

I have selected these from two classes of passages as being the most obvious for my purpose. The first prove that the blood of the slain Lamb is the procuring cause of human redemption. They proclaim in language not to be misunderstood, that salvation is of the pure favor of God, and procured for us by the life's blood of his only begotten Son, who is the effulgence of his glory, and the exact representation of his character, without the shedding of whose blood there was for lost man no redemption.

The other class of passages as obviously prove that means have been ordained by infinite wisdom through which pardon and salvation flow to the obedient recipient. The God of nature and the God of grace are the same. The volume of nature enables us to understand whatever is obscure in the practical developement of divine revelation. God supplies the earth with the sun, the early and the latter rain, and then puts within our reach the seed ; but we must plough, and sow, and reap ; we must improve the seed time and harvest, or sun, and dew, and rain, avail not for us. So in the kingdom of grace. " All things are of God." Jesus the Sun of Righteousness has arisen ; he has lived and died for us ; " for we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead." " He by the grace of God has tasted death for every man ;" and " being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." Jesus the Lord of the world sends forth his light, the Holy Spirit strives, the word of truth is proclaimed with zeal and energy, but unless sinners repent and obey the gospel, all the divine expenditure will be lost upon ungodly men, unless to heighten their condemnation. Man's submission to the divine requirements are just as essential to his salvation as the death of the atoning Lamb. These points being conceded (and your general preaching and teaching all proceed on the hypothesis that the means are as absolutely necessary as the grace of God), we have only to determine whether the overt act of baptism is one of the conditions on which pardon is proffered. I think this has been proved very clearly in several of our former letters ; but I again appeal to the plain testimony of God's word already quoted. The same inspiring spirit at one time attributes remission of sins to baptism, and at another to the blood of Christ. Now, truth is one. It cannot be opposed to itself. The blood of Christ has been shed, but all men, not even all the elect in your sense of the term are cleansed from their sins. Hence the conclusion that the blood of Christ is the procuring cause of pardon. Baptism procures it for none ; for it is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saves us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. Immersion then is one of the means of enjoying remission of sins. It is made prominent as one of the first acts of the believer, because it is the consummating act in the regenerating process ; that act which introduces the child of God into the renewed family.

But here we are at issue. Disguise your sentiments as you may, your standard authors contend that sinners are pardoned before obedience !

save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the seeking of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" [Appendix of New Version, page 70 ]