

A PREACHER FROM THE DEAD

NO. 143

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 26, 1857
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

*“And he said unto him,
If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”
Luke 16:31*

MAN is very loath to think ill of himself. The most of mankind are very prone to indulge in apologies for sin. They say, “If we had lived in better times we had been better men. If we had been born into this world under happier auspices we should have been holier. And if we had been placed in more excellent circumstances we should have been more inclined to the right.”

The mass of men, when they seek the cause of their sin, seek it anywhere but in the right place. They will not blame their own nature for it. They will not find fault with their own corrupt heart, but they will lay the blame anywhere else. Some of them find fault with their peculiar position. “If,” says one, “I had been born rich, instead of being poor, I should not have been dishonest.”

“Or if,” says another, “I had been born in middle life, instead of being rich, I should not have been exposed to such temptations of lust and pride as I am now. But my very condition is so adverse to piety that I am compelled by the place I hold in society to be anything but what I ought to be.”

Others turn round and find fault with the whole of society. They say that the whole organism of society is wrong. They tell us that everything in government, everything that concerns the state, everything which melts men into commonwealths is all so bad that they cannot be good while things are what they are. They must have a revolution, they must upset everything—then they think they could be holy.

Many, on the other hand, throw the blame on their training. If they had not been so brought up by their parents, if they had not been so exposed in their youth, they would not have been what they are. It is their parent’s fault. The sin lay at their father’s or their mother’s door.

Or it is their constitution. Hear them speak for themselves, “If I had such a temper as so and so, what a good man I would be! But with my headstrong disposition it is impossible. It is all very well for you to talk to me, but men have different turns of mind and my turn of mind is such that I could not by any means be a serious character.” And so he throws the blame on his constitution.

Others go a deal farther and throw the blame on the ministry. “If,” say they, “at one time the minister had been more earnest in preaching, I should have been a better man. If it had been my privilege to sit under sounder doctrine and hear the Word more faithfully preached, I should have been better.” Or else they lay it at the door of professors of religion and say, “If the church were more consistent, if there were no hypocrites and no formalists—then we should reform!”

Ah, sirs, you are putting the saddle on the wrong horse—you are laying the burden on the wrong back. The blame is in your hearts, nowhere else. If your hearts were renewed you would be better. But until that is done, if society were remodeled to perfection, if ministers were angels, and professors of religion were seraphs, you would be none the better.

But having less excuse for your sin, you would be doubly guilty and perish with a more terrible destruction. But yet men will always be having it, that if things were different they would be different too. Whereas the difference must be made in themselves, if they begin in the right place.

Amongst other whims which have occurred to the human mind, such a one as that of my text may sometimes have arisen. “If,” said the rich man in hell, “if one should arise from the dead, if Lazarus

should go from heaven to preach—my hardened brethren would repent.” And some have been apt to say, “If my aged father, or some venerable patriarch could rise from the dead and preach, we should all of us turn to God.” That is another way of casting the blame in the wrong quarter.

We shall endeavor, if we can, to refute such a supposition as that this morning and affirm most strenuously the doctrine of the text, that, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” Let us proceed with this subject.

Suppose a preacher should come from another world to preach to us—we must naturally suppose that he came from heaven. Even the rich man did not ask that he or any of his compeers in torment might go out of hell to preach. Spirits that are lost and given up to unutterable wickedness could not visit this earth. And if they did, they could not preach the truth, nor lead us on the road to heaven which they had not trodden themselves.

The advent of a damned spirit upon earth would be a curse, a blight, a withering blast—we need not suppose that such a thing ever did or could occur. The preacher from another world, if such could come, must come from heaven. He must be a Lazarus who had lain in Abraham’s bosom, a pure, perfect, and holy being.

Now, imagine for a moment that such a one had descended upon earth. Suppose that we heard tomorrow a sudden piece of news—that a venerable spirit, who had been a long time buried, had on a sudden burst his cerements, lifted up his coffin lid, and was now preaching the word of life. Oh! what a rush there would be to hear him preach!

What place in this wide world would be large enough to hold his massive congregations! How would you rush to listen to him! How many thousands of portraits would be published of him, representing him in the dread winding-sheet of death, or as an angel fresh from heaven? Oh! how this city would be stirred—and not only this city, but this whole land!

Nations far remote would soon hear the news. And every ship would be freighted with passengers, bringing men and women to hear this wondrous preacher and traveler who had returned from the bourne unknown. And how would you listen. And how solemnly would you gaze at that unearthly spectre! And how would your ears be attent to his every word! His faintest syllable would be caught and published everywhere throughout the world—the utterances of a man who had been dead and was alive again.

