

FIELDS WHITE FOR HARVEST**NO. 706**

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, JULY 29, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Say not you, There are yet four months, and then comes harvest? behold, I say unto you,
Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.”
John 4:35.*

MANY unbelieving Christians have a very large stock of reasons for not expecting to see many conversions. They suppose that any present manifestation of the divine power in connection with the truth is not to be expected. They read the history of past ages and they wonder, and sometimes, when their eyes are sufficiently clear, they look forward with some sort of hope to the repetition of these scenes in future years, that is to say, when they themselves are dead and buried and a new age shall have come upon the world. But as to God working any wonders in the world now, as to the conversion of thousands now, they do not expect it, and if it were to happen they would be surprised, and beyond all measure astonished. They are forever dwelling in the past, or seeking to roost in the future, but as for *now*, now seeing God’s arm made bare, now setting to work for the conversion of men, now expecting that God will win hearts unto Himself, they are not brought up to this mark yet.

Their common reason for expecting nothing now is this, that there are yet four months, and then comes the harvest. They say, “This is not the time, we must have patience, we must wait, this is not the man, this is not the hour, this is not the place, we must wait till, under other circumstances, other men being given, we look for grander results, but we must not expect them now, there are yet four months, and then comes the harvest.”

You know that this is the general feeling at present in the Christian church, not to expect any great things now, but to be waiting and watching for something or other which may one of these days, in the order of providence, “turn up.” Meanwhile, it is true that death does not cease to slay, meanwhile, it is a fact that our cemeteries and graveyards are being crowded, and that multitudes are perishing for lack of knowledge, meanwhile, it is most true that error stalks like a pestilence through the land. It is true that, as yet, Christ does not see of the travail of His soul, and that few are the travelers who go through the strait gate, but these good people seem indifferent to the perishing millions, and only say, “There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest.”

I have noticed that this kind of feeling has crept into the smaller agencies, to the individual workers too. In the Sunday school, how many a teacher does not expect to see the children of his class converted, but fondly hopes that perhaps when they are grown up, the benefit of the instruction which he imparts to them may be apparent? “There are yet four months,” say they, “and then comes the harvest.” The most of those who teach our young people have become hopeful, that perhaps before those young persons shall actually die, or before they come to be greyheaded, some truth that has been dropped into their hearts may perhaps germinate, and bud, and come to perfection, but they do not expect a present blessing. “There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest.”

Take the most of our ministers, and what are they looking for? They hope that God may visit their congregations, but as to holding inquirers’ meetings every week, and expecting to find people crying, “Sir, what must I do to be saved?” after their sermons—all this is not according to their notions. “There are yet four months, and *then* comes the harvest.”

One of these bright sunny days, one of these long-expected months of which the prophets have talked so long, perhaps in the Millennium year, which some say is drawing so near, they are expecting wonderful things, for “there are yet four months, and then comes the harvest.”

Truly, my brethren, one’s ear has been dinned and dunned with it till one has got sick of hearing that “there are yet four months, and then comes the harvest.” Patience is a virtue, but sometimes decision is a greater one. To wait long is well, but not when the harvest is ripe and ready, for then it will lie upon the ground and rot. To wait may be well, but not when men are dying, nay, when hell is filling, not when immortal souls are in jeopardy, not when the plague is raging, and we have, today, to stand between the living and the dead, and wave the censer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that the plague may be stayed. Four months, indeed, four months!

Have there not been months enough already? We have waited long, we have waited till our patience may well have exhausted itself. It was to be four months in the days of our grandfathers, it was to be four months in the days of our fathers, and now it is to be four months still. Oh that we would learn the Savior’s words, and say no longer that “there are four months, and then comes the harvest”! but let us do as He says, “Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.” Expect a present blessing, believe that you will have it, go to work to get it, and do not be satisfied unless you do have it. Let me dream dreams of the future, and put you off from looking for a blessing in the future alone, for though it may be true that your words will be blessed after you are dead, yet do not be content with that hope, but want them to be blessed now. Though, possibly, a sermon may bring a soul to God twenty years after it is preached, yet do not think of that, but think of those who are present while it is preached, and be not satisfied unless now, on the spot, you reap some of that wheat which is white already to harvest.

