

There is something in this finality of Jesus from which there is no appeal. In every instance where Jesus opens a sentence with "Verily, verily" there follows a pronouncement that admits of no qualification. And in every instance where Jesus says, "except" and "cannot" you may know that He has reached the irreducible minimum. And in every instance where Jesus says, "must" you may know that there stands behind Him the compulsion of eternity.

There is something therefore tremendously final in His word to this cultured man. No man could be more surprised to hear it than Nicodemus. Nicodemus was the last man in all Jerusalem who thought that he needed to be born again. He was a ruler of the Jews. He was a master in Israel. He belonged to the highest religious body in the land. He was learned in the Scriptures. He was connected with and practised the highest morality. Nicodemus had always taken it for granted that if the Kingdom came in his day he would be taken up to sit in one of the highest seats. It had never once entered his head that he needed to be anything else than he was