And we are very apt to suppose that if such a thing should happen, there would be numberless conversions—for surely the congregations thus attracted would be immensely blest. Many hardened sinners would be led to repent. Hundreds of halters would be made to decide and great good would be done.

Ah! Stop, though the first part of the fairy dream should occur, yet would not the last. If someone should rise from the dead, yet would sinners no more repent through his preaching than through the preaching of any other. God might bless such preaching to salvation, if He pleased. But in itself there would be no more power in the preaching of the sheeted dead, or of the glorified spirit, than there is in the preaching of feeble man today. “Though one should rise from the dead, they would not repent.”

But yet, many men would suppose that advantages would arise from the resurrection of a saint who could testify to what he had seen and heard. Now, the advantages, I suppose, could only be three. Some would say there would be advantage in the *strength of evidence which such a man could give to the truth of Scripture*.

For you would say, “If a man did actually come from the pearly-gated city of Jerusalem—the home of the blest—then there would be no more dispute about the truth of revelation. That would be settled.” Some would suppose that he could tell us more than Moses and the prophets had told us and that there would be an *advantage in the instruction which he could confer*, as well as in the evidence which he would bear.

And thirdly, there may be some who suppose that it would be an advantage gained *in the manner in which such a one would speak*. “For surely,” say they, “he would speak with great eloquence, with a far

mightier power, and with a deeper feeling than any common preacher who had never beheld the solemnities of another world.”

Now let us take these three points one after another, and we think we will settle them.

I. First, it is thought that if one came from the dead to preach, there would be A CONFIRMATION OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL and a testimony borne at which jeering infidelity would stand aghast in silence. Stop, we will see about that. We do not think so. We believe that the resurrection of one dead man today, to come into this hall and preach, would be no confirmation of the Gospel to any person here present who does not believe it already.

If, my friends, the testimony of one man who had been raised from the dead were of any value for the confirming of the Gospel, *would not God have used it before now?* This shall be my first argument. It is undoubtedly true that some have risen from the dead. We find accounts in Holy Scripture of some men who by the power of Christ Jesus, or through the instrumentality of prophets, were raised from the dead.

But you will note this memorable fact—that they never any of them spoke one word which is recorded—by way of telling us what they saw while they were dead. I shall not enter into any discussion as to whether their souls slept during the time of their death, or whether they were in heaven or not. That would be a discussion without profit, only gendering disputes, which could yield no fruit. I only say it is memorable that there is not a record of any one of them having given any description of what they saw while they were dead.

Oh, what secrets might he have told, who had laid in his grave four days! Do you not suppose that his sisters questioned him? Do you not think that they asked him what he saw—whether he had stood before the burning throne of God, and been judged for the things done in his body, and whether he had entered into rest?

But however they may have asked, it is certain he gave no answer, for had he given an answer we should have known it now. Tradition would have cherished the record. And do you remember, when Paul once preached a long sermon, even until midnight, there was a young man in the third loft named Eutychus, who fell asleep, and fell down, and was taken up dead?

Paul came down and prayed, and Eutychus was restored to life. But did Eutychus get up and preach after he had come from the dead? No. The thought never seems to have struck a single person in the assembly. Paul went on with his sermon, and they sat and listened to him, and did not care one fig about what Eutychus had seen. For Eutychus had nothing more to tell them than Paul had.

Of all the number of those who by divine might have been brought again from the shades of death, I repeat the assertion—we have not one secret told. We have not one mystery unraveled by them all. Now, God knows best. We will not compare our surmises to divine decision. If God decided that resurrected men should be silent, it was best it should be. Their testimony would have been of little worth or help to us, or else it would have been borne.

But again, I think it will strike our minds at once, that if this very day a man should rise from his tomb, and come here to affirm the truth of the Gospel, *the infidel world would be no more near believing than it is now.* Here comes Mr. Infidel Critic. He denies the evidences of the Bible—evidences which so clearly prove its authenticity—that we are obliged to believe him to be either blasphemous or senseless, and we leave him his choice between the two.

But he dares to deny the truth of Holy Scripture and will have it that all the miracles whereby it is attested are untrue and false. Do you think that one who had risen from the dead would persuade such a man as that to believe? What? When God’s whole creation having been ransacked by the hand of science, has only testified to the truth of revelation—when the whole history of buried cities and departed nations has but preached out the truth that the Bible was true—when every strip of land in the far-off East has been an exposition and a confirmation of the prophecies of Scripture—if men are yet unconvinced, do you suppose that one dead man rising from the tomb would convince them?

