

HOME STUDY LEAFLET.

LESSON 11.

SEPTEMBER 9th, 1894.

3rd QUARTER

Jesus and Nicodemus. John 3: 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT: "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 3: 16.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VERSES 1-3. CHILDREN'S HYMNAL 26, 79, 144, 170.

PROVE THAT—We need new hearts. Ps. 51: 10.

SHORTER CATECHISM—Quest. 92. What is a sacrament? Quest 93. Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?

DAILY PORTIONS.

(The Selections of the International Bible Reading Association.)

MONDAY.	TUESDAY.	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.	SABBATH.
John 8: 1-16	Nuin, 21: 4-9	Rom. 8: 1-11	2 Cor. 5: 14-21	Ezek. 36: 22-27	John 8: 28-40	Rom. 8: 31-39

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. The connection of this narrative with the preceding chapter has been variously understood. Some regard it as an illustration of that penetrating insight into human nature just spoken of; others, of the kind of faith that Jesus accepts in contrast with that of the superficial believers from whom he held himself aloof. There is however, no such logical connection. The evangelist continues his account of the events connected with the first passover. The discourse is given at length because containing important doctrine and it occupies the same place in the gospel of John that the sermon on the mount does in that of Matthew. John may have been present and was able, with the help of the Spirit of inspiration (14: 16) to recall the words of our Lord concerning a doctrine which he had, at the time this book was written, preached for more than half a century. Nicodemus could not have been one of those who believed on Christ for the miracles alone and to whom he did not trust himself, for he takes him thoroughly into his confidence and utters to him in private some of the most important teachings that ever fell from his lips. Nicodemus ultimately becomes a disciple.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Timid Inquirer. vs. 1, 2. II. The New Birth. vs. 3-9. III. The Uplifted Saviour. vs. 10-16.

I. THE TIMID INQUIRER. 1. A man of the Pharisees—"A certain pharisee." This sect observed rigidly, all the requirements of the law. They taught that a Jew was saved just by being a Jew. Nicodemus—We know nothing more about him than is told us here and in ch. 7: 50; 19: 36. A Ruler—A lay member of the sanhedrim (ch. 7: 50). This was the supreme tribunal of the nation and held in great veneration.

2. By night—He was one of those referred to in ch. 12: 42. His visit at night may have arisen partly from a desire to have an uninterrupted private interview. He had not yet quite made up his mind and deemed it prudent to enquire further before committing himself. He had courage enough to attend Christ's funeral, but not enough to bear his cross. A teacher come from God—He acknowledges him as "the coming One" (Matt. 11: 3), an expression used only with reference to the Messiah, but is afraid to call him "the Christ." These miracles—were a proof that the worker of them was sent

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from God. **God be with him**—Acts 10: 38. God could not be with one who claimed to be his Son, if he was not.

II. THE NEW BIRTH. Except a man be born anew (R. V.)—Christ means a change resembling a birth repeated a second time. The kingdom of God—John uses this expression on only one other occasion (ch. 18: 36). By this Nicodemus would understand the kingdom of the Messiah.

4. How can a man be born when he is old?—“How can such a complete change take place in one whose habits and disposition have become fixed. It would be as impossible as for him to undergo the natural birth a second time.” The answer of Jesus points out the supernatural character of the new birth.

5. Born of water and of the Spirit—The truth stated here is that which was afterwards embodied in the sacrament of baptism. Christ in effect says “Repentance must be accompanied by a spiritual renewal and this is the work of the Holy Spirit.” Compare Acts 2: 38. **6. Is flesh**—Membership in the kingdom of God must rest upon a spiritual birth. “There is a natural birth and there is a spiritual birth. The spiritual can never rise out of natural, as no stream can rise higher than its source.” (Reith). **Is spirit**—is kindred in character, in essential being, with the Spirit of God. Rom. 7: 6; 8: 2—10; 2 Cor. 5: 17; Gal. 6: 15; Eph. 4: 23; 1 Pet. 1: 23. This is Christ’s answer to Nicodemus’ question. “How can a man &c?” He is born by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

8. This illustrates the unrestrained action of the Spirit. You cannot bid the wind blow, or dictate its direction. We know the Spirit’s work by its fruits (Gal. 5: 22), but his modes of action are diverse and the

laws of his working unrevealed.

III. THE UPLIFTED SAVIOUR. **10. Art thou a teacher of Israel (R. V.)**—i. e. the wellknown, illustrious teacher. **Knowest not**—He ought to have known all these things from Jer. 31: 33; Ezk. 36: 26-28; Ps. 143: 10, 11 and such passages.

11. We speak—Some of his disciples may have been present. **Ye receive not our testimony**—Ye Jews, people and rulers.

12. Earthly things—“Things which take place on the earth.” The new birth as experienced by men. **Heavenly things**—“The heavenly side of the new birth and the salvation of man, in the eternal counsels of God regarding his only begotten Son.” (Alford.)

13. But he that came down—at the incarnation (ch. 6: 33; 16: 28.) and who will ascend back to the place whence he descended. **Son of man**—A title by which the Messiah was known. Dan. 7: 13. **Which is in heaven**—Compare ch. 1: 18.

14. The reference is to Num. 21: 8ff. In no other way can sinners be saved. Matt. 16: 21.

15. That whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life (R. V.)—A look brought sin into the world, a look takes it away.” (Reith.) **Eternal life**—ch. 17: 3. “Life in the true sense is fellowship with God through faith in Jesus Christ; and this, the possession of which is a matter of certainty now to the believer, lasts for ever.” (Reith.)

16. For—the reason of the “must be lifted up.” **So loved**—the measure of divine compassion is the sacrifice made to save men. Rom. 5: 8; 1 John 2: 2; 4: 8. **The world**—1 John 4: 9. The case of Abraham offering up Isaac is suggested. Heb. 11: 17; Rom. 8: 32.

1. Why did Nicodemus come at night to see Jesus? (5)
2. What was the first thing that Jesus said to him? (4)
3. What kind of a change is the new birth, and who brings it about? (5)
4. In what respects did Christ resemble the brazen serpent? (5)
5. How did God shew his love to the world? (3)
6. Who alone have everlasting life? (3)

Name

Dear Teacher—Please excuse my absence from Sabbath School to-day, I cannot come because I have read the

“Daily Portions” and answered the questions as well as I could. I have committed to memory verses in addition to the Golden Text, and Questions in the Catechism and have recited them to I was at church

I send with this my Weekly Offering of cents.