

Marks of a True Conversion (Become as Little Children to Enter the Kingdom of Heaven)

by George Whitefield

George Whitefield emphasizes the necessity of true conversion and the childlike faith required to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Duration: 53:44

Scripture: Matthew 18:3, Mark 9:43, John 13:34, Romans 14:19, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, James 4:8, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Audio Books"

Description

In this sermon by George Whitfield, he begins by urging the congregation to examine their own souls and determine if they have truly been converted. He emphasizes the urgency of this self-reflection, as death can come unexpectedly and many may be carried into an unalterable state. Whitfield encourages the listeners to pray for God to search and try their hearts, and to reveal whether they are truly converted or not. He concludes by offering Jesus as the way of escape and the one who can convert them, urging them to come to Christ and be part of his heavenly kingdom.

Transcript

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That's puritandownloads.com. The following sermon by George Whitfield is called The Marks of a True Conversion. Matthew 18, verse 3. Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. I suppose I may take it for granted that all of you, among whom I now preach the kingdom of God, are fully convinced that it is appointed for all men once to die, and that you all really believe that after death comes the judgment, and that the consequences of that judgment will be that you must be doomed to dwell in the blackness of darkness, or ass in to dwell with the blessed God forever and ever.

I may take it for granted also that, whatever your practice in common life may be, there is not one, though ever so profligate and abandoned, but hopes to go to that place which the Scriptures call heaven when he dies. And I think if I know anything of my own heart, my heart's desire, as well as my prayer to God for you all is, that I may see you sitting down in the kingdom of our heavenly Father. But then, though we all hope to go to heaven when we die, yet if we may judge by people's lives, and our Lord says that by their fruits we may know them, I am afraid it will be found that thousands and ten thousands who hope to go to this blessed place after death are not now in the way to it while they live.

Though we call ourselves Christians, and would consider it as an affront put upon us for anyone to doubt whether we were Christians or not, yet there are a great many who bear the name of Christ that yet do not so much as know what real Christianity is. Hence it is that if you ask a great many, upon what their hopes of heaven are founded, they will tell you that they belong to this or that or the other denomination, and part of Christians into which Christendom is now unhappily divided. If you ask others upon what foundation they have built their hope of heaven, they will tell you that they have been baptized, that their fathers and mothers presented them to the Lord Jesus Christ in their infancy, and though instead of fighting under Christ's banner they have been fighting against him almost ever since they were baptized, yet because they have been admitted to church and their names are in the register book of the parish, therefore they will make us believe that their names are also written in the book of life.

But a great many who will not build their hopes of salvation upon such a sorry rotten foundation as this, yet if they are what we generally call negatively good people, if they live so as their neighbors cannot say that they do anybody any harm, they do not doubt but they shall be happy when they die. Nay, I have found many such die, as the scripture speaks, without any bans in their death. And if a person is what the world calls an honest moral man, if he does justly, and what the world calls love a little mercy, is not and then good-natured, reaches out his hand to the poor, receives a sacrament once or twice a year, and is outwardly sober and honest, the world looks upon such as one a Christian indeed, and doubtless we are to judge charitably of every such person.

There are many likewise who go on in a round of duties, a model of performances, that think they shall go to heaven. But if you examine them, though they have a Christ in their heads, they have no Christ in their hearts. The Lord Jesus Christ knew this full well.

He knew how desperately wicked and deceitful men's hearts were. He knew very well how many would go to hell even by the very gates of heaven, how many would climb up even to the door, and go so near as to knock at it, and yet after all be dismissed with a, Verily I know you not. The Lord therefore plainly tells us what great change must be wrought in us, and what must be done for us before we can have any well-grounded hopes of entering into the kingdom of heaven.

Hence he tells Nicodemus, that unless a man be born again, and from above, and unless a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And of all the solemn declarations of our Lord, I mean with respect to this, perhaps the words of the text are one of the most solemn. Except, says Christ, ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The words, if you look back to the context, are plainly directed to the disciples, for we are told that at that same time came the disciples unto Jesus. And I think it is plain from many parts of Scripture that these disciples, to whom our Lord addressed Himself at this time, were in some degree converted before. If we take the words strictly, they are applicable only to those that have already gotten some, though but weak,

faith in Christ.

