

Salvation by Jesus Christ -- the Most Important of All Subjects -- Further Considered

by Job Scott

The only way to experience complete peace and salvation is through the new birth and the union with God, which is made possible by the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: John 3:3, John 14:6, Romans 8:10-12, 1 Corinthians 6:17, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 4:7, Colossians 1:27, Colossians 3:3

Topics: "Salvation", "New Birth"

Description

Job Scott preaches about the salvation by Jesus Christ, emphasizing the true nature of this salvation often misunderstood by Christians. He highlights the importance of being spiritually born of God to experience true satisfaction and bliss, becoming joint-heirs with Christ in the kingdom of heaven. Scott delves into the deep subject of the new birth, explaining that complete peace for the soul can only be found in a real union with God, where every thought and motion of the mind is in subjection to Him.

Transcript

SALVATION BY JESUS CHRIST,
THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL SUBJECTS,
FURTHER CONSIDERED

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I am as well assured there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we can be saved, but by the name of Jesus Christ, as I am of any doctrine whatever. And yet the true ground and nature of this salvation appears to me to be generally mistaken by the professors of the christian religion in our day.

The christian religion, did not then first commence when Christ appeared in that prepared body that was born of the virgin Mary; but was and is the true religion of all ages and nations; and Christ was and is the life of all the dispensations of God to mankind. The union of God and man in the one spirit, has ever been, and ever will be, the alone full rest and complete satisfaction and enjoyment of souls. Men may pursue pleasure, honour, wealth, and all that earth affords, in order to find satisfaction; but at the height of the enjoyment of all these, they will be poor, dissatisfied, and unhappy. Weary of these pursuits, a man may

try devotion, prayers, sermons, psalms, ceremonies, forms, and performances of religion, (so esteemed.) He may hear and tell a great deal of Christ, of faith, of imputation, and of being complete in Jesus; but all this will never anchor his soul upon that which is sure and steadfast, will never give him the true rest and enjoyment of souls, nor centre him in God; unless he truly knows the son of God begotten, formed, and brought forth in himself, wherein alone the union with God, or the Immanuel state, consisteth.

This ought to bring us to the consideration and inquiry, whether we are children of God, spiritually, as really as a son is the child of his father naturally?

I am assured there is no permanent and complete satisfaction and bliss, to be enjoyed by the soul of man, but in the state of true and real sonship. We must be born of God as really as ever we were born of our parents outwardly, and thus become true "heirs of God," and even "joint-heirs with Christ," if ever we enter the kingdom of heaven. Heirs are, in the first and nearest degree, one's own children; joint-heirs are brethren. And if ever we enter into a state of joint-heirship with the blessed Jesus, we must be as truly the sons of God, as he is his son.

If it be objected that Christ is his only son, his only begotten, and that therefore none else can be his son in the same sense, I answer,

1st. It is not pretended that any other visible person, or human being, was ever produced in the same manner as was Jesus the son of Mary, so, in that respect, that was a singular and only instance of sonship.

2d. But a second part of the answer to this objection is, that though the sonship, as brought forth in a plurality of persons, is expressed in the plural number in relation to them, and so is called sons, children, and heirs, yet in relation to God, with whom the union is immediately formed in all those persons wherein the sonship takes place, the whole is but one sonship. The seed of which they are begotten is one in all: that is, "the incorruptible seed, and word of God," of which all that are or ever were "born again of God," are and have been begotten.

The doctrine of the new birth is not a new-fangled notion, as deists may conceive, but is essentially the one only possible medium or way of complete peace to the human soul. We are all so constituted and made, that nothing in heaven or earth can ever fully satisfy the desires and longing of our souls, but a real union with the Fountain and Source of all good. This union we are capable of, and designed for, and therefore can never be completely happy without it.

This is the grand reason why mankind are, even at the height of their earthly enjoyments, uneasy, unhappy, and not fully satisfied. They crave and covet this and that, and vainly think, if the things they wish for were granted them, they should be happy; but when they obtain what they had thus desired, it ends more or less in disappointment. Their souls are not satisfied; they sigh for something more. Thus, the poor man thinks riches would make him happy; but when he attains wealth, he is no happier than before, and often not so much so. Still he wishes, still he craves, and fancies happiness consists in something which earth affords. Hence, mirth, festivity, and amusements are pursued; but these serve rather as an expedient to drown trouble, than any thing that has even the appearance of affording solid joy. These, therefore, soon cloy, and even disgust, and the mind is left lean, empty, and still longing for something, but knows not what.

Thus when all the rounds of earth's promised bliss are run, and all have failed, the poor, craving, disappointed soul, perhaps flees to some form of religious worship and devotion, in hope that now, at last, substantial happiness will be insured, and disappointment end. But, alas! too often this brings little more solid satisfaction than the rest. Now the poor creature begins to think happiness an unsubstantial name, a mere dream or illusion; what thousands fondly seek, but no man ever found. If it fails, thinks he, in religion, to which God has promised it in the most solemn manner, it must fail utterly, and for ever disappoint the hopes of man! But God never promised it to any forms or creaturely performances. The promise is only to the new creature, that which is born of God. And the reason why God never promised fulness of joy and complete satisfaction to any thing else, is, because nothing else in man is capable of it, or can possibly receive it. The reason so many of the human race are more or less unhappy, is, that they seek to satisfy the desires of an immortal soul with that which never was designed for its true source of enjoyment. The soul may flutter on from one earthly object to another, and even affect a kind of gayety and seeming satisfaction in these things, but it cannot find a solid resting place, -- a source of permanent enjoyment in any, or all of them.

