

SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION

NO. 127

A SERMON
 DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 12, 1857
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 AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

*“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”
 Ephesians 2:1*

IT might naturally be expected that I should have selected the topic of the resurrection on what is usually called the Easter Sabbath. I shall not do so—for although I have read portions which refer to that glorious subject, I have had pressed on my mind a subject which is not the resurrection of Christ, but which is in some measure connected with it—the resurrection of lost and ruined man by the Spirit of God in this life.

The apostle is here speaking, you will observe, of the church at Ephesus, and indeed, of all those who were chosen in Christ Jesus, accepted in Him and redeemed with His blood. And he says of them, “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

What a solemn sight is presented to us by a dead body! When last evening, trying to realize the thought, it utterly overcame me. The thought is overwhelming, that soon this body of mine must be a carnival for worms. That in and out of these places, where my eyes are glistening, foul things, the offspring of loathsomeness, shall crawl. That this body must be stretched in still, cold, abject, passive death—must then become a noxious, nauseous thing, cast out even by those who loved me, who will say, “Bury my dead out of my sight.”

Perhaps you can scarcely, in the moment I can afford you, appropriate the idea to yourselves. Does it not seem a strange thing that you, who have walked to this place this morning, shall be carried to your graves. That the eyes with which you now behold me shall soon be glazed in everlasting darkness. That the tongues, which just now moved in song, shall soon be silent lumps of clay. And that your strong and stalwart frame, now standing in this place, will soon be unable to move a muscle and become a loathsome thing—the brother of the worm and the sister of corruption.

You can scarcely get hold of the idea. Death does such awful work with us—it is such a Vandal with this mortal fabric—it so rends to pieces this fair thing that God has builded up that we can scarcely bear to contemplate His works of ruin.

Now, endeavor, as well as you can, to get the idea of a dead corpse—and when you have done so, please to understand, that that is the metaphor employed in my text—to set forth the condition of your soul by nature. Just as the body is dead, incapable, unable, unfeeling, and soon about to become corrupt and putrid, so are we if we are unquickened by divine grace. Dead in trespasses and sins, having within us death, which is capable of developing itself in worse and worse stages of sin and wickedness, until all of us here, left by God’s grace, should become loathsome beings. Loathsome through sin and wickedness, even as the corpse through natural decay.

Understand that the doctrine of the Holy Scripture is that man by nature, since the fall, is dead. He is a corrupt and ruined thing. In a spiritual sense, utterly and entirely dead. And if any of us shall come to spiritual life, it must be by the quickening of God’s Spirit, vouchsafed to us sovereignly through the good will of God the Father, not for any merits of our own, but entirely of His own abounding and infinite grace.

Now, this morning, I trust I shall not be tedious. I shall endeavor to make the subject as interesting as possible and also endeavor to be brief. The general doctrine of this morning is that every man who is

born into the world is dead spiritually and that spiritual life must be given by the Holy Spirit—and can be obtained from no other source. That general doctrine, I shall illustrate in rather a singular way.

You remember that our Savior raised three dead persons. I do not find that during His lifetime He caused more than three resurrections. The first was the young maiden, *the daughter of Jairus*, who, when she lay on her bed dead, rose up to life at the single utterance of Christ, “*Talitha cumi!*” The second was the case of *the widow’s son*, who was on his bier, about to be carried to his tomb. And Jesus raised him up to life by saying, “Young man, I say unto thee, arise.”

The third, and most memorable case, was that of *Lazarus*, who was not on his bed, nor on his bier, but in his tomb, ay, and corrupt too. But notwithstanding that, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the voice of His omnipotence, crying, “Lazarus, come forth,” brought him out of the tomb.

I shall use these three facts as illustrations of *the different states of men*, though they be all thoroughly dead. Secondly, as illustrations of *the different means of divine grace used for raising them*, though, after all, the same great agency is employed. And in the third place, as illustrations of *the after experience of quickened men*, for though that to a great degree is the same, yet there are some points of difference.

