WAKE UP! WAKE UP!

NO. 1445

A SERMON
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

"That, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."
Romans 13:11

THIS exhortation, as you will readily perceive, is not addressed to the ungodly. These words are not spoken to those who are dead in sin, but to those who are alive unto God, though somewhat given to slumber. There are many expostulations and admonitions which do appeal to the willful and wicked, to the indifferent and unbelieving, to those who err and are out of the way, but this is not one of them.

Here we have a special charge to disciples of Jesus who know the time, and also know that their salvation draws near. They are represented as being asleep and needing to awake from their present sluggishness. But they are not described as those who had ceased to be Christians, or whose salvation was in jeopardy. Though it is admitted that it is high time for them to awake out of sleep, their salvation is never questioned, but on the contrary they are reminded that now it is nearer than when they believed.

The tone and tenor of this call to circumspection suggest to us that when we address the Lord's people and find occasion to rebuke and reprove them, we should never insinuate that they are likely to be banished from the household of faith, or to be cast away from the presence of God, or to be treated as reprobates. Even if we feel convinced that they are asleep, and that they must be aroused, we ought not to denounce them with railing accusations, or threaten them with the wailings of the lost and the doom of unquenchable fire.

You would not be pleased if anyone should touch your child with a horsewhip. Nor will the Lord allow us to strike His chosen with the rod of the wicked. Legal thunders are not intended for justified saints.

"The terrors of law and of God
With us can have nothing to do,
Our Savior's obedience and blood
Hide all our transgressions from view."

Even if the saints' hearts are dull, their eyes heavy, and they are evidently fast asleep, we are not warranted in raising a false alarm. It is not for us to tell the heirs of salvation to awake because they are in danger of the wrath to come, for they are in no such danger, that is past and gone. Rather let us remind them that their salvation is nearer than when they believed, and so stir them up to watchfulness and activity by appropriate motives. The whip is for the slave, not for the child. The dread of punishment is for the condemned, not for the justified.

The fear of wrath is not for those who are "accepted in the Beloved," but for those who reject the Savior and put from them the eternal mercy of God. While, then, I endeavor to speak frankly and faithfully to the Lord's people, I shall try to avoid anything like a legal tone. I would fain talk to God's children as their Father in heaven would have them talked to, somewhat sharply, perhaps, but still without a trace of the threatenings which belongs to the ungodly, but not to those who are saved in the Lord.

From the connection it appears to me that Paul had in his mind's-eye a kind of sleepy state into which God's people may fall with regard to others. And upon that state of slumber we shall speak tonight.

I. Looking at the text in its true bearings, this is the lesson—SOME PROFESSING CHRISTIANS SEEM TO BE ALTOGETHER IN A DEAD SLEEP WITH REGARD TO OTHERS.

It is all very well to take a passage of Scripture, isolate it from the context, and use it as the motto of a sermon. But it is evidently not the natural and fair way of treating the Word of God. You may do so for the most part with tolerable safety, for God's truth, even when it is broken up into little pieces, still retains its purity and perfection like certain crystals, which, however much they may be subdivided, always bear the same crystalline form.

So true in every particle and detail is the revelation of God that though you should take it up and dash it to pieces, yet every little fragment will bear the original impression. But this is no excuse for treating the Scriptures in an unjustifiable manner instead of expounding them according to the rules of common sense. Texts ought always to be handled with a reverential deference to the mind of the divine Spirit who wrote them.

When we attempt to rivet your attention on a verse or the fraction of a verse of the Bible, we desire you also to be scrupulously attentive to the affinities in which it stands. If any of my published sermons should in any instance appear to violate this rule, you will bear me witness that it has been my constant habit throughout all my ministry among you to read and open up, as best I could, the whole chapter from which I have selected a few words as the motto of my discourse. I have honestly endeavored to give you the special mind of the Spirit either in the exposition or in the sermon.

Now, you will see that the connection here is this. Paul has been bidding us to pay attention to relative duties. As citizens, he bids us render honor to magistrates, to those who are in authority, and to pay all lawful dues and customs, and the like, telling us that we are to owe no man anything except to "love one another." And then he shows us that the law of love is the abstract and the essence of that great table of the law which concerns a man's relation to His neighbors. He goes on to exhort us to keep that law of love, to manifest love more and more. And when he has done so, he interjects this sentence, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep."