No. I see the critical blasphemer already armed for his prey. Hark to him—"I am not quite sure that you ever were dead, sir. You profess to be risen from the dead. I do not believe you. You say you have been dead and have gone to heaven. My dear man, you were in a trance. You must bring proof from the parish register that you were dead."

The proof is brought that he was dead. "Well, now you must prove that you were buried." It is proved that he was buried and it is proved that some sexton in old times did take up his dry bones and cast his dust in the air. "That is very good. Now I want you to prove that you are the identical man that was buried." "Well I am, I know I am. I tell you as an honest man I have been to heaven and I have come back again." "Well then," says the infidel, "it is not consistent with reason. It is ridiculous to suppose that a man who was dead and buried could ever come to life again, and so I don't believe you, I tell you so straight to your face."

That is how men would answer him. And instead of having only the sin of denying many miracles, men would have to add to it the guilt of denying another. But they would not be so much as a tithe of an inch nearer to conviction. And certainly, if the wonder were done in some far-off land and only reported to the rest of the world, I can suppose that the whole infidel world would exclaim, "Simple childish tales and such traditions have been current elsewhere. But we are sensible men, we do not believe them."

Although a churchyard should start into life and stand up before the infidel who denies the truth of Christianity, I declare I do not believe there would be enough evidence in all the churchyards in the world to convince him. Infidelity would still cry for something more. It is like the horseleech. It cries, "Give, give!"

Prove a point to an infidel and he wants it proved again. Let it be as clear as noonday to him from the testimony of many witnesses, yet does he not believe it. In fact, he does believe it—but he pretends not to do so and is an infidel in spite of himself. But certainly the dead man's rising would be little worth for the conviction of such men.

But remember, my dear friends, that the most numerous class of unbelievers are a set of people who never think at all. There are a great number of people in this land who eat and drink, and everything else except think. At least, they think enough to take their shop shutters down in the morning and put them up at night. They think enough to know a little about the rising of the funds, or the rate of interest, or something like how articles are selling or the price of bread.

But their brains seem to be given them for nothing at all except to meditate upon bread and cheese. To them religion is a matter of very small concern. They dare say the Bible is very true, they dare say religion is all right, but it does not often trouble them much. They suppose they are Christians—for were they not christened when they were babies? They must be Christians—at least they suppose so—but they never sit down to inquire what religion is.

They sometimes go to church and chapel and elsewhere. But it does not signify much to them. One minister may contradict another, but they do not know. They dare say they are both right. One minister may fall foul of another in almost every doctrine. It does not matter and they pass over religion with the queer idea—"God Almighty will not ask us where we went, I dare say."

They do not exercise their judgments at all. Thinking is such hard work for them that they never trouble themselves at all about it. Now, if a man were to rise from the dead tomorrow, these people would never be startled. Yes, yes, they would go and see him once, just as they go and see any other curiosity, the living skeleton, or Tom Thumb. They would talk about him a good deal and say, "There's a man risen from the dead," and possibly some winter's evening they might read one of his sermons.

But they would never give themselves trouble to think whether his testimony was worth anything or not. No, they are such blocks they never could be stirred. And if the ghost were to come to any of their houses, the most they might feel would be they were in a fearful fright. But as to what he said—that would never exercise their lead brains and never stir their stony senses. Though one should rise from the dead, the great mass of these people never would be affected.

And besides, my friends, *if men will not believe the witness of God, it is impossible that they should believe the witness of man.* If the voice of God from the top of Sinai and His voice by Moses in the book of the law, if His voice by the divers prophets in the Old Testament, and especially His own Word by His own Son, who has brought immortality to light by the Gospel, cannot convince men, then there is nothing in the world that can of itself accomplish the work.

No, if *God* speak once, but man regards Him not, we need not wonder that we have to preach many a time without being regarded. And we should not harbor the thought that some men who had risen from the dead would have a greater power to convince than the words of God. If this Bible is not enough to convert you—apart from the Spirit (and certainly it is not)—then there is nothing in the world that can, apart from His influence.

And if the revelation which God has given of His Son Jesus Christ in this blessed book, if the Holy Scripture be not in the hands of God enough to bring you to the faith of Christ, then, though an angel from heaven, then, though the saints from glory, then, though God Himself should descend on earth to preach to you—you would go on unsaved and unblest. “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” That is the first point.

