

"But it was in regard to this subject of being 'born again,' or, 'from above,' that my superficiality was especially noticeable. I had always been taught that the baptism of water had made me a Christian, that is, that I was born again, or regenerated, at the time and in virtue of my baptism. This, I saw, was giving to the term water, which is used but once in this wonderful dialogue, altogether too much prominence. I now realized that it was used as a mere symbol of the cleansing and refreshing influences of the Spirit upon the truly born again; just as fire, in John the Baptist's prophecy, 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire,' is evidently not to be interpreted literally, but as presenting the vivifying and enlightening power of the Spirit upon those whom Christ saves. I was made to feel that this re-creation was the special work of the Holy Ghost, as mysterious as the conception of Christ had been, which no man could explain any more than Nicodemus could tell whence came, or whither went, the winds. 'For so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' This change, I saw, is as necessary as it is wonderful. This is evident from the abrupt manner of Christ's question to Nicodemus, as well as by the matter of it. As there can be no physical life without a physical birth, so I saw that there could be no