Our Lord means that though they had already tasted the grace of God, yet there was much of the old man, so much in dwelling sin, and corruption, yet remaining in their hearts, that unless they were more converted than they were, unless a greater change passed upon their souls, and sanctification was still carried on, they could give but very little evidence of their belonging to His kingdom, which was not to be set up in outward grandeur, as they supposed, but was to be a spiritual kingdom, begun here but completed in the kingdom of God hereafter. But though the words had a peculiar reference to our Lord's disciples, yet as our Lord makes such a declaration as this in other places of Scripture, especially in the discourse to Nicodemus, I believe the words may be justly applied to saints and sinners, and as I suppose there are two sorts of people here, some who know Christ, and some of you that do not know Him, some that are converted, and some that are strangers to conversion. I shall endeavor, so to speak, that if God shall be pleased to assist me, and to give you an hearing ear and an obedient heart, both saints and sinners may have their portion.

First, I shall endeavor to show you in what respects we are to understand this assertion of our Lord's, that we must be converted and become like little children. I shall then, secondly, speak to those who profess a little of this childlike temper, and lastly, shall speak to you who have no reason to think that this change has ever passed upon your souls. First, I shall endeavor to show you what we are to understand by our Lord's saying, except ye be converted and become as little children.

But I think, before I speak to this point, it may be proper to premise one or two particulars. First, I think that the words plainly imply that before you or I can have any well-grounded scriptural hope of being happy in a future state, there must be some great, some notable and amazing change pass upon our souls. I believe there is not one adult person in the congregation but will readily confess that a great change has passed upon their bodies since they came first into the world, and were infants dandled upon their mother's knees.

It is true we have no more members than ye had then, but how are these altered? Though ye are in one respect the same as ye were, for the number of your limbs, and as to the shape of your body, yet if a person that knew you when ye were in your cradle had been absent from you for some years, and saw you when grown up, then thousand to one, if he would know you at all, ye were so altered, so different from what ye were, when ye were little ones. And as the words plainly imply, that there has a great change passed upon our bodies since we were children. So before we can go to heaven, there must as great a change pass upon our souls.

Our souls considered in a physical sense are still the same, there is to be no philosophical change wrought on them, but then as for our temper, habit and conduct, we must be so changed and altered, that those who knew us the other day when in the state of sin, and before we knew Christ, and are acquainted with us now, must see such an alteration, that they may stand as much amazed at it, as a person if the alteration wrought on any person he has not seen for twenty years from his infancy. 2. But I think it proper to premise something further, because this text is a grand stronghold of Arminians and others. They learn of the devil to bring texts to propagate bad principles, when the devil had a mind to tempt Jesus Christ, because Christ quoted scripture, therefore Satan did so too.

And such persons, that their doctrine in bad principles may go down the better, would fain persuade unwary and unstable souls, that they are founded upon the word of God. Though the doctrine of original sin is a doctrine written in such legible characters in the word of God, that he who runs may read it. And

though I think everything without us, and everything within us, plainly proclaims that we are fallen creatures, though the very heathens had no other light, but the dim light of unassisted reason, complained of this, for they felt the wound, and discovered the disease, but were ignorant of the cause of it.

Yet there are too many persons of those who have been baptized in the name of Christ, that dare to speak against the doctrine of original sin, and are angry with those ill-natured ministers who paint man in such black colors. They say it cannot be that children come into the world with the guilt of Adam's sin lying upon them. Why? Desire them to prove it from scripture, and they will urge this very text.

Our Lord tells us, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now their argument runs thus. It is implied in the words of the text, that little children are innocent, and that they may come into the world like a mere blank piece of white paper.

Otherwise our Lord must argue absurdly, for he could never pretend to say, that we must be converted, and be made like wicked creatures. That would be no conversion. But my dear friends, this is to make Jesus Christ speak what he never intended, and what cannot be deduced from his words.

That little children are guilty, I mean that they are conceived and born in sin, is plain from the tenor of the book of God. David was a man after God's own heart, yet he says, I was conceived in sin. Jeremiah, speaking of everyone's heart, says, The heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked above all things.

God's servants unanimously declare, and Paul cites it from one of them, that we are altogether now become abominable, altogether gone out of the way of original righteousness. There is not one of us that doeth good by nature, no, not one. And I appeal to any one of you that are mothers and fathers, if you do not discern original sin or corruption in your children, as soon as they come into the world, and as they grow up.

