

A SOLEMN INQUIRY CONCERNING OUR FAMILIES

NO. 601

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 20, 1864,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And the men said unto Lot, have you here any besides? son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whatsoever you have in the city, bring them out of this place.”
Genesis 19:12.*

THE angelic messengers of mercy were not only earnest to bring Lot out of the city, but in their great kindness they reminded him of an important matter which, in the alarm of the tumult without, and in the surprise of their fearful tidings, he might possibly have forgotten. They suggested, to his distracted heart, a loving care for his relatives and friends. His wife and his two daughters were already with him in the house, but he had two sons-in-law to whom his daughters were espoused, if not married, and the angels suggest to him to make an effort to rescue these also from the destruction which awaited the filthy city. In the perturbation of mind, which is so usual in the renewed heart at first, it is no marvel if a man should be so taken up with thoughts of his own safety as to forget the welfare of others. Hence I see a wisdom in the saying of the apostle Paul to the trembling jailer, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, *and your house.*” The jailer’s question was personal and confined to himself, “Sirs, what must *I* do to be saved?” In this, we judge him not, for his own conversion must be the object of the deepest and most earnest thoughts of a convinced sinner.

But Paul’s answer was large and liberal, “You shall be saved, *and your house.*” There may be some here who have but lately passed from darkness to light. In the fear lest you should be mistaken, or in the joy of your new-found comfort, it may be you have scarcely begun to think of your wife, your children, or your relatives, is it not time to begin at once? Let this text come, this morning, fresh out of Holy Scripture, as though it dropped anew from the angel’s tongue, “Have you here any besides?” You are yourself privileged by sovereign mercy and singled out for safety, have you here in the land of sin any beside? Have you not some unconverted kinsfolk, some unsaved relative, some who are written in your family register, but who are not written in the Lamb’s Book of Life?

Come, friend, think you and give heed to the question, “Have you here any besides?” My heart is in a blaze with love to souls this morning, and if there be no others who care for the salvation of their fellow men, I can truly say I agonize for conversions. Forgive me if, in my excitement, my thoughts should seem tame and feeble, for I have passed out of the realm of thoughts, and am under the absolute dominion of my feelings. Come, Holy Spirit, come, and aid my tongue, which is all too feeble to express the language of my inmost heart.

I. We would observe, first, that such a question as this APPEALS TO OUR NATURAL AFFECTIONS.

Surely, unless we have lost manhood, we love our kindred and desire their good. We have not yet become like the ostriches in the wilderness, which care not for their young. Our flesh has not congealed into marble, nor are our hearts become like millstones, we have a very tender concern for those united to us by ties of nature, and esteem them as parts of ourselves.

What parent is not glad to see his children in good health? We will watch with them all through the weary night when they are ill, and can we not pray for them when they are sick with sin? It is a singular mercy when our children are born to us without deformity and in full possession of every sense, and it is a great blessing when a man can look round upon a numerous household and see them all full of cheerfulness and hope.

Do we care for their bodily welfare, and shall we neglect to pray that their souls may prosper? Can we see the deformity of sin without tears? Can we remark the blindness of our children towards divine things, can we observe how deaf they are to the admonitions of mercy, can we discover clearly the depravity of their nature without deep grief and regret? We hasten to the best physicians when we see anything amiss, and we spare no cost for their recovery. Shall we ever be at peace, or know what rest means concerning them, until we see their eyes open and the light of Jesus streaming into their souls, until we know that their tongues are loosed to tell of God's mercy towards them, until there is formed in them a new heart and a right spirit?

We are anxious to see in our children a due share of intelligence, we are very quick to notice any signs of it, and perhaps we are over ready to remark upon their shrewdness and good sense, it is an overwhelming sorrow to a parent to discover weakness or imbecility of mind in his offspring, but what shall we say if we cannot perceive any knowledge of Christ in our children? Shall the folly of their hearts cause us no anxiety? Does it give us no concern if they put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness? Do we seek to have them educated in the various arts and sciences, and not desire that they should comprehend with all saints the love of Christ which passes all knowledge?