Now, I gather that he means that many Christians are in a sleepy state with reference to the law of love, with reference to their obligations to others. Beloved friends, true godliness makes a man look to himself. It commences by convincing him of his own sin, and by leading him personally to lay hold on Christ by faith that in His blood he may find salvation.

It then makes the man feel his personal obligations and his individual responsibilities. It sets him free from many of the yokes with which his fellow men would load him, and bids him obey his own conscience before his God, to be a law unto himself and to stand and walk as before the Most High, judging righteous judgment as to the Lord's will, and not basely bending to evil at the advice and persuasion of other men.

I would to God we could get some Christians, some professed Christians, to be a little more independent. But so many of them are like the rotten houses of which we have not a few in this neighborhood. They could not stand alone, they must keep together, for they prop one another up.

If you were to pull down one of the houses in some of our streets, they must all fall. And so there are sets of Christian professors that lean one upon another, upon the custom of their set and sect, and church and community. They have never dared to study Scripture for themselves and follow it, nor have they ever tried to form their own personal conscientious convictions. One of the first works of the Holy Spirit is to make a man look at home, and to consider the condition of his own soul.

When the Spirit of God has made a man thus to stand on his own footing before God, and to feel his personality, there springs up a danger that such a man may say, "I shall henceforth keep myself to myself. My chief business will be indoor work, to see after the rightness of my own spirit and to keep myself prospering before the Lord. Other people must see to themselves, and I must see to myself." The

principle of individuality might be thus pushed to an extreme, till what at first was necessary grit in the spiritual constitution, making the man truly a man, may be so unduly increased that he becomes at last an unkind, ungenerous, cruel, selfish thing, deprived of the best part of his humanity.

Thus, then, we are brought back to this, that albeit every man must give an account of himself before God, and must personally be born again, and personally be reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, yet, "no man liveth to himself," nor was he ever meant to do so. No man can compass the ends of life by drawing a little line around himself upon the ground. No man can fulfill his calling as a Christian by seeking the welfare of his wife and family only, for these are only a sort of greater self.

There are outgoing lines of life that bind us not only with some men, but in fact, with all humanity. So that, if we did but know it, the thought of one brain, the utterance of one lip, the movement of one pair of hands does in its measure, influence the whole human race to some degree and will do so till time shall be no more. We are placed, therefore, in a most solemn position, and it is with regard to this that it is high time that we should awake out of sleep.

Into what a deep slumber some professing Christians have fallen! How utterly insensible they are to the sins and sorrows of those around them. They believe God has a people, and they are very glad He has, as far as they are capable of being glad of anything that does not concern themselves. But "the world lieth in the wicked one," and multitudes are perishing. They are sorry it is so, that is to say, they go the length of saying they are sorry. It does not cause them any sleepless nights, it does not disturb their digestion, it in no way interferes with their comfort, for they do not seem to think that it has anything to do with them.

I know some that are in such a sleep who drug themselves with almost as much regularity as they feed themselves. They take that great and precious truth of the divine Sovereignty, and turn it to a most detestable use. For they say, "What is to be will be, and the Lord's purpose will be fulfilled. There will be some saved and others lost." All this is said as coolly as if they were talking of a wasp's nest.

As for those that are lost! They dare not injure their logic by indulging a little mournful emotion. Were their minister to weep over the lost, as Jesus wept over Jerusalem, they would say he was unsound—a duty-faith man, certainly, and probably, an Arminian. And they would straightway quit him and think that he could not have really received the mind of the Spirit of God.

Yet, in the judgment of all who think aright, one of the finest traits in a Christian's character is the deep sorrow which he feels over souls that are being lost and the great longing of his own soul that men would turn unto God and find peace through Jesus Christ.

O sirs, I fear there are many professors in a deep sleep as to whether others are going to heaven or to hell! The drunkenness that is around them they look upon as a matter of course. The blasphemy which greets their ears does not chill their blood. They say it is very usual and very shocking. The Sabbath-breaking they take to be a kind of necessary evil. The rejection of Christ by men they look upon as no sin at all, and they even quarrel and cavil with those who think that sinners are blameworthy in rejecting the Son of God, the Savior of sinners.