If you do not discover self-will, and an aversion to goodness, what is the reason your children are so averse to instruction, but because they bring enmity into the world with them, against a good and gracious God? So then, it is plain from scripture and fact that children are born in sin, and consequently that they are children of wrath. And for my part, I think that the death of every child is a plain proof of original sin. Sickness and death came into the world by sin, and it seems not consistent with God's goodness and justice to let a little child be sick or die, unless Adam's first sin was imputed to him.

If any charge God with injustice for imputing Adam's sin to a little child, behold, we have gotten a second Adam to bring our children to him. Therefore, when our Lord says, Unless you are converted and become as little children, we are not to understand, as though our Lord would insinuate, that little children are perfectly innocent. But in a comparative, and as I shall show you by and by in a rational sense, little children are innocent, compare them with grown people, but take them as they are, and as they come into the world, they have hearts that are sensual, and minds which are carnal.

And I mention this with the greatest concern, because I verily believe unless parents are convinced of this, they will never take proper care of their children's education. If parents were convinced that children's hearts were as so bad as they are, you would never be fond of letting them go to the balls, the assemblies, and plays, the natural tendency of which is to botch their minds and make them the children of the devil. If parents were convinced of this, I believe they would pray more when they bring their children to be baptized, and would not make it a mere matter of form.

And I believe if they were really convinced that their children were conceived in sin, they would always put up that petition before their children came into the world, which I have heard that a good woman always did put up, Lord Jesus, let me never bear a child for hell or the devil. Oh, is it not to be feared that thousands of children will appear at the great day before God, and in presence of angels and men will say, Father and Mother, next to the wickedness of mine own heart, I owe my damnation to your bad education of me. Having premised these two particulars, I now proceed to show in what sense we are really to understand the words that we must be converted and become like little children.

The evangelist tells us that the disciples at this time came unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? These disciples had imbibed a common prevailing notion that the Lord Jesus Christ was to be a temporal prince. They dreamed of nothing but being ministers of state, of sitting on Christ's right hand and his kingdom, and lording it over God's people. They thought themselves qualified for state offices, as generally ignorant people are apt to conceive of themselves.

Well, they say, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Which of us shall have the chief management of public affairs? A pretty question for a few poor fishermen, who scarcely knew how to drag their nets to shore, much less how to govern a kingdom. Our Lord, therefore, in the second verse, to mortify them, calls a little child and sets him in the midst of them. This action was as much as if our Lord had said, Poor creatures, your imaginations are very towering.

You dispute who shall be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I will make this little child preach to you, or I will preach to you by him. Therefore I say unto you, I who am truth itself, I know in what manner my subjects are to enter into my kingdom.

I say unto you, ye are so far from being in a right temper for my kingdom, that, except ye be converted, and become as a little child, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, unless ye are, comparatively speaking, as loose to the world, as loose to crowns, and scepters, and kingdoms, and earthly things, as this poor little child I have in my hand, ye shall not enter into my kingdom. So that what our Lord is speaking of is not the innocency of little children, if ye consider the relation they stand unto God, and as they are in themselves, when brought into the world. But what our Lord means is, that as to ambition and lust after the world, we must in this sense become as little children.

Is there never a little boy or girl in this congregation? Ask a poor little child that can just speak about a crown, scepter, or kingdom. The poor creature has no notion about it. Give a little boy or girl a small thing to play with, it will leave the world to other people.

Now in this sense we must be converted, and become as little children. That is, we must be as loose to the world, comparatively speaking, as a little child. Do not mistake me.

I am not going to persuade you to shut up your shops or leave your business. I am not going to persuade you that if you will be Christians you must turn hermits and retire out of the world. You cannot leave your wicked hearts behind you when you leave the world.

For I find when I am alone, my wicked heart has followed me. Go where I will. Know the religion of Jesus is a social religion.

But though Jesus Christ does not call us to go out of the world, shut up our shops and leave our children to be provided for by miracles, yet this must be said to the honor of Christianity. If we are really converted,

we shall be loose from the world, though we are engaged in it and are obliged to work for our children, though we are obliged to follow trades and merchandise and to be serviceable to the commonwealth. Yet if we are real Christians, we shall be loose to the world, though I will not pretend to say that all real Christians have attained to the same degree of spiritual mindedness.