One thing is needful, all the rest may have a temporary necessity, but the one thing, acceptance in Christ and faith in Jesus, is absolutely needful. Can we be content when we see them neatly dressed, strongly framed, and progressing in their learning, while their souls are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, and they are ignorant of the power of divine love? Can we rest content while their souls are not trained for God, not tutored for heaven, not educated for eternity? Why, common sense teaches our natural affection that the first thought should be the training of the soul, and the highest desire of our spirits should be that they may live before God, whatever may become of them in their education as to the things of time and sense.

It is only natural that we should care for the prosperity of our friends and children. We are grieved if we hear that they meet with any accident. If losses and calamities befall them, I trust we know how to weep with them that weep. We would sooner bear pain ourselves than that they should suffer. We have often felt our own cross to be very light, if we have thereby lifted a cross from the shoulders of those dear to us. But can we think of their sinning against God, and abiding under the anger of the Most High without any emotion? Above all, can we contemplate for an instant their death, their appearance before God unpardoned, their condemnation and their eternal doom, without a horror taking hold upon us? My friend, my sister, my wife, my child in hell! How can I bear the dreadful thought?

Mother, if your child were running in the streets, and there were a fear that yonder wheels would go over it and crush it, your heart would be in your mouth. Can you see your child in danger of eternal destruction, without your bosom heaving high with fond maternal anxiety? If I saw my friend upon the edge of a precipice, I would rush to his rescue, and can I be silent when I see so many whom I love walking upon the verge of eternal ruin, utterly unconcerned about their souls? Natural affection, which makes us care for our children and friends that they may prosper, will, if it is rightly trained, make us far more earnest for their salvation from the wrath to come.

If there be any who are professedly Christians, who nevertheless have no sort of interest in the welfare of their children, I only utter what I believe to be the solemn truth, when I say that their profession is a mistake, if not a hypocrisy, they had better give it up. If you care not for the souls of others, you do not know the value of your own. God's people are a tender-hearted people. Like their Savior, they cannot look upon Jerusalem without weeping over it, they cannot view with complacency the destruction of *any*, much less can they be careless concerning the condition of those who spring from their own loins, who are united to them by ties of blood. Like Doddridge, we dare say in the sight of God, that we love the souls of men—

“My God, I feel the mournful scene;

*My bowels yearn o'er dying men;
And fain my pity would reclaim,
And snatch the firebrands from the flame."*

I set you down as nearer akin to a devil than to a saint, if you can go your way and look into the face of your friend or child, and know him to be on the downward road, and yet never pray for him nor use any means for his conversion. May God grant that no doctrinal belief may ever dry up the milk of human kindness in our souls! Certainly the doctrines of divine grace, such as election and effectual redemption, will not do so. Error may petrify, but the truth melts. May we feel that no dogma can be Scriptural which is not consistent with a sincere love to men. Truth must be consistent with its Author's character, and He who has revealed saving truth is the God of love, nay, He is love itself, and that cannot be true which naturally and legitimately would lead men to be unloving! May we be such parents, such brothers, such sisters, such children, that it shall be the first anxiety of our spirits that our children, our parents, our husband, our wife, our friends, our brothers and sisters, should be brought to partake with us of the things of God!

I do think that the query which is suggested this morning, "Have you in Sodom any besides?" is one which forcibly appeals to the natural affections, while it does no violence to the judgment. I shall hope, therefore, that in such a congregation as the present, where there are so many loving hearts, my question will drop like a spark upon dry tinder to set the soul on fire, or melt into the soul as a snowflake into the sea, to increase the flood of holy earnestness. My own heart is stirred in its inmost depths by the inquiry, and I cannot but hope that yours will be also.

You who are friends, now I pray you, show yourselves friendly. Parents, be parents indeed. Brothers, act a true fraternal part. Sisters, let your tender love find a fitting channel. Husbands and wives, let your conjugal union awaken you to tenderest emotions. Let every fond relationship stir us to care for others while the inquiry is made, "Have you here any besides?"

