

Atonement Illustrated

by G.W. North

The sermon emphasizes the significance of the New Covenant and the Blood of Christ, highlighting its living, spiritual reality and the role of the Holy Spirit in sprinkling the throne of grace.

Scripture: Luke 22:20, John 6:53

Topics: "Redemption", "New Covenant"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the revolutionary nature of the New Covenant established by Jesus during the Last Supper, where He instructed His disciples to drink from the cup representing His blood. This act signifies a profound internal transformation rather than an external ritual, as Jesus invites believers to partake in His soul-life through the drinking of His blood. North explains that the New Covenant is not about the physical act of drinking but about receiving the essence of Christ's life, which is pure and redemptive. He contrasts the Old Covenant's practices with the New, highlighting that true redemption comes from the life contained in Jesus' blood, which cleanses and transforms the believer. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper understanding of the significance of Christ's sacrifice and the internal change it brings to those who accept it.

Transcript

Because this is so, and because He was moving up to the great eternal act of atonement, a few hours before His sacrifice the Lord Jesus took His disciples into an upper room that He might show them eternal truth. Passing over the intervening years of Hebrew practice and thereby displaying them to be parenthesis, He took a cup filled with wine and said, 'This cup is the New Covenant in my blood ... drink ye all of it.' So they drank the New Covenant in His Blood. To them the whole idea was entirely revolutionary. They had first heard it when, having fed the five thousand men plus women and children, Jesus had taught them that He was the bread from heaven. He had said that they must eat His flesh and drink His Blood or they would have no life in them. They had not understood it then, nor did they understand what He was saying now, but they knew He was introducing to them an entirely new and (what was considered to be) unlawful practice. Blood drinking was prohibited by the Law, but here was Jesus commanding them to do exactly the opposite from what Moses had said. True it is that He never once intended them to drink His actual blood, and that all was spiritual, but there was no denying that His teaching was absolutely revolutionary.

And revolutionary it surely is, for the Lord was not introducing a new idea, but simply turning them back to an old one: drinking. Instead of 'sprinkling,' 'striking,' 'pouring out,' or any of the other various usages of the blood of the Old Covenant, it was now and for ever more to be drinking. The New Covenant is not an external covenant like the old one, but an internal and therefore an entirely new one. True it is that the Blood of Jesus Christ had to be poured out, and upon the occasion stamped into the ground like the blood of many another who had hung on Calvary's hill or ever the Lord hung there. It had to be shed for remission, but it was the life of, that is, in the Blood, that gave it its true value. Isaiah has it right. He poured out His soul unto death. It was the life He lived in the flesh, the soul He created in sinlessness, that was really poured out as the actual blood outpoured onto the ground. The soul is in the blood. When a man drinks the Blood he drinks the soul of the Lord Jesus of Nazareth.

Anticipating Calvary, before His death the Lord as it were presented His whole soul-life as Man on earth in the cup He gave them to drink. It was as though He caught and compressed the real virtue and value and purpose of Calvary into the loving cup, that He might impress upon our tardy spirits the critical importance of the inward action above the outward manifestation, lest we lose the significance of the epochal and eternal thing that was being wrought and instituted as law in the New Covenant. The New Covenant in His Blood is a covenant to create in His own people the soul that was in Him, that being regenerate in spirit they too may live on earth the eternal life He lived whilst here. 'Drink it,' He says.

Oh, the soul of Jesus! How wonderful! The soul-life of that Man for every man who will drink. God manifest in the flesh, His uttermost perfections, His glorious reality, His sweetness ineffable; the wonder of Him, the righteousness, the holiness, the purity, the loveliness of Him; all that Manhood lived out under all kinds and conditions of life; trials, temptations, provocations, hatred, deceptions, lyings and blasphemies, betrayal, and tortures, and crucifixion; all that perfect soul that loathed sin, and that leapt out against hypocrisy, all the preciousness of this wondrous life that always obeyed the Father -- He says, 'Drink Me in, drink in My soul, My life, My all in the Blood.' The concern was and still is not so much that the wine be drunk; one only takes a sip anyhow, a lip-moistening, a little swallow; of itself it is nothing, a mere token thing of the gushings of His soul into ours as we open our being and drink and drink and drink in the perfect life of that Man, that God in Flesh.

So we see that immediately we reach the New Covenant we are brought back to the original idea of the open mouth; 'the Blood' has to be drunk. Yet the idea of sprinkling is also to be found in the New Testament, for the Hebrews letter speaks of the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. The comparison is apt, for Abel's blood was spilled on the ground as valueless for atonement as his brother Cain's, but Jesus' Blood is sprinkled on the throne of grace. I do not know quite what I expect to see when I stand before that throne, but this I know, that as of old the High Priest went every year into the Holiest of all and sprinkled the blood of atonement upon the Mercy Seat, so Jesus has gone into the Heavenly Jerusalem with His own Blood and has sprinkled the throne of grace with it. Moreover, the Holy Spirit has come forth, the second Apostle of the Trinity to be sent by the Father, to sprinkle hearts from an evil conscience.

All sprinkling of the Blood of the New Covenant is done by the Holy Ghost. His work by it is the inward disinfecting of the human personality from all sin and uncleanness and evil. There is not the slightest ground in the New Testament for believing that men are expected subjectively to handle and use the Blood; to the contrary they are plainly shown to be the objective beneficiaries of another's handling of it. Without question this is because of the redemption in that Blood. Redemption is not only through the Blood, that is because it was shed (meaning that unless it had been outpoured on the cross there could

have been no atonement, which is absolutely true), redemption is only through the Blood because also redemption was in the Blood of that wonderful Man.

There was no redemption in the blood of animals; it contained nothing of the moral and ethical worth of a life free from sin; it was not precious Blood but common blood. Superficial innocence it may have, sufficient enough for the Lord to allow Himself honestly to use it for imputed coverage and token implication, but it would have been immoral to have used it for anything further than that. So the Lord God did not do so. But the precious, unique, eternal soul-life of Jesus was utterly righteous, holy, pure, love-filled, virtuous, and positively redemptive. His Blood covers nothing, but removes everything contrary to its moral, ethical and virtuous nature, and brings into everyone who drinks it the soul-life of the Man who shed it. In one eternal act He shed it in that manner as the procuring price for the souls of men; just once in the end of an age of bloodshed He did it to end the age of bloodshed and put away sin thereby; and with the consummation of that age came also the passing of its practices, and phraseology.

No more must men use its limited vocabulary when speaking of such precious Blood; no more may men speak of covering anything with it; it is impossible, it cannot 'be done. The ideas are incompatible. Neither must men conjure up ideas of sprinkling it upon anyone or anything or anywhere. It is already sprinkled in the only places it may be sprinkled. We must not vulgarise it or impute unto it any superstitious uses. We must drink it; it is the blood of the new man which is entirely spiritual while living in the flesh.

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