

SPIRITUAL LIBERTY

NO. 9

A SERMON
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 AT EXETER HALL, STRAND

*“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”
 2 Corinthians 3:17*

LIBERTY is the birthright of every man. He may be born a pauper, he may be a foundling, his parentage may be altogether unknown, but liberty is his inalienable birthright. Black may be his skin, he may live uneducated and untaught, he may be poor as poverty itself, he may never have a foot of land to call his own, he may scarce have a particle of clothing, save a few rags to cover him, but poor as he is, nature has fashioned him for freedom—he has a right to be free, and if he has not liberty, it is his birthright, and he ought not to be content until he wins it.

Liberty is the heirloom of all the sons and daughters of Adam. But where do you find liberty unaccompanied by religion? True it is that all men have a right to liberty, but it is equally true that you do not meet it in any country save where you find the Spirit of the Lord. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

Thank God this is a free country. This is a land where I can breathe the air and say it is untainted by the groan of a single slave. My lungs receive it, and I know there has never been mingled with its vapors the tear of a single slave woman shed over her child which has been sold from her. This land is the home of liberty. But why is it so? I take it, it is not so much because of our institutions as because the Spirit of the Lord is here—the spirit of true and hearty religion.

There was a time, remember, when England was no more free than any other country, when men could not speak their sentiments freely, when kings were despots, when Parliaments were but a name. Who won our liberties for us? who has loosed our chains? Under the hand of God, I say, the men of religion—men like the great and glorious Cromwell, who would have liberty of conscience, or die—men who, if they could not reach kings’ hearts, because they were unsearchable in cunning, would strike kings low, rather than they would be slaves.

We owe our liberty to men of religion, to men of the stern Puritanical school—men who scorned to play the craven and yield their principles at the command of man. And if we ever are to maintain our liberty (as God grant we may) it shall be kept in England by religious liberty—by religion.

This Bible is the Magna Charta of old Britain. Its truths, its doctrines have snapped our fetters, and they never can be riveted on again, whilst men, with God’s Spirit in their hearts, go forth to speak its truths. In no other land, save where the Bible is unclasped—in no other realm, save where the Gospel is preached, can you find liberty.

Roam through other countries, and you speak with bated breath—you are afraid, you feel you are under an iron hand. The sword is above you, you are not free. Why? Because you are under the tyranny engendered by a false religion, you have not free Protestantism there, and it is not till Protestantism comes that there can be freedom.

It is where the Spirit of the Lord is that there is liberty and nowhere else. Men talk about being free, they describe model governments, Platonic republics, or Owenite paradises, but they are dreamy theorists, for there can be no freedom in the world, save, “where the Spirit of the Lord is.”

I have commenced with this idea, because I think worldly men ought to be told that if religion does not save them, yet it has done much for them—that the influence of religion has won them their liberties.

But the liberty of the text is no such freedom as this, it is an infinitely greater and better one. Great as civil or religious liberty may be, the liberty of my text transcendently exceeds. There is a liberty, dear friends, which Christian men alone enjoy, for even in Great Britain there are men who taste not the sweet air of liberty.

There are some who are afraid to speak as men, who have to cringe and fawn, and bow, and stoop, to anyone—who have no will of their own, no principles, no voice, no courage, and who cannot stand erect in conscious independence. But he is the free man, whom the truth makes free. He who has grace in his heart is free—he cares for no one, he has the right upon his side, he has God within him—the indwelling Spirit of the Holy Ghost—he is a prince of the blood royal of heaven, he is a noble, having the true patent of nobility. He is one of God’s elect, distinguished, chosen children, and he is not the man to bend, or meanly cringe.

No!—sooner would he walk the burning furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—sooner would he be cast into the lion’s den with Daniel, than yield a point of principle. He is a free man. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” in its fullest, highest, and widest sense. God give you, friends, to have that “Spirit of the Lord,” for without it, in a free country, you may still be bondsmen, and where there are no serfs in body, you may be slaves in soul.

