

# THE RELATION OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY TO YOUNG PEOPLE

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What can young people do? What may they not do? Young people, members of the Church either by confession or baptism, must face these questions very often in the midst of this world. And, almost needless to say, their parents face the same questions.

The question seems most often involved with the matter of entertainment; however, it is certainly not limited to this. Because of the very problems involved, the answer may seem to be that a list of rules and regulations be drawn up to govern in these things. Yet such has not been – and for very good reason. Because we walk in liberty, Christian liberty, we don't need all kinds of rules to govern us.

If Christian liberty is the answer to the questions that our young people face, we must be sure that we understand it in a proper way. Christian liberty is far removed from the general idea of liberty in our day. Liberty in our day and in our country is understood to be the power of free choice. One may do as he pleases without any interference by those in authority. So one has the freedom to worship or not to worship God. One has the freedom to curse or not to curse the name of God. And we boast that we live in such a free country that we have this liberty.

That idea of liberty is often understood to be the idea of Christian liberty as well. According to this interpretation of Christian liberty, the child of God no longer need to keep the law of God, but he can walk in whatever way he please. Christ has fulfilled the law; He has paid for all our transgressions. Now I can do whatsoever I please. Although we many not be so bold as to maintain this in so many words, the fact is that often this is the way in which we would act.

Christian liberty is the complete freedom to obey God and His Word in all that we do. All that opposes God is the opposite of liberty – it is the bondage of sin and death. This liberty we have now principally in Christ. He has removed our transgressions and has made us holy before God. From the heart, though we have but a small beginning, we would worship and praise God. That liberty shall be perfectly ours in glory. There we shall praise our God in both body and soul without sin. We shall perfectly obey Him – that is the glorious liberty of the child of God.

Now, as we live on this earth, we are not bound by all kinds of laws and regulations. In the Old Testament that was different. Then the children of Israel had laws concerning what they might eat, what they might wear, how they had to perform sacrifice. They were under these many laws and had to obey them. But Christ was the fulfillment of these laws. We, therefore, are no longer under all of those regulations for our life.

However, that does not mean that now we do not have to obey the law of God. The fact is that even in heaven we shall have the Word and the law of God. It is true that we do not, and can not, obey the law of God in order to receive life. The command of God in the Old Testament: "Do this and live," revealed clearly in spiritual Israel, and us, that we can not obtain life through the law. Christ also obeyed the law perfectly for us. In Him we do live in harmony with the just requirements of God. And having life in Christ, we have the harmony with the just requirements of God. And having life in Christ, we have the spiritual desire and will to obey God's law in love. That is Christian liberty - because we live in Christ, we have the spiritual

desire and will to obey God's law in love. That is Christian liberty – because we live in Christ, therefore we have the freedom to obey the law of God. In-so-far as we now obey the Word of God, we walk in Christian liberty.

And Christian liberty does not only apply to the older members within the church. God's promise is to the spiritual parents and their covenant seed. It is not true, as is often alleged, that young people before they make confession of faith can do anything that they please. That after confession of faith then they must also walk in this perfect law of liberty. Within the covenant God has established with the Church of Jesus Christ, that is not correct. The spiritual seed are in Jesus Christ, and therefore also must walk according to the law of liberty in Him.

How must this Christian liberty be a guide to you as young people? Remember, first of all, according to this liberty you are not free to sin as you please. If you indeed walk in true liberty, you cannot simply neglect the Word of God. To neglect that is not walking in liberty, but in bondage. To ignore the study of God's Word in societies, to neglect catechism in attendance or preparation, is not liberty at all; that is bondage. True liberty is the desire of the child of God, whether he be young or old, to intellectually and spiritually the revelation of God in Christ. It is the spiritual desire to walk according to that revelation of God no matter what the consequences for the flesh.

This same truth ought to guide us in the midst of this sinful world. There are many things which confront especially young people. The world has much entertainment to offer. That is offered not only in the theaters and shows of the land but is equally presented upon television and on radio. And what must the young people do? How must they use their spare time? Again let it be said, we need not a long list of rules and regulations. The Spirit of Christ guides us. According to the liberty which is ours in Christ, the answer to these questions ought not be difficult. Whatever we do, we shall do according to the Word of God. That probably means that many things we now do according to our flesh, we could do no more. For the law of liberty does not give us the right to do as we please, but in Christ it gives us the right and privilege to do as God pleases.

To walk according to Christian liberty surely requires then a knowledge of the Word of God. By the Spirit of Christ we desire to walk according to the Word of God. Then we must diligently study it also as young people. It is our guide in the liberty we possess in Christ.

If we as children of God, and young people, indeed walk in such liberty, it will not be said of us that we are seen in evil places, that we do many corrupt things, that we care not for the Word of God nor the study of that Word. Rather, we too will be seen as pilgrims and strangers who look for that time in which we shall live in perfect liberty forever. And until then, by grace we shall even now walk principally in that same law of liberty.

Originally published in:  
Vol 20 No. 1 February 1960