

miserable sophistry; and add, why not baptism have some other meaning than that usually attached to it as well as faith? Reader, let us not be cheated out of our birthright by such perversions of the truth! But, to an application of the above rule to the sentence before us: No writer of whom we have any knowledge ever expressed a doubt relative to the meaning of the word spirit in the "text." All Christians appeal with confidence to this sentence to prove the necessity of being born of the Spirit. Here then is our argument: if to be born of the Spirit means literally the Spirit of God, then to be born of water must mean literally water, for *water* and *spirit* are two of the principal words in the same member of the sentence; and every argument that can be presented to prove that man must be born of the Spirit of God, in order to enter his kingdom, also proves that they must be born of water, and he who attempts to disprove the necessity of literally being born of water, also urges arguments against being born of the spirit; for if water does not mean water, what man living can show that spirit means spirit! Perhaps, it may mean wind, fire, or something else!!

From the days of the Apostles, the fact, that to be "born of water," meant to be baptized, was not disputed until within a very short time. But since the design of baptism and its importance have been fully and clearly developed, the words of our Lord—the plainest he ever spoke—have been tortured to say something else than what they really do. Of late, both baptist and pædo-baptist have done their utmost not only to give some fanciful view of this passage, but have contradicted their own articles of faith and their standard writers. We appeal not, either to the concessions of the ancients or moderns, in order to confirm our faith, but to the plain, obvious construction of Holy Writ.

We now proceed to an examination of modern expositions. 1. The translation is objected to. It is said that the Greek conjunction *kai* should be translated *even*, thus causing the sentence to read "born of water, *even* of the spirit"—making water figurative of the spirit! This exposition not only violates the above rule, but also sets aside a most obvious rule of translation. All honest men give the primary signification of a word when the connexion will admit of it. No word in the New Testament occurs more frequently than *kai*, and in ninety nine cases in a hundred is, or should be translated *and*. Who then can give a reason for rendering *kai*, *even*, in this place, which cannot be urged in favor of such a version in Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth, *even* (*kai*) is baptized," &c. But we shall pursue this objection no further. It should not have occupied so much space, only some smatterers in Greek are contending for this as orthodox.

2. Another exposition is, that the water means the blood and water which flowed from the Saviour's side! This is evidently so fanatical that were it not that many pious people run into such expositions, through ignorance or prejudice, we should let it pass without a remark. If the Lord had referred to his sufferings and death, it is certain that Nicodemus would not have been blamed for his ignorance of such language, for even the disciples of the Lord Jesus at that time knew