

Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel, may I not wash in them and be clean?

Round he turns in a rage, and is dashing off to Damascus; when he is reproved by his servants, who say to him, my father, if the prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather then when he says to you, wash and be clean! Struck with the common sense reasoning of his poor simple hearted servants, he turns about, and complies with the commands of the prophet. He goes down to Jordan, and dips himself, once, twice, thrice, four times, five, six times, and the leprosy, that dreadful malady that had baffled all the skill of physicians, still cleaves to him with all its virulence. Had he gone away then, he had gone a rebel and unblessed: but he dips himself the seventh time, and as he rises from the waters the leprosy departs, and his flesh comes upon him like that of a young child.

*I come now to the positive institution of baptism, which is the door of entrance into the church of Christ.* It is a most unlikely ordinance to secure the pardon of sins, for which it was instituted! Unfit as it may seem for this purpose, Jesus says, he that believeth (the gospel) and is baptised shall be saved, not saved from temporal dangers, not saved from the grave, but saved from his sins—pardoned. Does this stagger you? Do you believe that, if you believe the gospel, repent of your sins, and forsake them, and are baptised in submission to the authority of the Lord Messiah, that he will pardon all your numerous sins? Or will you reject baptism for the remission of sins, because you perceive in it no adaptation to such an end? Because you perceive not the relation of cause and effect, existing between baptism and the pardon of sins? Is there not as much fitness in baptism for the remission of sins, as there was in the children of Israel looking upon the brazen serpent, to heal the bite of the fiery flying serpent, of which multitudes of them were dying? Is there not as much fitness in baptism for the remission of sins, as there was in Naaman's dipping seven times in Jordan, to heal him of the leprosy, that mocked all the skill of the physicians? Or as there was in the eating of an apple to entail death on all the world's inhabitants?

If there were any natural connection perceivable between baptism and the remission of sins, it would require very little faith to induce persons to submit to it; if there were here any natural adaptation of means to ends, men would be baptised from considerations drawn from the reason and fitness of things, without any regard for the authority of the lawgiver; it would therefore be no test of respect either for the divine word or the divine authority: But God would test your confidence in his word and your respect for his authority, and therefore he commands penitent believers to be baptised for the pardon of sins.

Many reject baptism for the remission of sins because they perceive in it no fitness for that purpose; but this is the very reason why God has instituted baptism for the remission of sins; for if there were any natural fitness in baptism for that purpose, men might attribute the virtue to the water. Hence while some reject baptism for the pardon of