We shall now come directly to our subject, and may we have strength given by God’s grace to stir up Christian laborers to great and instantaneous diligence.

We shall take our text in three ways, *signs of harvest*, *wants of harvest*, and *fears of harvest*.

I. SIGNS OF HARVEST.

“Say not you, There are yet four months, and then comes harvest? behold, I say to you, Lift up your eyes, and look at the fields; for they are white already to harvest.” What signs were there, when the Savior uttered these words, from which the disciples might effect an immediate gathering of souls? I answer, first, that there was this sign—that *the Savior had preached a sermon, and that the whole of His congregation had been converted*. You will remind me that He had but one hearer. Yes, but that is the first point to which I want to come. The conversion of one soul by the Gospel should be to you a hopeful sign that God intends to convert others.

For see, the cholera is raging in certain towns—say, on the Continent—and a physician has been studying the disease. He has administered a variety of drugs, but in every case without success. He has prescribed different methods of treatment, but in no case has he succeeded in effecting a cure. At last he has hit upon the right drug, and, administering it, he sees his patient rallying, strength evidently given by the medicine, the struggle ends favorably, and the patient rises to life and health. “Now,” says the physician, “I know that I shall have a harvest of men who will be preserved from this disease, because the same medicine which heals one will heal two, will heal twenty, will heal a thousand, or even twenty thousand, it only has to be administered, that one person has been healed by this compound, and it is clear that as many more may be healed as are willing to receive it.”

Brethren, we do not lack this sign with regard to the Gospel. We have had it, we have it still. It is clear to you that the Gospel has been blessed to the conversion of some. We, as a church, can show every week some whom God converts by His grace. We have not been left without our witnesses at any time, but during the last twelve years God’s hand has continually been stretched out. Now we ought to take this as an omen of good. If *some* have found the Savior, why not *more*?

Christian soldier, you have a sword in your hand that has won one battle, why should it not win another, and another, and another? You have the omnipotence of God with you, which has already

broken one hard heart, why should it not break other hard hearts? Already one stronghold of the enemy has been captured by the sounding of the silver trumpet, why should not the rest fall too, when with the confidence of faith we sound the silver trumpet yet again? When Napoleon landed on his return from Elba, and one man came and presented himself as willing to serve the Emperor, "Here," said Napoleon, "is one recruit at least." So may we say when we have converts—"Here is one recruit, and thank God for one, for the same attractive influence which draws one will draw multitudes more." We have got the right medicine, we have got the right power, and therefore let us hope that there is a harvest to be reaped now.

But, again, there was another hopeful sign, namely, *that this one convert was at that very moment diligently engaged in making more converts.* "The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and said to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did." We hear a great deal of strategy, it was our Savior's strategy to bless the men of Samaria through this woman. He said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come hither." This is the blessing about the Gospel, that if it gets into one person's heart it is sure to run from that one to all those who live in the neighborhood, and who are the surroundings of that saved one.

Just strike the match and let the spark drop in the prairie, and what a roaring ocean of flame shall soon come from it! Let God's grace fall into one soul, and who knows what the end shall be? When this country of ours was all asleep, and religion was at the lowest possible ebb, half a dozen young men at Oxford felt the inspiration of God and they met together to pray. They were expelled the college for the horrid crime of meeting together to pray, but what was the result of it? Soon, from the Land's End to John o' Groat's House that same inspiration which had fallen upon those young men had descended upon the multitudes, till from peers of the realm down to the black-faced colliers, men of all ranks and grades confessed the power of the God of Israel. One of those young men, as you remember, wrote the hymn we sang just now—

*"Saw ye not the cloud arise,
Little as a human hand?"*

It only wants a beginning, get one soul saved and you have got a preacher of Christ at once. There is not a plant that grows by the hedge-side but takes care, as it dies, to scatter all down the bank the seeds of succeeding generations of plants, and you cannot get the grace of God into a soul but it is sure to try to disseminate the spiritual life, and to bring others to know the holy joy which it itself experiences. Here, then, were two signs of harvest, there was one saved, and that one was trying to bring others to be saved.