I. I shall begin by noticing, then, first of all, THE CONDITION OF MEN BY NATURE.

Men by nature are all dead. There is Jairus’ daughter. She lies on her bed. She seems as if she were alive. Her mother has scarce ceased to kiss her brow, her hand is still in her father’s loving grasp, and he can scarcely think that she is dead—but dead she is—as thoroughly dead as she ever can be.

Next comes the case of the young man brought out of his grave. He is more than dead, he has begun to be corrupt, the signs of decay are upon his face, and they are carrying him to his tomb. Yet though there are more manifestations of death about him, he is no more dead than the other. He is just as dead—they are both dead and death really knows no degrees.

The third case goes still further in the manifestation of death, for it is the case of which Martha, using strong words, said, “Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days.” And yet, mark you, the daughter of Jairus was as dead as Lazarus, though the manifestation of death was not so complete in her case. All were dead alike.

I have in my congregation some blessed beings, fair to look upon. Fair, I mean, in their character, as well as their outward appearance. They have about them everything that is good and lovely. But mark this, if they are unregenerate they are dead still. That girl, dead in the room, upon her bed, had little about her that could show her death. Not yet had the loving finger closed the eyelid. There seemed to be a light still lingering in her eye, like a lily just nipped off. She was as fair as life itself. The worm had not yet begun to gnaw her cheek, the flush had not yet faded from her face. She seemed well-nigh alive.

And so is it with some I have here. You have all that heart could wish for, except the one thing needful. You have all things save love to the Savior. You are not yet united to Him by a living faith. Ah! then, I grieve to say it, you are dead! You are dead! As much dead as the worst of men, although your death is not so apparent.

Again, I have in my presence young men who have grown to riper years than that fair damsel who died in her childhood. You have much about you that is lovely, but you have just begun to indulge in evil habits. You have not yet become the desperate sinner. You have not yet become altogether noxious in the eyes of other men. You are but beginning to sin, you are like the young man carried out on his bier.

You have not yet become the confirmed drunkard—you have not yet begun to curse and blaspheme God. You are still accepted in good society. You are not yet cast out. But you are dead, thoroughly dead, just as dead as the third and worst case. But I dare say I have some characters that are illustrations of that case, too.

There is Lazarus in his tomb, rotten and putrid. And so there are some men not more dead than others, but their death has become more apparent, their character has become abominable, their deeds cry out against them, they are put out of decent society, the stone is rolled to the mouth of their tomb.

Men feel that they cannot hold acquaintance with them, for they have so utterly abandoned every sense of right, that we say, "Put them out of sight, we cannot endure them!"

And yet these putrid ones may live. These last are not more dead than the maiden upon her bed, though the death has more fully revealed itself in their corruption. Jesus Christ will quicken the one as well as the other, and bring them all to know and love His name.

1. Now, then, I am about to enter into the details of the difference of these three cases. I will take the case of the young maiden. I have her here today. I have many illustrations of her present before me. At least, I trust so. Now, will you allow me to point out all the differences?

Here is the young maiden. Look upon her. You can bear the sight. She is dead, but oh! *beauty lingers there*. She is fair and lovely, though the life has departed from her. In the young man's case there is no beauty, the worm has begun to eat him, his honor has departed. In the third case, there is absolute rottenness. But here there is beauty still upon her cheek.

Is she not amiable? Is she not lovely? Would not all love her? Is she not to be admired, even to be imitated? Is she not fairest of the fair? Ay, that she is—but God the Spirit has not yet looked upon her. She has not yet bent her knee to Jesus and cried for mercy. She has everything, except true religion. Alas! for her, alas! that so fair a character should be a dead one.

Alas! my sister, alas! That you—the benevolent, the kind one—should yet be, after all, dead in your trespasses and sins. As Jesus wept over that young man who had kept all the commandments and yet one thing he lacked, so weep I over you this morning. Alas! you fair one, lovely in your character, and amiable in your carriage—why should you lie dead? For dead you are, unless you have faith in Christ. Your excellence, your virtue, and your goodness shall avail you nothing. You are dead and dead you must be, unless He makes you live.