I trust that many of these are God's people, and if they be, it is high time that they should awake out of such a sleep as that, so unlike Christ, so alien to the spirit of love, so contrary to the mind which God would have His Spirit work in all His people. Alas! that they should have sunk into so dead a sleep.

Others there are, dear friends, who are prone to be overtaken with an oft-recurring sleep. I know a brother who often takes forty winks in the daytime. You may nudge him and he will wake and listen to you, but he goes to sleep again in a few minutes if you leave him alone. He will attend to you with much pleasure if you pull his coat again, but he soon returns to his dozing.

Who can blame the sleeper when it is a question of infirmity or sheer exhaustion? I never like to blame people too hastily when they go to sleep in a place of worship, for I remember thinking rather harshly of a brother who went to sleep one Sunday morning under my sermon. But when I found that he had been sitting up two nights with a sick wife and had been doing a full day's work besides, then I was

sorry enough to have thought a hard thought of a worthy man. I rather wondered, when I understood the case, whether I should have been able to come to worship at all.

Well, without blaming any of you, then, for the weakness of the flesh, I take this sleepy habit to be a fit illustration of the state in which some Christians are to be found. They go to sleep and then they wake up for a little. They have fits and starts of wakefulness, and then off to sleep again they drop.

Does this describe you, dear friend? At that missionary meeting you woke up when you heard the cry of the perishing heathen. You wanted to get out into the street at once and tell poor sinners about Christ. And you did empty your pockets into the plate before you left the building. Have you cared much about China or India since then, though you know that there are millions of people—millions dying for lack of knowledge? They have not troubled you much, have they, since that missionary meeting?

Perhaps tonight I shall pull your coattail a little and you will be awake again, and you will be very much concerned, and you will pray earnestly for your neighbors and your ungodly friends. But I fear, you will soon go to sleep again. You have gone back to your slumbers so many times before that now it is "sleeping made easy." Could not your ministers lodge a grievous complaint against you for this? You do get on fire with love for souls when the discourse is specially arousing, but then after the sermon is over and the week of special services has ended, you go to sleep again.

Many Sunday school teachers there are of that kind. They do sometimes talk to their children about their souls with tears in their eyes, and then, again, their ardor evaporates, and they get through their duties in little better form than merely reading the Scriptures, and explaining them in a dry, dull fashion.

My slumbering brethren, you *could* be awake! You might be awake! For sometimes you are so. There are times when your whole soul seems on fire. If anybody had spoken of you then, they would have said, "What a fine man that is! What love he has for Christ! What concern for the souls of men! He ought to be sent forth as a missionary at once."

Wait till you see him asleep! He can sleep very soundly! In fact, he is as great at sleeping as at waking. He can descend into depths of stupidity and indifference as naturally as he just now rose into heights of fervor and enthusiasm. Yes, there are many such, and I would say to any brothers and sisters who are conscious of a propensity in that direction—is it not high time that you, that I, that any, that all of us should awake out of sleep?

There are those, again, who fall into a kind of somnambulistic state. They are doing a good deal for their Lord and Master, but they are asleep. If judged by their outward actions we should think they were wide awake, and they do what they do very well. But have you ever seen a person who has a habit of walking in his sleep? It is a strange sight. Persons have been known to walk along giddy heights safely enough when they have been fast asleep, where they would not have thought of venturing if they had been wide awake.

And we have known, sometimes, professors going on very safely, carefully, exactly in positions where others have fallen, and we have admired their prudence and discretion, and attributed it to the grace of God, whereas in part it has been attributable to the fact that they were spiritually asleep all the time.

It is very possible to walk long and far and yet remain asleep. It is very possible to appear very devout when, indeed, you are very sleepy. It is very possible to sing hymns when you are not awake to the sense. Yes, and it is very probable that you will betray your absence of mind by sitting down at the last verse, although there is going to be a chorus afterwards. You know it is coming, but your part of the worship is performed so mechanically that you dropped down in your pews as a mere matter of habit, and then were all in a flurry to be up again. I have detected many of you doing it.

