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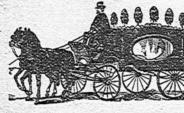
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Memory Verses, 14, 15-Golden Text, John III, 16-Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns. [Copyright, 1905, by American Press Association.] If we take the last sentence of chapter ii and the first sentence of chapter

ili from the revised version we read, "He Himself knew what was in man; before us this Nicodemus as a sample well to do, moral, religious, devout men, who are found in all churches as members in good standing, but in the sight of Him who reads the heart, and before whom as their judge they must appear, lacking the one essential to fit them for the kingdom-viz, the birth from above (verse 3, margin). The subsequent history of Nicodemus would and that he became a true child of

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON V, FIRST QUARTER, INTER-NATIONAL SERIES, JAN. 29.

Text of the Lesson, John iii, 1-15.

Nicodemus knew and acknowledged Jesus to be a teacher come from God and that God was with Him, but such knowledge could not save him. And yet that is more than some of His professed friends, who think they are saved, know or acknowledge today, counting Him to be ignorant of many things which they think they know better than He did. Notwithstanding all that so called wise and learned men say and teach, we must accept the opening statements of John concerning Him-that He was God, that He made all things, that He made the world, that He is the only revealer of God the Father (John i, 1, 3, 10, 18).

The Lord Jesus seemed not to notice what Nicodemus said; but, reading his heart and seeing his real need, He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again [margin, "from above"] he cannot see the kingdom of God." This is the second of the twenty-five double "verilys" or "amens" of this gospel, and the next two are found in verses 5 and 11. We have in all these sayings the most abundant possible testimony to the importance of the truths enunciated, the first referring to the kingdom and glory and the next to the only way to see

Nicodemus, being only a natural man, although so very religious, could not understand this new birth, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness unto him (I Cor. ii, 14), and he therefore asks what seems like a very foolish question. Not many people consider that the foolish questions they often ask concerning spiritual things may indicate that they are only natural people, not born again, not spiritual. The natural birth by which all come into this world can only produce natural people, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh."

When our Lord replied to Nicodemus' first question He said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." What does this signify and just how is this new birth accomplished? Jas. i, 18, says, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." I Pet. ii, 23. says. "Being born again by the word of God." But our Lord said we must be "born of water." Now turn to Eph. v, 26, and read, "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with th washing of water by the word." Although this refers to an experience which follows the new birth, yet it tells us that water is a symbol of the word and that "born of water" means "born of the word," as James and Peter plainly state. But our Lord said, "Born of water and of the Spirit." Now turn to John vi, 63, and read, "The words that I speak unto you are Spirit and are life." And is it not conclusive that the new birth is accomplished by the word of God and the Spirit of God? And by this means God does all His work. In Gen. 1, 2, 3, the Spirit of God moved, and God said, and the work was done. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath [or Spirit]

of His mouth" (Ps. xxxiii, 6). Only by the word of God in the power of the Spirit of God can we know will help you to save your small anything of the things of God, but unless we meekly receive the testimony of God we cannot know the things of God. Not only was Jesus a teacher posit it with us. You will find it sent by God, as Nicodemus confessed (verse 2), but He came down from heaven, and, though visibly on earth, He was at the same time in heaven (verse 13). If this sounds foolish to any consider what we have already written. To understand more fully let us go with our Lord to the wilderness story of Num. xxi, 4-9. The people did not like God's way nor God's provision, so they spake against Him, and the Lord sent flery serpents among them, which bit them, and many died. In answer to Moses' prayer he was instructed to put upon a pole, so that all might see it, a brass likeness of that which had bitten the people, and every bitten one who looked upon the ser-

pent of brass lived. That old serpent, the devil, has bitten the whole race of mankind and instilled his poison of unbelief into us bringing upon us death and the curse, and man cannot provide a remedy. But the serpent upon the pole suggests sin, that which has bitten us nailed to the cross, and when the helpless, dying sinner sees Jesus Christ made a sin offering for him on Calvary and looks believingly upon Him instantly he lives or is born from above. See John iii, 16; II Cor. v, 21; Gal. iii, 13; John i, 12, and learn the secret of the new birth, but note also verse 18 of our lesson chapter and learn that we are either not condemned (if born again) or condemned already.

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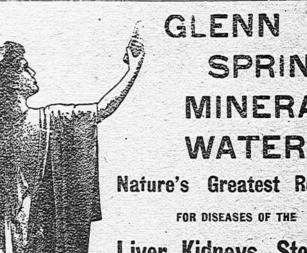
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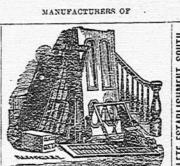
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