But there was a third sign that was still better, namely, *that the others were coming to hear.* There they came, a whole troop of them from that little town, all anxious to listen to the Savior. Oh! it is a blessed sign in these times of ours that men are willing to listen to the preaching of Christ. We can scarcely find places large enough now in which to accommodate the multitude. It is true they will not go to hear some ministers, who would? Who cares to go to hear where the preaching is dull? Some charity boy being asked why the eunuch "went on his way rejoicing," replied that "It was because Philip had done preaching to him," and I do not doubt that there are some now who from the same cause go on their way rejoicing when the sermon is over.

But simple speech, plain talk about Christ, does win the ear still, and if it be but tried, and it really is the Gospel that is preached, there will never be a lack of hearers. See how Sunday night after Sunday night the theatres have been filled when our brethren have gone there to preach to the working classes the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is false that the working men of London do not care to hear the Gospel; they do care to hear it. Only preach it so that it can be understood, take the velvet from your mouths, and speak plainly, and they will be sure to come to listen. This is always a good sign, and we may fairly expect a harvest when once we get the people to hear. When the fish get round the net, surely some of

them will be taken, and when the furrows lie open, surely he who scatters good seed may have hope that he shall see it spring up.

Brethren in Christ, I am persuaded there never was a time when people were more willing to listen to the Gospel of Christ than now. They will hear it if you only preach it so that it can be understood. Do not, of course, expect them to listen to you if you are not earnest about what you have to say, but if you have something to tell them that is worth their hearing, never fear but what they will give you the hearing. This was another sign of harvest.

But there was yet a better one. Our Savior knew that a harvest was approaching *because the persons who were coming to hear were the very people who seemed the least likely to listen to His word*. They were Samaritans who were coming. "Oh!" said the Jew, "a Samaritan!" If he merely heard the word "Samaritan" he turned on his heels and went his way very much in the same style as some of our gentlemen do if they merely hear the word "rough," which is supposed to be the conglomeration of everything that is horrible, and yet the person who happens to be called a "rough" may be rough in nothing but his garments, and may have as gentle a heart as ever beat beneath broadcloth.

But so it is, sometimes the very people come to hearken to the Gospel whom you would least expect to see listening to it, and this is a good sign. When the Samaritans will hear, when the giddy multitude are willing to stand crowded together to listen to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, when the working man is not ashamed to come to the house of God to hear Christ preached, and will even stand at a corner of the street and listen to it, it is a good sign, and it is a sign that we see now. The publican and the harlot are willing to receive the Gospel of Jesus, and God blesses them, and they enter into the kingdom of heaven. All these are good signs of a coming harvest.

It is, moreover, an omen for good *when we recollect the men who have labored before us*. How much of labor has been spent upon this city! How many earnest men have wept and toiled among our teeming masses, and have gone back to their Master with, "Who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" Here for three centuries, I may say, since the days of old Hugh Latimer, right on from the time of the preachings at Paul's Cross, there has never been a lack of ministrations of God's truth in this city of London, and in the surrounding parts of the metropolis. Some of you can almost look back to the days when John Newton was at St. Mary Woolnoth, and can almost recollect Romaine, at St. Ann's, Blackfriars. When we had among Dissenters such men as Dr. Gill, and afterwards Dr. Rippon, and Abraham Booth, and others who labored and toiled for Christ, and yet after all met with but little comparative success.

There must be some good come from all this. Has all this labor been spent for nothing? Has the ground been watered by the sweat of these men, and have they plowed it and sown it, and is there never to come a harvest? Our Savior seems to say, "Those Samaritans over yonder, they have the Word of God, they have heard something about it, even the Jews could not keep the light of prophecy away from them, other men had prepared them to receive our teachings." And, doubtless, the days that are past have been preparing the population of England to receive the Gospel, and we may hope that when it does come to them it will come with a mighty power, for when the Holy Ghost is pleased to work mightily we shall see something done, the like of which England has never seen before, and which shall be the result of the accumulated labors of many years gone by. We have a right to expect a harvest when we recollect what has been done already.

