



AN  
AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS  
TO  
CHILDREN.

BY JOHN BROWN, LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN  
HADDINGTON.

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**M**y dear little children, for whom I ought to “travail as in birth, till Christ be formed in your soul;” suffer me, “by the mercies of God,” and “in the bowels of Jesus Christ,” to beseech you, while you peruse this, to lay to heart, the one thing needful—a saving interest in the Son of God, and renovation into his image; know and consider the things which concern your peace, your eternal peace, before they be hid from your eyes. Remember now thy Creator,” (thy Saviour,) “in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not.” O that you would consider your last end! the dread eternity, the delightful heaven, or fearful hell that is before you! Should you slight the present call, should you tarry a moment longer without Christ, perhaps you are undone for ever: “Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.”

Oh! think, seriously think, how deplorable is your natural estate! In Adam you have all sinned. You are “children of disobedience; children of wrath, even as others.” Your carnal mind is enmity against God, and your heart “hard as an adamant;” is filled with all unrighteousness, is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and out of it do proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” With horror contemplate the number of your vain thoughts, your idle words, your evil works!

“ they are more than the hairs of your head, which cannot be numbered.” What thousands, what millions of your best, your earliest moments, are departed from you, and gone to Jehovah’s tribunal, to bear witness how treacherously you have squandered them away in wickedness and unconcern; especially consider how basely you have discredited the faithfulness of God, by your unbelieving rejection of his unspeakable gift, his dear Son; who, in the gospel, is offered, and made of God unto you “ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” How justly he complains, “ You will not come unto me, that ye might have life!” and even my little children “ would have none of me!” O! why thus grieve a divine Saviour!

My dear child, how great is thy misery! While without Christ, thou art a stranger to the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. God is angry with thee every day: all his perfections are ready to heap “ indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish” upon thee: in vain dost thou expect thy righteousness will profit thee at his bar, and recommend thee to his favour. His law condemns thee to eternal ruin: for, “ cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. He that believeth not, is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him.” Nor hast thou a moment’s security for thy life: death, the king of terrors, incessantly advanceth to drive thee away in thy wickedness. Oh! how will thy heart endure the tremendous blast of the archangel’s trumpet! In vain shalt thou cry to the hills and mountains to fall on thee, and hide thee from thine angry Judge. How terrible to hear the now despised Saviour, denounce against thee the unalterable sentence, “ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!”

But there is yet hope concerning thy case: it may now be remedied: “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but should have everlasting life. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us,” and laying our iniquities upon his Son, sent him in the likeness of sinful flesh, made him under the law, to fulfil its precepts and endure its penalty in our stead, and so be the propitiation

for our sins. "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." To you, my child, was born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord: "he was manifested to destroy the works of the devil: he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. He hath finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness: while we were yet without strength, he died for the ungodly: while we were yet sinners, yet enemies, Christ died for us: he suffered for our sins, he died for our offences, and rose again for our justification. God raised him up, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. Him hath God exalted to be a prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins: he hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them, and daily load them with his benefits."

O! how he "travels in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save! able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." O! his infinite willingness to save us! how deeply marked in words, in oaths, in cries, in tears, in sighs, in groans, in blood, in death! He "cometh in the name of the Lord to save us; to seek and save that which was lost; and him that cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out." Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come, buy and eat: yea, come buy wine and milk, receive freely my person and benefits, without money, and without price. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden with guilt, corruption, or trouble, and I will give you rest. Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. My son, my child, give me thine heart. Wilt thou not then from this time, this moment, cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth? How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee myself, the goodly heritage of the host of nations? Thou shalt call me, My father, and shalt not turn away from me,

I will betroth thee unto me for ever. Are you guilty? Come let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Are you far from righteousness? Behold I bring near my righteousness. Surely shall one say, In Jehovah have I righteousness and strength; in him shall you be justified, and in him shall you glory. Let therefore the wicked forsake his ways of iniquity and self-righteousness, and let him return to me the Lord, for I will have mercy on him; to me his God, for I will abundantly pardon. As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. You whom times without number, I the Lord your Saviour have besought by love, by tears, by blood, by heavenly joys, and infernal horrors, to accept salvation; why abuse my mercies, and make me your stumbling block into deeper damnation! Why will ye die? Why continue dead in trespasses and sins? why imbitter your natural death? why run headlong into the second, the eternal death? why slight the gift of God, which is eternal life? why give your hearts to trifles, to devils, to lusts, rather than to me? Are they more excellent than I, who am God over all blessed for ever, the chief among ten thousand; or more kind than a dying Redeemer? Have they done, or can they do more for thy soul than I? Is my heaven so wretched, that you will in no ways enter it by me as the way? Is hell so sweet, so desirable, that you will have no redemption from it through my blood? Are lusts so honourable, that you will be their everlasting slave and endless prey? Why such outrage against me your bleeding Saviour, as to refuse, that in you I should see the travail of my soul and be satisfied? O my son, my son, give me thine heart. Dear child, say him not nay: request him to apprehend it himself, as it is beyond thy power to give it: beg him, the blessed of the Lord, that hath the key of David, to draw it with his promises, his cords of love; to open it and come in. Thus taste and see that the Lord is good.

May the lovely Bridegroom, the almighty Saviour, persuade you. Lord Jesus, come thyself, and fetch them out of the prison, the pit of corruption, and bring them into the bond of the covenant.