

Berean Notes on the Lesson.

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I. GENERAL STATEMENT.

Jesus teaches that little children are subjects of the kingdom of God. He shows how to gain eternal life.

II. NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Topic: "Except ye become as little children."

1. THE CHILDREN REJECTED BY THE DISCIPLES, ver. 13. (1.) *The occasion.* THEN. After Christ's discourse on marriage. Matt. xix. 1-12. Jesus was in Perea, (east of Jordan,) on his way to Jerusalem, a short time before his crucifixion, surrounded by self-righteous Pharisees. (2.) *The rejected.* CHILDREN. "Infants." Luke xviii. 15. Innocent. Teachable. Without guile, malice, or envy. Free from pride or covetousness. Humble. BROUGHT. By loving parents. (3.) *The rejectors.* DISCIPLES. Feeling their self-importance, they infer that little children are of no consequence to Christ. Heathens have little regard for childhood. The "Rabbis taught that children perished like brutes."—*Lightfoot.*

A child is a man in small letter, yet the best copy of Adam before he tasted the apple. His soul is yet a white paper, unscrubbed with observations of the world wherewith it becomes at length a blurred note-book.—*Bishop Erie.*

2. THE CHILDREN BLESSED BY THE SAVIOUR, vers. 14, 15. (1.) *Children subjects of God's kingdom.* SUFFER. FORBID NOT. Not only do not hinder them, but make it easy for them to COME UNTO ME. OF SUCH SPIRITS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Acts ii. 39. Children are doubtless more numerous than adults in heaven. Children part of Church in Old Testament dispensation. Deut. xxix. 10, 11; Isa. xlv. 3. (2.) *The blessing of love.* The imposition of Christ's hands symbolical. Gen. xlviii. 14; Num. xxvii. 18; Lev. xvi. 21. Conveyed the influence of grace to the heart. Godly parents will bring their little ones to Jesus for his blessing. A faithful Church gives constant attention to childhood.

I have during the past year received forty or fifty children into Church-membership. Among those I have had at any time to exclude from Church-fellowship, out of a Church of twenty-seven hundred members, I have never had to exclude a single one who was received while yet a child.

Teachers and superintendents should not merely believe in the possibility of early conversion, but in the frequency of it.—*Spurgeon.*

3. THE YOUNG MAN'S INQUIRY, ver. 16. (1.) *The questioner.* ONE. A "young man," ver. 20. A "ruler;" "very rich," Luke xviii. 18, 23. Compare John vii. 48. "Running," Mark x. 17. (2.) *Longing for eternal life.* The soul longs for immortality. This rich ruler purposes to DO some GOOD THING whereby to gain ETERNAL LIFE.

There is, I know not how, in the minds of men, a certain presage, as it were, of a future existence; and this takes the deepest root, and is most discoverable in the greatest geniuses and most exalted souls.—*Cicero.*

4. THE SAVIOUR'S ANSWER, verses 17-21. (1.) *Motives searched.* WHY? The Ruler had called Jesus GOOD through respect, courtesy, and admiration. MASTER. Flatteringly—not with faith in Christ's Messiahship. The young man is honest, but self-righteous. "If I am only master, why call me good? If I am God, why call me Master? Why not call me God? for there is none good but God."—*Wordsworth.* (2.) *The way of life.* KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS. Obedience to the law of God. "To obey is better than sacrifice." 1 Sam. xv. 22. Saved "by grace.. through faith ..not of works." Eph. ii. 8, 9. (3.) *Near to the kingdom.* ALL THESE...KEPT. Jesus said to him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Mark xii. 34. A "moral" man a vastly better citizen than an immoral one. (4.) *Condition of following Jesus.* To follow Jesus one must LACK nothing in purity of motive. The young man had not kept at least two of the commandments. Loved himself more than his God or his neighbor. Had not been PERFECT in his obedience. Overestimated himself. His conscience demanded something he knew not what. GO..SELL. Had "great possessions." Seemingly Christ makes a great demand. Analyzed it means: Prefer Christ to self, to wealth, to all things.

Though good works may be our Jacob's staff to walk with on earth, yet they cannot be our Jacob's ladder to climb to heaven with. To lay the save of our services upon the wound of our sins is as if a man who is stung by a wasp should wipe his face with a nettle; or as if a person should busy himself in supporting a tottering fabric with a burning fire-brand.—*Secker.*