

like a sponge, to contain it in a large quantity, and that the container is certainly greater than the contained.

In the order of the conversion of the elements it appears to me, that water is to air what air is to fire, and that all the transformations of nature depend on them. Air, like the food of fire, assimilates with it, and is transformed into this first element. Water, rarefied by heat, is transformed into a kind of air capable of feeding the fire like common air. Thus fire has a double fund of certain subsistence; if it consume much air it can also produce much by the rarefaction of water, and thus repair, in the mass of atmosphere, all the quantity it destroyed, while ulteriorly it converts itself with air into fixed matter in the terrestrial substances which it penetrates by its heat or by its light. And so, likewise, as water is converted into air, or into vapours, as volatile as air, by its rarefaction, it is also converted into a solid substance by a kind of condensation. Every fluid is rarefied by heat and condensed by cold. Water follows this common law, and condenses as it grows cold. Let a glass tube be filled three parts full and it will descend in proportion as the cold increases, but some time before congelation it will ascend  
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