

Declarations of the New Testament, you cannot believe that a sincere penitent can obtain pardon, and the benefits of the blood of the New Covenant in the waters of baptism, in obedience to the express command of the Holy Spirit, for this very purpose! Is it possible that there can be such credulity on the one hand, and such a want of faith on the other! Now, gentlemen, I appeal to your own consciences for the truth of these allegations. With how much confidence have you, presiding over "Conference" and "Church" meetings, listened to the relation of the dreams, impulses, feelings, griefs, sorrows and joys of young converts: whereas if one should have arisen, and most solemnly have stated that they found peace and pardon so soon as they were, on a profession of their faith and repentance, immersed into the name of the Lord—your countenance would have fallen, and your confidence in his conversion would have been greatly weakened, and very probably you would have charged him to be careful that he did not trust in his own performances for salvation! In the estimation of many there is much more danger of trusting to one's own performances when they say they expect a fulfilment of God's promises in obedience to his expressly revealed will, than when they dwell almost exclusively on what they have felt and experienced, although nothing of the kind was ever recorded of any saint in the Christian Scriptures! If sinners are not properly instructed there is just as much danger of trusting to faith, to one's own prayers or those of others, as there is of trusting to baptism. Believing however as we do, that the Gospel finds its way to the affections through the understanding, we always warn our hearers not to trust for salvation to any thing's out of the great sin offering. We always teach that faith, repentance, baptism, prayer, praise, and all the ordinances of the Gospel, are so many means through which the virtue of Jesus' blood flows into the soul, to give it in the first place spiritual life, and then to keep open the intercourse between God and the soul. We have adopted the Apostle's motto, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." And we are content to trust to his wisdom as to the best way of receiving the "word of reconciliation." We remind our hearers that there was no virtue in the waters of Jordan to cleanse Naaman the Syrian of his leprosy, more than Abana and Pharpar, those beautiful streams which incander through the plains of Damascus. But God's presence and power presided over the former and not over the latter, simply because he had not so ordained. Naaman obeyed, and he washed. He had lived and died a leper, notwithstanding the provisions made for his recovery, had he persisted in his refusal to obey the prophet Elisha.

We invite frequent attention to the Israelites in the wilderness, who were bitten by the serpent. The brazen serpent possessed no virtues to check the influence of the poison that was coursing through their veins, and, doubtless for this reason God ordained it. Had it possessed any medical virtues, the people would have attributed their cure to these rather than to God. He has always ordained the most *unlikely* means, according to the wisdom of man, of accomplishing his purposes. Their faith did not save them, nor their looking, any more than the serpent of brass, but these were all necessary to bring the bitten, dying Israelite into a position in which God had purposed to be present by his power to