II. In the second place, the question is one which AROUSES HOLY SOLICITUDE.

Shall I stop a moment while you read over the roll of your friends and kinsfolk? "Have you here any besides?" Are they all saved? Are you quite sure that all of them are rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and are washed in His blood? Mother, it was such a comfort to you when your firstborn was added to the church, and what a joy when your fair daughters subscribed with their hand to the name of Jesus! Are there not others who are strangers to the commonwealth of Israel? Brother, it has been a great delight to you to see your brother saved, your heart has swollen high with holy joy to know that a sister has passed from death unto life, but there are others of the family, are they all converted? are there not some still in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity, concerning whom even in the judgment of charity you are compelled to say, "Lord, have mercy upon them, for they have no mercy upon themselves"? Have you no tears for the unsaved ones? no prayers for those who abide under the wrath of God?

In your house you have seen your servants saved, and next to the salvation of one's children, there is no greater mercy than to see one's servants walking in the faith, but are all of your servants saved? Is there not one in the house with you who still has not given her heart to Christ? You are happy, my brother, thrice happy, if while I suggest this question, you can read down the whole list with sparkling eyes and say, "Yes, I can say, like Noah, they are all with me in the ark, my wife, and my sons, and my sons' wives with them, they are all secure, and though the deluge sweep over the whole world, in that covenant ark of salvation, with my whole household, I hope to float in safety." But it is not so, I am afraid, with the most of us, we have an Esau as well as a Jacob, an Ishmael as well as an Isaac.

To provoke you to earnest solicitude this morning, let me remind you of times when we should be anxious about our friends and children. *When first we ourselves look to Christ, we should care for others.* Oh! what a joy it is to feel the burden rolling from our shoulder, to be able to say with holy delight, "Great God, I'm saved, the chief of sinners is at last at peace with You, Your enemy is reconciled, my sin is covered, my iniquity is cast into the depths of the sea." What should be the next

thought? If this be so sweet *to me*, there are my sin-burdened relatives, O God, bring them to know this blessedness. If I leap at the sound of Jesus' name, and find it blessed to know that sin is forgiven, O my God, let others whom I love be set at large, and be enabled to triumph in justification through the blood of Jesus Christ. We would not eat our morsel alone, lest it grow stale through our selfishness. The woods drop with honey, we cannot eat it all, let us call others to taste its sweetness. I think, dear friends, there can be no better season than the first blush of your newborn piety in which to cry unto the Most High, with strong crying and tears, that He would be pleased to pluck others, as He has done yourselves, like firebrands from the flame. "In the morning, sow your seed."

Then, there are *times of Christian enjoyment*. When we have been sitting round the table of our dying Lord, we have been made to feast at the banquet of wine with King Jesus, the banner over us has been love, and His fruit has been sweet unto our taste, but while we were downstairs at the table, did we not think of those upstairs among the spectators? Will not our hearts wing their flight with anxious desires towards loved ones who cannot unite with us? Do we not hope that ere long they will sit side by side with us? Let us remember those at home this morning, at home, did I say? Alas! some are worse than at home, for they are now where we were once, spending the Sabbath in sin, finding their pleasures anywhere but in the things of God. A warm fire, and a happy family gathering may well make us think of those shivering in the cold without, I charge you, believer, forget not your poor unconverted children. Let your highest and most rapt moments of communion with Christ, be just the times when your soul shall speak to God as Abraham talked to his Father and his Friend, and pleaded for the sinners of Sodom.

I think *when we are downcast*, when our soul is filled with bitter trouble, then also is an appropriate season to pray for others. God turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends, and he may turn our captivity when we do the same. Why, if I who have an interest in Christ, yet feel so desponding, what must be the wretchedness of those who have no Christ to go to? If we who live on the bread of heaven, yet complain that our spirit oftentimes sinks within us, what must be the failings of heart, the horror of great darkness which those must experience who feed upon the wind, and would fain fill their bellies with the husks which the swine eat? Let your own grief help you to arrive at some knowledge of the griefs of unconverted souls, and go to the throne of grace on their account.