II. It is imagined, however, that if one of “the spirits of the just made perfect” would come to earth—even if he did not produce a most satisfactory testimony to the minds of skeptics—he would yet be able to give abundant information concerning the kingdom of heaven. “Surely,” some would say, “if Lazarus had come from the bosom of Abraham, he could have unfolded a tale that would have made our hair stand upright, while he talked of the torments of the rich man. Surely, if he had looked from the gates of bliss, he might have told us about the worm that dies not and the fire that never can be quenched—some horrible details, some thrilling words of horror and of terror he might have uttered—which would have unfolded to us more of the future state of the lost than we now know.”

“And” says the bright-eyed believer, “if he had come to earth he might have told us of the saints’ everlasting rest—he might have pictured to us that glorious city which has the Lord God for its eternal light, the streets whereof are of gold and its gates of pearl. Oh! how sweetly would he have descanted upon the bosom of Christ and the felicity of the blest. He had been—

*“Up where eternal ages roll;
Where solid pleasures never die,
And fruits immortal feast the soul.”*

“Surely he would have brought down with him some handfuls of the clusters of Eshcol. He would have been able to tell us some celestial secrets, which would have cheered our hearts, and nerved us to run the heavenly race, and put a cheerful courage on.”

Stop. That is a dream too. A spirit of the just descending from heaven could tell us no more that would be of any use to us than we know already. What more could that spirit from heaven tell us of the pains of hell than we do already know? Is not the Bible explicit enough? Did not the lips of Christ dreadfully portray the lake of fire? Did He not, even He who wept over men, did He not in awful language tell us that God would say at last, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”?

Do you need more thrilling words than these? “The worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched.” Do you need more terrible warnings than these—“The wicked shall be cast into hell, with all the nations that forget God”? Do you want more awful warnings than this—“Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings.”

What! do you want a fuller declaration than the words of God—“Tophet is prepared of old; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it”? You cannot want more than Scripture gives of that. Even that which you try to run away and escape from. You say the Bible is too horrible and tells you too much of damnation and hell.

Sirs, if you think there is too much there, and therefore reject it, would you stand for an instant to listen to one who should tell you more? No. You do not wish to know more, nor would it be of any use to you if you did. Do you need more details concerning the judgment—that day of wrath to which each of us is drawing nigh?

Are we not told that the king “shall sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all people; and he shall divide them the one from the other, as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats.” Suppose there were one here who had seen the solemn preparation for the great assize—one who had stood where the throne is to be planted and had marked the future with a more piercing eye than ours?

Yet of what avail would it be to us? Could he tell us more than Holy Writ has told us now—at least, any which would be more profitable? Perhaps he knows no more than we. And one thing I am sure of—he would not tell us more about the rule of judgment than we know now.

Spirit that has returned from another world, tell me, how are men judged? Why are they condemned? Why are they saved? I hear him say, “Men are condemned because of sin. Read the ten commandments of Moses and you will find the ten great condemnations whereby men are forever cut off.” I knew that before, bright Spirit. You have told me nothing! “No,” says he, “and nothing can I tell.”

“Because I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was sick, and ye visited me not; I was in prison, and ye came not unto me; therefore, inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me. Depart, ye cursed!”

“Why, Spirit, was that the word of the King?” “It was,” says he. “I have read that, too—you have told me no more.” If you do not know the difference between right and wrong from reading the Scripture—you would not know it if a spirit should tell you. If you do not know the road to hell and the road to heaven from the Bible itself—you would never know it at all.

No book could be more clear, no revelation more distinct, no testimony more plain. And since without the agency of the Spirit, these testimonies are insufficient for salvation, it follows that no further declaration would avail. Salvation is ascribed wholly to God and man’s ruin only to man. What more could a spirit tell us than—a distinct declaration of the two great truths of God—“O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help found!”

Beloved, we do solemnly say again, that Holy Scripture is so perfect and so complete, that it cannot want the supplement of any declaration concerning a future state. All that you ought to know concerning the future you may know from Holy Scripture. It is not right to say with Young—

*“My hopes and fears start up alarmed,
And o’er life’s narrow verge look down,
On what? A bottomless abyss,
A dread eternity.”*

It is not right to say that, as if it were all we know. Blessed be God, the saint does not look down upon a bottomless abyss. He looks up to the celestial “city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Nor do even the wicked look down upon an unknown abyss. For to them it is clearly revealed. Though “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,” the tortures of the lost, yet has Holy Scripture sufficiently told us of them to make it a well-mapped road. So that when they meet with death and hell and terror, it shall be no new thing—for they heard of it before and it was distinctly revealed to them.