I have felt convinced that you were virtually asleep at the time, not really drinking in the spirit of the hymn, or else it would not have happened. It is very easy to hear sermons and to be asleep all the while, at least with one ear open and one eye, but the major part of the faculties of the soul still steeped in slumber. And you can keep on teaching in the Sunday school, pay your religious contributions

punctually, maintain the habit of family prayer, and even your private devotions may not be wholly neglected, and yet you may be walking in your somnambulist.

All these duties may be done with a sort of sleep-walking life and action, and not at all with the life of a thoroughly wakeful man. Oh, I would like to hear a man speak about heaven who was altogether awake to it. I would like to hear a man preach about hell who was aroused to the true pitch. It would make your very hair stand on end as you should hear how he told of the terrors of the wrath to come.

It would make every drop of blood dance in your veins to hear a man speak of Christ who is all on fire with love divine, and all awake with divine delight in Him. But that slumber is apt to come over the most lively minister. Who will not confess it?

Oh, if you have ever read a chapter of the Bible when your soul has been all awake, how the promises have glowed and burned. How bright have they been like "the terrible crystal." But too often we have nodded over the Bible, nodded over the promises, nodded over the precepts, till there seemed neither life nor power in them. The life was there, but we were asleep.

Well, dear friends, I must add, and then I shall have said enough about sleep, that a very large number of us are half asleep. Whether there is one man alive that is spiritually awake all over, I do not know. Such a man as Rutherford, who loved his Lord so that he scarcely ever thought of anything but Jesus—that was a man all awake. Such a man as Mr. Whitefield again, preaching his very heart out morning, noon, and night with a seraphic eloquence—that was a man wide awake. There have been many such, I trust there is a remnant of such now. But the most of us are painfully conscious that we are waking, and need greatly to be more awake still.

O God, make us feel the solemn weight of those eternal things in which we believe. You have saved us, make us awake to feel from what You have saved us, and by whom You have saved us, and to what you have saved us, and what the privileges are which belong to us now that we are saved. Oh, when I think how trivial are the things of time, and how all-important are the unseen realities of eternity, I cannot but again conclude that most of us are nothing more than about half awake as to the things of God, and if it be so it is high time that we awake out of sleep.

II. Now, in the second place, I want to occupy a few minutes by saying that whereas many believers are asleep IT IS HIGH TIME THAT THEY SHOULD AWAKE.

And why high time that they should be awake? Why, first, because what right have we who are believers to be asleep at all? The Lord has saved us—saved us from death—saved us from the sleep which is the first cousin to death—saved us from indifference—saved us from unbelief—saved us from hardheartedness—saved us from carelessness. Well, now, if the Lord has done this for us, what business have we to be in a sleepy state?

When the five wise virgins went out to meet the bridegroom and took their lamps with them, what right had they to be asleep? I can very well understand those sleeping who had no oil in the vessels with their lamps, because when their lamps went out they would be in the dark, and darkness suggests sleep. But those who had their lamps well trimmed, should they go asleep in the light? Those that had the oil, should they go to sleep while the oil was illuminating them? They needed to be awake to put the oil into the lamp.

Besides, they had come out to meet the bridegroom. Could they meet him asleep? When he should come, would it be fit that he should find those who attended his wedding all asleep in a row, insulting his dignity and treating his glory with scorn?

Child of God, you are expecting Christ soon to come, He may come tonight, or He may, if He pleases, delay His coming, but why, oh why, do you think of sleeping? What is there congruous to your character—what is there suitable to your expectations—in your sleep? If then you have caught yourself having a sinful nap, bestir yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to awaken you, for since you have no right to sleep at all it is high time that you should awake out of sleep.

It is high time because a great many opportunities have already slipped away. I address myself to some of you who have been converted, say these ten years. And what have you done for Christ? You are

saved—we are not going to question that, and your glorious salvation is nearer than when you believed. But what have you done during these many years? You have been eating the fat and drinking the sweet, but have you fed the hungry? Have you brought in the wandering? You have enjoyed the means of grace, you tell me. And is this all you were created for—to enjoy, ay, even to enjoy good things? Have you not asked yourself the question, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?"

Dear friend, if you have been saved a week, and you have done nothing for Christ during that week, you have already wasted more than enough time in having lived through seven fruitless days. Let the time past suffice you to have suffered opportunities to pass before your door unwelcomed.