It may also help to stimulate this holy solicitude, to think of *how we shall feel in regard to our children and friends when they come to lie sick*. They will be sick as well as others, and when they are in jeopardy of their lives, and the physician tells us that their existence trembles in the scale, how shall we feel then? Can we gaze upon their pallid countenances without bitter reproaches for our past supineness? I am afraid I cannot say I have had a sick friend concerning whom I could feel that I had done all I ought to have done, I do not know whether you have, happy are you if you feel quite guiltless. When we have seen our friends on their beds of languishing, have we not thought, "Ah! would to God we had to do over again our occasions and opportunities of talking to them on divine things, for now they are so racked with pain, so distracted with many thoughts, that there is scarcely room to sow the good seed, because of the many thorns." O that the harvest may not be past, and the summer ended, before we begin our sowing. Fools lose the spring, and then lament in the time of harvest. May heaven save us from the fool's lament.

And what will you think if your children should die unconverted—your wife, your husband, your friend? To lose our loved ones is one of the sore, though common troubles of life, but oh! it can be little of a trouble to send on those who are ripe for glory. Go you where glory waits you, we would not detain you here! To think that while we are weeping here they are singing around the eternal throne, wipes the tears from our eyes. But what must it be to bury them without "a sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection"? to put the body under the sod with this dread thought upon us, that "we sorrow as those that have no hope"? It is the death of death to fear that our friends have not escaped the second death. Must you not confess, this morning, that if some of your kinsfolk were to die as they are, you could not,

unless you were to stultify your own conscience, entertain anything like a sure hope of their entering into eternal life?

Now, as you would wish you had prayed for them, as you would wish you had labored with them, when they are dead, so do you now, while there is an opportunity, avail yourself of it, for fear you should have to mourn with briny tears that the soul has gone, but that you have never rendered it any help. Ere the sun goes down forever, use its light. It is vain to warn when the ship is wrecked. Hell will never give up its prey, nor will your tears mitigate the fury of its fires. It is now or never. Lord, make it *now*.

Think again, *how you would care for your friends if you were yourself this morning very nigh unto death*. O my hearers, I sometimes think of the time when I shall lie a-dying, when all alone my spirit must cross the black brook Kidron, and leave the city of our solemnities for the other side of Jordan. Then such thoughts as these will surely steal over me, “O that I might preach to this people again! O that I had the opportunity of addressing those thousands once more, that I might preach in real earnest, and not talk away the time! that I might deal with their souls, as if they really were immortal, and there were a judgment to come—might set before them life and death, hell and heaven, and plead with them, knowing the terrors of the Lord.”

I can scarcely tell you what must be the sorrow of a dying man at the end of an unfaithful ministry. Then shall every wasted opportunity stuff his pillow with thorns, there shall be no sleep for that aching head, no rest for those weary eyes, he has damned the souls of men by his carelessness and sloth, and now he must give his account. He is haunted by grim forebodings of wrath to come, and knows not where to turn for comfort. He has insulted heaven, and played into the hands of hell. What will be your thought, my hearers, if in your narrower sphere you shall have been unfaithful? There on the sick bed, though the comforts of complete forgiveness may take away from you the sting of death, which is sin, yet even the blood of Christ will not be able to remove those solemn heart-moving regrets which shall be suggested by a lively recollection that you had opportunities of doing good, and wasted them, and that now you are dying, but leaving unconverted children behind you—dying, and the wife is still unsaved—dying, and your father still lives to whom you might have spoken of the way of God, but who now has no loving child to care about his soul!

As you must die, believers, seek to live like dying men, and labor for your sons and daughters, and kinsfolk, as those who must soon leave them, and have no other opportunities of doing them good. You cannot come back from heaven, if you have neglected a duty, you cannot leave heaven to perform it. If there is one thing that can make an angel in heaven envy a man on earth, it is his power to intercede for sinners, to preach, to woo, and to win souls. If there is one thing which a glorified saint before the throne of God might wish to come to earth for, it is surely this, that he might speak to impenitent brothers, that he might weep over unconverted friends, and perhaps bring them to repentance. “Work while it is called today, for the night comes wherein no man can work.”

III. And now, we turn, prosecuting the same earnest objective, to the third point of our discourse. Such a question as this is calculated to EXCITE US TO ANXIOUS EFFORT, for mere solicitude without effort is not genuine.