The text speaks of Spiritual liberty, and now I address the children of God. Spiritual liberty, brethren, you and I enjoy if we have “the Spirit of the Lord” within us. What does this imply? It implies that there was a time when we had not that Spiritual liberty—when we were slaves. But a little while ago all of us who now are free in Christ Jesus, were slaves of the devil, we were led captives at his will.

We talked of free will, but free will is a slave. We boasted that we could do what we pleased, but oh! what a slavish and dreamy liberty we had. It was a fancied freedom. We were slaves to our lusts and passions—slaves to sin, but now we are freed from sin. We are delivered from our tyrant—a stronger than he has cast out the strong man armed, and we are free.

Let us now examine, a little more closely, in what our liberty consists.

I. And first, my friends, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” from the BONDAGE OF SIN.

Ah! I know I shall speak feelingly to some of you when I talk about the bondage of sin. You know what that misery means. Of all bondage and slavery in this world, there is none more horrible than the bondage of sin. Tell me of Israel in Egypt preparing their tale of bricks unsupplied with straw, tell me of the Negro beneath the lash of his cruel taskmaster, and I confess it is a bondage fearful to be borne.

But there is one far worse—the bondage of a convinced sinner when he is brought to feel the burden of his guilt, the bondage of a man when once his sins are baying him, like hounds about a weary stag. The bondage of a man when the burden of sin is on his shoulder—a burden too heavy for his soul to bear—a burden which will sink him forever in the depths of everlasting torment, unless he does escape from it.

Methinks I see such a person. He has ne’er a smile upon his face, dark clouds have gathered on his brow, solemn and serious he stands, his very words are sighs, his songs are groans, his smiles are tears, and when he seems most happy, hot drops of grief roll in burning showers, scalding furrows on his cheek.

Ask him *what he is*, and he tells you he is “a wretch undone.” Ask him *how he is*, and he confesses that he is “misery incarnate.” Ask him what he *shall be*, and he says, “He shall be lost in flames forever and there is no hope.” Behold him alone in his retirement, when he lays his head on his pillow, up he starts again. At night he dreams of torment and by day he almost feels that of which he dreamed. Such is the poor convinced sinner under bondage.

Such have I been in my days, and such have you been, friends. I speak to those who understand it. You have passed through that gloomy Slough of Despond. You have gone through that dark vale of penitence, you have been made to drink the bitter cup of repentance. And I know you will say, “Amen”

when I declare that of all bondage this is the most painful—the bondage of the law, the bondage of corruption.

“O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me” from it? But the Christian is free, he can smile now, though he wept before. He can rejoice now, whereas he lamented. “There is,” he says, “no sin upon my conscience now. There is no crime upon my breast. I need not walk through the earth fearful of every shadow and afraid of every man I meet, for sin is washed away. My spirit is no more guilty, it is pure, it is holy. There no longer rests the frown of God upon me, but my Father smiles. I see His eyes—they are glancing love. I hear His voice—it is full of sweetness. I am forgiven, I am forgiven, I am forgiven! All hail, you breaker of fetters! glorious Jesus! Ah! that moment when first the bondage passed away! Methinks I recollect it now. I saw Jesus on His cross before me, I thought on Him, and as I mused upon His death and sufferings, methought I saw Him cast a look on me. And when He gazed on me, I looked at Him and said,

*“Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly.”*

“He said, ‘Come,’ and I flew to Him and clasped Him, and when He let me go again, I wondered where my burden was. It was gone! There, in the sepulchre it lay and I felt light as air, like a winged sylph. I could fly over mountains of trouble and despair. And oh! what liberty and joy I had! I could leap with ecstasy for I had much forgiven and now I was freed from sin.”

Beloved, this is the first liberty of the children of God. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” from the bondage of sin.

