

HENRIC SCHARTAU
AND
THE ORDER OF GRACE

Biography by Henrik Hägglund and
Fifteen Sermons by Henric Schartau

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AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN
Rock Island, Illinois

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ROCK ISLAND, ILL.
AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN, PUBLISHERS
1928

Seventh Sunday After Trinity.

Introduction.

Lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only. In this way Matthew concludes his story of the peculiar occurrence described in the seventeenth chapter.

When Jesus had at one time gone apart with a few of His disciples to a mountain, it happened that the "form of a servant," which He had taken upon Himself, was changed into the royal glory which belonged to Him ever since He had been born to be a king. The disciples who were accustomed to see Jesus associating with sinners, now found Him in conversation with two of the "Spirits of the New Jerusalem." They found themselves infolded in a cloud and possessed with great joy, but when they again came to themselves and "lifted up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only."

When a sinner first opens the eyes of his understanding, they are turned down upon his unsaved soul and lost condition. Shame and timidity are associated with downcast eyes. Esra describes the dejection of an awakened soul in such wise, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up into the heavens." The law enjoins men

to look especially upon themselves. It urges them to compare their depravity with God's holiness, and their guilt with His righteousness. The Holy Spirit, however, thereupon lifts the eyes of their understanding to Jesus only. The glory of Christ, emanating from the words of the gospel, enlightens their heart and attracts their thoughts to Jesus, while the love of God revealed in His promises comforts their frightened heart and gives them courage to turn to Jesus.

It is blessed when a believing soul looks in the Scriptures for Jesus only. He is the center and essential part of the word, and the Scriptures bear testimony of Him. When therefore the soul has learned to consider everything in the Word of God as leading to Jesus or derived from Him, then its searching has discovered the true treasure and the costly pearl.

It is a blessed thing when the believing soul in prayer fixes his uplifted eyes of faith upon Jesus only, not looking about for his dispersed thoughts, nor backward upon Satan, who threatens with the assertion that the prayers are to no avail, nor inwardly upon his own slothfulness and slight devotion, but above himself to Jesus, "who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

As Jesus only was the main object of Paul's preaching, so that he "determined not to know anything" except that which was related to the Saviour who once had been crucified, so shall also my main topic be Jesus Only. May He alone grant us enlightenment in the Word, strength and salvation through the Word, and may God hear us, when we ask for this for Jesus' sake. "Our Father," etc.

Proposition.

JESUS ONLY

- I. In the awakening, as its object.
- II. In justification and the new birth, as its foundation.
- III. In sanctification, as its power.

First Part.

It is Jesus only who has provided that the Holy Spirit works upon a secure heart unto its awakening. Paul says that the awakening takes place with reference to Jesus, in connection with, and as a result of, His redemption, which was perfected when God awakened Jesus from the dead. The blood of Jesus was shed even for those who have "counted it an unholy thing," and it bespeaks mercy even for them. God is jealous for the honor of His Son; He desires to show that the atonement is valid and powerful, and He therefore permits His Holy Spirit to quicken the slumbering consciences. Jesus gave His life for the wandering sheep, and He "goes after that which is lost." It is the suffering of Jesus that pleads for pardon. It is His prayer which quickens the movements of grace in dead hearts, and it is by virtue of His merits that gifts are provided even for those who have fallen away.

Jesus only is the basis of a sinner's awakening, but He is also the object thereof, for it is the object of the law to urge sinners to accept the grace offered by the gospel. Paul teaches that Christ and justification through faith in Christ are the objects of the law, "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every

one that believeth." Then again he describes the end of awakening as follows, "The law has been our tutor unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Hear then, O man, that the law causes grief in order that you may eagerly accept the comfort proclaimed in the gospel: that Jesus has paid for all your sins. The law frightens you, threatening you with eternal torment, in order that you may take the refuge which is being offered you with Jesus. When God, in His law, demands perfection in everything, His true object is that you may become a partaker of the righteousness of your Saviour, who has fulfilled the law for you.