Nothing more could we know that would be of any use. Tattlers, idle curiosity people, and such like, would be mightily delighted with such a man. Ah! What a precious preacher he would be to them, if they could get him all the way from heaven, and get him to tell all its secrets out! Oh, how would they love him—how would they delight in him! “For,” say they, “he knows a great deal more than anybody else. He knows a great deal more than the Bible tells us. He knows a great many little details and it is wonderful to hear him explain them!”

But there the matter would end. It would be merely the gratification of curiosity. There would be no conferring of blessing. For if to know more of the future state would be a blessing for us, God would not withhold it. There can be no more told us. If what you know would not persuade you, “Neither would you be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

III. Yet some say, “SURELY IF THERE WERE NO GAIN IN MATTER, YET THERE WOULD BE A GAIN IN MANNER.

Oh, if such a spirit had descended from the spheres, how would he preach! What eloquence celestial would flow from his lips! How majestically would he word his speech! How mightily would he move his hearers! What marvelous words would he utter! What sentences that might start us from our feet and make us quiver with their thrilling influence.

There would be no dullness in such a preacher. It would be no fatigue to hear him. There would be no want of affection in him and surely no want of earnestness. We might well be pleased to hear him every day and never weary with his wondrous speech. Such a preacher earth has never heard. Oh, if he would but come! How would we listen!”

Stay! that too is but a dream. I do believe that Lazarus from Abraham’s bosom would not be so good a preacher as a man who has not died, but whose lips have been touched with a live coal from off the altar. Instead of his being better, I cannot see that he would be quite so good. Could a spirit from the other world speak to you more solemnly than Moses and the prophets have spoken? Or could they speak more solemnly than you have heard the Word spoken to you at divers times already?

O sirs, some of you have heard sermons that have been as solemn as death and as serious as the grave. I can recall to some of your memories seasons when you have sat beneath the sound of the Word wondering and trembling all the while. It seemed as if the minister had taken to himself bow and arrows, and was making your conscience the butt at which his shafts were leveled.

You have not known where you were—you have been so grievously frightened and smitten with terror that your knees did knock together and your eyes ran with tears. What more do you want than that? If that solemn preaching of some mighty preacher whom God had inspired for the time—if that did not save you—what can save you—apart from the influence of the Holy Spirit?

And oh! you have heard more solemn preaching than that. You had a little daughter once. That child of yours had been to the Sabbath school. It came home and was sick unto death. You watched it by night and day, and the fever grew upon it. And you saw that it must die. You have not forgotten yet how your little daughter Mary preached you a sermon that was solemn indeed—just before she departed she took your hand in her little hand and she said, “Father, I am going to heaven. Will you follow me?” That was a solemn sermon to you. What more could sheeted dead have said?

You have not forgotten how, when your father lay a dying—(a holy man of God he had been in his day and served his Master well)—you with your brothers and sisters stood around the bed, and he addressed you one by one. Woman! you have not forgotten yet, despite all your sins and wickedness since then, how he looked you in the face and said, “My daughter, ’twere better for you that you had never been born than that you should be a despiser of Christ and a neglecter of His salvation.”

And you have not forgotten how he looked when with solemn tears in his eyes he addressed you and said, “My children, I charge you by death and by eternity. I charge you, if you love your own souls, despise not the Gospel of Christ. Forsake your follies and turn unto God and live.” What preacher do you need better than that? What voice more solemn than the voice of your own parent upon the confines of eternity?

And you have not yet quite clean escaped from the influence of another solemn scene. You had a friend, a so-called friend. He was a traitor—one who lived in sin and rebelled against God with a high hand and an outstretched arm. You remember his deathbed—when he lay near to death terrors got hold of him. The flames of hell began to get their grip of him, before he had departed.

You have not yet forgotten his shrieks, his screams—you have not quite got from your vision in your dreams that hand through which the fingernails were almost pierced in agony, and that face, contorted

with direful twitchings of dismay. You have not clear escaped yet from that horrid yell with which the spirit entered the realm of darkness and forsook the land of the living. What more of a preacher do you want?