But some professors are growing old, gray hairs are upon them. How long have you been a Christian? Have you loved the Lord these thirty years and done so little? Or what, if though you are an old man, and yet only a baby in grace? That is worse still, is it not? As to all the past, is your account grievously unprofitable?—a wilderness where there might have been a garden, a desert where there might have been a fruitful field? Can you endure the painful retrospect?

Oh, when I look back, one of the joys of my life is to have been converted to God while yet a child, and to have begun to preach the name of Jesus when still a youth. And yet though that be a subject for joy, I find abundant reason for accusing myself of wasting opportunities of service. If it be so with me, though for years I have lived unto the Lord, I am sure it must be so with many of my Master's servants. So let me say to them, by all those wasted opportunities, it must be high time for you to awake out of sleep.

Time is hastening on, my brethren, each flying moment holds another by the heel. Life rushes on as a rapid stream. It bears us along swiftly and silently. If you are going to do something it must be done very soon, young man. You are not a child now. Your sun has not quite reached its zenith, but it is rising high. It may go down ere it is noon. If something is to be accomplished before you die, get at it, man, get at it, or your life will be a failure.

And you of middle life. Well, you are in the very strength and prime of your days. If God is to be glorified by you, and souls brought to Christ by you, I urge you, in the name of all that is reasonable, get at it and lay to, for if you do not work now, when will you? When the days of weakness come and those that look out of the windows are darkened, you will say, "I am too old." Oh, now, let the prime of your days be the Lord's!

Or has the evening of life descended upon you? Are the shadows lengthening and does strength fail? Brother, sister, you are saved. You would not like to go to heaven, would you, without glorifying Christ somewhat here below? Then do it now. All hand, all heart, all mind, all thought must be given to the present pressing duty. You have such a little while before you—so scanty an evening is left you—surely it should be all spent with the utmost diligence in the Master's service. "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep."

Do you not see that it is high time to awake out of sleep because there were so many people that had a claim upon us who are beyond our power now, even if we do wake? Have you ever felt the sadness of neglecting to visit a person who was ill until you heard that he was dead? You said to yourself, "Why did I not go and speak at least one word of warning before that soul was gone into eternity?" Death is sweeping away multitudes of our neighbors and friends, and it is high time that we were diligent in seeking those that remain if we are to do them any good, for when that knell is tolling and that grave is closing, our regrets will be useless to the departed, but at the same time, very bitter to ourselves.

Many are passing away from us and from the sphere of our influence in the common course of providence. Your children, for instance. They were little. Some of you have little children still. Well, they will not be little long. Already, mother, that boy is beginning to show a good deal of independence of spirit. He will not even now listen to you as he once did, and you feel a little grieved at it. It will be more so soon.

If you do not bend the twig when it is a twig, you will not do much with it when it gets to be a tree. We let our children slip from under our fingers while they are plastic. We forget to mold them, and then

they get into manhood and become less amenable to our counsels and our cautions, and we grieve that we did not do something more to train them up in the way they should go. Now is your time, Mother, God helping you. Now is your time, Father. Parents, avail yourselves of your opportunities, and remember that good is done by constant watching and by small degrees.

And your servants, too. Cannot you recollect some servants that lived with you, and you always meant to talk to them about their souls and to pray with them? But they left you and they were gone before you had commenced to bless them.

They are very worldly now. Perhaps if you were to trace them out you would find they were Christless, and you would hear them say that they once lived with a religious mistress, with a pious master, and they hoped they would never do so again. For it was the most miserable time they ever had, "and whatever religion master might have had, he kept it all pretty well to himself, for we never heard much of it." "Oh," you say, "I hope they do not say so." I hope so too, but I have known such things said. And it is very possible that men and women may be so asleep about the souls of those round about them that opportunities which were in their way may be sliding away never to return.

I believe that if we were awake we might often avail ourselves of opportunities to speak to men who otherwise hold themselves aloof from any religious conversation. There is a time with almost every man when conscience is awake. Perhaps he is saddened by affliction, is cowed by adversity, then he will respect as friendly what he might otherwise resent as insulting. The most hardened do at some season or other become amenable to reproof, or exhortation, or direction. If you are ready, take a shot at him, and you will have him. But if not at that moment, you may never have another occasion of getting the truth where the man will feel it.