This is the primary meaning of these words, that we must be converted and become as little children. Nevertheless, I suppose the words are to be understood in other senses. When our Lord says we must be converted and become as little children, I suppose he means also that we must be sensible of our weakness, comparatively speaking, as a little child.

Everyone looks upon a little child as a poor, weak creature, as one that ought to go to school and learn some new lesson every day, and as simple and artless one without guile, having not learned the abominable art called dissimulation. Now, in all these senses, I believe we are to understand the words of the text. Are little children sensible of their weakness? Must they be led by the hand? Must we take hold of them or they will fail? So if we are converted, if the grace of God be really in our hearts, my dear friends, however we may have thought of ourselves once, whatever were our former high exalted imaginations, yet we shall now be sensible of our weakness, we shall no more say, we are rich and increased with goods and lack nothing, we shall be inwardly poor, we shall feel that we are poor, miserable, blind and naked.

And as a little child gives up its hand to be guided by a parent or a nurse, so those who are truly converted and are real Christians will give up the heart, their understandings, their wills, their affections to be guided by the word, providence and the spirit of the Lord. Hence it is that the apostle, speaking of the sons of God says, as many as are led by the spirit of God they are, and to be sure he means they only are, the sons of God. And as little children look upon themselves to be ignorant creatures, so those that are converted do look upon themselves as ignorant too.

Hence it is that John speaking to Christians calls them little children. I have written unto you, little children. And Christ's flock is called a little flock, not only because little in number, but also because those who are members of his flock are indeed little in their own eyes.

Hence that great man, that great apostle of the Gentiles, that spiritual father of so many thousands of souls, that man who in the opinion of Dr. Goodwin fits nearest the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, that chosen vessel, the apostle Paul when he speaks of himself says, Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Perhaps some of you, when you read these words, will be apt to think that Paul did not speak true, that he did not really feel what he said. Because you judge Paul's heart by your own proud hearts.

And the more you get of the grace of God, and the more you are partakers of the divine life, the more will you see your own meanness and vileness and be less in your own eyes. Hence it is that John Flavel, in his book called Husbandry Spiritualized, compares young Christians to green corn, which before it is ripe, shoots up very high, but there is little solidity in it. Whereas an old Christian is like ripe corn, it does not lift up its head so much, but then it is more weighty and fit to be cut down and put into the farmer's barn.

Young Christians are also like little rivulets. You know, rivulets are shallow, yet make great noise. But an old Christian, he makes not so much noise.

He goes on sweetly, like a deep river sliding into the ocean. And as a little child does look upon as a harmless creature, it generally speaks true. So if we are converted to become as little children, we shall be guileless as well as harmless.

Once said the dear Redeemer when he saw Nathanael, as though it was a rare sight he gazed upon, and would have others gaze upon it. Behold, an Israelite indeed. Why so? In whom is no guile? Do not mistake me.

I am not saying that Christians ought not to be prudent. They ought exceedingly to pray to God for prudence. Otherwise they may follow the delusions of the devil, and by their imprudence give wrong touches to the ark of God.

It was the lamentation of a great man. God has given me many gifts, but God has not given me prudence. Therefore when I say a Christian must be guileless, I do not mean he should expose himself and lie open to everyone's assault.

We should pray for the wisdom of the serpent, though we shall generally learn this wisdom by our blunders and imprudence, and we must make some advance in Christianity before we know our imprudence. A person really converted can say, as it is reported of a philosopher, I wish there was a window in my breast, that everyone may see the uprightness of my heart and intentions. And though there is too much of the old man in us, yet if we were really converted, there will be in us no allowed guile.

We shall be harmless, and that is the reason why poor Christian is too often imposed upon. He judges other people by himself, having an honest heart. He thinks everyone is as honest as himself, and therefore is a prey to everyone.

I might enlarge upon each of these points. It is a copious and an important truth, but I do not intend to multiply many marks in heads. And therefore, as I have something to say by way of personal application, give me leave, therefore, with the utmost tenderness, and at the same time with faithfulness, to call upon you, my dear friends.

