

Sailing With Paul

Simple Papers for Young Christians

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Chapter 7

Acceptance

It is a precious truth that GOD accepts every believer in the Lord JESUS CHRIST, not according to any real or fancied goodness in himself but according to the Father's estimate of His beloved Son.

I remember well a striking illustration of the power of this in practical life, which I saw several years ago. A dear colored woman, who had herself known the Lord from her girlhood but had erred in marrying an unsaved man, asked the prayers of a little company of Christians one night for her husband who had become a depraved drunkard and gambler. In wondrous mercy, while we prayed, GOD heard and answered; for into our meeting came Alex Beck himself, and cried: "Friends, I want to find my wife's GOD! I was gambling and drinking in a saloon on S- Street (It was in Los Angeles, California), and twenty minutes ago it seemed to me a voice cried in my soul: 'Alex Beck, you must be saved to-night or be damned forever!' I threw down the cards in fear, and rose from the chair and fled from the place. Tell me how I may be saved!" It was a solemn moment for us all, thus to see GOD's power so manifest. We pointed the anxious, trembling man to the Cross, and, perhaps an hour later, he was rejoicing in GOD's salvation, and husband and wife were one in CHRIST.

A few evenings afterward I heard him give his first public testimony. These were substantially his words: "My friends, I want you all to look at me. I know I ain't a pretty sight to look on. I'm just a great big black ugly man, but in GOD's sight I'm altogether lovely, for I'm all dressed up in JESUS!"

He had been truly taught of the SPIRIT. For this is none other than Paul's doctrine of acceptance, **"He hath made us accepted in the beloved"** (Ephesians 1:6). Once, all our guilt and sin were imputed to JESUS when He hung upon the Cross as our SUBSTITUTE. Now we appear before GOD's face in all His perfections. **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"** (II Corinthians 5:21). Carefully observe:- It is not, as theologians sometimes put it, that the righteousness of CHRIST is imputed to us. Scripture never so speaks. It is this, that GOD reckons us, looks upon us, as righteous, because of the work His Son has accomplished and of the new place in which we now stand before Him: that is, in CHRIST, perfect and complete in GOD's sight.

And as so accepted we are as dear to GOD as is our blessed Lord Himself, who, when He prayed to the FATHER said, **"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me"** (John 17:23). Could language be clearer, or words stronger, to declare the unbounded love of the FATHER for all who are accepted in His Son? Well may the happy Christian sing with chastened joy:

"So dear, so very dear to GOD,
I could not dearer be;
The love wherewith He loves His Son,
Such is His love to me."

And being thus brought so near to GOD in the person of our Lord JESUS CHRIST our security naturally follows. We are in Him, and, consequently, as safe from judgment as He is. He died in our stead, and faith reckons His death as our death. Now He lives forever beyond the reach of death and judgment. And in Him we are accepted! If He falls (far be the thought!) then do we also fall; but He has said, **"Because I live ye shall live also."** We have died out of the old relationship, in which we had part by nature, but we have now been raised with CHRIST and our life is hid with CHRIST in GOD. Ponder carefully: **"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory"** (Colossians 3:1-4).

Already GOD sees us as a heavenly company, for CHRIST is in glory as our representative. So we are told: **"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"** (Ephesians 2:4-7). Thus our destiny is forever settled. Our past, present, and future we know, on the authority of GOD's Word. Once dead in sins, we are now seated in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS, and for all eternity to be to the praise of His glory as an exhibit of the power of His grace!

And it is well to remember that a true Christen life springs from a recognition of our acceptance. So the apostle adds, **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"** (Ephesians 2:10). He who has

been thus taken into favor in the Beloved is called to show by a holy, blameless life his appreciation of the grace bestowed upon him, and to manifest CHRIST in his walk and conversation and manner of life.

The same truth is put before us in the chapter already noticed in Colossians. He whose life is hid with CHRIST in GOD is called upon to put off all that belonged to him as a man in the flesh, and to put on the new ways of the man in CHRIST.

But let it never be forgotten:- no merit attaches to the believer because of his godliness and devotedness. He needs none. He is already accepted in the Beloved, and nothing can be added to this. No loving obedience he can render can make him one whit dearer to the heart of GOD.

But it should now be the object of his life to be well-pleasing to Him in whom he is accepted. This is what Paul means when he writes: "**We labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him**" (II Corinthians 5:9).

All believers are accepted in Him, and this for eternity. Henceforth it should be the object of our souls to so live that we may daily be accepted of Him, or well-pleasing to Him. This is to walk worthy of our high and holy calling.

~ end of chapter 7 ~