God made man in his own image. "In the image of God created he him." There is therefore something in man, that must eternally pant for enjoyment, unless united to God, the source of all real good.

The best and highest enjoyment short of this, is still a state of banishment; and even the misery of the condemned, is properly called a punishment "with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." It is alienation, banishment, separation! and so long as a soul is not united to God, it is and must be in pain and anxiety; wishing, craving, longing for solid enjoyment, but never finding it. It never can be found but in the new birth; because we can never be united to God till we are so overshadowed by the holy ghost, and so yield to its influence, as to be thereby regenerated and born again of God; truly and livingly born again of the "incorruptible seed and word of God." This is that new birth, without which, Christ assures us, we "cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And it will ever hold good that we cannot; and the reason why we cannot, will also hold good for ever, -- that is, the enjoyment of that kingdom is the true enjoyment of God, where all is in subjection to him, and the soul in vital union with him; and this cannot be where the life that lives in us is not a real birth of God. Hence, Paul says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Yea, further, he says, "Christ who is our life." Many may think this only means, that as Christ has purchased life and salvation for us, without us, he is called our life; but the truth is, that Christ is substantially the very life of all that are born of God, and on this ground it is, that Christ declares himself to be the "resurrection and the life." He knew the divine life of every Christian is the same as his own, it is all one divine life. He knew also that in the new birth only, in that which is truly born of God, the "resurrection and the life" are enjoyed. Hence, "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death has no power."

The "first resurrection" is Christ; and therefore, every soul in whom the new birth, the begotten of God, the life of Christ, is brought forth, has "part in the first resurrection." This is out of the power of death, and in the spring of life forever: for Christ, the begotten, triumphs over death, as well in all the seed, in all his joint-heirs and brethren, as in that one prepared body.

But as the true doctrine of Christ is, perhaps, the deepest subject ever clearly opened to the mind of man, so man had, and still has, and as mere man ever will have, his "strong reasons," (as he thinks them,) against it. Perhaps nothing was more directly repugnant to the wisdom and learning of the Greeks and the Jews, than that Jesus Christ should be the son of God. The veil was over their minds, so that they could not understand the mystery; and therefore, many things about it were, to their sense, impossible.

He testified, that "Abraham saw his day," which they disbelieving, and thinking that he had involved himself in an inextricable dilemma, replied, "thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" And many professed Christians think to this day, that Abraham only saw his day afar off, and then, a great while after, to commence. But that was not our blessed Lord's meaning; his answer to their cavil, points directly at another thing: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am."

He does not say, I was before Abraham, but "I am." For he is the life of God's people through all time; and as such, Abraham truly saw his day, and rejoiced in it. It was his life. He was born of God. Christ lived in him, and was his "hope of glory." If it had not been so, he had been a reprobate; for it holds good in every age, as Paul said to those of his day, "Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." For as Christ the begotten of God, is certainly the life of all that are born of God, and as that vital union with God, which is the only true solace and full satisfaction of every soul, is only known in this living birth of God, therefore it follows, that those who know not this union, this birth, this only solid enjoyment, are reprobates, strangers, outcasts (in that state) from true bliss and enjoyment.

But as in that day, so in this, the veil is over people's minds, and ever will be over them, till Christ is revealed in them. It was in Paul that "God revealed his son." He did not reveal him to him as something wholly without him; but he revealed him in him. Well then might Paul call Christ "our life," and testify that "Christ lived in him." And until he is so revealed, in professing Christians, the veil will remain over their minds; for it is only removed, or "done away with in Christ:" not in a mere profession of him, but in himself, the life.

And so far as this is not experienced by christian professors, they stand much on a level with the Jews, in point of clearness and understanding in the doctrines of Christ. For the name makes little or no difference. And until Christ comes to be the real inward life of those who bear his name, their profession of him is but nominal; and they will be as subject to doubts, reasonings, and objections against the true doctrine of the gospel, as the Jews were. Hence they will be ready to say, Surely God does not beget Christ in every true Christian; this would be making every such equal with the man Christ Jesus.

In answer to this, let us call to mind what great offence the notion of equality gave the Jews. They thought it blasphemy in Christ to pretend oneness with God. "Whom makest thou thyself?" said they. But though all the divine life in Christ, was the very life of God in him, and in that sense he and his Father were one; yet as in him something was taken into union with God which was human, therefore Christ testified, "My Father is greater than I." This will eternally be the case; God is and ever will be greater than any thing else; and though humanity is united with divinity, in every new born babe in Christ, yet none can ever aspire to equality with God.