My text is introduced in an awful manner. Verily I say unto you, And what Jesus said then, he says now to you, and to me, and to as many as sit under a preached gospel, and as to as many as our Lord shall call, let me exhort you to see whether you are converted, whether such a great and almighty change has passed upon any of your souls. As I told you before, so I tell you again, ye all hope to go to heaven, and I pray God Almighty you may be all there, when I see such a congregation as this.

If my heart is in a proper frame, I feel myself ready to lay down my life, to be instrumental only to save one soul. It makes my heart bleed within me, it makes me sometimes most unwilling to preach, lest that word that I hope will do good, may increase a damnation of any, and perhaps of a great part of the auditory, through their own unbelief. Give me leave to deal faithfully with your souls, I have your death warrant in my hand.

Christ has said it, Jesus will stand to it, it is like the laws of the Medes and Persians, it altereth not. Hark, O man, hark, O woman, he that has ears to hear, let him hear what the Lord Jesus Christ says. Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Though this is Saturday night, and you are now preparing for the Sabbath, for what you know, you may yet never live to see the Sabbath. You have had awful proofs of this lately, a woman died but yesterday, a man died the day before, another was killed by something that fell from a house, and it may be in twenty-four hours more, many of you may be carried into an unalterable state. Now then, for God's sake, for your own soul's sake, if ye have a mind to dwell with God, and cannot bear the thought of dwelling in everlasting burning, before I go any further, silently put up one prayer, or say amen to the prayer I would put in your mouths, Lord, search me and try me, Lord, examine my heart and let my conscience speak, let me know whether I am converted or not.

What say ye, my dear hearers, what say ye, my fellow sinners, what say ye, my guilty brethren, has God by His blessed Spirit wrought such a change in your hearts? I do not ask you whether God has made you angels, that I know you will never be, I only ask you whether you have any well-grounded hope to think that God has made you new creatures in Jesus Christ, so renewed and changed your natures, that you can say, I humbly hope, that as to the habitual temper and tendency of my mind, that my heart is free from wickedness, I have a husband, I have a wife, I have also children, I keep a shop, I mind my business, but I love these creatures for God's sake, and do everything for Christ, and if God was now to call me away, according to the habitual temper of my mind, I can say, Lord, I am ready, and however I love the creatures, I hope I can say, Whom have I in heaven but Thee? Whom have I in heaven, O my God and my dear Redeemer, that I desire in comparison of Thee? Can you thank God for the creatures, and say at the same time, These are not my Christ, I speak in plain language, you know my way of preaching, I do not want to play the orator, I do not want to be counted a scholar, I want to speak so as I may reach poor people's hearts, what say ye, my dear hearers, are you sensible of your weakness? Do you feel that you are poor, miserable, blind, and naked by nature? Do you give up your hearts, your affections, your wills, your understanding, to be guided by the Spirit of God as a little child gives up his hand, to be guided by a parent? Are you little in your own eyes? Do you think meanly of yourselves, and do you want to learn something new every day? I mention these marks because I am apt to believe they are more adapted to a great many of your capacities. A great many of you have not that showing of affection ye sometimes had, therefore you are forgiving up all your evidences, and making way for the devils coming into your heart. You are not brought up to the mount as you used to be, therefore you conclude you have no grace at all.

But if the Lord Jesus Christ has emptied thee, and humbled thee, if he has given thee to see and know that you are nothing, though you are not growing upward, you are growing downward, and though you have not so much joy, yet your heart is emptying to be more abundantly replenished by and by. Can any of you follow me? Then give God thanks, and take the comfort of it. If you are thus converted, and become a little child, I welcome you in the name of the Lord Jesus into God's dear family.

I welcome you in the name of the dear Redeemer into the company of God's children. O you dear souls, though the world sees nothing in you, though there be no outward difference between you and others, yet I look upon you in another light, even as so many kings, sons, and daughters, all hail in the name of God. I wish every one of you joy from my soul.

