

Salvation—Adoption (3rd)

(Today we continue studying the doctrine of adoption unto salvation. This podcast continues to show more information that adoption does not originate at faith and that it is an eternal and immanent act of God before the foundation of the world.)

In the previous podcast, we quoted from Book II, Chapter V, of Gill's *Body of Divinity*. Showing that adoption is an eternal and immanent act of God before the foundation of the world. Now we direct your attention to Book VI, Chapter IX, of Gill's *Body of Divinity*. After a brief introduction and summary regarding adoption as an eternal and immanent act of God as discussed in Book II, Chapter V, from which we previously quoted, Gill considered adoption "as openly bestowed upon believing in Christ, and as manifested, applied, and evidenced by the Spirit of God." Again, we will quote somewhat at length while trying to provide a brief overview or outline of the application of adoption with reference to the passages in Romans and Galatians. Prior to taking up this part of the subject, in giving a brief statement showing that adoption is distinct from justification and pardon, Gill wrote: "A subject may be acquitted by his sovereign from charges laid against him; and a criminal, convicted and condemned, may be pardoned, yet does not become his son; if adopted, and taken into his family, it must be by a distinct and fresh act of royal favour."

After Gill discussed some things wherein civil adoption and spiritual adoption agree and disagree, he considers (1) the *causes* of adoption; (2) the *objects* of adoption; (3) the *nature and excellency of the priviledge* of adoption; and, (4) the *effects* of adoption. Under the *causes* of adoption, he lists the *efficient cause* which is God and then the *moving cause* of adoption which is "the love, grace, free favour, and good-will of God." The *objects* of adoption are those who are the objects of the love of God: the children of God; the chosen of God; the redeemed; the believers; those who live so that they "become the sons of God." Discussing the *nature and excellency of the priviledge* of adoption, Gill enlarges on the various benefits and blessings that are enjoyed by those adopted. In closing by considering the *effects* of adoption, Gill gives the following:

1. A share in the pity, compassion, and care of God, their heavenly Father; who, as a father pities his children, so he pities them that fear him, and reverence him as their Father; in all their afflictions he is afflicted, and sympathizes with them, and delivers them out of all their troubles; when they are in want of whatsoever kind, and particularly of food, he supplies them, and for which they are encouraged to ask it of him, as children of their parents; so our Lord reasons, *If a son*, etc. Luke xi. 11-13.
2. Access to God with boldness; they can come to him as children to a father, use freedom with him, tell him all their complaints and wants, and come boldly to the throne of grace, and ask grace and mercy to help them in their times of need.
3. Conformity to the image of Christ, the firstborn among many brethren; which is begun in this life, and will be perfected in that to come; when the sons of God shall be like him, and see him as he is.
4. The Spirit of adoption, given to testify their sonship to them; for *because they are sons, God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father*, Gal. iv. 4. 6.
5. Heirship; for *if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*, Rom. viii. 17. heirs of the grace of life, heirs of a kingdom, of an inheritance most glorious, to which they are entitled, and for which they are made meet by the grace of God.

Now I would like to direct your attention to an article written several years ago by Elder J. D. Shain. The complete article can be found on Brother Leroy Rhodes' website of Mount Zion Primitive Baptist Church at the following address: <https://mountzionpbc.org/Weekly/Adoption-1Elder%20J%20D%20Shain.pdf>. Brother Shain wrote:

Adoption is so obviously by grace that it proves conflicting in any system of salvation by works that any or all men could devise. Therefore, they leave it entirely out of their preaching. And may I further suggest why the ministers who believe and advocate the doctrine of grace mention it so rarely. They seem to have no clear concept as to its position, or significance in the economy of grace. Some hold that adoption comes with, or is accompanied with regeneration; while others hold that it is manifested only in the resurrection. Then some hold that adoption applies to the body only; that while the soul of man is born again in regeneration and takes on a spiritual change, the body remains natural, but is admitted into the service of God by virtue of adoption. ... But, as they differ so widely on the real and proper application of the term, I can come to but one conclusion, and that is there was and is a lack of proper understanding of the term among them. In my opinion, none of the aforementioned positions are correct in the light of the Scriptures. While it may sound presumptuous for me to say so, I think these varied opinions have grown and continue to grow out of a failure to recognize the fundamental element of adoption in the theme of grace, and hence, the failure to ascertain its real nature and meaning in common scriptural usage.

After defining adoption from various sources, Brother Shain selected the *American College Dictionary* (definition No. 2) as follows: "To take another's child as one's own, by a specific legal act of law." Then he said:

Let us now note the order in which adoption is effected. 1st, there must be a decision or purpose to have an heir or heirs to one's estate. In Eph. 1:11, this is clearly expressed. "Being predestinated according to the PURPOSE of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." 2nd. The choice or selection of those who are to be heirs. Eph. 1:4, "According as He hath chosen us in Him." 3rd. The estate described which the heirs are to inherit. Eph. 1:3, "Who hath blessed us with ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS in heavenly places in Christ." 4th. A court, or tribunal of law, of competent jurisdiction to confirm and publish the Decree of adoption, naming the Adopter, the heir or heirs, and describing the legacy they are to inherit. Read Eph. 1:5, "*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children* by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

After explaining the legal aspect of adoption of which he addressed "God's Foreknowledge, His eternal purpose to adopt, His choice of those to be adopted and His predestinating them to sons by adoption," he proceeded to unfold "the doctrine as revealed in Scriptures of the New Testament." Then he gave the following regarding the principle of adoption:

But before we take up the consideration of the other passages in the New Testament bearing on the subject, we will emphasize two points that are necessary to the proper understanding of the subject. These two points are—The nature of adoption, and the proceedings necessary to accomplish or complete it. First, the nature of adoption is to take a child that is not a child by birth, and by an act in law, make it a legal heir. Please remember this: only legal relations are established by adoptions; never vital or blood relation. So, in adoption, only title to and right of an estate is conveyed. It cannot convey a fitness or a

likeness of nature. It makes one an heir to a home, but does not prepare one for the society or life of the home. The principle of adoption was practiced on a national scale by the government of Israel. They admitted Gentiles to come under the Government of Israel as adopted sons. The adopted Gentiles could enjoy most of the blessings and privileges of the National Israelites but adoption could not make the Alien Gentiles so admitted, natural or national Jews. It could not remove the alien blood in the adopted Gentiles and give them the royal blood of the seed of Abraham. From these facts, it must be clear to the reader that adoption constitutes only legal relationship and does not convey a likeness of nature. You could adopt a Negro child, but you could not make it white; you could adopt a Chinese child, but you could not put Anglo-Saxon life in its bloodstream.

I regret to interrupt this because at this point Brother Shain makes a transition to enlarge on “the incredible and incomprehensible obstacles and difficulties that must be removed or overcome before the heirs can be admitted to that home of eternal joys.” The Lord willing we will continue at this point in our next podcast. However, our time is up for today. Before closing, I want to emphasize that I am only giving some of the highlights from his article and I would highly recommend going to the web site supplied to download and study the entire article. Farewell.