A man must not pretend that he cares for the souls of others so long as he leaves one stone unturned which might be the means of blessing them. It seems to me, then, that if we are in a right state of heart this morning, one of the first things we shall do will be to *tell those dear to us of their danger*. I think I see Lot going out that night. No very tempting place the streets of Sodom, especially after that wretched scene which had been enacted at his own door, a miracle had rescued him, but yet with his life in his hand, the good old man goes to the door of his sons-in-law.

Affection is not always as strong towards sons-in-law as towards those who are of our own blood, still he goes with all solemnity of feeling, knowing that he himself should be rescued, but trembling lest these sons-in-law should refuse the invitation to escape with him. The good old man finds his way through the winding streets of Sodom, and begins to knock at the door with a resolute hand. They look

down from the top of the house. “That is the voice of old Lot,” says one, “what is he at, disturbing thus our comfortable slumbers?” They have but little love for him, they have put on some pretense of affection that they might win his daughters, but Sodomites cannot have much love for righteous men, and consequently they have no care for Lot. “What does the old fellow want here at this time of night?” say they, “why cannot he keep seasonable hours? Besides, what a disturbance there was at his own door just now! Does he not know better than to knock at our door, when he so resolutely shut his own to protect two tramping strangers? What is he about?”

He cries to them, “My sons, this city is to be burned with fire in the morning, come, get you up, and fly with me, for the two men who came to me were angels sent from God to rescue me, and they have bidden me seek you, come with me.” “Ah!” they say, “what next, Old Lob—that is your name, Lob, instead of Lot—go your way, and talk about your silly dreams to men of softer brains, but not to us.” “Nay,” says he, “it is even so, by the love you bear my daughters, bear with me, if it be not so it will not matter, you can return, but if it be so, think what it will be to be destroyed with fire and brimstone out of heaven! I pray you come.” But they scoff at him, they tell him he is only mocking them, that he has some motive for wishing to get them into the street, and they bid him go, and with an aching heart the poor old man goes back, feeling something more than Isaiah’s grief—“Who has believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” Yet as he fled out of Sodom, if the sight of his daughters reminded him of their husbands, he would think, “I am clear of their blood. I did plead with them, I did exhort them to escape, and if they would not, why, they would not, and the sin lies at their own door.”

It will be some comfort to the Christian, if the worst should come to worst, that he has warned the ungodly. Let us tell them of their danger, and never cease to warn until they cease to sin. Having so done, it is the duty of every Christian to tell his friend the remedy. Plain speaking about Christ is the ordinary means of bringing sinners to repentance. Those ministers are most useful in soul-seeking who put the doctrine of simple faith in the atonement in the clearest light. Let not your friend perish through ignorance. Tell him that whosoever comes unto Christ He will in no wise cast out, that there is life in a look at the crucified Savior, that whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. Preach no salvation by works, but preach faith, and works only as the *fruit of faith*, and let the doctrine that Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, be clearly set before your friend’s face.

Remember it is not enough to coldly warn them of danger and doctrinally to teach the remedy. There are many who will go so far, but I hold, my brethren and sisters, that we are bound to *use a constraint* with our friends. Do not misunderstand me—only a loving and a tender constraint, such as these angels used with Lot. Press them, plead with them, take them by the hand. Some are afraid to do this, they fear that they would be doing the Spirit’s work.

My dear brother, that is the reason why I do it, for I know the Spirit of God works by means, and I am in hopes that He will use me to do His own work. “Well, but we cannot bring them to Christ,” says one. That is true and that is false. That is true—you cannot, unless God be with you, but instrumentality is the ordinary method by which God accomplishes His purpose, and therefore you may be enabled to bring sinners to Jesus. I do not, when I plead with sinners, plead as though *I* pleaded, or as though there were anything in my pleading which could do them good, but I plead, as Paul says, “As though God did beseech you by us.” This is the position the Christian parent should take up, the position of God pleading with men, “As though God did beseech you by us.” Not man seeking to win a soul, but the Son of Man coming to seek and to save that which was lost. Do not be afraid, dear friends, that you will ever violate the doctrine of election or predestination, by the most solemn determination you can make in the sight of God that you will wrestle, and weep, and agonize to bring your children to Himself. Rightly understood, this doctrine is an incentive to duty, and never an opiate for sloth. “Compel them to come in,” is the Savior’s own command!

