

THE LIVING WATER.
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THE new birth of the 3rd chapter of John is necessary for all, high or low. It is not the natural birth over again, as Nicodemus seemed to think, but supernatural or spiritual, the sovereign action of God in answer to *faith*, and accomplished by the Spirit through *water* (symbol of the word of God), see John vi., 63; James i., 18; 1 Pet. i., 23. Baptismal regeneration is, therefore, a deadly fable.

The principles of the 3rd of John were practically applied by the Lord to the woman of Samaria, of the 4th chapter. This "living water" or "water of life" (Rev. xxii., 17) is a symbol of the *word* of life, the "incorruptible seed" of the word of God, which, received into the heart by faith, is the fountain of water springing up *into* everlasting life, quenching the thirst for evermore.

But the natural heart of this woman, as is the case with every unconverted person, was not suitable soil for this seed of life until the conscience was plowed up in preparation for it. He spoke to her of the "gift of God" freely offered, and of its abounding blessing when received, and thus created a longing in her soul, a thirst before unknown and which could not be quenched but by this living water. Still, she drew a natural conclusion just as Nicodemus did as to the new birth (v. 15). Now, the Lord reminded her of her wicked life, and thus exposed her heart before God. She *perceived* He was a prophet, and if so, God was speaking to *her* in grace. His goodness