II. Liberty from THE PENALTY OF SIN.

What is it? Eternal death—torment forever—that is the sad penalty of sin. It is no sweet thing to fear that if I died now I might be in hell. It is no pleasant thought for me to stand here and believe that if I dropped down I must sink into the arms of Satan and have him for my tormentor. Why, sirs, it is a thought that would plague me. It is a thought that would be the bitterest curse of my existence. I would fain be dead and rotting in the tomb rather than walk the earth with the thought that I might suffer such a penalty as this.

There are some of you here who know right well that if you die hell is your portion. You don’t attempt to deny it, you believe the Bible, and there you read your doom, “He that believeth not shall be damned.” You cannot put yourselves among believers. You are still without Christ. Have any of you been brought into such a condition that you believe yourself so full of sin that God could not be just if He did not punish you? Have you not felt that you have so rebelled against God by secret crimes, ay, I say, by secret crimes, and by open transgression that if He did not punish you He must cease to be God and lay aside His scepter?

And then you have trembled, and groaned, and cried out under the fear of the penalty of sin. You thought when you dreamed, that you saw that burning lake whose waves are fire, and whose billows are ever blazing brimstone, and each day you walked the earth it was with fear and dread lest the next step should let you into the pit which is without a bottom.

But Christian, Christian, you are free from the penalty of sin. Do you know it? Can you recognize the fact? You are free at this moment from the penalty of sin. Not only are you forgiven, but you never can be punished on account of your sins however great and enormous they may have been.

*“The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified God;
His pardon at once he receives,
Salvation in full through His blood,”*

and he never can be punished on account of sin. Talk of the punishment of a believer! there is not such a thing. The afflictions of this mortal life are not punishments for sin to Christians, they are fatherly chastisements and not the punishments of a judge.

For me there is no hell, let it smoke and burn, if I am a believer I shall never have my portion there. For me there are no eternal racks, no torments, for if I am justified, I cannot be condemned! Jesus has suffered the punishment in my stead, and God would be unjust if He were to punish me again. For Christ has suffered once and satisfied justice forever.

When conscience tells me I am a sinner, I tell conscience I stand in Christ's place, and Christ stands in mine. True, I am a sinner, but Christ died for sinners. True, I deserve punishment, but if my ransom died, will God ask for the debt twice? Impossible! He has cancelled it. There never was, and never shall be one believer in hell. We are free from punishment, and we never need quake on account of it. However horrible it may be—if it is eternal, as we know it is—it is nothing to us, for we never can suffer it. Heaven shall open its pearly portals to admit us, but hell's iron gates are barred forever against every believer. Glorious liberty of the children of God!

III. But there is one fact more startling than both of these things, and I dare say some of you will demur to it, nevertheless it is God's truth, and if you don't like it, you must leave it! There is LIBERTY FROM THE GUILT OF SIN.

This is the wonder of wonders. The Christian is positively not guilty any longer the moment he believes. Now, if Her Majesty in her goodness spares a murderer by giving him a free pardon, that man cannot be punished, but still he will be a guilty man. She may give him a thousand pardons, and the law cannot touch him, but still he will be guilty. The crime will always be on his head, and he will be branded as a murderer as long as he lives.

But the Christian is not only delivered from the bondage and from the punishment, but he is positively absolved from the guilt. Now this is something at which you will stand amazed. You say, "What? Is a Christian no more a sinner in God's sight?" I answer, he is a sinner as considered in himself, but in the person of Christ he is no more a sinner than the angel Gabriel—for snowy as angelic wings, and spotless as are cherubic robes, an angel cannot be more pure than the poor blood-washed sinner when he is made whiter than snow.

Do you understand how it is that the very guilt of the sinner is taken away? Here I stand today a guilty and condemned traitor. Christ comes for my salvation, He bid me leave my cell, "I will stand where you are. I will be your substitute. I will be the sinner, all your guilt is to be imputed to Me, I will die for it, I will suffer for it, I will have your sins."

