38—5. ST. JOHN. 481   
   
 the kingdom of God. \* Nicodemus saith unto him, How   
 can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the   
 second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?   
 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, °\* Except ¢ Mark svi.16.   
   
 a man be born of water and [%0/] the Spi he cannot   
   
 8 omit.   
   
 derstood it of a new birth in mature life. the views of expositors have been warped.   
 Born anew or afresh is a better rendermg Such we have in Calvin: who explains the   
 than ‘born again,’ being closer to the words to mean, “the Spirit, who cleanses   
 meaning of the Greek word, ‘from Zhe very us, and by diffusing His influence in us   
 beginning ;;—‘ unless a man begin his life inspires the vigour of heavenly life:’—   
 anew altogether (see Gal. iv. he cannot” Grotius, “the Spirit, who cleanses like   
 &e. It is not impossible that the other water ;”—Cocceius, “the grace of God,   
 meaning may lie beneath this,—as the king- washing away our uncleanness and sins ;”   
 dom is of God, and so must the birth be ;— —Tholuck, who holds that not Baptism   
 but Grotius hasmadethe important remark, itself, only its idea, that of cleansing,   
 that in the language in which our Lord is referred to others, who endeavour   
 probably spoke, there is no word of double to resolve water and the Spirit into a   
 meaning corresponding to the Greek word figure, so to make it mean ‘ the cleansing   
 here:—sothat He must have expressed it, as or purifying Spirit.’ All the better and   
 Nicodemus understood it, of an entirely deeper expositors have recognized the co-   
 birth. 4.] It is impossible that Nico- existence of the two, water and the Spirit.   
 demus ean have so entirely and stupidly This being then reeognized, to what   
 ¢nisunderstood our Lord’s words, as his does water refer? At that time, two   
 question here would seem to imply. The kinds of baptism were known: that of the   
 idea of new birth was by no means alien proselytes, by which they were received   
 from the Rabbinical views. They described into Judaism,—and that of Johx, by which,   
 a proselyte when baptized as “like an in- as a preparatory rite, symbolizing repent-   
 fant just born.” Lightfoot. I agree with ance, the people were made ready for Him   
 Stier in thinking that there was some- who was to baptize them with the Holy   
 thing of the spirit that would not under- Ghost. But both these were significant of   
 stand, and the disposition to turn to ridi- one and the same truth; that, namely, of   
 cule what he heard. But together with the entire cleansing of the man for the   
 this there was also considerable real igno- new and spiritual life on which he was to   
 rance. ‘The proselyte might be regarded enter, symbolized by water cleansing the   
 as born again, when he became one of the outward person. Both were appointed   
 seed of Abraham: this figure would be means,—the oue by the Jewish Church,—.   
 easily explained on the Judaical view : but the other, stamping that first with ap-   
 that every man should need this, was proval, by God Himself,—towards their   
 beyond Nicodemus’s comprehension. He respective ends. John himself declared   
 therefore rebuts the assertion with a re- his baptism to be incomplete,—it was ouly   
 duction to an absurdity, which in spirit with water ; One was coming, who should   
 expresses, as in ch. vi. 60,—‘ This say- baptize with the Holy Ghost. That de-   
 ing is hard; who can hear it?” claration of his is the key to the under-   
 when he is old: probably he himself was standing of this verse. Baptism, com-   
 old, and he instances his own case. plete, with water and the Spirit, is the   
 5.] Our Lord passes by the question of admission into the kingdom of God. Those   
 Nicodemus without notice, further than who have received the outward sigu and   
 that this His second assertion takes as it the spiritual grace, have entered into that   
 were the ground from under it, by explain- Kingdom. And this entrance was fully   
 ing the token and means of the new birth. ministered to the disciples when the Spirit   
 There can be no doubt, on any descended on them on the day of Pente-   
 honest interpretation of the words, that eost. So that, as spoken to Nicodemus,   
 to be born of water refers to the token or these words referred him to the baptism   
 outward sign of baptism,—to be born of of John, which probably (see Luke vii. 30)   
 the Spirit to the thing signified, inward he had slighted. But they were not only   
 grace of the Holy Spirit. All attempts spoken to him. The words of our Lord   
 to get rid of these two plain facts have have in them life and meaning for all ages   
 sprung from doctrinal prejudices, by which of His Church: and more especially these