And brethren, I think it is a sign of some good for the church of Christ *when there is a stir among the people*. The worst thing, perhaps, for true religion is the stagnation of the human mind. When people are not thoughtful about other things, it is very seldom that you can get them to be thoughtful about religion. It is generally supposed that our country friends, some of whom seem to vegetate rather than to live, and who are not so pressed with business from morning till night as we are in London, must have a great deal of time to give to religion, and that they must therefore be the most hopeful of congregations.

My country brethren do not confirm the supposition, and for myself—for I preach more in the country than I do in the town, and often spend three or four days a week in addressing country

audiences—for myself I must say that glad as I am to address the assembled crowds in a field or anywhere else, I do not find that the supposition that their having less to do makes them think more of divine things is at all correct. I believe that where the intellect is most exerted, above other things, there is, on the whole, the most hope of sending home some thought about divine things. It is true that thorns may be a hindrance, and are, but at any rate they prove that the soil will grow something, and I think if I were going to take a farm, I would sooner take one that was overgrown with thistles than one which grew nothing at all, and it is better to lay hold of a man who really does think about something than of one who thinks about nothing at all, and has nothing at all to think about.

It was said—I do not know how truly—that a singular apathy had seized the public mind, and that there was nothing that could stir it up. Continually it was said that this was an age in which nobody cared for anything, and I think it was pretty nearly the fact. Nobody cared what anything did or did not do. As long as people could be tolerably easy, they seemed to be pretty well satisfied, if you did not put on the income-tax too heavily, nothing else would much concern the people.

But now it is not so. I think I see the beginning of a stir in the public mind. Even the political stir of the last few days, with all about it which one would deplore, still shows that the public mind is stirring, for there generally comes a waking up about every twenty years or so. People go to sleep for a long time, but all on a sudden they begin to rub their eyes, and to inquire about this, and about that, and about something else. Well now is the time, when the spirit is thus aroused, to preach the Gospel to that awakened mind. It seems to me that no nobler opportunity could present itself than now. Now is the time when the corners of the streets should ring with ministers' voices, when the Word of God should be distributed in every house, when you should give away tracts, not such poor tracts as are mostly given away, but tracts with something solid in them, and these should be given away by the millions, for just now men are thoughtful, and let them have the grand revealed reality to think about. I believe on this account, let others think what they will, that there are the signs of a coming harvest.

And, to conclude on this point, it is quite certain that at the present period *the old priestcrafts do not hinder men from hearing the Gospel*. Time was, I dare say, in Sychar and Samaria, when the people dared not have come out to hear Christ, they must have asked some Samaritan Rabbi whether it was proper for them to go to hear the new prophet. You know in half the country towns in England this is the case. The people there no more dare to think for themselves in religion, than they dared to think of old in the days of serfdom and slavery. Squirecraft and priestcraft tread the people in the country down still. But it is not so in London. Nobody here thinks of asking the parish priest where he shall go. We can get at the people, we can bring the Gospel to their doors, there is no dominant priestcraft to keep us back, and I say, brethren, if Martin Luther could have lived in such an age as this, how he would have rejoiced to see it, and if John Bunyan, after lying twelve years in Bedford Jail, if Richard Baxter, and Alleine, and men of that stamp, could have lived in days where there is such perfect liberty that every man may hear the Gospel, if he cares to hear it, they would have been almost ready to say, "Lord, let your servants depart in peace, for our eyes have seen your salvation."

This is the hour of the flowing of the tide, which taken at its flood leads on to fortune. If the Christian church does not avail herself of the present crisis, she deserves to have an age of infidelity to make her mourn over her laxity and her indolence, if now the Christian church dares not bestir herself, now when the minds of men are ready, when their ears are open, when there is nothing to stand between us and the multitude, then I fear she will have cause to repent and mourn in days of darkness and bitterness which will inevitably follow. Up, then, believers, if the Bible is worthy of your belief proclaim it to others, and proclaim it especially just now. Now is the day and now is the hour, for the fields are white already white to harvest.