Then stripping Himself of His robes, He says, "There, put them on, you shall be considered as if you were Christ. You shall be the righteous one. I will take *your* place, you take *Mine*." Then He casts around me a glorious robe of perfect righteousness, and when I behold it, I exclaim, "Strangely, my soul, are you arrayed, with my elder brother's garments on." Jesus Christ's crown is on my head, His spotless robes are round my loins, and His golden sandals are the shoes of my feet. And now is there any sin? The sin is on Christ, the righteousness is on me.

Ask for the sinner, Justice! Let the voice of Justice cry, "Bring forth the sinner!" The sinner is brought. Who does the executioner lead forth? It is the incarnate Son of God. True, He did not commit the sin, He was without fault, but it is imputed to Him. He stands in the sinner's place. Now Justice cries, "Bring forth the righteous, the perfectly righteous." Whom do I see? Lo, the church is brought, each believer is brought. Justice says, "Are these perfectly righteous?" "Yes they are. What Christ did is theirs, what they did is laid on Christ, His righteousness is theirs, their sins are His."

I appeal to you, you ungodly. This seems strange and startling, does it not? You have set it down to hyper-calvinism, and you laugh at it. Set it down for what you please, sirs. God has set it up as His truth. He has made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And now, if I am a true believer, I stand here freed from every sin. There is not a crime against me in the book of God. It is blotted out forever, it is cancelled, and not only can I never be punished, but I have

nothing to be punished for. Christ has atoned for my sins and I have received His righteousness. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

IV. Furthermore, the Christian man, whilst delivered from the guilt and punishment of sin, is likewise delivered from THE DOMINION OF IT.

Every living man before he is converted is a slave to lust. Profane men glory in free living and free thinking. They call *this* free living—a full glass, a Bacchanalian revel, shouting, wantonness, chambering—Free living, sir! Let the slave hold up his fetters and jingle them in my ears and say, “This is music and I am free.” The man is a poor maniac. Let the man chained in his cell, the madman of Bethlem, tell me he is a king, and grin a horrible smile. I say, “Ah, poor wretch, I know wherefore he counts that he is a king. He is demented and is mad.”

So it is with the worldling who says he is free. Free sir? you are a slave. You think you are happy, but at night, when you lay yourself upon your bed, how many times have you tossed from side to side sleepless and ill at ease, and when you awaked have you not said, “Ah! that yesterday—that yesterday!” And though you plunged into another day of sin, that “yesterday,” like a hell-dog, barked at you and followed at your heels.

You know it, sir—sin is a bondage and a slavery. And have you ever tried to get rid of that slavery? “Yes,” you say, “I have.” But I will tell you what has been the end of it. When you have tried, you have bound your fetters firmer than ever, you have riveted your chains. A sinner without grace attempting to reform himself is like Sisyphus rolling the stone up hill, which always comes down with greater force.

A man without grace, attempting to save himself, is engaged in as hopeless a task as the daughters of Danaus, when they attempted to fill a vast vessel with bottomless buckets. He has a bow without a string, a sword without a blade, a gun without powder. He needs strength. I grant you, he may produce a hollow reformation, he may earth up the volcano, and sow flowers around its crater. But when it once begins to stir again, it shall move the earth away and the hot lava shall roll over all the fair flowers which he had planted, and devastate both his works and his righteousness. A sinner without grace is a slave. He cannot deliver himself from his sins.

But not so the Christian! Is he a slave to his sin? Is a true-born heir of God a slave? Oh, no. He does not sin, because he is born of God. He does not live in uncleanness, because he is an heir of immortality. You beggars of the earth may stoop to deeds of wrong, but princes of heaven’s blood must follow acts of right.

You poor worldlings, mean and pitiful wretches in God’s sight—you may live in dishonesty and unrighteousness, but the heir of heaven cannot. He loves his Lord, he is free from the power of sin, his work is righteousness, and his end his everlasting life. We are free from the dominion of sin.

V. Once more, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” in all holy acts of love—LIBERTY FROM A SLAVISH FEAR OF LAW.