We ought to be ready in a minute. Those who would shoot the running deer have to be very, very clever in taking sight and seizing the moment while it is running by. And those that would take running souls—and the most of our fellow countrymen are just such—must be sharp-sighted and quick-witted. They only run by us and we must have them in a minute or else they will have gone beyond our reach. We cannot do this unless we are awakened out of our sleep. God grant we may be so awakened.

Meanwhile, dear friends, there is this reason why we should be awake, we have plenty of enemies that are awake if we are not. You may sleep, but you cannot induce the devil to close his eyes. Protestantism may slumber, but I will warrant you Jesuitism never does. You may see evangelicals asleep, but you will not find ritualists slumbering. The prince of the power of the air keeps his servants well up to their work.

Is it not a strange thing that the servants of the devil serve him so enthusiastically, while the servants of the Lord often serve Him at a poor, cold, dead-alive rate. Oh, may the Lord quicken us! If we could with a glance see the activities of the servants of Satan we should be astonished at our own sluggishness. It is while men sleep that the enemy comes and sows tares among the wheat and it is because men sleep that the tares are sown in the Lord's field. If we were more awake, the adversary would not have the opportunity of scattering his evil grain.

It is high time that we awake out of sleep, for it is daylight. The sun has risen. Will you sleep now? We are getting far into the Gospel dispensation. Can you sleep still? It is time that we were awake, for our Lord was awake. What wakefulness He exhibited! How did His eyes stream with tears over perishing Jerusalem! He was all heart. The zeal of God's house consumed Him. Ought it not to consume us?

We ought to be awake, for our own day may be over within an hour or two. The preacher may be delivering his last sermon. You may go home tonight to offer the last prayer at the family altar which you will ever utter on earth. You shall open shop tomorrow morning for the last time. Should not these possibilities bestir you? How near, how very near, is the ultimatum of every man here present.

Have you fixed upon a grand purpose, brother? Fulfill it. You have scarcely time to get through it, therefore waste not an hour. Have you been planning? Leave off planning and get to executing your work. You have been speaking about being generous. Be generous. You have been talking about being

spiritually minded. Leave off talk and get at it, man. You have intended to be consecrated to God. Come, do not squabble about consecration and about perfectionism, but be you consecrated and be you perfect. Go in for the highest possible form of devotion and service.

We have lived long enough at this poor half-and-half rate. If there be any higher platform, the Lord lift us up to it. If there be a way of living, spirit, soul, and body, wholly, unreservedly devoted every moment to the Lord, oh for His Spirit to conduct us into such a state. This is our ambition. After this we aspire. We dare not say, as some do, that we have gained it, for if we did we believe that we should give evidence that we knew not what it was, or else we should not talk so loftily. But brethren, while the Master's personal coming may be so near, and while His coming to us by death may be nearer still, it is high time that we awoke out of our sleep.

III. I close with a third remark. IT IS WORTH WHILE WAKING, FOR THERE IS SOMETHING WORTH WAKING FOR.

He says that it is high time that we wake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. As I already remarked, he does not say, "for if you do not wake you will be lost." Neither does he say, "You Christian people, if you remain in this dull state, will perish without hope." No, that is the threatening of the law, and suits the tongue of Moses, but Jesus does not talk so. No, no, He sets His servant speaking to us in a Gospel tone, "Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed."

Undoubtedly, dear brother, it is nearer in order of time. How long is it since you believed? Ten years? You are ten years nearer heaven then. Your salvation, that is, your ultimate, complete salvation, the display and manifestation of your complete deliverance from evil, from sin, from death, from hell, is nearer by so many years than when you believed. Some of us are twenty-five years nearer heaven than we were. Ought we not to be more awake? The farther we are off from heaven, the less we may feel its influence. But we are getting so much nearer that we ought to be increasingly sensitive to its mysterious spell. Oh, to feel more of its power!

We shall soon be in heaven, brothers. We shall soon be there, sisters. Do not let us go to sleep now with the golden gate right before us, and Jesus waiting to admit us. Nearer glory! Is it not good argument for being more alive unto God?