II. Supposing all this to be true, we shall now speak of HARVEST WANTS.

The wants of harvest are, first, *many laborers*. If many souls are to be converted, there must be many to preach to them. If we are to expect a great ingathering, as I think we ought, there must be much energy used and much effort put forth. "Pray you, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that he would send

forth laborers into his harvest,” and ask Him to be pleased to stir up Christian zeal throughout the whole of Christendom that advantage may be taken of this auspicious hour. You cannot reap without laborers. I saw a reaping machine the other day doing the work very well and very fast, but somehow or other one liked the old-fashioned look of the field when the laborers were in it at work. Certainly there is no machine that can do this work of soul-reaping. It must be done by men, chosen men, who, filled with the Spirit of God, shall go forth to ingather souls. The first want, then, is more laborers. Who is there amongst you who will consecrate himself to God? I do not ask for young men for the College just now, we have enough, but I do ask for young men, old men, and all sorts of men, and women too, to be laborers in the great work of ingathering souls. Many sinners perish, and many saints do nothing. Oh! you who know Christ, be indifferent no longer.

The next thing that is wanted is *sharp sickles* as well as more laborers. A laborer is no good unless he has got a sickle, and if he can keep his sickle sharp so much the better. You must get a hold, dear friends, of God’s truth. You will do nothing without that truth, and you must have that truth well understood. You must grind your sickles, you must go to work with such cutting truths as justification by faith, as the total ruin of mankind, as the hope that is laid up in the cross, the energy of the Holy Ghost, and when you know these truths, and know how to use them, you shall then be made great reapers in the Master’s harvest. It is idle to say, “I will go,” and then go with no tool in your hand. Get the truth, get hold of it well, get it sharp, and in good order, and who knows, under the blessing of God the Holy Ghost, what you may do!

The next want of harvest is *some close binders*. When the wheat is cut down you must tie it up with sheaves. We want some of you who cannot preach, who cannot use the sickle, to go and gather up the wheat which falls under the sickle when it is used by others. Invite them to come into church fellowship, talk to them, get them into union with the people of God. And oh! if you happen to be in the church yourselves, try to keep the church knit together in love. Bind the sheaves together. We cannot have good harvest work without loving hands to bind the people of God in one.

Then we want beside these *some to take the sheaves home*. The church of God is the barn, it is the Master’s garner here, He has another garner yonder on the hilltop in heaven, but here we want you to assist in bringing them into the church of Christ. When God has served them, try, if you can get them to practice the ordinances of God, and to be joined with His people. And we want some of you, if you cannot do anything yourselves either in reaping, or binding, or bringing the sheaves home, at least by kind words and loving speeches to *bring refreshments to the reapers*. You can sometimes remind them of the success you know they have had in certain places, you can cheer them when they begin to grow uneasy. You can go to those who are working hard and say, “Be not discouraged, God has blessed you to my soul. God has owned your work in such-and-such cases. Persevere, and God is with you!”

As I look round this congregation I cannot help thinking what a mass of strength there must be here for the Lord’s cause if it could but be brought out! You, young man, who are full of ability, who would take the lead in any society into which you choose to enter, oh! young man, how I long for you as a recruit for my Master, and to enlist you in His service! If you were a Christian, or if being a Christian, you were all on fire with love to Christ, what might you not accomplish! I would fain have that matron yonder, with her family about her, to train for the Savior. Oh! what a position of usefulness she has! And that great employer of labor there, how influential he is! How a good word from him might be blessed to hundreds of people! And even you who are servants in families, nurses and so on, you may not have so wide a sphere of labor, but you have still your place of influence.

