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INFANTS BROUGHT TO JESUS.

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Matthew, 19th Chap., 13 and 14.

This is one of those beautiful and suggestive incidents with which the great biography abounds. It sheds a pleasing light on the character of Jesus and on the genius of that dispensation which He came to establish. The scene is tender and touching, and the aspect in which Jesus, the world's redeemer, here appears, has attracted and consoled parental hearts through long successive ages. It is not, however, pictorial moral beauty and the sentiment which it naturally awakens in Christian minds with which we have now to do, but our proper business is the exegesis of the text, and the deductions of its corollaries, both doctrinal and practical. This interesting event is recorded by three of the evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, with slight circumstantial variety and one or two important additions on the part of Mark and Luke to which we shall advert as we proceed.

I. *Who were brought to Jesus?* The young, or according to Matthew and Mark, "little children," the original term signifying not youths but the diminutive denoting mere children or infants. Luke uses the term rendered infants or babes. It is the same which he had used for "the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in the manger," and which Peter, in his first epistle, uses when he speaks of "new-born babes." They were infants apparently brought in arms, and which Jesus took up in His arms. I call special attention to this point because a popular preacher in England, and an amiable writer in the same country have recently attempted to show, or rather assumed, that they are not mere infants, but little children capable of instruction who are referred to in this passage. There does not appear the shadow of a reason for such an interpretation in the text or context. Everything said and done by those who brought them, by the disciples who opposed their being brought, and by Jesus to whom they were brought, as well as the plain import of the terms by which they are designated as "little children," infants or babes, forbids such an idea. It is a notion brought to the text and not brought out of it.

II. *By whom were they brought?*—We may answer this by saying they were brought by loving parents or friends, to one who was regarded as a great Rabbi or prophet sent from God, that he might bless them. There is nothing certainly indicated regarding the religious character of the parties. Whether those who brought these little children were pious Hebrews or believers in the Messiahship of Jesus or in His God-sent character at all, or whether they were merely influenced by custom and the example of others we have no information. There would be in the appearance and demeanour of Jesus, not merely the evidence of transcendent sanctity, but also such a radiation of kindness and tenderness and