tell of his own death. This was in the beginning of His ministry. It was two years before the death would come. He saw the cross before Him but He did not turn from it. He loved us too well for that.

In talking to Nicodemus, Christ tells him that it would be with himself as with the brazen serpent in the wilderness. He too would be lifted up upon the cross and all who look and trust to Him would be saved.

A great many precious lessons we learn here.

1. How much God loves us when He made such a sacrifice to save us from sin.

2. How Christ loved us when He gave Himself for us.

3. How great the danger and ruin of sin when He made such a sacrifice to save us from it.

4. If he saw the danger so great and did so much to save me from it, I should not think lightly of it.

Have you believed in Him?

Sept. 16.

Jesus at Jacob's Well.

Les. John 4:9-26.
Men vs. 11-14.

Gol. Text, John 4:14.
Catechism Q. 91.

Little thought Samaria's daughter
On that ne'er forgotten day,
That the tender shepherd sought her
As a sheep astray.

From the Nicodemus of last lesson to the Samaritan woman of this lesson is a journey of several months. That event was in Jerusalem, in the Spring time, at the Passover. This was in the following winter in the Province of Samaria.

When Jesus left Jerusalem, after last lesson, He spent some months in Judea, teaching. Many disciples joined Him. Some who had followed John now left him and followed Christ. Some of John's disciples were jealous, but John himself was not. He said "He must increase but I must decrease."

After a time Jesus decided to go north into Galilee, and in doing so He and His disciples had to pass through the Province of Samaria that lay between.

Travelling northward along a narrow valley, He would come to an opening in the hills to the left, another narrow valley running west. They turned into it, and a short distance up the valley, with Mt. Ebal rising on the right and Mt. Gerizim on the left, they came to the old well which Jacob had dug nearly two thousand years before, on his return from his long sojourn with his uncle Laban.

Jesus was tired. He sat and rested on a stone by the wall to rest while his disciples went to buy some bread.