Note, too, that in the case of this maiden, whom we have introduced to you, the daughter of Jairus, *she is yet caressed*. She has only been dead a moment or two, and the mother still presses her cheek with kisses. Oh, can she be dead? Do not the tears rain on her, as if they would sow the seeds of life in that dead earth again?—earth that looks fertile enough to bring forth life with but one living tear? Ay, but those salt tears are tears of barrenness. She lives not, but she is still caressed.

Not so the young man. He is put on the bier. No man will touch him anymore, or else he will be utterly defiled. And as for Lazarus, he is shut up with a stone. But this young maiden is still caressed—so it is with many of you. You are loved even by the living in Sion. God's own people love you. The minister has often prayed for you. You are admitted into the assemblies of the saints, you sit with them as God's people, you hear as they hear and you sing as they sing. Alas! for you, alas! for you, that you should still be dead!

Oh! it grieves me to the heart to think that some of you are all that heart could wish, except that one thing, yet lacking that which is the only thing that can deliver you. You are caressed by us, received by the living in Sion into their company and acquaintance, approved of and accepted. Alas! that you should yet be without life! Oh! in your case, if you are saved, you will have to join with even the worst in saying, "I have been quickened by divine grace, or else I had never lived."

And now will you look at this maiden again? Note, *she has no grave clothes on her yet*. She is dressed in her own raiment—just as she retired to her bed a little sick—so lies she there. Not yet have the napkin and the shroud been wrapped about her. She still wears the habiliments of sleep—she is not yet given up to death.

Not so the young man yonder—he is in his grave clothes. Not so Lazarus—he is bound hand and foot. But this young maiden has no grave clothes upon her. So with the young person we wish to speak of this morning. She has as yet no evil habits, she has not yet reached that point. The young man yonder has begun to have evil habits. And yon grey-headed sinner is bound hand and foot by them.

But as yet she appears just like the living—she acts just like the Christian. Her habits are fair, goodly, and comely. There seems to be little ill about her. Alas! alas! that you should be dead, even in

your fairest raiment. Alas! you who have set the wreath of benevolence on your brow, you who do gird yourself with the white robes of outward purity—if you are not born again—you are dead still.

Your beauty shall fade away like a moth. And in the day of judgment you will be severed from the righteous, unless God shall make you live. Oh! I could weep over those young ones who seem at present to have been delivered from forming any habits which could lead them astray, but who are yet unquickened and unsaved. Oh! would to God, young man and young woman, you might in early years be quickened by the Spirit.

And will you notice, yet once more, that this young maiden's death was *a death confined to her chamber*. Not so with the young man. He was carried to the gate of the city and many people saw him. Not so Lazarus. The Jews came to weep at his tomb. But this young woman's death is in her chamber.

Ay, so it is with the young woman or the young man I mean to describe now. His sin is as yet a secret thing, kept to himself—as yet there has been no breaking forth of iniquity, but only the conception of it in the heart. Just the embryo of lust, not as yet broken out into act. The young man has not yet drained the intoxicating cup, although he has had some whisperings of the sweetness of it. He has not yet run into the ways of wickedness, though he has had temptations thrust upon him.

As yet he has kept his sin in his chamber and most of it has been unseen. Alas! my brother, alas! my sister, that you who in your outward carriage are so good, should yet have sins in the chamber of your heart, and death in the secrecy of your being, which is as true a death as that of the grossest sinner, though not so thoroughly manifested.

Would to God that you could say, “And he hath quickened me, for with all my loveliness and all my excellence, I was by nature dead in trespasses and sins.” Come, let me just press this matter home. I have some in my congregation that I look upon with fear. Oh! my dear friends, my much-loved friends, how many there are among you, I repeat, that are all that the heart could wish, except that one thing—they love not my Master.

Oh, you young men who come up to the house of God and who are outwardly so good, alas! for you, that you should lack the root of the matter. Oh! you daughters of Sion, who are ever at the house of prayer, oh! that you should yet be without grace in your heart! Take heed, I beseech you, you fairest, youngest, most upright, and most honest—when the dead are separated from the living, unless you be regenerated, you must go with the dead. Though you be never so fair and goodly, you must be cast away, unless you live.

