

## "WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS LIBERTY."

1. There is *liberty of access*,—access to God. In Paul's letter to the Hebrews, in the 10th chapter, you have the liberty described. There, with no more conscience of sins, we have boldness to enter through the blood into the Holiest, of which scene, it is said, that *there*, before God, "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more."

Let me here call to mind a very beautiful truth regarding Aaron the high priest. You know Aaron was as Christ; and you remember that when Aaron entered into the holiest, he had a golden plate on his forehead, "*Holiness to the Lord*," was inscribed on it. But Israel in itself, was anything but "*Holiness to the Lord*." Israel was simply a people of *sinners*.—But mark the plate on the Aaronick brow. Aaron, for Israel, was "*Holiness to the Lord*," and was accordingly permitted to go in before God; but there was one thing necessary to this. It was the atoning and sanctifying blood of the victim, which he sprinkled before the Lord. The standing of that blood was the standing of Israel. They were before God according to His estimate of it. And so the shekinah, before which he sprinkled the blood, shed down its peaceful, glorious beams on the golden plate, on which was, "*Holiness to the Lord*." As I have often said to you, the Jewish army might have been striking, or perchance pitching their tents, but this was the attitude of Aaron for Israel; and, adds the sacred writer, "*It shall be always on his forehead, that Israel may be accepted.*"

Now, there is this difference in our case. Aaron was only allowed to go in before the Lord "*once a year*," but we who believe in Jesus are once and for ever accepted; once and forever risen and seated together with Christ in heavenly places,—once and for ever, we have "*boldness (liberty) 'to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus'*." This, beloved, is our right of entrance! The blood that cancels sin, and puts away transgression, is that which lays open the very presence of God to us, and gives us boldness of access to Him.

2. And there is liberty of conscience.

We read "*No more conscience of sin*." Not no more consciousness of sin; not that I do not feel deep sorrow on account of sin, but what the apostle means is this, before I saw the wondrous love of God in the sacrifice of Jesus, which was the expression of that love before I saw my sins on the cross, I had the dark load on *my own conscience*, and the condemnation of them in me; but since I beheld the Lamb of God, who not only took away sins, but condemned sin in the flesh, that load is gone, I have "*no more conscience of sins*," but rest and peace of conscience; rest and peace in Jesus.

3. And there is liberty of *FELLOWSHIP*. There are some Christians who have never yet had full liberty in prayer—calm, confident freedom in speaking with Christ. And why? Because they have never yet had perfect peace as to the question of their being in Christ. How, then, can they have unfettered fellowship? Such cannot speak to God with unfaltering lips as to their Father; cannot, in unfaltering accents, thank Him for their salvation—thank Him for peace. "*Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ*." Liberty for fellowship must come from the solid ground of the truth of His testimony concerning our salvation as settled and complete, and of having *believed that testimony* concerning Christ and our own salvation.

4. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" of *OBEDIENCE*. As Luther said, "*I now walk justly, because I am justified*; not I walk justly *that I may be justified*, but because *I am justified*." It is marvellous the joy a believer may have in serving God in obedience when he knows where he is, and what he is in the presence and grace of God. But if he know not where he is, his services will be rather the result of fear and of dread, and not of liberty and love.

5. One thing more:—"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" of *UTTERANCE*. I would like to be practical here. When Bunyan was converted, Dr. Owen, then vice-chancellor of Oxford, chanced to step in to a "*conventicle*," and there sat listening to him; and he afterwards wrote, "*I would rather be able to preach one sermon like Bunyan, than to*