Many people are honest because they are afraid of the policeman. Many are sober because they are afraid of the eye of the public. Many persons are seemingly religious because of their neighbors. There is much virtue which is like the juice of the grape—it has to be squeezed before you get it. It is not like the generous drop of the honeycomb, distilling willingly and freely.

I am bold to say that if a man be destitute of the grace of God, his works are only works of slavery. He feels forced to do them. I know before I came into the liberty of the children of God, if I went to God’s house, I went because I thought I must do it. If I prayed, it was because I feared some misfortune would happen in the day if I did not.

If I ever thanked God for a mercy, it was because I thought I should not get another if I were not thankful. If I performed a righteous deed, it was with the hope that very likely God would reward me at last, and I should be winning some crown in heaven. A poor slave, a mere Gibeonite, hewing wood and drawing water.

If I could have left off doing it, I should have loved to do so. If I could have had my will, there would have been no chapel-going for me, no religion for me—I would have lived in the world and

followed the ways of Satan, if I could have done as I pleased. As for righteousness, it was slavery—sin would have been my liberty.

But now, Christian, what is your liberty? What makes you come to the house of God today?

*“Love made your willing feet
In swift obedience move.”*

What makes you bend your knees in prayer? It is because you like to talk with your Father who sees in secret. What is it that opens your purses and makes you give liberally? It is because you love the poor children of God and you feel, so much being given to you, that it is a privilege to give something back to Christ. What is it that constrains you to live honestly, righteously, and soberly? Is it the fear of the jail? No, you might pull the jail down, you might annihilate the convict settlements, you might hurl all chains into the sea, and we should be just as holy as we are now.

Some people say, “Then, sir, you mean to say that Christians may live as they like.” I wish they could, sir. If I could live as I liked, I would always live holily. If a Christian could live as he liked, he would always live as he ought. It is a slavery to him to sin, righteousness is his delight. Oh! if I could but live as I list, I would list to live as I ought. If I could but live as I would I would live as God commands me.

The greatest happiness of a Christian is to be holy. It is no slavery to him. Put him where you will, he will not sin. Expose him to any temptation, if it were not for that evil heart still remaining, you would never find him sinning. Holiness is his pleasure, sin is his slavery. Ah! you poor bondsmen who come to church and chapel because you must. Ah! you poor slavish moralists that are honest because of the shackles, and sober because of the prison. Ah! you poor slaves!

We are not so, we are not under the law, but under grace. Call us Antinomians if you will, we will even glory in the scandalous title. We are freed from the law, but we are freed from it that we may obey it more than we ever did. The true-born child of God serves his Master more than he ever did. As old Erskine says—

*“Slight now His loving presence if they can;
No, no; His conquering kindness leads the van.
When everlasting love exerts the sway,
They judge themselves most kindly bound to obey;
Bound by redeeming love in stricter sense,
Than ever Adam was in innocence.”*

VI. But to conclude, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” from THE FEAR OF DEATH.

O death! How many a sweet cup have you made bitter. O death! how many a revel have you broken up. O death! how many a gluttonous banquet have you spoiled. O death! how many a sinful pleasure have you turned into pain. Take you, my friends, the telescope this morning, and look through the vista of a few years, and what see you? Grim death in the distance grasping his scythe. He is coming, coming, coming, and what is behind him?

Ay, that depends upon your character. If you are the sons of God, there is the palm branch. If you are not, you know what follows death—Hell follows him. O death! your specter has haunted many a house where sin otherwise would have rioted. O death! your chilly hand has touched many a heart that was big with lust and made it start affrighted from its crime.

Oh! how many men are slaves to the fear of death. Half the people in the world are afraid to die. There are some madmen who can march up to the cannon’s mouth, there are some fools who rush with bloody hands before their Maker’s tribunal, but most men fear to die. Who is the man that does not fear to die? I will tell you.