2. Thus, I have done with the first case. Now we will go to the young man, who stands second. He is not more dead than the other, but *he is further gone*. Come, now, and stop the bier. You cannot look upon him! Why, the cheek is sunken—there is a hollowness there, not as in the case of the maiden, whose cheek was still round and ruddy.

And the eyes—oh! what a blackness is there! Look on him, you can see that the gnawings of the worm will soon burst forth. Corruption has begun its work. So it is with some young men I have here. They are not what they were in their childhood, when their habits were proper and correct. But mayhap they have just been enticed into the house of the strange woman. They have just been tempted to go astray from the path of rectitude.

Their corruption is just breaking forth—they disdain now to sit at their mother's apron strings. They think it foul scorn to keep to the rules that bind the moral! They! they are free, they say, and they will be free. They will live a jolly and a happy life. And so they run on in boisterous yet wicked merriment and betray the marks of death about them.

They have gone further than the maiden. She was still fair and comely, but here there is something that is the afterwork of death. The maiden was caressed, but the young man is untouched—he lies on the bier, and though men bear him on their shoulders, yet there is a shrinking from him. He is dead and it is known that he is dead.

Young man, you have got as far as that—you know that good men shrink from you. It was but yesterday that your mother's tears fell fast and thick as she warned your younger brother to avoid your

sin. Your very sister, when she kissed you but this morning, prayed to God that you might get good in this house of prayer. But you know that of late she has been ashamed of you. Your conversation has become so profane and wicked that even she could scarce endure it.

There are houses in which you were once welcome—where you once bowed your knee with them at the family prayer and your name was mentioned, too. But now you do not choose to go there, for when you go, you are treated with reserve. The good man of the house feels that he should not let his son go with you, for you would contaminate him.

He does not sit down now side by side with you, as he used to do, and talk about the best things. He lets you sit in the room as a matter of mere courtesy. He stands far away from you, as it were. He feels that you have not a spirit congenial with his own. You are a little shunned. You are not quite avoided. You are still received amongst the people of God, yet there is a coldness that manifests that they understand that you are not a living one.

And note, too, that this young man, though carried out to his grave, was not like the maiden. She was in the garments of life, but *he was wrapped in the cerements of death*. So many of you have begun to form habits that are evil. You know that already the screw of the devil is tightening on your finger. Once it was a screw you could slip off or on. You said you were master of your pleasures—now your pleasures are master of you.

Your habits are not now commendable, you know they are not. You stand convicted while I speak to you this morning. You know your ways are evil. Ah! young man, though you have not yet gone so far as the open profligate and desperately profane, take heed—you are dead! you are dead! and unless the Spirit quicken you, you shall be cast into the valley of Gehenna, to be the food of that worm which never dies, but eats souls throughout eternity.

And ah! young man, I weep, I weep over you. You are not yet so far gone that they have rolled the stone against you. You have not yet become obnoxious. You are not yet the staggering drunkard, nor yet the blasphemous infidel. You have much that is ill about you, but you have not gone all the lengths yet. Take heed. You will go further still—there is no stopping in sin. When the worm is there, you cannot put your finger on it and say, “Stop. Eat no more.” No, it will go on, to your utter ruin. May God save you now, ere you shall come to that consummation for which hell so sighs and which heaven can alone avert.

One more remark concerning this young man. The maiden’s death was in her chamber. *The young man’s death was in the city gates*. In the first case I described, the sin was secret. But young man, your sin is not. You have gone so far that your habits are openly wicked. You have dared to sin in the face of God’s sun. You are not as some others—seemingly good—but you go out and openly say, “I am no hypocrite. I dare to do wrong. I do not profess to be righteous. I know I am a scapegrace rascal. I have gone astray and I am not ashamed to sin in the street.”

