

The formula "Accept Christ" has become a panacea of universal application, and I believe it has been fatal to many. The trouble is that the whole "Accept Christ" attitude is likely to be wrong. It shows Christ appealing to us rather than us to Him. It makes Him stand hat-in-hand awaiting our verdict on Him, instead of our kneeling with troubled hearts awaiting His verdict on us. It may even permit us to accept Christ by an impulse of mind or emotions, painlessly, at no loss to our ego and no inconvenience to our usual way of life.

For this ineffectual manner of dealing with a vital matter we might imagine some parallels; as if, for instance, Israel in Egypt had "accepted" the blood of the Passover but continued to live in bondage, or the prodigal son had "accepted" his father's forgiveness and stayed on among the swine in the far country. Is it not plain that if accepting Christ is to mean anything there must be moral action (repentance) that accords with it.

A.W. Tozer, That Incredible Christian

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

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30. Q. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition (Luke 2:7), made under the law (Gal. 4:4), undergoing the miseries of this life (Heb. 12:2, 3; Is. 53:2, 3), the wrath of God (Luke 22:44; Mt. 27:46), and the cursed death of the cross (Phil. 2:8); in being buried (1 Cor. 15:3,4), and continuing under the power of death for a time (Acts 2:24, 25, 26, 27, 31; Mt. 12:40).

31. Q. Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4), in ascending up into heaven (Mark 16:19), in sitting at the right hand of God the Father (Eph. 1:20), and in coming to judge the world at the last day (Acts 1: 11; 17:31).

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Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

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THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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FREE TO BE FREE

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Galatians 5:1

America is often characterized as the “Land of the free and the home of the brave.” In fact most of the citizens of this country meet the criteria of neither of these things. Freedom is to most a relative term and is perceived as the ability to exercise one’s will without either coercion or restraint. Outside of Christ and the benefits of His grace, men are incarcerated in the most formidable of all prisons. While they plead their case for the freedom of their will, their own fallen nature and those elements that exploit it places limitations on them that they cannot rise above. Any and all efforts to extricate themselves only serve to further enslave them in pride and rebellion and to validate the fact that only Christ can make one truly free.

Having presented a powerful case against the actions of the Galatians who were gravitating toward the bondage of legalism, Paul delivers a concise but powerful exhortation. They had been made abundantly aware of the facts of justification by faith alone, that which was fully accomplished by the Blood of Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul likened them to children who having been trained up under the tutelage of the schoolmaster were now electing to return to submitting as children when they should have been acquitting themselves as men. It seems that the ever present fleshly tendencies prefers that way in which it can comply or contribute in order to claim credit for what grace alone produces in men. The manner and the objective

expose the lack of true freedom and rather present a case for a bondage that in no way honors Christ. He would have them to know that this is diametrically opposed to the “liberty wherewith Christ had made us free.”

Many able commentators and some other translations render this thought as “For freedom Christ has set us free...” ESV and others. In that it is spoken of in such a particular fashion the KJV may be so understood. It is “the liberty” as only He could give. It is a liberty given with purpose. It is that we should be free and experience that freedom in most glorious ways. There is no room for presumption here. Paul adds later: *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. Galatians 5:13.* It is well observed that this liberation has a dual function. It is a deliverance and there is much to celebrate in that regard. It is also an endowment (Hendriksen). That is, what the Law could not do, has been given us in Christ and the Spirit.

It is well that we be reminded that we have been delivered from, as Martin Luther characterized them, the cruelest of tyrants. He spoke of the Law itself which demanded but could not produce in us what was required. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: Romans 8:3.* And, that sinful nature against which the Law is

directed is unrelenting in its hold and knows only the orchestration of the adversary. Death then is the end of that bondage (Proverbs 14:12). We are reminded of that state when we read: *And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Hebrews 2:15.* The devil himself is a cruel taskmaster and we once walked that way: *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Ephesians 2:2.*

It seems that the Apostle would warn us away from any hint of returning to such a way of life. Calvin wrote: "If men lay upon our shoulders an unjust burden it may be borne: but if any endeavor to bring our conscience into bondage, we must resist valiantly, even to death." This was the intent of the legalists of whom Paul warned them. Luther warned: "Those that will be secure and snore on without care, these will not keep this freedom." We must believe that this is why Paul wrote these words and why they are preserved for us to this day. We are free to be free. We are free that we may exercise this liberty. We are reminded that the tendencies of the flesh remain and that Satan hates the light and freedom of the Gospel

above all. He hates the fact that in this freedom men love Christ supremely, worship Him with great delight and seek in every way to be identified with Him with no other constraint than the love of Christ Himself.

