The idea is that we are baptized "for the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2:38, 22:16), so that the blood of Jesus can remove all past sins, then we partake of the Lord's Supper each week so that any sins we commit after our conversion can be also taken away by Christ's blood. So baptism and the Lord's Supper are viewed as two " sacraments" for the forgiveness of sins, one for initial forgiveness, and the other for ongoing forgiveness.

One can understand the reasoning behind this idea, especially since both acts are symbolic of the death of Christ. However, the idea is wanting. The Lord's Supper is never said in scripture to be "for the forgiveness of sins" whilst the scriptures do say this of baptism (Acts 2:38). Let us look into this in some detail.

The Purpose of the Lord's Supper

The purpose of the Lord's Supper was stated by Jesus when he instituted its observance. As he took each emblem, the bread and the cup, he said in both cases, "Do this in remembrance of me" (1Co 11:23-25). Each time we partake of the Lord's Supper, we "proclaim the Lord's death" (1Co 11:26).

So we see the purpose of the Lord's Supper. It is observed as a memorial of Christ, a proclamation of his death. It acknowledges the blood of Jesus shed "for the forgiveness of sins" (Mtt 26:27-28) but the Supper is not partaken in order to receive forgiveness.

How We Obtain Ongoing Forgiveness

The scriptures show us how sins committed after conversion are to be dealt with, compared to sins committed before conversion.

Note the following two points:

- Before conversion to Christ, sinners who asked, "What must we do?" were told to "Repent and be baptized..." (Acts 2:37-38).
- After conversion to Christ a sinner was told to "Repent... and pray to God" (Acts 8:13,18-22).

Someone has called these "the first and second laws of pardon". Christ takes away the burden of past sins when by faith we turn to him in repentance and baptism. He takes away our ongoing sins when by faith we turn to him in repentance and prayer.

Christ Our High Priest

Christ is our sympathetic high priest (Heb 4:16, Heb 10:22). He is at the right hand of God where he "intercedes for us" (Rom 8:34). We have continuing forgiveness through him because of his sacrificial death and his continuing intercession.

On our part, he requires us to commit ourselves to continuing in such as the following...

- obedience of faith (Rom 1:5, 16:25-26, Col 1:22-23).
- repentance (Rev 2:5).
- prayer (Jde 1:20-21).
- confession of sin (1Jn 1:7-9).

While attendance at the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week is certainly part of our ongoing obedience of faith, it is done to remember Jesus Christ, not to receive forgiveness of sins.

The action we take to receive ongoing forgiveness is to take our sins to Christ in prayer, confessing them and repenting of them. We can do this at any moment, not just at the observance of the Lord's Supper.

Why the Lord's Supper Is Not For Forgiveness

To better appreciate this lesson, we should think about why the Lord's Supper is unsuitable as a means of receiving forgiveness of sins.

On the next page there is a short lesson giving three reasons. (Please turn the page)