Ah! young man, young man! Your father, perhaps, is now saying, “Would God that I had died for him—would God that I had seen him buried in his grave, ere he should have gone to such a length in wickedness! Would God that when I first saw him and my eye was gladdened with my son, I had seen him the next minute smitten with disease and death! Oh, would to God that his infant spirit had been called to heaven, that he might not have lived to bring in this way my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave!”

Your sport in the city gates is misery in your father’s house. Your open merriment before the world brings agony into a mother’s heart. Oh, I beseech you, stay. Oh, Lord Jesus! touch the bier this morning! Stop some young man in his evil habits and say to him, “Arise!” Then will he join with us in confessing that those who are alive have been quickened by Jesus, through the Spirit, though they were dead in trespasses and sins.

3. Now we come to the third and last case—LAZARUS DEAD AND BURIED.

Ah! dear friends, I cannot take you to see Lazarus in his grave. Stand, oh stand away from him. Whither shall we flee to avoid the noxious odor of that reeking corpse? Ah, whither shall we flee? There is no beauty there. We dare not look upon it. There is not even the gloss of life left. Oh, hideous spectacle! I must not attempt to describe it—words would fail me and you would be too much shocked.

Nor dare I tell the character of some men present here. I should be ashamed to tell the things which some of you have done. This cheek might mantle with a blush to tell the deeds of darkness which some of the ungodly of this world habitually practice. Ah, the last stage of death, the last stage of corruption—oh, how hideous. But the last stage of sin—hideous far more!

Some writers seem to have an aptitude for puddling in this mud and digging up this miry clay. I confess that I have none. I cannot describe to you the lusts and vices of a full-grown sinner. I cannot tell you what are the debaucheries, the degrading lusts, the devilish, the bestial sins into which wicked men will run, when spiritual death has had its perfect work in them and sin has manifested itself in all its fearful wickedness.

I may have some here. They are not Christians. They are not, like the young maiden, still caressed—nor even, like the young man, still kept in the funeral procession. No, they have gone so far that decent people avoid them. Their very wife, when they go into the house, rushes upstairs to be out of the way. They are scorned.

Such a one is the harlot, from whom one's head is turned in the very street. Such a one is the openly profligate, to whom we give wide quarters, lest we touch him. He is a man that is far gone. The stone is rolled before him. No one calls him respectable. He dwells, perhaps, in some back slum of a dirty lane—he knows not where to go. Even as he stands in this place, he feels that if his next-door neighbor knew his guilt, he would give him a wide berth and stand far away from him, for he has come to the last stage. He has no marks of life—he is utterly rotten.

And mark—as in the case of the maiden, the sin was in the chamber, secret. In the next case it was in the open streets, public. But in this case it is secret again. It is in the tomb. For you will mark that men, when they are only half gone in wickedness, do it openly—but when they are fully gone their lust becomes so degrading that they are obliged to do it in secret. They are put into the grave, in order that all may be hidden. Their lust is one which can only be perpetrated at midnight, a deed which can only be done when shrouded by the astonished curtains of darkness.

Have I any such here? I cannot tell that I have many, but still I have some. Ah! in being constantly visited by penitents, I have sometimes blushed for this city of London. There are merchants whose names stand high and fair. Shall I tell it here? I know it on the best authority and the truest too. There are some who have houses large and tall, who on the exchange are reputable and honorable, and everyone admits them and receives them into their society—but ah! there are some of the merchants of London who practice lusts that are abominable.

I have in my church and congregation—and I dare to say what men dare to do—I have in my congregation women whose ruin and destruction have been wrought by some of the most respected men in respectable society. Few would venture on so bold a statement as that. But if you boldly do the thing, I must speak of it. It is not for God's ambassador to wash his mouth beforehand—let him boldly reprove, as men do boldly sin.

Ah! there are some that are a stench in the nostrils of the Almighty—some whose character is hideous beyond all hideousness. They have to be covered up in the tomb of secrecy, for men would ban them from society and hiss them from existence, if they knew all.