Such thoughts would seem to be in conflict with the idea of servitude to Christ. *For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. 1 Corinthians 7:22.* What a wonderful paradox. One called unto Christ, being the slave of Christ is in fact free. How can this be? Those who are the slaves of Christ find no conflict with their will and are therefore free to embrace their slavery with full submission, unbounded love for their Master, and are fully involved in the joy of their Lord. The Lord's "freemen" are at liberty to do all the Law requires in that it is in their nature to do so. We walk with a sure step and avoid the entanglements of the legalist and the things of this world.

So then, we must truly stand where Christ has placed us. Our liberty was won at a great cost to Him and to act in any other way would be an insult to our Lord and the great work of His salvation. He is the "truth" and in Him we are free indeed. *bhs*

THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF RELIGION

There are some, I know, who would fain believe that to think and preach so much about Christ is no true religion, that it would be better if I spoke more about plain, practical duties, that it does not signify so much what we think about Christ. But, I trust they are so few that I shall say nothing to them. Plain, practical duties are very well; but they cannot put away sin, nor give men new hearts, nor save souls. All of that is Christ's office. Christ is the mainspring and subject of all Scripture. Christ, we read, is the Bishop of souls, the Author and Finisher of faith, the Bread of life, the Captain of Salvation, the Cornerstone, the Door, the Mediator, the Prince of life, the Prince of peace, the Rock, the Shepherd, the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the world; and surely then, I may fairly tell you that to think rightly of Jesus Christ is the sum and substance of religion.

J. C. Ryle

DUTY OF LIVING AND WALKING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Gal 5:25.—If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

We live, move, and have our being in God. His presence is ever with us; and by his power, we are, at every moment, upheld in being, and faculties and powers, from which all movements corporeal or mental, proceed, are preserved in existence and action. Such is our constant and immediate dependence on God. We are, in like manner and degree, dependent on the Holy Spirit, for the existence of spiritual life, and for the faculties and powers necessary to all spiritual action. Our dependence on the Holy Spirit extends still further. The very disposition to holy action, proceeds from the Spirit; and the production of this disposition, is his peculiar work in sanctification. In our natural actions, we live and move in God; in our spiritual actions, we live and walk in the Holy Spirit. The Scripture representations of our dependence on the Holy Spirit, are full and strong. Our spiritual life comes from him, for it is the spirit that quickeneth; [John 6:63] and he is called the Spirit of Life. [Rom 8:2] When the prophet saw the dead bones in the valley, he prayed: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live;" [Exod 37:9] and the spirit of life entered into them. So souls, dead in trespasses and sins, are quickened by the Holy Spirit. And we live in the Holy Spirit as dependent on him for spiritual life, as the body is dependent for animal life on the atmosphere which we breathe. Hence proceed the earnest prayers, that the Holy Spirit may be granted, and may not be taken away. [Ps 51:11-12] And hence the bestowment of the Holy Spirit is regarded as the giving of all good. [Compare Matt 7:11 with Luke 11:13] The importance of the Holy Spirit's influence in the exercises of the spiritual life, may be inferred from such passages as the following: "Led by the Spirit;" [Gal 5:18] "Mind the things of the Spirit;" [Rom 8:5] "Filled with the Spirit;" [Eph 5:18] "The Spirit lusteth against the flesh;" [Gal 5:17] "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live:" [Rom 8:13] "The Spirit helpeth our infirmity:" [Rom 8:26] "Changed into the same image by the Spirit;" [2 Cor 3:18] "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits." [Rom 8:16] No believer, who has any just sense of his dependence on the Holy Spirit, for the divine life which he enjoys, and all its included blessings, can be indifferent towards the Agent by whom all this good is bestowed. He cannot willingly "grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom he is sealed to the day of redemption." [Eph 4:30] He will seek to know, in all things, what is the mind of the Spirit; and, to him, the communion of the Holy Spirit will be the sweetest foretaste of heaven, that can be enjoyed on earth. And to him, therefore, the study of the Holy Spirit's character and office, will be a source of delight. John Dagg *A Manual of Theology*

I do not come into this pulpit hoping that perhaps somebody will of his own free will return to Christ. My hope lies in another quarter. I hope that my Master will lay hold of some of them and say, "You are mine, and you shall be mine. I claim you for myself." My hope arises from the freeness of grace, and not from the freedom of the will.
Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Though Christians be not kept altogether from falling, yet they are kept from falling altogether. —William Secker