Have you heard this preaching and yet have you not repented? Then verily, if after all this you are still hardened—neither would you be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

Ah! but you say, you want someone to preach to you more feelingly. Then, sir, you cannot have him in the preacher you desire. A spirit from heaven could not be a feeling preacher. It would be impossible for Lazarus, who had been in Abraham's bosom, to preach to you with emotion. As a perfect being, of course, he must be supremely happy.

Imagine this morning a supremely happy being preaching to you about repentance and the wrath of God. Do you not see him? There is a placid smile ever upon his brow. The light of heaven gilds his face—he is talking about the torments of hell—it was the place for sighs and groans. But he cannot sigh, his face is just as placid as ever. He is speaking of the torments of the wicked—it is the time for tears—he cannot weep—that were incompatible with blessedness.

The man is preaching of dreadful things with a smile upon his face. There is summer on his brow and winter on his lips—heaven in his eyes and hell in his mouth. You could not bear such a preacher—he would seem to mock you. Ay, it needs a man to preach, a man like yourselves, who is capable of feeling.

There wants one who, when he preaches of Christ, smiles on his hearers with love—who, when he tells of terror, quails in his own spirit whilst he utters the wrath of God. The great power of preaching, next to the power of God's Spirit, lies in the preacher's feeling it. We shall never do much good in preaching unless we feel what we utter.

"*Knowing* the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." Now a glorified spirit from heaven could not feel these things. He could show but little emotion. True, he could speak of the glories of heaven. And how would his face grow brighter, and brighter, and brighter—as he told the wonders of that upper world!

But when he came to cry, "Flee from the wrath to come," the voice would sound as sweet when he spoke of death and judgment, as when he spoke of glory. And that would make sad discord, the sound not answering to the sense—the modulations of his voice being unfit to express the idea upon the mind. Such a preacher could not be a powerful preacher, even though he came again from the dead.

And one thing we may say—he could not preach more closely home to you than you have had the truth preached to you. I shall not say that you have had preaching put very close to you from the pulpit. But I have sometimes striven to be very personal—I have not shunned to point some of you out in the congregation and given you a word of rebuke—such as you could not mistake.

Nor if I knew that any of you were indulging in sin, would I spare you. I bless God that I am not afraid to be a personal preacher and to shoot the arrow at each separate man when he needs it. But nevertheless, I cannot preach home to you as I would. You are all thinking your neighbor is intended—when it is yourself.

But you have had a personal preacher once. There was a great preacher called at your house one day—his name was Cholera and Death. A terrible preacher he! With grim words and hard accent he came and laid his hand upon your wife. And then he put his other hand on you, and you grew cold and well-nigh stiff. You remember how he preached to you then.

He made your conscience ring again and again. He would not let you lie still. He cried aloud concerning your sin and your iniquity. He brought all your past life to light and set all your evil conduct in review. From your childhood even up till then, he led you through all your wanderings—and then he took the whip of the law and began to plough your back with furrows. He affrighted you with "the wrath to come."

You sent for the minister. You bade him pray. You thought you prayed yourself. And after all that—that preacher went away, and he had come on a fruitless errand—no good had been done to you. You

had been a little startled and a little stirred, but you are today what you were then—unsaved and unconverted. Then, sir, you would not be converted though one rose from the dead.

You have been wrecked at sea. You have been cast into the jaws of the grave by fever. You have been nearly smitten to death by accident. And yet, with all this personal preaching, and with Mr. Conscience thundering in your ears, you are today unconverted. Then learn this truth—that no outward means in the world can ever bring you to the footstool of divine grace and make you a Christian, if Moses and the prophets have failed.

All that can be done now is this—God the Spirit must bless the Word to you, otherwise conscience cannot awaken you, reason cannot awaken you, powerful appeals cannot awaken you, persuasion cannot bring you to Christ. Nothing will ever do it except God the Holy Spirit.

Oh! do you feel that you are drawn this morning? Does some sweet hand draw you to Christ and does some blessed voice say, “Come to Jesus, sinner. There is hope for you.” Then that is God’s Spirit. Bless Him for it! He is drawing you by the bands of love and the cords of a man. But oh! if you be not drawn and left to yourself, you will surely die.

Brethren and sisters in the faith, let us lift up our prayers to God for sinners, that they may be drawn to Christ—that they may be led to come, all guilty and burdened, and look to Jesus to be lightened, and that they may be persuaded, by the coming power of the Spirit, to take Christ to be their “all in all”—knowing that they themselves are “nothing at all.”

O God the Holy Spirit bless these words, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen and Amen.

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.