Nor will a humble Christian presume upon equality with Christ. For though every babe that is begotten and born of God, is as truly the offspring of God, as truly born of the same holy seed, and so "Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren;" yet as the birth of the divine life, in the union with the human, was most eminent in that prepared body; as the body itself was conceived through the overshadowing power of the holy ghost, and was uniformly in subjection to the divine life; as he was thus brought forth for a most excellent work and service, and as a glorious display of the way and work of salvation, so all the brethren and fellow heirs with him, will readily allow him the pre- eminence.

Yet this hinders not their being truly born of the same holy seed as he was, and as to the divine life in them, it is one and the same, wherever it becomes the life of the soul: it cannot be divided: there is no

twain in it.

Moses told Israel of old to "cleave unto the Lord," for says he, "He is thy life, and the length of thy days." The life of God itself has ever been the divine and spiritual life of his people. This is a great mystery! God with man, in living union, is too deep a subject for the natural understanding of man, unassisted, to investigate. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them." But it may be depended upon, that it is the alone true rest, solace, and satiating enjoyment of the soul; and that the one reason why there are so few truly happy persons in the world is this: full union with God can never take place, till death takes place in man upon all that is or acts in opposition to him. Hence, "straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it." Few are willing to lose the life of their own wills, that is contrary to God, and thus to die into union with the Source of all Good, and save that eternal life which cannot be enjoyed but where God is all in all, and every thought and motion of the mind is in subjection to him? The separate, selfish, and creaturely will of man seeks satisfaction out of subjection to the divine will, and mistakenly thinks the death of self, and a full subjection to the will of God, would be death to almost every enjoyment in the world: but the truth is, it is the only possible way for the soul to attain to complete enjoyment. But the carnal mind is at enmity with God. "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Therefore, in the work of salvation there is no alternative: death must pass upon the carnal mind, or the soul remains in the state of enmity to God, and opposition to him! God has so created even wheat, that unless it die it abideth alone, and bringeth not forth; and unless we die to the first state, will, inclination, and selfish life of the creature, we too abide alone, wrapped up in ourselves, in a life of separation from the life of God. This is abiding alone; if ever we are united to God, all that is in us, that is opposed to his pure reign in the soul, must die. And in order to effect this, he is wooing, overshadowing, and operating upon us to bring forth in us that immortal birth, that babe of divine life, which, when brought forth, and increased in stature, would bind the strong man and cast him out, spoiling all his goods, and slaying utterly the carnal mind, the enmity; thus reconciling the soul to God.

This doctrine of the new birth, and this absolute oneness of the life of the begotten, both in the man Christ Jesus and in all his joint-heirs and brethren, is not only according to the scriptures, but founded in the nature of things. It is by the overshadowing influence and power of the holy ghost, that "Christ in us, the hope of glory," is conceived and brought forth, or formed in us. Paul travailed in birth that Christ might be formed in the little children spiritually of his day. We find also the same agency in the conception of Jesus Christ: for as none but God ever could or can be the Father of Christ, spiritually, so the analogy holds good in the case of his prepared body; as it is said, Heb. x.5, "A body hast thou prepared me." Here we may see the body was not the saviour, but was prepared for him to do the Father's will in, and prepared by the power of God, through the influence of the holy ghost.

"She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, (a saviour,) for he shall save his people from their sins." He could not possibly save them in their sins. Salvation is the removal of sin actually, not imputatively. Sin forever separates the soul, that is in it, from reconciliation and union with God. Complete salvation is complete reconciliation to, and union with God. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;" "of twain making one new man, and so making peace." Peace can never be fully known whilst the twain remains. All that is in man, even "every thought," must be "brought into captivity," or subjection, "to the obedience of Christ." Here the will is one; here of the twain one new man is made, and so true peace is witnessed.

This is being saved from sin. And as a real and complete change must always take place in one of the twain, where two that were aliens, or unreconciled, become reconciled and made one, it is evident that the change which Christ effects and brings about in reconciling souls unto God, is and must be in them; for God remains the same, unaltered and unchanged forever. Hence the souls of believers are said to be reconciled unto God; not he to be reconciled unto them: though that also is truly the case, for he is reconciled unto them, in a true and substantial sense; but as all the change is in them, they are, in the most natural and proper sense, said to be reconciled unto him. And no soul can ever know the complete salvation of Christ by mere imputation; for that removes not the sin, the cause of separation and opposition.

God will be forever disposed alike at all times to a soul in the same state. If he rejects at one time for actual sin or sinfulness, he will always reject for the same. It is perfectly idle to talk of being completely reconciled to God by the righteousness of Christ, whilst remaining actually sinners in ourselves; or that we are holy in him, and unholy in ourselves. God always regards us just as we are in ourselves, and is to us accordingly, because he cannot change. And therefore to the froward he must and will show himself froward; because all that are froward are in direct opposition to him, who is always the same. Let that frowardness in us be removed, and a reconciliation must of course take place; for he is in eternal good will to all good, and to all that are strictly under the influence of good. Here there can be twain no longer, for all jarring, frowardness, and opposition being removed, the oneness is established, wherein the true peace consists forever. This is the work of CHRIST in man, and of GOD in CHRIST. It is also the work of man by CHRIST, and of CHRIST by GOD the FATHER.

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