And yet—and now comes a blessed interposition—yet this last case may be saved as well as the first, and as easily too. The rotten Lazarus may come out of his tomb, as well as the slumbering maiden from her bed. The last—the most corrupt, the most desperately abominable—may yet be quickened and he may join in exclaiming, “And I have been quickened, though I was dead in trespasses and sins.”

I trust you will understand what I wish to convey—that the death is the same in all cases, but the manifestation of it is different—and that the life must come from God, and from God alone.

II. And now I will go on to another point—THE QUICKENING.

These three persons were all quickened and they were all quickened by the same being—that is by Jesus. But they were all quickened in a different manner. Note, first, the young maiden on her bed. When she was brought to life, it is said, “Jesus took her by the hand and said, maiden, arise.” It was a

still small voice. Her heart received its pulse, again, and she lived. It was the gentle touching of the hand—no open demonstration—and the soft voice was heard—“arise.”

Now, usually when God converts young people in the first stage of sin, before they have formed evil habits, He does it in a gentle manner. Not by the terrors of the law, the tempest, fire and smoke, but He makes them like Lydia, “whose heart the Lord opened,” that she received the Word. On such, “it droppeth like the gentle dew from heaven upon the place beneath.” With hardened sinners divine grace comes down in showers that rattle on them. But in young converts it often comes gently. There is just the sweet breathing of the Spirit. They perhaps scarcely think it is a true conversion, but true it is, if they are brought to life.

Now note the next case. Christ did not do the same thing with the young man that he did with the daughter of Jairus. No. The first thing He did was, He put His hand, not on him, mark you, but *on the bier*. “And they that bare it stood still,” and after that, without touching the young man, He said in a louder voice, “Young man, I say unto thee, arise!”

Note the difference—the young maiden’s new life was given to her secretly. The young man’s was given more publicly. It was done in the very street of the city. The maiden’s life was given gently by a touch, but in the young man’s case it must be done, not by the touching of him, but by the touching of the bier.

Christ takes away from the young man his means of pleasure. He commands his companions, who by bad example are bearing him on his bier to his grave, to stop, and then there is a partial reformation for a while, and after that, there comes the strong out-spoken voice—“Young man, I say unto thee, arise!”

But now comes the worst case. And will you please at your leisure at home notice what preparations Christ made for the last case of Lazarus? When He raised the maiden, He walked up into the chamber, smiling, and said, “She is not dead, but sleepeth.” When He raised the young man, He said to the mother, “Weep not.” Not so when He came to the last case.

There was something more terrible about that—it was, *a man in his grave corrupting*. It was on that occasion you read, “Jesus wept,” and after He had wept it is said that, “He groaned in his spirit.” And then He said, “Take away the stone.” And then there came the prayer, “I know that thou hearest me always.”

And then, will you notice, there came what is not expressed so fully in either of the other cases. It is written, “Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth!” It is not written that He cried with the loud voice to either of the others. He spake to them—it was His word that saved all of them. But in the case of Lazarus, He cried to him in a loud voice.

Now, I have, perhaps, some of the last characters here—the worst of the worst. Ah! sinner, may the Lord quicken you! But it is a work that makes the Savior weep. I think when He comes to call some of you from your death in sin who have gone to the utmost extremity of guilt, He comes weeping and sighing for you.

There is a stone there to be rolled away—your bad and evil habits—and when that stone is taken away, a still small voice will not do for you. It must be the loud crashing voice, like the voice of the Lord, which breaks the cedars of Lebanon—“Lazarus, come forth!”

John Bunyan was one of those rotten ones. What strong means were used in his case! Terrible dreams, fearful convulsions, awful shakings to and fro—all had to be employed to make him live. And yet some of you think, when God is terrifying you by the thunders of Sinai, that really He does not love you. It is not so—you were so dead that it needed a loud voice to arrest your ears.

III. This is an interesting subject. I wish I could dilate upon it, but my voice fails me. And therefore, permit me to go to the third point very briefly. THE AFTER-EXPERIENCE OF THESE THREE PEOPLE WAS DIFFERENT—at least, you gather it from the commands of Christ.