Second Part.

A person becomes justified through faith alone, but Jesus only is the foundation of faith. He has provided that an awakened sinner can come to faith. Therefore an apostle* says that "Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith." Jesus has not only atoned for sins and purchased righteousness, but He has also provided that a sinner shall become a partaker of this grace. And since this is done by faith, Jesus has also provided that the Holy Spirit shall work to that end and grant a true faith, in order that the works of grace may be perfected and that man may appropriate and enjoy the fruits of redemption.

Jesus is the foundation of faith, for it is He of whom the gospel says that He has purchased all the good which the gospel offers to those who are rightly awakened. It is only through the gospel that a man can come to faith, for the gospel speaks of Jesus and, in-

* Paul, acc. to the author.

deed, concerning Jesus only. Any doctrine that does not speak of Jesus, whatever experience and glory it may proclaim, is not the gospel. So then Jesus is in the Word. His suffering, His blood, His obedience and death are proclaimed in the Word, and this is the only means of coming to the right faith.

It is Jesus only whom faith embraces and on whom it relies. When a person, after seeing the awful depth of his own misery, has once caught a right vision of Jesus, he cannot turn his thoughts from Him. Jesus becomes everything to such an one, and everything else is "counted as loss and dung." He seeks for Jesus, comes to Him, longs for His righteousness, prays in His name, and hopes in Him alone. He presses on that he may grasp Christ more securely, and that he may trust Him with more certainty and with greater boldness.

Jesus only is the basis and main cause of justification. Jesus only is considered by God when He makes a person righteous. God merely sees that the sinner has accepted Christ and that he is in Christ, in fellowship with Him. God does not wrathfully count such a person's sins, for they are covered with the blood of Jesus. The Saviour is sinless, and a justified man is considered quite as free from guilt as Jesus was when He had paid the whole debt of sin, and as pure, free from the corruption of sin, as Jesus has always been. Nor does God graciously look upon a person's good deeds; no, He looks only on His beloved Son. If He were to look upon our good deeds, He would also see the sins wherewith these good deeds are contaminated, and He would by virtue of His righteousness be compelled

to exact punishment. God looks upon His beloved Son only, in order that He may find something perfect to rest His holy eyes upon. The atonement and righteousness of Jesus only are then by God attributed to the justified sinner. Nothing else will avail and satisfy an awakened soul. Nothing else suffices for our salvation from eternal fire; no other righteousness is valid and pleasing before God than that of His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. It is by reason of this alone that God forgives sins and receives us into sonship with Him. Sins are forgiven, because Jesus "blotted out the bond against us" with His pierced, bleeding hand, and for the sake of His childlike obedience every one that believes on Him becomes a child of God. For Jesus' sake every child of God is considered like Jesus Himself, and a like verdict is rendered in heaven at the time of every act of justification as was proclaimed with reference to Jesus at the transfiguration, "This is my beloved son [this is my beloved daughter], in whom I am well pleased."

Jesus only is the basis of the new birth, for it is faith in Him alone that brings regeneration of the heart. Paul expresses this in Eph. 2. 6, saying, "God made us to sit with Christ in the heavenly places." When a man fixes his attention upon Jesus alone and upon the holiness which He purchased and perfected when He had "His delight in the law of the Lord," he receives the Spirit which grants full enlightenment in the Word of God. The believer then becomes like the Lord Jesus, being "transformed into the same image." The light of the glory of Jesus enlightens the soul to see aright and to perceive clearly the heavenly light in

the Word of God, when the Sun of Righteousness arises and God takes His dwelling in the soul. God then also grants the believer a new mind, "the mind which was also in Christ Jesus." His will becomes our will, and we thereupon always desire to be humble like Jesus, meek like Jesus, obedient like Jesus, pure in heart like Jesus, and occasionally we are also able to be thus, for in the new birth we received "a clean heart and a right spirit" and a mind like that "which was also in Christ Jesus."

Third Part.