Some of you are sixty years nearer to heaven than you were. You have been in Christ now more than half a century. Well, well, brother, are you not glad of it? Would you like to live those sixty years over again? Would you like to go back and tread that weary road a second time, clambering again Hill Difficulty, and sliding, down again into the Valley of Humiliation. Would you wish to march a second time through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and into Giant Despair's castle? "No," say you, and you need not fear the return journey, for you shall not go back again.

Rejoice that you are so much nearer heaven in the matter of time. Therefore, keep wide awake and looking out for it. When little children have been taken from their inland homes to the sea they have been very eager to see the ocean, and yet they have been ready to go to sleep as they approached the end of the journey. They have never seen the sea before, but mother says, "Wake up, children, you are coming near the sea."

Soul, soul, soul, we have never seen heaven, but we are getting nearer. Let us keep awake. Jerusalem, my happy home, shall I enter your sacred precincts sleeping? Shall I come to the last hill, from which I am to take a view of your glittering vanes and golden streets, and shall I be half asleep within view of them? Come, no, no, no, my heart, wake up! Heart, wake up! You are getting nearer home. "A day's march nearer home" you have come even this day, be ashamed to slumber.

And if we are getting nearer in point of time, I hope we are getting nearer in point of *preparation*. Christ is preparing heaven for us, and His Sprit is preparing us for heaven. Well, then, if we are getting more ready for heaven, we ought to be more awake, for sleepiness is not the state of heavenly spirits. Heaven is the home of activity, not the dormitory of unconsciousness. When our bodies shall have been raised from the dead, they shall enjoy life and energy, and be forever free from fatigue and sluggishness. Let us, as we are getting ready for celestial company, be fuller of life and fuller of energy.

More ready for heaven, then reap, reap, reap with stronger arms. Do another man's work, if you can, as well as your own. You have nearly accomplished your life's labor, therefore throw all your strength into that little which remains. So near heaven, then pluck another brand out of the burning. If you are more fit for heaven you have more love, more grace, more pity. Then reach out both hands to bring another poor soul to Christ. If the golden gate shall soon be open to you, and you shall be shut in forever in the blest place of rest, be sure to show others the way to that gate, that you enter not alone. Your salvation is nearer than when you believed, therefore do something more to prove that you are ready for it.

And lastly, as your salvation is nearer than when you believed, let us hope your realization of it is more clear. Have you tried to realize the glory to be revealed? Within a short time you will be with Jesus—

"Far from this world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in."

Your head will wear a crown, your hand shall grasp the palm of victory. You, even you, shall walk the golden streets, and see that face which is brighter than the sun. It may be that tonight you will be made free of the New Jerusalem, tonight you may leave that narrow room and that hard bed, the abode of poverty and care, and you may be away up where they keep eternal Sabbath, and the congregations never break up. You will be there, brother, even you. There is a crown in glory which no head can wear but yours. You will be there.

Well, now, it seems to me that if I can realize that in so short a time my eternal salvation shall be consummated, and I, even I, shall be among the blood-washed throng, to see my Savior's face, I cannot any longer neglect a single opportunity of serving my Master—cannot any longer let poor souls go down to hell without endeavoring to save them—cannot any longer neglect prayer—neglect opportunities of usefulness, or live otherwise than as a man should live who has his foot upon the doorstep of heaven and his finger on the latch.

What manner of persons ought ye to be to whom heaven is guaranteed by promise, and to whom it has been sealed by blood to be your special heritage—the portion of a people whom every moment brings nearer to eternal felicity? What manner of persons ought ye to be? May the Spirit of God make you to be just that now, and He shall have praise forever. Amen.

I have said nothing to the unconverted because I have been admonishing *you* to say something to them. If you will catch the spirit of my text, you will each one feel for them and begin to speak. But if I were to wrench the text from its connection, and apply it to the unconverted, what a sledge hammer it would be!

Shall I read the text as I should have to read it if it spoke to the unregenerate? It runs to the Christian, "Now is your salvation nearer than when ye believed." Oh, ye unconverted men, must I read the text as it would have to run if it were written to you? "It is high time that you should awake out of sleep, for now is your damnation nearer than when you first heard the Gospel and rejected it." Take heed, take heed. God grant you grace to take heed and to believe in Christ. Amen and Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ROMANS 13

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—
116 (VERSION 2), 63 (VERSION 3)

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.