

Liberty from the Fear of Death

by Charles Spurgeon

The true-born child of God serves his Master more than ever he 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."

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" from the Fear of Death. O death! how many a sweet cup hast thou made bitter. O death! how many a revel hast thou broken up. O death! how many a gluttonous banquet hast thou spoiled! O death! how many a sinful pleasure hast thou turned into pain. Take ye the telescope 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 own character. If ye are the sons of God, there is the palm-branch; if ye are not, ye know what followeth death—hell follows him. O death! thy spectre hath haunted many a house where sin otherwise would have rioted. O death! thy chill hand hath 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. 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; the prospect of dissolution does not make you tremble. Sometimes you fear, but oftener you rejoice. You sit down and calmly 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? 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 thee in my bedroom every night; I have talked with thee each day; I have had the skull upon my dressing table; and I have oftentimes thought of thee. Death! thou art come at last, but thou art a welcome guest; thou art 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 Welsh 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 host, 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 ye 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, through death led the way."

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. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," and that liberty gives us certain rights and privileges.

We are free to heaven's charter. There is heaven's charter—the Magna Charta—the Bible; and you are free to it. There is a choice passage: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee;" thou art free to that. Here is another: "Mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart;" 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 thee, let it be thy helper. This is thy Father's love-token: let it never be shut up and covered with dust. Thou art free to it—use, then, thy freedom.

Next, recollect that thou art 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 to-night I wish to have a conversation with my Master, I can go to Him. I have a right to go to His throne. It matters not how much I 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 time—in midnight's darkest hour, or in noontide's heat. Where'er I am; if fate commands 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 a carriage, and so on." Very well and good; but I wish Christians 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.

With such stores in the bank, and so much in hand, that God gives you, you have not right to be poor. Up, rejoice! rejoice! The Christian ought to live up to his income, and not below it.

"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."

Excerpted from *Words of Cheer for Daily Life*. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.