Oh! if every talent we possess were but consecrated to Christ! London, you need not be in the dark if all God’s lamps which are in you were but lit! O you mighty city! you need not be ignorant of the Gospel if the tongue of every child of God would but tell it out. If we were all enlisted, all made soldiers for Christ, might not this country yet feel the power of Christ? And what are we? A slender few, a handful compared with the masses of our fellow Christians! Would God that they were all baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and then we might see such a harvest as would make heaven itself ring as

we shouted our harvest home! I charge you who love the Lord, I charge you by the nearness of death, by the shortness of the time in which you can serve your Master, do not one of you be idle! Oh! my dear hearers, I would almost say if you are members of my church here, and are doing nothing, get you gone! Of what service can you be? You are drags on the wheels, you are an impediment to the church's course, you are like the heavy baggage which impedes the armies of Israel. Do something, in God's name I charge you, do something, or else be ashamed of yourselves. Has He done so much for you? Do you profess to have been bought with His blood? Have you dared to sing—

***“I love my God with zeal so great
That I could give Him all.”***

and are you doing nothing? Some of you drink in the doctrines of grace, but if they be indeed true to you, do show the grace of the doctrines by spending and being spent in the Master's cause. These, then, are the wants of harvest.

III. And now, lastly, THE FEARS OF HARVEST.

The husbandman sometimes fears that *through lack of laborers he may be obliged to leave the wheat out in the field till it is considerably damaged*. After a certain time the wheat spears out and there is a loss sustained, the birds also will feast upon it, and the farmer's gains are going. My dear friends and fellow reapers, this great city is the field that is white for the harvest, and every hour in which men are not saved there are capabilities of usefulness that are falling out, and Satan is running away with opportunities for good. Supposing those souls to be saved in a few years hence, yet there are all the years between now and then lost for God. I am jealous, not only to have souls saved, but to have them saved while young. Why should Satan have so much of their time? Why should so many years of their influence be thrown into the wrong scale? The wheat, even if you do not get it in before it perishes, is losing part of its value every hour. Oh! should we not be moved by this to take the sickle, and go at once to the work?

But there is a worse fear than this, namely, *that some other wheat may remain un-reaped, and so be destroyed*. It may rot in the place where it grows, and instead of gladdening the husbandman it may lie there to become a mere mass of rotteness, and perhaps the fire may come, and it may do damage, the very thing which might have been so useful. Ah! how much of London may be destroyed for want of laborers to go and take in the harvest! Ah! the millions that never enter a place of worship. I speak within bounds, for even if they all wished to enter there is hardly room for one million out of three, and a great mass never come at all, and how few of us there are who go after them! They perish, my brethren, they perish, they perish with an overwhelming destruction, you know how they perish, you know how you were once on the brink of perishing, and how mercy snatched you from it. You have read in that old Book of everlasting destruction, which is the portion of the men who die unwashed in the blood, and unforgiven.

I charge you, if you would not see souls lost, rise, and with the sickle get you to the harvest, for meanwhile do you not know that there are other reapers at work? If the Christian does not work, there are others who will labor. If the truth does not now spread among the masses, error is spreading. You cannot silence the tongue of infidelity if you shut your own mouth. You cannot stop the voice of priestcraft if you are quiet yourselves. You know that the messengers of Satan are busy. As Hugh Latimer said, “The busiest bishop in England is the devil, he is always traveling up and down his diocese, he neither neglects town nor village, nor hamlet, nor so much as one of those who live in his see, he is seeking both by night and by day the ruin of souls.” Other hands, they are gathering the harvest, but it belongs to your Master, and will you endure it, will you endure it? You servants of Christ, will you suffer it? Shall the harvest be taken away? No, by the love you bear your Master, take the prey from the mighty.

And now, lastly, perhaps the most solemn reflection is, that *whether we gather in the harvest or not, there is a reaper who is silently gathering it every hour*. Just now it is whispered that he is sharpening his sickle. That reaper is DEATH! You may look upon this great city as the harvest field, and every week the bills of mortality tell us how steadily and how surely the scythe of death moves to and fro, and how a lane is made through our population, and those who were once living men are taken like sheaves to the garner, taken to the graveyard and laid aside. You cannot stop their dying, but oh! that God might help you to stop their being damned! You cannot stop the breath from going out of their bodies, but oh! if the Gospel could but stop their souls from going down to destruction! It can do it, and nothing else can take its place.