As soon as the maiden was alive, Christ said, “Give her meat.” As soon as the young man was alive, “He delivered him to his mother.” As soon as Lazarus was alive, He said, “Loose him, and let him go.” I think there is something in this.

When young people are converted who have not yet acquired evil habits—when they are saved before they become obnoxious in the eyes of the world—the command is, “*Give them meat.*” Young people want instruction, they want building up in the faith. They generally lack knowledge. They have not the deep experience of the older man or woman. They do not know as much about sin, nor even as much about salvation as the older man that has been a guilty sinner. They need to be fed.

So our business as ministers, when the young lambs are brought in, is to remember the injunction, “Feed my lambs.” Take care of them, give them plenty of meat. Young people, search after an instructive minister. Seek after instructive books. Search the Scriptures and seek to be instructed—that is your principal business. “Give her meat.”

The next case was a different one. He gave the young man up to his mother. Ah! that is just what He will do with you young man, if He makes you live. As sure as ever you are converted, He will give you up to your mother again. You were with her when you first as a babe sat on her knee. And that is where you will have to go again.

Oh, yes, grace knits together again the ties which sin has loosed. Let a young man become abandoned—he casts off the tender influence of a sister and the kind associations of a mother—but if he is converted, one of the first things he will do will be to find the mother out, and the sister out, and he will find a charm in their society that he never knew before.

You that have gone into sin, let this be your business, if God has saved you. Seek good company. Just as Christ delivered the young man to his mother, do you seek after your mother, the church. Endeavor as much as possible to be found in the company of the righteous, for as you were carried before to your grave by bad companions, you need to be led to heaven by good ones.

And then comes the case of Lazarus. “*Loose him and let him go.*” I do not know how it is that the young man never was loosened. I have been looking through every book I have about the manners and customs of the East, and have not been able to get a clue to the difference between the young man and Lazarus.

The young man, as soon as Christ spoke to him, “sat up and began to speak.” But Lazarus, in his grave clothes, lying in the niche of the tomb, could do no more than just shuffle himself out from the hole that was cut in the wall, and then stand leaning against it. He could not speak. He was bound about in a napkin.

Why was it not so with the young man? I am inclined to think that the difference lay in the difference of their wealth. The young man was the son of a widow. Very likely he was only wrapped up in a few common things and not so tightly bound about as Lazarus. Lazarus was of a rich family—very likely they wrapped him up with more care. Whether it was so or not, I do not know.

What I need to hint at is this—when a man is far gone into sin, Christ does this for him—He breaks off his evil habits. Very likely the old sinner’s experience will not be a feeding experience. It will not be the experience of walking with the saints. It will be as much as he can do to pull off his grave clothes—to get rid of his old habits. Perhaps to his death he will have to be rending off bit after bit of the cerements in which he has been wrapped.

There is his drunkenness. Oh what a fight will he have with that! There is his lust. What a combat he will have with that, for many a month! There is his habit of swearing—how often will an oath come into his mouth and he will have as hard work as he can to thrust it down again! There is his pleasure-seeking—he has given it up—but how often will his companions be after him, to get him to go with them? His life will be ever afterwards a loosing and letting go, for he will need it till he comes up to be with God forever and ever.

And now, dear friends, I must close by asking you this question—*have you been quickened?* And I must warn you that—good, or bad, or indifferent—if you have never been quickened, you are dead in

sins and must be cast away at the last. I must bid you, however, who have gone the furthest into sin, not to despair. Christ can quicken you as well as the best.

Oh, that He would quicken you and lead you to believe! Oh, that He now would cry to some, "Lazarus, come forth!" and make some harlot virtuous, some drunkard sober. Oh! that He would bless the Word, especially to the young and amiable and lovely, by making them now the heirs of God and the children of Christ!

And now but one thing I have to say to those who are quickened, and then adieu this morning and may God bless you! My dear friends, you who are quickened, let me advise you to be aware of the devil. He will be sure to be after you. Keep your mind always employed and so you will escape him. Oh, be aware of his devices. Seek to "keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

The Lord bless you, for Jesus' sake.

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.