

1.* Although that article was thus hastily written, yet on a careful re-perusal I see no reason for changing my mind on one argument adduced. A few words may need a little qualification, but I cannot admit that one argument is now shaken. You may have bruised the cement of the edifice, but not a stone is loosened. Without the addition of a word, cheerfully would I send the article, in the first Number of the current volume, on being "born again," with your criticism appended to it, out before the world and risk the consequences with all those who are capable of discriminating between truth and error. But you have introduced irrelevant matter, which shall be carefully examined together with all your remarks on the subject under consideration.

2. The first question to be settled is this, viz :—Does the expression "*born of water*" refer to baptism? I take the affirmative. You say these words have "no reference whatever to Baptism." Here then we join issue—this is the turning point. If the affirmative can be established, then the question relative to the action meant by baptism is set at rest, and also the indispensable necessity of immersion in order to citizenship in the kingdom of God! If you are right, I have only lost *one* argument for the design and importance of immersion.

3. Why, Mr. Sleep, did you not try your strength at my principal argument? You have thrown a few arrows at the out-flanks, why not attack the main body. Had you been as confident of a good cause as was David when he went out to meet Goliath, you would not have made an effort merely to paralyze his armour-bearer. You could not have read that article so carelessly as not to perceive on which argument I particularly relied for the establishment of the main point. Hear it again: "*When one principal word in a sentence has an allegorical, figurative or literal meaning, so must the other principal words.*" Had you succeeded in overturning this, then you might have done something; but as it is, every remark you have made, and every argument you have offered, have been as subversive of regeneration by the spirit of God as of the doctrine of immersion in order to entering into his kingdom. If either of us, Sir, were called upon to prove that the Lord Jesus taught the necessity of being born of the spirit, unhesitatingly we should refer them to his conversation with Nicodemus. But suppose the inquirer should dispute the correctness of our interpretations, and say, "the passage cannot mean literally the spirit of God, for it is joined with the word "water," and you say, that that is figurative, and if one is, so must be the other!" What would be your reply? How can you prove the Saviour meant the Holy Spirit in the text under consideration? Remember, Sir, by the same argument I shall prove that he meant, literally, water. Let it once be admitted that one member of a sentence has a literal meaning and the other a figurative, and away goes every doctrine of the Bible before the whims and fancies of cringing men. Now, Sir, produce if you can, a plain passage in the Oracles of God, or in any other book of common sense, where the writer in a short sentence couples two principal words, where one must necessarily have a figurative and the other a literal meaning. No, this cannot be done. One of the most

* That you may the more easily refer to my arguments, I shall number each paragraph, which you will please to imitate in your reply.