Just now this cholera has come. There can be little doubt, I suppose, about it being here already in some considerable force, and probably it may be worse. The Christian cannot dread it, he has nothing to lose, and everything to gain. Still, for the sake of others he may well pray that God would avert His hand and not let His anger burn. But since it is coming, I think it ought to be a motive for active exertion. If there ever be a time when the mind is sensitive it is when death is abroad. I recollect when first I came to London how anxiously people listened to the Gospel, for the cholera was raging terribly. There was little scoffing then. All day and sometimes all night long I went about from house to house, and saw men and women dying, and oh! how glad they were to see one's face, and when many were afraid to enter their houses for fear of disease, we who had no fear about such things found ourselves most gladly listened to when we spoke of Christ and of divine things.

And now, again, is the minister's time, now is the time for all of you that love souls. You may see men more alarmed than now, I hope they may not be, I pray to God that they may not be, but if they should, avail yourselves of it. You have the balm of Gilead, when their wounds smart pour it in. You know of Him who died to save, tell them of Him. Lift high the cross before their eyes. Tell them that God became man that man might be lifted up to God. Tell them of Calvary, and its groans, and cries, and sweat of blood. Tell them of Jesus hanging on the cross to save sinners. Tell them that there is life for a look at the Crucified One. Tell them that He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him. Tell them that He is able to save at the eleventh hour, and to say to the dying thief, "Today shall you be with me in Paradise."

Oh, dear hearers, while I am exhorting you who are Christians to look after strangers, I may well ask you to look over those who are sitting in the pews with you, for there are some of you who, if you were to die tonight—if, instead of going down yonder steps beneath the columns you were to die in your seats, where would your souls go? If you reached your home and staggered into your bed, and found it your tomb, what would be your eternal fate? Will not conscience tell you that you could not plead a Savior's blood? You have never trusted it. You cannot expect a living Savior to meet you in a dying moment, for you have never loved Him. Oh! may God's grace make you love Him now tonight! Sinner, look to Jesus, and you shall be saved. Now trust Christ, trust Him only, trust Him wholly, trust Him earnestly, and you shall rejoice, even tonight, and you shall be a part of that wheat which is white already unto harvest.

Oh, my hearers, I am concerned for your souls, I would fain reap myself, and bind up some sheaves to be carried into our earthly sheltering place, in prospect of our heavenly home. I cannot bear the thought that any of you should ever be bound in bundles to be burned. What, will any of you ever be lost, and be borne into the flame which never can be quenched? It must not be. Turn you, turn you, why will you die? Are there any reasons you can urge for your choice when you select companionship with sinners here and devils hereafter, and despise the Gospel of salvation, and reject the overtures of grace? There are none. You know you are wrong. You are persuaded that your present position is false, and you are not without some dread of the result at last.

Are there not at times fears which sting like serpents, and poison your peace of mind, so that you would gladly be free from them if you could? Well, listen to me, or rather hearken to God's Word as spoken by me. "Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I speak

of no untried remedy, I have myself tasted it, I am a witness of the efficacy and power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin. I am surrounded by thousands who are all so many proofs of its value and unchanging might—

*“Venture on Him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.”*

He is waiting to be gracious, nigh at hand, and not afar off. There are in some parts of the Continent where I have traveled, places so sparsely inhabited, and the people so poor, that no medical man resides in the district, and in such cases, if any one falls sick, he must write to the nearest wayside inn to have a notice put up that if any doctor or medical man is passing by, they would be glad if he would in kindness stay and pay them a visit, so as to give them a chance of being healed, if human help can avail in their case. Should no physician pass that way, then the man must die, there is no help for him, the ignorance of his friends and their poverty cannot help him, he must go to his grave.

But here, my dear hearers, is the difference in your case. The Physician knocks at your door, and tells you of your disease, proffers to you the remedy, assures you of a complete and of an immediate cure. And you—oh madness and folly unspeakable!—you hesitate to welcome Him, and you reject, it may be, all His offered care. Then you must perish. For our ignorance and poverty are such that no help of man can avail. You cannot effect your own cure, and therefore you will go down to the pit with your blood upon your own head. May this folly soon cease, and you be inclined to listen to Him whose touch gives health, yea, life from the dead! In His name I proclaim salvation, look then to Him, believe, and life everlasting shall be yours.

May God Almighty bless you, and may we meet in heaven. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 4.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. 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.