I remember an old man who was a nursing father to all the young men in the parish where he lived. This one thing he used to do, there was scarcely a lad whom he would not know and speak to, and there was a time with most of the lads when he specially sought to see them decided. Suppose one of them

was going away to London, he would be sure to ask him to have a cup of tea with him. “You are going away, John,” he would say, “I should not like you to go without spending an evening with me.” If it was a fine sunshiny evening, he would say, “You know I have often talked to you about the things of God, and I am afraid that as yet there has been no impression produced. You are going to London, and will meet with many temptations, and I fear you may fall into them, but I would like to pray with you once before you go. Let us walk down the field together.”

There was a tree, an old oak tree in a solitary place, where he would say, “To help you to recollect my words better, we will pray under this tree.” The young and the old knelt together, and the old man poured out his soul before God, and when he had wrestled with God, and talked with his young friend, he would say, “Now, when I am dead and gone, and you will perhaps come back to the place where you lived when a youth, let that tree be a witness between God and your soul, that here I wrestled with you, and if you forget God, and do not give your heart to Christ, let that tree stand to accuse your conscience till it yields to the entreaties of divine love.”

Now here was a using of what I have styled constraint, but it is not a constraint, you see, such as the Papist would use, and as for *physical force*, of course that is *never to be used*, but the constraint of spiritual force, divine love, and earnestness. May I ask whether we have all done our duty in this matter? Here stands one who has not, and if every Christian here who has something to repent of in this matter were to stand up, I query, brethren, whether many of us dare keep our seats. Ah! if they perish, we cannot say that we wept after them. Whitefield could say to his congregations often, “Ah! if you are lost, it is not for want of weeping after, not for want of my groans and tears.” But I am afraid if our children were lost, or our brothers and sisters were lost, we could not say so much as that. May God forgive the past, and may He help us in the future, and from this time forth may we resolve as in the presence of the flowing wounds of Christ, and as He enables us we will—

*“Tell to sinners round,
What a dear Savior we have found,
Point them to the redeeming blood,
And say, ‘Behold the way to God.’”*

IV. And now I shall not weary you, I trust, if I continue a little longer, for it seems to me that our text FOSTERS A VERY CHEERING HOPE. It says, “Have you here any besides?” as much as if it would say, “Hope for them *all*. Why should they not *all* be brought out of Sodom? Why should one be left behind?”

That was a grand saying of Moses, when Pharaoh said, “Go you, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be left stayed: let your little ones also go with you. And Moses said, You must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind,” the smallest lamb, or the meanest goat, they shall all come out. So it is glorious when in strength of faith the father of the family can feel that he will give the Master no rest till they are all saved. Not leaving William out, nor omitting Mary, not saying, “Well, thank God, I am blessed above the average, the most of my children are converted, and if one shall perish, I must bear with it as a cross,” no, but saying in your soul with humble boldness—

*“‘Lord, I will not let Thee go,
Till a blessing Thou bestow’*

upon every child of my loins, upon every brother, and every sister, and every relative.” I say, the text fosters a hope, that you may yet see them all brought. I stayed some few months ago with a brother in Christ, in a certain town in the midland counties. I might mention his name if I would, he is the banker of the town. I was delighted when staying there, to hear a story from his own lips, which is also printed and worthy of your careful perusal. His wife, a godly woman, had been exercised with many thoughts

for her husband and children. She did not live to see her prayers answered. She fell asleep, but with a good hope that yet her husband and her children would join her in the skies. She said that her husband would experience a great trial, but that it would be greatly blessed to him, and so it turned out.

Our esteemed friend, that excellent man of God, Mr. Denham Smith, went to preach in the town, and the gentleman went to hear him. He did not go with any desire for conversion, he knew not its value, he merely went to hear Mr. Smith as a person well known as an evangelist. The Word, through divine grace, pierced his heart, and about the same time it also reached the heart of one of his daughters. He was under deep distress of mind, but through the simple teaching of our friend, Mr. Smith, he was led to rest upon Jesus, and cast his anchor in the blessed anchorage of the atonement.

