

body* or of the spirit? The Saviour says it is the spirit, and therefore the body "emerging from the font" has no more to do with it than the birth spoken of by Nicodemus. It appears from our Lord's words that the sense in which He uses the word "*born*" is not coming out of, as you seem to suppose, but it is being placed in a new condition, and this condition in which the soul is placed when it is born again, enables it to exert its powers and enjoy the benefits connected with its new situation. The reason why the grace of God is spoken of under the emblem of water, in connexion with the spirit, is because of its purifying qualities; and thus the soul that is "born again," is like an infant, washed, in order that as its strength increases it may enjoy the benefits connected with its new situation. Now, Sir, if I am not mistaken this is the plain meaning of our Lord's words, and to give them any other meaning is in my opinion "to put them on the rack to make them speak something besides what they plainly express." Your quotation from Matthew iii. 11, is also erroneous, as the word "*en*" cannot be translated "*in*" in this place. John was not sent to baptize *in* but *with* water, and he says—He that cometh after me shall baptize you *with* (not immerse you *in*) the Holy Ghost and with fire. In the 12th page you have anticipated an objection to your exposition, but this you seem to overcome with triumph. But here, Sir, you have run too fast and too far in saying that our Lord does not say "any one," "but except a man," &c. I hope this was through ignorance; if so it is the more excusable, but I must confess it appears too much like trying to prove a favourite sentiment. The word "*tis*" in Greek is properly translated "any one," &c., and this is *the word* you have informed your readers does not mean "any one." The word man is not in the original, but supplied by the translators to signify the human species, and simply means any one.

Your remarks on "modern expositors" are of no importance, as we are not so much concerned to know what persons have said of the texts, as we are to know what our Lord's meaning was when he delivered the words.

That you and I may enjoy all the blessings which are to be experienced by those who are born of the Spirit, is the prayer of, dear Sir, your's,
respectfully,
PETER SLEEP.

EXAMINATION OF MR. SLEEP'S COMMUNICATIONS.

My Dear Sir—A very singular coincidence in dates has happened between your communications and my article which called them forth. On New Year's eve, 1839, I penned the remarks on being born of water and spirit. My family wishing to attend a Methodist watch-night meeting, that they might all be accommodated, I remained at home—rocked the cradle—and to improve usefully the midnight hours, I hastily wrote the article under consideration. It was written more for the purpose of throwing my views into order than for the public eye. The manuscript was thrown by with other papers for nearly six months, when believing that the public mind needed arousing on an important point, it was published. But to the coincidence: just one year from the time it was written, your criticism on that and other matters came to hand!