

Let them so live, through the merits of the grace of Christ, that he may say of them at last, "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels;

and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

"And the Grace of God Was Upon Him."

The Youth's Instructor, September 8, 1898

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

What is John's testimony concerning Christ?—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and that life was the light of men.... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," Christ declared, "because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Christ wrought miracle after miracle when he was on this earth. In this work he showed what God can do for afflicted bodies and souls. This work he began when he was but a child. His whole being, pure and undefiled, was given to the Lord. Luke testifies of him, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."

When Christ was twelve years old, he went with his parents to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Passover, and on their return he was lost in the multitude. After Joseph and Mary had searched for him for three days, they found him in the court of the temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." He asked his questions with a grace that charmed these learned men. He was a perfect pattern for all youth. Ever he manifested deference and respect for age. The religion of Jesus will never lead any child to be rude and uncourteous.

When Joseph and Mary found Jesus, they were amazed, "and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me?" Pointing heavenward, he continued, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" As he spoke these words, divinity flashed through humanity. The light and glory of heaven illuminated his countenance. But "they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and

came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart."

Christ did not enter upon his public ministry for eighteen years after this, but he was constantly ministering to others, improving every opportunity offered him. Even in his childhood he spoke words of comfort and tenderness to young and old. His mother could not but mark his words, his spirit, his willing obedience to all her requirements.

It is not correct to say, as many writers have said, that Christ was like all children. He was not like all children. Many children are misguided and mismanaged. But Joseph, and especially Mary, kept before them the remembrance of their child's divine Fatherhood. Jesus was instructed in accordance with the sacred character of his mission. His inclination to right was a constant gratification to his parents. The questions he asked them led them to study most earnestly the great elements of truth. His soul-stirring words about nature and the God of nature opened and enlightened their minds.

On the rocks and knolls about his home the eye of the Son of God often rested. He was familiar with the things of nature. He saw the sun in the heavens, the moon and the stars fulfilling their mission. With the voice of singing he welcomed the morning light. He listened to the lark caroling forth music to its God, and joined his voice with the voice of praise and thanksgiving. "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: sing forth the honor of his name: make his praise glorious. Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men." This psalm and portions of the sixty-eighth and seventy-second psalms were often sung by Christ. Thus in the most simple and unassuming way he taught others.

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." He was an example of what all children may strive to be if parents will seek the Lord most earnestly, and if children will co-operate with their parents. In his words and actions he manifested tender sympathy for all. His companionship was as a healing, soothing balm to the disheart-

ened and depressed.

No one, looking upon the childlike countenance, shining with animation, could say that Christ was just like other children. He was God in human flesh. When urged by his companions to do wrong, divinity flashed through humanity, and he refused decidedly. In a moment he distinguished between right and wrong, and placed sin in the light of God's commands, holding up the law as a mirror which reflected light upon wrong. It was this keen discrimination between right and wrong that often provoked Christ's brothers to anger. Yet his appeals and entreaties, and the sorrow expressed in his countenance, revealed such a tender, earnest love for them that they were ashamed of having tempted him to deviate from his strict sense of justice and loyalty.

From childhood to manhood, Christ taught that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." He was the Truth. The Spirit of God was upon him. Why?—Because he did not by one act of disobedience separate himself from God. The grace of God was upon him, and he grew in favor with God and man. He lived a life of unceasing humiliation, and through it all his character was lovely. The peace of God was with him, and this peace was uninterrupted. In the sorrows of others he could always speak

peace to the soul; for his peace was the result of supreme rectitude and loyalty, and was completely his own. None could give it; none could take it away.

After his ascension, Christ revealed himself to Paul. As Paul beheld the glory of the Saviour's countenance, it was more than he could endure. He was stricken to the earth, and as he lay thus, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

By this revelation Paul was converted. Afterward when asked by the Pharisees, Who is this deceiver, that you should leave your brethren to believe in him? the Spirit of God came upon Paul, and he testified of Christ. His face was illuminated, as if the subject of their conversation was before them in his great majesty, and he answered, in the language of Isaiah: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me."

Christ's Example in Contrast With Formalism

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Of the Lord Jesus Christ in his youth the divine testimony is given, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." After the visit to Jerusalem in his boyhood, he returned with his parents, "and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

In the days of Christ the educators of the youth were formalists. During his ministry, Jesus declared to the rabbis, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." And he charged them with "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Tradition was dwelt upon, amplified, and revered far above the Scriptures. The sayings of men, and an endless round of ceremonies, occupied so large a share of the student's life, that the education which imparts a knowledge of God was neglected. The great teachers were continually enlarging upon little things, specifying every detail to be observed in the ceremonies of religion, and making its observance a matter of highest obligation. They paid "tithes of mint and anise and cummin," while they "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." Thus there was brought in a mass of rubbish that hid from the view of the youth, the great essentials of the service of God.

In the educational system there was no place for that personal experience in which the soul learns for itself the

power of a "Thus saith the Lord," and gains that reliance upon the divine word which alone can bring peace and power with God. Busied with the round of forms, the students in these schools found no quiet hours in which to commune with God and hear his voice speaking to their hearts. That which the rabbis regarded as superior education was in reality the greatest hindrance to true education. It was opposed to all real development. Under their training, the powers of the youth were repressed, and their minds were cramped and narrowed.

The brothers and sisters of Jesus were taught the multitudinous traditions and ceremonies of the rabbis, but Christ could not be induced to interest himself in these matters. While hearing on every hand the reiterated "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," he moved independently of these restrictions. The requirements of society and the requirements of God were ever in collision, and while in his youth he made no direct attack upon the customs or precepts of the learned teachers, he did not be-