Ye sons and daughters of the King of kings, will not you henceforth exercise a childlike temper? Will not such a thought melt down your hearts when I tell you that the great God who might have frowned you to hell for your secret sins, that nobody knew of, but God in your own souls, and who might have damned you times without number, has cast a mantle of his love over you? His voice has been, Let that man, that woman live, for I have found a ransom. O will you not cry out, Why me, Lord? Was King George to sin for any of your children? And were you to hear they were to be his adopted sons, how highly honored would

you think your children to be! What great condescension was it for Pharaoh's daughter to take up Moses, a poor child, exposed in an ark of bulrushes, and breed him up for her child? But what is that happiness in comparison of thine, who was the other day a child of the devil? But now, by converting grace, you are become a child of God. Are you converted? Are you become like little children? Then what must you do? My dear hearers, be obedient to God.

Remember, God is your Father, and as every one of you must know what a dreadful cross it is to have a wicked, disobedient child. If you do not want your children to be disobedient to you, for Christ's sake, be not disobedient to your heavenly parent. If God be your Father, obey him.

If God be your Father, serve him. Love him with all your heart. Love him with all your might, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

If God be your Father, fly from everything that may displease him, and walk worthy of that God, who has called you to his kingdom and glory. If you are converted and become like little children, then behave as little children. They long for the breast, and with it will be contented.

Are you newborn babes? Then desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. I do not want that Arminian husks should go down with you. You are king's sons and daughters, and have a more refined taste.

You must have the doctrines of grace, and blessed be God that you dwell in a country where the sincere word is so plainly preached. Are you children? Then grow in grace, and in the knowledge of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If any of you children that do not grow, do you not lament these children, and cry over them? Do you not say, My child will never be fit for anything in the world? Will doth it grieve you to see a child that will not grow? How much must it grieve the heart of Christ to see you grow so little? Will you always be children? Will you always be learning the first principles of Christianity, and never press forward towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? God forbid! Let the language of your heart be, Lord Jesus, help me to grow, help me to learn more, learn me to live, so as my progress may be known to all.

Are you God's children? Are you converted, and become like little children? Then deal with God as your little child does with you. As soon as ever they want anything, or if anybody hurt them, I appeal to yourselves that they do not directly run to their parent. Well, are you God's children? Does the devil trouble you? Does the world trouble you? Go tell your father of it.

Go directly and complain to God. Perhaps you may say, I cannot utter fine words, but do any of you expect fine words from your children? If they come crying, and can speak but half words, do not your hearts yearn over them? And has not God unspeakably more pity to you? If you can only make signs to him, as a father pitieth his children, so will the Lord pity them that fear him. I pray you, therefore, be bold with your father, saying, Abba, Father, Satan troubles me, the world troubles me, my own mother's children are angry with me, Heavenly Father, plead my cause.

The Lord will then speak for you some way or other. Are you converted and become as little children? Have you entered into God's family? Then assure yourselves that your Heavenly Father will chasten you now and then. For what son is there whom the Father chasteneth not? For if you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

It is recorded of Bishop Latimer, that in the house where he came to lodge, he overheard the master of the house say, I thank God I never had a cross in my life. Oh, he said, then I will not stay here. I believe there is not a child of God, when in a good frame, but has prayed for great humility.

They have prayed for great faith. They have prayed for great love. They have prayed for all the grace of the Spirit.

Do you know, when you put up these prayers, that you did also say, Lord, send us great trials? For how is it possible to know you have great faith, humility, and love, unless God put you into great trials, that you may know whether you have them or not? I mention this because a great many of the children of God, I am sure it has been a temptation to me many times, when I have been under God's smarting-rod. When they have great trials, think God is giving them over. If therefore you are God's children, if you are converted and become as little children, do not expect that God will be like a foolish parent.

No, he is a jealous God. He loves his child too well to spare his rod. How did he correct Miriam? How did he correct Moses? How has God in all ages corrected his dearest children? Therefore, if you are converted and become as little children, if God has taken away a child or your substance, if God suffers friends to forsake you, and if you are forsaken, as it were, both by God and man, say, Lord, I thank you.

I am a perverse child, or God would not strike me so often and so hard. Do not blame your heavenly Father, but blame yourselves. He is a loving God and a tender Father.

He is afflicted in all our afflictions. Therefore, when God spake to Moses, he spake out of the bush, as much as to say, Moses, this bush represents my people. As this bush is burning with fire, so are my children to burn with affliction.

But I am in the bush. If the bush burns, I will burn with it. I will be with them in the furnace.

