

9629

Davies, Samuel, 1723-1761.

(D. A. B.)

Little Children.... Fifth Edition.

Boston, Fowle for Barclay, 1765. 24 pp.

(The Evans entry, which came from Haven, is a ghost of this or the 4th ed., Boston, 1762, of which there is a copy at the AAS.)

AAS copy.

LITTLE CHILDREN

Invited to

Jefus Christ.

*A SERMON preached in Hanover County,
Virginia ;*

With an Account of the late remarkable
Religious Impressions among the STU-
DENTS in the College of *New-Jersey.*

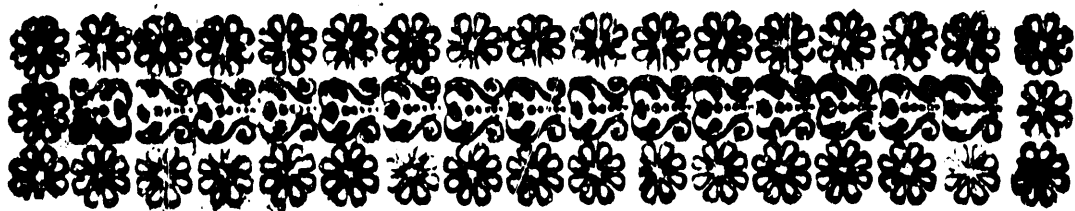
By SAMUEL DAVIES, A. M.

The Fifth Edition.



B O S T O N ;

Printed by Z. FOWLE, for A. BARCLAY,
next Door but one to the Sign of the three Kings,
in CORNHILL. 1765.



MARK X. 14.

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeas'd, and said unto them, Suffer the little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not : For of such is the Kingdom of God.

THE Return of this blooming Season of the Year puts me in Mind of my Duty towards my young Friends in this Congregation ; those growing Shoots, those blooming Flowers of human Nature.

To you therefore, my dear Youth, I would now address myself : And would do it with all the Tenderness of a fatherly Heart.

AMONG you, I hope, I shall not meet with Discouragement, of the same kind, which I often meet with in my Addresses to others. Among you, I hope, I shall not find any Veterans in Sin, confirmed and hardened in Wickedness by long Practice ; though alas ! we sometimes meet with the shocking Curiosity of one young in Years, but old in Sin. Among you, I hope to find that Tenderness of Heart, and those soft impressible Passions, which are so peculiar to your Age ; and which may render you more susceptible of religious Impressions, than those whose Hearts are at once hardened by Age, and by

by a long Habit of Sinning ; these Circumstances afford me Encouragement. But alas ! even among you, soft and pliable as you are, I expect great Discouragements, tho' of another Kind. You are gay, merry and thoughtless ; and cannot bear to fix your Thoughts upon such disagreeable Subjects ; and flatter yourselves, it is time enough for you to submit to the Mortification of attending to them, as you advance farther into Life. Your Passions and Appetites are strong and unruly : Your Hopes warm and sanguine. And therefore, I am afraid, sundry of you will hardly allow me a serious Hearing, tho' but for an Hour. However, whether you hear, or whether you forbear, I must endeavour to deliver my Message to you, in the Name of God.

IT is a very encouraging Thought, that the blessed Jesus has a very tender Regard for such young Creatures. This he shewed in his warm Resentment against those that would have kept them from his Arms, while he dwelt among Men.

SOME of his Friends brought their young Children to him, that he might touch them, or lay his Hands upon them, as a Sign of his blessing them, after the Manner of the Patriarchs and Prophets, in their solemn Benedictions. But his Disciples, thinking it beneath the Dignity of so great and divine a Prophet, to be troubled and teased with little Children, and apprehending that such thoughtless Creatures could receive no Advantage from him, rebuked their Parents, and would have sent them away. This must be a very affecting Discouragement

ment to Parents to find themselves forbid to come to Christ, and that by his Disciples, who ought to have introduced them, and encouraged their Application. *But when Jesus saw the dear little Creatures sent away from him, he was greatly displeas'd.* If good Men thro' Mistake, and bad Men thro' obstinate Wickedness discourage these young Immortals in coming to Christ, he himself is willing they should come, and warmly resents it, when any Hindrance is thrown in their Way. This gracious Shepherd takes special Care of the Weak and Young in his Flock ; he " gathers the Lambs in his Arms, and carries them in his Bosom. Hence he tells his Disciples, and all around him, " Suffer the little Children to come unto me, and " forbid them not." They are all welcome to my Arms : And the little Sinners stand in need of a Saviour.

WHEN he says, " Suffer them to come, and " forbid them not ; " he does not mean, meerly, that they should not hinder or discourage them but he means, that they should *positively assist* and encourage them to come to him ; and that Parents should be so far from hindering them, that they should bring them themselves.

THIS Exhortation was particularly addressed to his Disciples ; and through them, to all the Ministers of the Gospel. And I feel its Obligation binding me in particular to this agreeable Duty. Indeed the lovely Forms, the Blooms of Reason, and the engaging little Actions of those amiable Creatures, whom I now address, might win the Affection

Affection even of a Stranger, and excite him to perform every kind Office in his Power for them.

Our Saviour adds a Reason why he would have little Children suffered to come to him, which is, "For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." This may be understood in two Senses. It may either signify, the Gospel Church, which is often called *the Kingdom of Heaven*, and even the heavenly Church consists of such little Children as these: Such little Creatures are admitted as Members into this divine Society, and entitled to its Privileges. And therefore, "Christian Parents ought to bring them to me; and it is their Duty to come as soon as they are capable of acting. Therefore forbid them not, but encourage them." Or it may signify, the Church of God, both in its earthly and heavenly State, consists of *such Persons*; i. e. of Persons, who resemble little Children in Temper; who, like them, are humble, meek, pliable, forgiving, easily appeased, teachable. I rather chuse this Sense, because the Connection seems to lead to it; for the very next Words are, Verily "I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child, he shall not enter therein." This is also agreeable to what he says elsewhere, when he makes a little Child an Emblem of the Christian Temper. (*Matt. xviii. 2, 3. 4.*) "Jesus called a little Child unto him, and set him in the Midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as *little Children*, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

" Whosoever

" Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this *little Child*, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." In this View the Argument is conclusive: For if Children have some Dispositions, in which even Men must resemble and imitate them, before they can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; then certainly Children are capable of being brought to Jesus, and it is their Duty to come to him.

You see, my dear Children and Youth, that you have a Right, and that it is your Duty, to come to Jesus. Therefore, oh! come to him: come to him this very Day, without Delay.

BUT here, I hope, you start a very proper Question, "What is it to come to Christ? or in what Sense are we to understand this Phrase, as it may be applied to us now, since he is removed from our World?"

COMING to Christ, in my Text, did indeed mean a bodily Motion to him: And this was practicable, while he tabernacled in Flesh among Men. But even then, it signified much *more*. It signified coming to him as a divine Teacher, to receive Instruction; as a Saviour, to obtain eternal Life; and as the only Mediator, through whom guilty Sinners might have Access to God. It signified a Motion of Soul towards him, correspondent to the bodily Motion of coming: A Motion of the Desires, a Flight of tender Affections towards him. In this View it is still practicable to come to Christ; and it is our Duty in these latter Days, as much as it was theirs who were his Contemporaries

