

At present I have access only to sentiments of one of your number, but he is acknowledged to be the best defender of baptist sentiments in the Provinces. He says "*Remission of sins is granted independently of every external act of obedience.*" If you were willing to defend this position, then would we have a tangible point before us. I doubt not but the author of the assertion would stand up to it as successfully as any man on the continent, but in so doing he would have to throw himself upon his learned authors and his powers of ratiocination; for certain it is he could obtain no aid from the apostles. "Remission of sins is granted independently of any external act!" This is a plain assertion, and a very pointed reproof of Peter for teaching sinners on the day of Pentecost to "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins." How these persons could obtain remission of sins previous to baptism has not yet been made apparent; and yet they must have done so if remission is granted "independently of any external act." The same may be said in relation to nearly every inquiry in the New Testament. So far from any foundation being laid for such an assertion in the word of God, the very reverse is the case. *There is not a promise from Genesis to Revelation of remission of sins independently of an external act.* I do not intend to oppose assertion by assertion, but one is as good as another unless sustained by the authority of God's word. In our previous letters we have proved that John the Baptist taught that baptism was for remission of sins. Until some of you show that I have not properly interpreted these divine declarations, it will be unnecessary for me, farther, either to defend the use I have made of them, or to adduce additional testimony. I therefore, now come to the main design of this letter, namely to show the similarity between your interpretations of Scripture opposed to your theory and that of the Socinians, for whose doctrines you feel such a pious horror.

You practically say, "Baptism cannot be in order to the enjoyment of remission of sins, because we believe we were pardoned previously; it is therefore opposed to our experience. And it is not reasonable that salvation can be of grace, if an external act be requisite in order to its enjoyment. And, then, baptism is only an outward bodily act, and how can that have any connexion with spiritual enjoyment. And although Peter did teach penitents to repent and be baptized for remission, according to the common English translation, yet the preposition *eis* often has the force of 'because,' 'according to,' &c., and very frequently means 'into,' and I, therefore, do not believe that the three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost were baptized in order to the remission of sins." I have listened to this kind of reasoning scores of times. And it is as good a defence as can be made for modern conversions and the inutility of baptism in order to the enjoyment of the blessings of the gospel.

Now, how does the Socinian reason in reference to the atonement. He thinks that it is "unreasonable that God should require the death of his Son as a sacrifice for sins, that it is not only unreasonable but unjust to require the innocent to suffer for the guilty, that there can be no connexion between the shedding of blood and the enjoyment of pardon—a sacrifice is an external act, and what connexion can that have with