I will be with them in the water. And though the water come over them, it shall not overflow them. Are you God's children? Are you converted and become as little children? Then will you not long to go home and see your Father? O happy they that have gotten home before you! Happy they that are up yonder! Happy they who have ascended above this field of conflict! I know not what you may think of it, but since I heard that some whose hearts God was pleased to work upon are gone to glory, I am sometimes filled with grief that God is not pleased to let me go home to.

How can you see so much coldness among God's people? How can you see God's people like the moon waxing and waning? Who can but desire to be forever with the Lord? Thanks be to God! The time is soon coming. Thanks be to God! He will come and will not tarry. Do not be impatient.

God in His own time will fetch you home. And though you may be brought to short allowance now, though some of you may be narrow in your circumstances, yet do not repine. A God and the gospel of Christ, with brown bread, are great riches.

In your Father's house there is bread enough and to spare. Though you are now tormented, yet by and by you shall be comforted. The angels will look upon it as an honor to convey you to Abraham's bosom.

Though you were but a Lazarus here, by the frame of my heart I am much inclined to speak comfortably to God's people. But I only mention one thing more, and that is, if you are converted and become as little children, then for God's sake take care of doing what children often do. They are too apt to quarrel with

one another.

Oh, love one another! He that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. Joseph knew that his brethren were in danger of falling out. Therefore, when he left them, says he, fall not out by the way.

You are all children of the same Father. You are all going to the same place. Why should ye differ? The world has enough against us.

The devil has enough against us, without our quarreling with each other. Oh, walk in love! If I could preach no more, if I was not able to hold out to the end of my sermon, I would say as John did, when he was grown old and could not preach, little children love one another. If ye are God's children, then love one another.

There is nothing that grieves me more than the differences amongst God's people. Oh, hasten that time when we shall either go to heaven or never quarrel any more. Would to God I could speak to all of you in this comfortable language, but my Master tells me I must not give that which is holy to dogs.

I must not cast pearls before swine. Therefore, though I have been speaking comfortably, yet what I have been saying, especially in this latter part of the discourse, belongs to children. It is children's bread.

It belongs to God's people. If any of you are graceless, christless, unconverted creatures, I charge you not to touch it. I fence it in the name of God.

Here is a flaming sword turning every way to keep you from this bread of life till you are turned to Jesus Christ. And therefore, as I suppose many of you are unconverted and graceless, go home and away to your closets and down with your stubborn hearts before God. If you have not done little before, let this be the night, or do not stay till you go home.

Begin now, while standing here. Pray to God and let the language of your heart be, Lord, convert me. Lord, make me a little child.

Lord Jesus, let me not be banished from your kingdom. My dear friends, there is a great deal more implied in the words than is expressed when Christ says, Ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is as much to say, Ye shall certainly go to hell.

You shall certainly be damned and dwell in the blackness of darkness forever. You shall go where the worm does not die and where the fire is not quenched. The Lord God, impress it upon your souls.

May an arrow, as one lately wrote me in a letter, dipped in the blood of Christ, reach every unconverted sinner's heart. May God fulfill the text to every one of your souls. It is He alone that can do it.

If ye confess your sins and leave them and lay hold on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God shall be given you. If ye will go and say, Turn me, O my God. Thou knowest not, O man, what the return of God may be to you.

Did I think that preaching would be to the purpose? Did I think that arguments would induce you to come? I would continue my discourse till midnight, and however some of you may hate me without a cause, would to God every one in this congregation was as much concerned for himself as at present. Blessed be God, I feel myself concerned for him. I know that my head were waters, O that mine eyes were a fountain of tears, that I might weep over an unconverted, graceless, wicked, and adulterous generation.

Precious souls, for God's sake, think what will become of you when you die. If ye die without being converted, if ye go hence without the wedding garment, God will strike you speechless, and ye shall be banished from His presence forever and ever. I know you cannot dwell with everlasting burnings.

Behold, then, I show you a way of escape. Jesus is the way. Jesus is the truth.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life. It is His Spirit that must convert you. Come to Christ, and you shall have it.

And may God, for Christ's sake, give it to you all and convert you, that you may all meet, and we will meet to never part again in His heavenly kingdom. Even so, Lord Jesus, amen and amen. A sermon by George Whitfield It's your worldwide online Reformation home for the very best in free and discounted classic and contemporary Puritan and Reformed books, MP3s and videos.

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