

plied to that divine change which an individual experiences when he is adopted into the family of God, then our Lord has himself explained these terms as far as they can be brought down to the capacity of man. The reason why our Lord calls this change a "being born again," is because of the similitude that exists between this important change and the natural birth; and when these words are received in this sense, they can be understood by persons of limited intellectual capacity who have experienced any thing of a work of grace in their souls. Your assertion that, "When our Lord used the word water in any other than its literal or actual acceptance, he always used a qualifying epithet," is easier made than proved. If your assertion would prove what you intended to prove by it, then it must be understood that the qualifying epithet used by our Lord, John iv. 10, was a term that would be used in that part of the world to signify *water* literally; which would be to assume what is not true—for learned persons tell us that the term *living* when applied to *water* means running, as opposed to still or stagnant water; and that it was in this sense the words were understood in that part of the world in which the scripture was written.

From the above remarks it appears that the term *living*, when applied to water, is not sufficient to prove that it means grace, neither does the absence of the term prove that the word water must be understood literally. The only way then to understand whether the words are to be understood literally or figuratively is to view them in connexion with the context.

I have as much reason to believe that our Lord would use the word in a figurative sense, without any qualifying epithet, as the Prophets who wrote the Old Testament, and unless you can find some stronger proof than any you have yet produced, your argument will be but the "baseless fabric of a vision," unless it be with persons who know but little of scripture or history, and with whom assertion is proof.

If you please you can read the following passages, where the term *water* is used without any qualifying epithet, and yet it must be acknowledged to refer to the grace of God:—Isaiah xii. 3, xxxv. 6, 7, xlv. 3, lv. 1; Joel iii. 18.

The meaning of our Lord seems to be this: The blessings which I shall bestow on those who believe in me may not only be compared to water, but water which flows spontaneously. This is clear from the 14th verse. Perhaps the reason why our Lord conversed in this figurative manner with Nicodemus, and also with the woman, was, that his conversation might produce a more lasting and powerful effect.

Let us now notice your sentence on the 10th page, "Yet we can see no reason," &c. and first inquire, what do the words "born of water clearly express?" To find your answer, I turn to the 9th page, where I find it is "emerging from the baptismal font." Now, to prove that you have mistaken our Lord's meaning, I think it will be necessary to apply only to his own words: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."

We will now consider your argument on the 12th page. "It is now apparent" &c., "that only one birth is spoken of." I agree with you, Sir that only one birth is spoken of, and therefore I ask is it of the