The man that is a believer. Fear to die! Thank God, I do not. The cholera may come again next summer—I pray God it may not, but if it does, it matters not to me. I will toil and visit the sick by night and by day, until I drop. And if it takes me, sudden death is sudden glory. And so with the weakest saint in this hall. The prospect of dissolution does not make you tremble. Sometimes you fear, but more often you rejoice. You sit down calmly and think of dying. What is death? It is a low porch through which you stoop to enter heaven. What is life? It is a narrow screen that separates us from glory and death kindly removes it!

I recollect a saying of a good old woman, who said, “Afraid to die, sir! I have dipped my foot in Jordan every morning before breakfast for the last fifty years, and do you think I am afraid to die now?” Die! beloved, why we die hundreds of times, we “die daily,” we die every morning, we die each night when we sleep, by faith we die, and so dying will be old work when we come to it.

We shall say, “Ah, death! you and I have been old acquaintances. I have had you in my bedroom every night. I have talked with you each day, I have had the skull upon my dressing table and I have oftentimes thought of you. Death! you are come at last, but you are a welcome guest. You are an angel of light and the best friend I have had.”

Why, then, dread death, since there is no fear of God’s leaving you when you come to die! Here I must tell you that anecdote of the good Welch lady, who, when she lay a-dying, was visited by her minister. He said to her, “Sister, are you sinking?” She answered him not a word, but looked at him with an incredulous eye. He repeated the question, “Sister, are you sinking?” She looked at him again, as if she could not believe that he would ask such a question.

At last, rising a little in the bed, she said, “*Sinking! Sinking! Did you ever know a sinner sink through a rock? If I had been standing on the sand, I might sink, but thank God I am on the Rock of Ages and there is no sinking there.*”

How glorious to die! Oh, angels, come! Oh, cohorts of the Lord of hosts, stretch, stretch your broad wings and lift us up from earth. O, winged seraphs, bear us far above the reach of these inferior things, but till you come, I’ll sing,

***“Since Jesus is mine, I’ll not fear undressing—
But gladly put off these garments of clay,
To die in the Lord is a covenant blessing;
Since Jesus to glory, though death leads the way.”***

And now, dear friends, I have shown you as briefly as I can the negative side of this liberty. I have tried to tell you, as well as I could put it in a few words, what we are *freed from*. But there are two sides to such questions as this. There are some glorious things that we are *free to*. Not only are we freed from sin in every sense from the law and from the fear of death, but we are free to do something. I shall not occupy many moments, but shall just run over a few things we are free to, for, my brother Christians, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,” and that liberty gives us certain rights and privileges.

In the first place, we are free to *heaven’s charter*. There is heaven’s charter—the Magna Charta—the Bible, and my brother, you are free to it. There is a choice passage here, “When thou passest through the river I will be with thee, and the floods shall not overflow thee.” You are free to that.

Here is another, “Mountains may depart, and hills may be removed; but my lovingkindness shall not depart.” You are free to that. Here is another, “Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end.” You are free to that. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

Here is a chapter touching election, you are free to that if you are elect. Here is another, speaking of the non-condemnation of the righteous, and their justification, you are free to that. You are free to all that is in the Bible. Here is a never-failing treasure filled with boundless stores of grace. It is the bank of heaven, you may draw from it as much as you please without let or hindrance. Bring nothing with you

except faith. Bring as much faith as you can get, and you are welcome to all that is in the Bible. There is not a promise, not a word in it, that is not yours.

In the depths of tribulation, let it comfort you. Mid waves of distress let it cheer you. When sorrows surround you, let it be your helper. This is your Father's love token. Let it never be shut up and covered with dust. You are free to it—use, then, your freedom.

Next, recollect that you are free to the throne of grace. It is the privilege of Englishmen that they can always send a petition to Parliament, and it is the privilege of a believer that he can always send a petition to the throne of God. I am free to God's throne. If I want to talk to God tomorrow morning, I can. If tonight I wish to have conversation with my Master, I can go to Him.

