

must possess before we can be recognised as proper subjects of baptism! But, having these, "baptism," the Apostle Peter affirms, "SAVES US!"—1 Pet. iii. 21. In the preceding verse, he affirms in reference to Noah and his family, that "eight souls were saved *by water*." Not, however, by water ALONE! In order to obtain salvation by water, Noah and his family *believed* and *obeyed*! Thus it is in respect to baptism. *Faith* and *obedience* bring us into the enjoyment of pardon! so that Peter says, "the like *figure* or antitype whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us." Without faith and obedience, baptism is no more fitted to save us, than were the waters of the flood to save Noah, without the faith and obedience by which he built himself an Ark. And here, we cannot forbear saying, that the Pædo-Baptist creeds, attach more importance to baptism than we do; for they suppose it to possess the same efficacy, when applied to unconscious babes, without either faith or repentance, that we suppose it to possess when applied to believing penitent adults!

Baptism then, saves us; but not unless preceded by *genuine* faith and repentance. Nor does the parenthetical sentence—"not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God"—which has been thrown into this verse, militate in the least against this position. "The filth of the flesh," what is it? Why, says the opposer of baptism for remission, "the filth of the flesh is sin!" But we say that it is not sin—and now for the proof! "For of the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ purge your consciences?" &c. Heb. ix. 13.—Now observe, that the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer could *purify the flesh*, that is, *take away the filth of the flesh*. But says Paul, "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."—Hebrews, x. 3. Now what is the logical conclusion from these premises? Why just this: that as the blood of those animals could take away the filth of the flesh, and could not take away sin; therefore, the filth of the flesh is not sin. Baptism was never designed, as were many of the legal ceremonies, for a mere purification of the flesh. It reached deeper. Through faith, and the blood of Christ, it reached the conscience—because when properly received, it was an act of obedience for remission, springing *from the heart*; an internal act, terminating in an external act; and, therefore, having an internal effect. As Eve, by the internal act of believing a lie, and the external act of eating the forbidden fruit, made herself the object of guilt, and many woes; so we, by a belief of the truth, and obedience, are made the subjects of remission, and unnumbered gospel blessings. The person, therefore, "who obeys from the heart, is made free from sin, and becomes a servant of righteousness." Let this suffice to show how little truth there is in saying, that "the filth of the flesh is sin, and that as baptism is not for the putting away of the filth of the flesh, therefore, it is not for the remission of sins." What then is it for? A mere sectarian form? It saves us! From what? From nothing! Then it does not save us at all! The contest is between the objector and Peter!