His daughter, about the same time, through the united prayers of her newly-converted father and Mr. Smith, was brought into perfect peace. He thought, "This is a happy season, two of my sons are out on business, but I will send for them to come home." They were brought home, they were asked to go and hear Mr. Smith. One of them found the Savior, the other remained indifferent. The three converted ones began to pray for the others, and to make the story—a blessed story—very short, there were six in the household, sons and daughters, they were all saved, father included. They had but three domestic servants, Mr. Smith visited them a second time, it had been a subject of prayer that the three servants might be saved, and they were so, and are now a whole family walking in the truth.

Such an instance as this in a somewhat large family should excite the desire of all Christian parents, that they may have the same blessing. Of course we cannot expect it where there are very little children, but we can expect, we ought to expect family conversions, and in answer to prayer we may have it where the children are come to an age in which they are capable of understanding the things of God, and knowing the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. I know that many of you feel your eyes watering at the thought of being able to say, "Here am I and the children You have given me, for I have no greater joy than this—to see my children walking in the truth."

Do not think that the conversion of children is a thing unusual or suspicious, look for it and believe in it. You cannot change their hearts, or give them life divine, it *is* beyond *your* power, but it is *not* beyond the power of *your God*, and God will refuse His children nothing, if they do but know how to plead His promise, and ask in faith, nothing doubting. Only let us feel more about this, and I am persuaded we shall see better times with regard to our young people. I am resolved, in connection with this church, as soon as I can get over my many present engagements in the country, in Scotland, and so on, that we will devote ourselves to looking more directly and personally after our young people. We must have special meetings with them, the pastor must commune with them, the elders and deacons must meet them.

We must be seeking to bring in more souls. God has dealt very graciously with this church, and for eleven years there has been one long revival, but I want to see greater things than these. I believe that the prayers of the last three weeks are being heard. Last Friday I met with many of my brethren, the ministers of London, in this place, to pray. We did pray. Our hearts were knit together in holy love, and we prayed for our churches and congregations, and pleaded with God that He would make us better ministers, and help us to be free from the blood of our hearers, and I expect in answer to the prayers of my brethren that we shall get a blessing.

Moreover, we have all been pleading, may I not say *all*? We have been crying, "Will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You?" But we must use the means. I must ask my dear friends who love the Lord who are scattered about the Tabernacle, to begin from this time forward to look after those who sit near them, to look after those who sit in the pews with them, put questions to them, and endeavor gently to lead them to the Savior. Instead of one address from this pulpit, make it a thousand addresses from Christians round about. Let me give you the nail and the hammer by preaching the sermon, but do you, as agents in the hands of the Holy Spirit, labor to drive home the Word, and if I can get all of you who love the Lord into a thoroughly warm and earnest state, I am persuaded the great things we have seen are only the prognostics of greater things to come.

We are on the threshold of an era of mercy, we have journeyed to the edge of a long stretch of glorious sunlight, emerging out of the shadows into the serene clear shining of JEHOVAH'S face. So may it be. We shall yet see these galleries, and these aisles, and this vast area full of believers yet, we shall see the Word of God running, having free course, and being glorified, but we must, dear friends, be stirred up to holy action for it.

V. Alas! I must conclude, conclude, too, with a very dark and gloomy thought. The text SUGGESTS A VERY SOLEMN FEAR, namely, that there may be some in our households who will not be saved.

Ah! young men and women, ah! you who are fathers of Christian children, but not converted yourselves, you who are godless daughters and unregenerate sons of Christian people, *you are lost now, and you may be lost forever!* Lot's sons-in-law were consumed, and why not you? Saved shall the patriarch be, but not saved the patriarch's son, except he shall flee out of Sodom. Beware! No kinship can save you. You may be allied to a race of saints, but, being yourself a sinner, your pedigree cannot save you. Unconverted souls, flee away, I pray you, and may God's grace direct you to the Rock of Ages cleft for you. Hide yourself in the clefts thereof, and let your soul find peace through Jesus the Savior.

May God bless these feeble words of mine to every soul here, for Jesus' sake. Amen

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.