I have a right to go to His throne. It matters not how much I may have sinned. I go and ask for pardon. It signifies nothing how poor I am—I go and plead His promise that He will provide all things needful. I have a right to go to His throne at all times—in midnight's darkest hour or in noontide's heat. Where'er I am, if fate command me to the utmost verge of the wide earth, I have still constant admission to His throne.

Use that right, beloved—use that right. There is not one of you that lives up to his privilege. Many a gentleman will live beyond his income, spending more than he has coming in. But there is not a Christian that does that—I mean that lives up to his spiritual income. Oh, no! you have an infinite income—an income of promises—an income of grace, and no Christian ever lived up to his income.

Some people say, "If I had more money I should have a larger house, and horses, and carriage, and so on." Very well and good, but I wish the Christian would do the same. I wish they would set up a larger house and do greater things for God, look more happy, and take those tears away from their eyes.

***"Religion never was designed
To make our pleasures less."***

With such stores in the bank, and so much in hand that God gives you, you have no right to be poor. Up! Rejoice! Rejoice! The Christian ought to live up to his income and not below it.

Then, if you have the "Spirit of the Lord," dear friends, you have a right to enter into the city. There are many of the freemen of the City of London here, I dare say, and that is a great privilege, very likely. I am not a freeman of London, but I am a freeman of a better city.

***"Savior, if of Zion's city,
I, by grace, a member am,
Let the world revile or pity,
I will glory in Thy name."***

You have a right to the freedom of Zion's city and you do not exercise it. I want to have a word with some of you. You are very good Christian people, but you have never joined the church yet. You know it is quite right, that he that believes should be baptized, but I suppose you are afraid of being drowned, for you never come.

Then the Lord's table is spread once every month, and it is free to all God's children, but you never approach it. Why is that? It is your banquet. I do not think if I were an alderman I should omit the city banquet, and being a Christian, I cannot omit the Christian banquet, it is the banquet of the saints.

***"Ne'er did angels taste above
Redeeming grace and dying love."***

Some of you never come to the Lord's table, you neglect His ordinances. He says, "This do in remembrance of me." You have obtained the freedom of the city, but you won't take it up. You have a

right to enter in through the gates into the city, but you stand outside. Come in brother, I will give you my hand. Don't remain outside the church any longer, for you have a right to come in.

Then, to conclude, you have the freedom of Jerusalem, the mother of us all. That is the best gift. We are free to *heaven*. When a Christian dies, he knows the *open sesame* that can open the gates of heaven, he knows the password that can make the gates wide open fly. He has the white stone whereby he shall be known as a ransomed one, and that shall pass him at the barrier. He has the passport that shall let him into the dominions of JEHOVAH. He has liberty to enter into heaven.

Methinks I see you, you unconverted, in the land of shades, wandering up and down to find your portion. You come to the porch of heaven. It is great and lofty. The gate has written o'er it, "The righteous only are admitted here." As you stand, you look for the porter. A tall archangel appears from above the gate and you say, "Angel, let me in." "Where is your robe?" You search, and you have none, you have only some few rags of your own spinning, but no wedding garment.

"Let me in," say you, "for the fiends are after me to drag me to yonder pit. Oh, let me in." But with a quiet glance the angel lifts up his finger and says, "Read up there," and you read, "None but the righteous enter here." Then you tremble, your knees knock together, your hands shake. Were your bones of brass they might melt, and were your ribs of iron they might be dissolved. Ah! there you stand, shivering, quaking, trembling, but not long, for a voice which frights you from your feet and lays you prostrate, cries, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

O dear hearers, shall that be your portion? My friends, as I love you—I do this morning, and hope I ever shall—shall this be your lot? Will you not have freedom to enter into the city? Will you not seek that Spirit which gives liberty? Ah! I know you will not have it if left to yourselves, some of you perhaps never will. O God, grant that that number may be but few, but may the number of the saved be great indeed!

*"Turn, then my soul unto thy rest,
The ransom of thy great High Priest,
Hath set the captive free.
Trust to His efficacious blood,
Nor fear thy banishment from God,
Since Jesus died for thee."*

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.