

## **THE BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Rasmus Anderson was a Danish man who came to Utah. He had married a widow lady somewhat older than himself. At one of the meetings during the reformation Anderson and his step-daughter confessed that they had committed adultery. They were rebaptized and received into full membership. They were then placed under covenant that if they again committed adultery, Anderson should suffer death. Soon after this a charge was laid against Anderson before the Council, accusing him of adultery with his step-daughter. This Council was composed of Klingensmith and his two counselors; it was the Bishop's Council. Without giving Anderson any chance to defend himself or make a statement, the Council voted that Anderson must die for violating his covenants. Klingensmith went to Anderson and notified him that the orders were that he must die by having his throat cut, so that the running of his blood would atone for his sins. Anderson, being a firm believer in the doctrines and teachings of the Mormon Church, made no objections. His wife was ordered to prepare a suit of clean clothing, in which to have her husband buried.

Klingensmith, James Haslem, Daniel McFarland and John M. Higbee dug a grave in the field near Cedar City, and that night, about 12 o'clock, went to Anderson's house and ordered him to make ready to obey Council. Anderson got up, and without a word of remonstrance accompanied those that he believed were carrying out the will of the 'Almighty God.' They went to the place where the grave was prepared; Anderson knelt upon the side of the grave and prayed. Klingensmith and his company then cut Anderson's throat from ear to ear and held him so that his blood ran into the grave.<sup>1</sup>

Can a man atone for his sin by the shedding of his own blood? By some estimates a life whose good deeds have outweighed his evil deeds is a sufficient atonement, but this is man's wisdom and not God's.

When on the night of His betrayal our Lord celebrated the Passover with His disciples He spoke these words of the cup which He gave to them all: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" Matthew 26:28. Jesus' blood is of sufficient value to remit or remove the sins of many. He is the Saviour of the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Confessions of John D. Lee, Photo-reprint of 1877 edition, pages 282-283.

Direct reference is made to this covenant in the words of Jesus to His disciples: "I appoint (*diatithemi*) unto you a kingdom, even as My Father appointed unto Me." Luke 22:29.

"And I engage by covenant unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath engaged by covenant unto me." Witsius' translation.

"I covenant to give you, as My Father has covenanted to give Me, a kingdom." Weymouth.

"I covenant with you--according as My Father covenanted with Me—a kingdom." Rotherham.

The verb used here is *diatithemi*, the word from which *diatheke* is derived, which means to appoint by will, testament or covenant.

The Scriptures represent the Father, in the economy of our salvation, before the creation of mankind, as entering an agreement with the Son even unto death should man's representative, Adam, prove a failure in unbelief. For the love of the world the Saviour died upon His cross. He rejoiced knowing that many sons and daughters of God would receive the gift of His endless life, though He went down into the prison-house of Satan.

The new testament is so-called because God's promise and oath which He swore on His own life, for the remission sins, was sealed by His blood, that is, the value of His life given in death. The old covenant is so called because it was the promise of the people of Israel which they gave to God that they would be obedient. Their covenant was ratified by the blood of animal sacrifices whose value was not even that of a man's life. There never could be any redemption in the old covenant for the people sinned by their unbelief of God's promise and soon worshiped idols and lived promiscuously. That is why Moses broke the stone table of ten commandments.

The new testament is God's promise of the everlasting covenant which he gave to the patriarchs: Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, David, etc. He never asked them to make promises to Him in return. They believed His Word. They trusted in God's wonderful love. God's covenant was His gift of righteousness in the Messiah to come, but it was real for them nonetheless, for Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The same blessing of forgiveness of sins which both removes sin and imparts God's power to overcome sin by the writing of His law upon our hearts and minds was their privilege as well as ours.

Old covenant unbelief was ancient Israel's problem in following after other gods throughout much of its history. There could be no

deliverance for them in the old covenant and hence the northern kingdom of Israel was overwhelmed by Assyria in 722 B. C. and then later Judah followed after Baal and they too were taken into Babylonian captivity. Even after their return from exile they persisted in unbelief of God's promise and followed the old covenant which led them to not recognize their Messiah when He came and they crucified Him.

There were always a faithful few like David, Elijah, Samuel, Daniel, Jeremiah who understood the new covenant. These two covenants are two distinctly different experiences that run on two parallel tracks down through the course of history. One is salvation by faith alone in Christ. It is always a faith in Christ which is not dead, but works by love, the grand motivating principle of God. The old covenant is faith and works—adding to God's promise our promises to obey. Here the motivation is for self to get a reward. The new covenant motivation is that Christ may receive His reward—a new concern that transcends ourselves and thinks of Jesus' need.

Ben told how he and his brother Christopher had been walking in woods 200 yards from their home. Because of the storm we decided it was a bad idea," he said. "We had already seen several trees coming down. As we left the woods I remember Christopher shouting from behind, 'Look out!' Christopher Vince died pushing 16-year-old Ben out of the way of a falling tree.

"I want the whole world to know how brave my little brother was." As Ben tried in vain to move the 30ft tree, Jessica ran to fetch their parents from their home at Costessey, Norwich, but slightly-built Christopher was already dead. Ben added: "Christopher saved my life. It could have been me if it wasn't for him."

Jesus the Divine Son of God took our flesh and blood. He became our elder brother to take on our common enemy which is sin, Satan and death. As our actual substitute He died upon the cross for our sins which crushed out His life. You and I were responsible for those sins.

Seventh-day Adventists can understand the death of Christ because of their teaching regarding the state of the dead. Death is not a disembodied spirit existence floating around in heaven or burning in hell. Death is cessation of life. The general Christian belief is that Jesus did not really die. Thence they cannot truly appreciate that Jesus went to hell and the grave when He died and said, Goodbye to

life forever. He experienced the curse of God for sin. Such wrath broke His heart in the end and He surrendered His life.

Our hearts should ever be touched with such unbounded love. When His love warms our hearts we will no longer be pathetic and lazy, but alive, hungry, thirsty desiring more of Him who loves us. We will have a story to tell others of how He saved my life.