

abstract and genetic. Human wisdom would probably begin with the fountain-love of the Father, and trace it through the channel of the Son's vicarious sufferings to the influence and efficiency of the Holy Spirit in the new creation. But Christ takes the very opposite course. He begins with man's wants and ascends to God's munificence: "Ye must be born again . . . God so loved the world." He begins with the discharge of the water of life into the desert and deadness of humanity, and then traces the mighty stream of blessing back and up to the very *fons et origo* (the very font and source)—the Father's munificent and unsparing love. He at once brings the great theme of life into contact with his hearer's heart, and presses it home in its personal bearing and necessity: "Thou a Master in Israel, and not knowing these things! Hearing of earthly things, and yet not believing! Listening to a recognized teacher from God without really learning!" He says nothing of the human means of life till he denotes the divine provision for it. First of all, it is the Spirit that regenerates and the Son that redeems; it is from the ocean of Paternal affection and benignity that everlasting life issues; and man is to receive it by believing. After God's glorious agency, that resolves, redeems and regenerates, comes the agency of man, that submits and accepts. "As apples of gold in baskets of silver," so are the fitly spoken words of the Word of God.

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How skilfully and graciously Christ teaches Nicodemus, *the aged*, meeting his objections and prejudices, and suggesting trains of thought that should lead him into the light of life! How successfully, in all probability, he pours the light on this dull and darkened heart! A young