It is in sanctification that the power of our Lord Jesus Christ is best shown, for it is Jesus who provides the power to put off the old man and put on the new. If you are to get rid of your wicked thoughts, if you are to quench your evil desires, if you are to succeed in overcoming your old sinful habits, verily, there is no other help for this in heaven or on earth than that provided by Jesus only. He has conquered sin, and "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us," for He is "the Lord which sanctifies." "The sanctification of the spirit" is a sure result of His redemption. If you were unable to resist sin, if you were compelled to fall therein again, then the forgiveness would be useless and the atonement in vain. But His merit is complete and perfect, and He has arranged that the merit imputed to you at once and immediately in justification shall also gradually be wrought in you in sanctification. Jesus has not only stood in your stead as a just man who has had His delight in God's commandments and whose righteous-

ness is imputed to you as though you had always been just, but He has also brought about that you actually become just and obtain more and more delight in God's law according to the inner man.

The more a person grows in faith in the Lord Jesus, the more he will also increase in good works. You do not, as you may suppose, receive more faith and grace from God by virtue of your watchfulness, meekness, patience, and devotion, but quite the reverse. In the proportion that Jesus becomes great and glorious to you, in the proportion that He becomes indispensable, you will increase in all the virtues that derive their strength from Him. The more faith, which is the origin of love, increases, the more will also love, which is the result of faith, increase.

Love for Jesus is the chief motive unto sanctification in a converted soul. It is love for Jesus that makes the believers submissive to Him in trials and sorrow, enabling them to bear His cross when the Lord finds it needful for their sanctification. Paul designates the knowledge of the love of Christ as the most immediate cause leading to one's being "filled unto all the fulness of God." In like manner it is love for Jesus that makes the most pleasing sins abominable and the most grievous duties light. It is love for Jesus that enables us to love all men, because He has deigned to make them all objects of His love. It is love for Jesus which opens our heart so that we may have confidence in those who are known to be partakers of that same love of Christ. It is love for Jesus which quenches our anger when we are offended, which kills hatred and enables the believer to love his enemies, since Jesus

has loved them too, precisely as He loved us even while we were yet His enemies.

Jesus is the most splendid and only perfect pattern to follow in sanctification. Do not ask to become like this one or that one, but pray that you may become like Jesus. Do not attempt to imitate the talents of others, nor their measure of grace, but walk in the footsteps of your Saviour. Along that way you shall more and more attain to that whereunto by your election you were ordained, namely, to be "conformed to the image of His Son."

Application.

Do you, O confident sinner, know whom you are warring against, whom you are scoffing at? It is not the servant who proclaims the message which you contradict, not human beings whom you mock for their spiritual interests, but Jesus only, Jesus, whose words are being spoken to you and whose members they are whom you vituperate. Rest assured that Jesus alone is able to overrule your wickedness and to judge and punish you. How dreadful it will be for you when you lie upon your death bed at the end of the way to realize that the Son's wrath is upon you! How awful the mere appearance of Jesus when, in the resurrection, you raise your head from the grave!

Take heed to what you have heard, O mournful souls, remember that Jesus only is the object of your awakening. Do not therefore seek for more regret nor for an immediate improvement in your course of life, but seek for Jesus only. Where, indeed, can you look for salvation except to your Saviour? Where can you find

salvation except in Him? It is nowhere else to be found. When you have found Him and in Him righteousness and strength, when His righteousness is your support in temptations, when His might is your succor, lo, then you have enough in Him, for you have all in Him. If then it should ever happen that you, like the first disciples, should in spirit see somewhat of His glory and "taste the powers of the age to come," and if this glory should thereupon disappear, then do not look for Moses or Elias, but be contented with the grace granted to those early disciples of whom we read, "When they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only."

When the peace of Christ has brought you reinvigoration and His promises have given you assurance of grace, then it shall also be your lot, at the approach of death, when your eyes can no longer see the things of this world, then the vision of your soul shall be opened and endowed with heavenly light to see the great glory, world without end, face to face, — Jesus only. Amen.