

Jesus took our nature, and was made sin for us, 2 Cor. 5 : 21. (c) The moral condition of healing—the faith of the individual in God's method of cure. In this Jesus meets Nicodemus with the fundamental demand of the spiritual life, namely, faith.

II. JOHN'S COMMENTARY ON THIS REVELATION OF JESUS, vs. 16 to 21. Follow closely the great principles unfolded :

(a) *The divine motive in the incarnation*; the love of God in Christ, vs. 16, 17. These verses are a summary of the gospel. Bring out the message in detail, as it concerns God, Jesus, and humanity. God's great love leads to the sending of Jesus. Jesus comes not to condemn, but to give eternal life. Man is not destined to perish, but to enter into the higher life of the Spirit. Let the teacher bring out these truths clearly.

(b) *The historic result of the incarnation*, vs. 18, 19. This appears as judgment in human life. Whoever believes in Jesus, is justified, so that for him there can be no condemnation. Whoever refuses to believe in Jesus, is already condemned, because, having seen the light, he deliberately chooses darkness. This great principle of determining destiny is universal.

(c) *The reasons of belief and unbelief*, vs. 20, 21. These are entirely moral, being found in the characteristic life of the soul. An evil life will shrink from the light in Jesus, dreading the exposure of its weakness. A sincere life will welcome the light in Jesus, seeking its approval and confirmation. In this way John outlines the basal principles of Jesus in relation to God and human life. These are the foundations of the new order of society and type of character.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

By Rev. E. Douglas Fraser, D.D.

There could be but one Golden Text for this Lesson,—the one chosen, v. 16; and the Lesson cannot be better begun than by calling for it. The tenderest, sweetest, deepest voice in all the class should repeat it, and by its recitation, and if necessary, repetition, the teacher should make sure, while the class is still fresh, that every scholar knows the verse. To know it, is to, at least begin to feel its charm.

Then take the scholars back to the anger of Jesus, and His driving the traders out of the holy temple. No sinful anger this (see Eph. 4 : 26 for the possibility of sinless anger).

What followed upon this memorable occurrence? Bring out these three things from ch. 2 : 23-25 : (a) Jesus wrought many miracles at Jerusalem, although these are not recorded in detail (see ch. 20 : 30). (b) These miracles led many to believe on Jesus. (c) But Jesus was cautious in giving even these His confidence, for He knew that their belief was shallow (compare Matt. 13 : 6, 20, 21).

Then comes the story of Nicodemus, which every boy and girl knows, vs. 1-13. Don't pass the story by : it is necessary to the understanding of the Lesson passage. Here are some of the points : (a) A notable man, Pharisee and ruler, one who ought to have known about the kingdom of God (compare v. 10); (b) On a strange errand,—a secret, night visit to this carpenter of Galilee; (c) A frank acknowledgement (v. 2) of Jesus' claim to be God-sent; (d) A disconcerting answer, from the lips of that heaven-sent Teacher : ruler and "master (teacher) of Israel" (v. 10) as Nicodemus was, he must be born again; (e) A wonderful revealing : tells how a man is born again, vs. 5-8.

And then the Lesson. "What can I do to get the wondrous life, of which this new birth is the beginning?" That is Nicodemus' question—not uttered in so many words; but the question in his heart.

Jesus answers it by recalling an Old Testament story which Nicodemus knew well. Have the class tell the story, bringing out its details; and make memorable the incurableness of the serpent bite, the sudden and marvelous cure, and the ease and simplicity of what was to be done to get it.

Follow with the question—In what respects is Jesus like the brazen serpent? Vs. 14, 15 furnish the reply : it will take a good many questions and answers to bring from the class the several points that Jesus was God-given, as was the brazen serpent; He was lifted up on the cross, as it was lifted up on a pole; in either case, a look brought the cure of a deadly disease; all were free to look, and all who looked were certain of cure.