

That which is born of the flesh is flesh (or fleshly), and that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (or spiritual.) The new birth, or the conversion of the soul to God, is a great change—a change from darkness to light, from death to life, from bondage to liberty. Dear reader, if you have not experienced this great, this radical change in your views, your state, your relations, your feelings, your character, come, O come to the conclusion that you need to be born again. You need to be born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men but of God. You need to be born of the Spirit,—this is necessary, for he who has the government of the kingdom on his shoulder, and the keys of that kingdom hanging at his girdle,—who openeth and no man shutteth, who shutteth and no man openeth, has said, "except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The language which our Lord here employs clearly shews us that regeneration, or the new creation, does not consist in a physical change, but is *moral in its nature*. He not only teaches us the nature and the necessity of the new birth, he also teaches us, and that very explicitly, the *necessity of the Holy Spirit's agency in effecting it*.

That the agency of the Holy Spirit is indispensably necessary in regeneration is abundantly evident from many portions of the word of God. We shall not spend time quoting scripture to prove this important doctrine. We wish to call the reader's attention specially to the words of our Lord already quoted,—"*Except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*"

Various views have been taken of this interesting and important passage. Many suppose that when our Lord said "*Except a man be born of water,*" that he meant by *water* the *word of God*, or the Gospel. That regeneration is ascribed, in scripture to the truth is abundantly evident. It is also indisputable that the word of God, or the converting instrument is designated *water*. For example, in Isaiah lv. 1. "*Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*" Also Rev, xxii 17: "*And the spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*" The language is figurative, but it is significant and expressive. The word of God is *water*,