

extremely unlikely, and to come very close to requiring belief in baptismal regeneration, which is certainly contrary to the doctrine of the Scripture.

Another suggestion as to the meaning of the word "water" here, which takes it as standing for the Bible, appears to me unwarranted. While it is true that study of the Bible is the great instrument of the Holy Spirit in cleansing the life of the Christian and in leading him into closer communion with God, supposition of such a figurative element at this point is quite unnecessary. The natural use of the word, as a symbol of cleansing, would be far more likely and would also convey an immediate sense to Nicodemus.

LETTER 56

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WIND OR SPIRIT IN JOHN 3:8?

I notice that here the NIV follows the same interpretation as the KJV, by rendering *pneuma* as "wind" though it is translated "spirit" several times in the immediately preceding and following context. It is true that this interpretation is followed by most modern interpreters (though not by Bengel). To me it seems rather senseless. I do not know how the wind can "please" to blow in one direction or another. Perhaps there were some ignorant people in ancient times who thought that no one could tell from what direction the wind came, but I am sure that most intelligent people knew whether it was blowing off the ocean or off the desert. St. Augustine wrote: "Then, brethren, which of us does not see, for example, the south wind going from south to north, or another wind coming from east to west? How, then, know we not whence it cometh and whither it goeth?" (Augustine