

## **JESUS' EARLY LIFE**

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“What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He?” The reply was, “The Son of David,” and this was correct; for when Gabriel foretold to Mary the birth of Jesus, he said: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David.” Luke 1:32.

But here comes a puzzling question, which silenced the unbelieving Jews, who had admitted that Christ is the Son of David:—

“How then doth David in Spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son?” Matt. 22:42-45.

How?—Because it is a fact that the Son of David is Lord of all; David could not do otherwise than call Him Lord. But if it be asked, “How can it be that Jesus is both David’s Son and his Lord?” the answer must remain with God, who alone knows the mysteries of miracles.

The wonder is not exhausted, however, for just as David’s Son is David’s Lord, so our Lord is our Son; “for 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, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His Government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.” Isa. 9:6, 7.

But not even yet has the depth of the mystery been set forth. Christ is David’s Son and David’s Lord, and our Lord also, and our Son; but He is at the same time the Son of God and the Son of man. He was “born of a woman, born under the law” (Gal. 4:4), yet He was the Son of God sent forth into the world. When Mary asked by what means she, a virgin, should bring forth a Son, the angel replied: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Luke 1:35.

In Luke the genealogy of Christ is traced back through David, the son of Jesse, Jacob, Abraham, to “Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.” Luke 3:23-38. Adam, the first man, in

whom were all the human beings that have since lived on this earth, was “the son of God,” so that it is not merely from the fact that Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Son of God, but also because He is the Son of Adam, that is, “the Son of man.” The truth contained in this simple statement has power to lift every man born of a woman into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Still again: In the garden of Eden, just after the first pair had sinned, God said to the serpent: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head.” Gen. 3:15. The Seed of the woman is not merely to be delivered from Satan’s power, but is to crush his head—to destroy him. But who is the Seed of the woman?—It is Christ, you say. Undoubtedly; but the term is unlimited, and therefore it applies to every child born of a woman, whose faith grasps it. The seed of the woman is the seed of Abraham; and “if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Gal. 3:29. So it is given to every son of man to crush Satan? Yes; have you never read, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly?” Rom. 16:20. Christ had to become flesh and blood, like the children of men, in order “that He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Heb. 2:14. He has “authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man” (John 5:27), and “this honor have all His saints.” Ps. 144:5-9.

### **THE FIRSTBORN**

For He is “the firstborn among many brethren.” He is in all things like them, only as firstborn He has in all things the pre-eminence. “But His birth was supernatural,” you say, “for He was born of the Spirit.” Ah, how little we know that what we call the natural is supernatural; we are so familiar with the phenomena of birth, that we forget that nobody understands the mystery of it. Christ was born of the Spirit, but even in this He was “like unto His brethren,” for Elihu says: “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” Job. 33:4. Ever since the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters, and brought order out of chaos, there has not been any manifestation of life that has not been that of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God in every man’s nostrils (Job 27:3) has kept him in life, and given him power even to wage rebellion against his Maker if he would.

Remember that miracles are God’s ordinary work. He never goes out of His way to do anything. When God fed the Israelites in the

desert with bread from heaven, it was only that they and we might ever remember that the bread which we make from corn is also rained down from heaven. See Ps. 65:9-11; Isa. 4:10. When Christ turned the water into wine, at the wedding in Cana, He merely shortened the ordinary process, omitting some of the intermediate agencies, to let us know that he is the True Vine. The grape vine takes up water by its roots, and in the course of months of sunshine it becomes wine. Christ had the life which supplies light to the sun, so He did in a moment the work that He commonly does in months. In miracles God is not doing something extraordinary, for the purpose of astonishing us, but by leaving out the usual agencies, is letting us see that He is the power that is working and accomplishing the result, even when the ordinary time and agencies are employed.

So in the miraculous birth of Christ, by dispensing with the ordinary agency in the birth, God would demonstrate to us that the human agent is but the channel of the Divine creative life. He shows us how completely the Spirit ought to control in every birth. In the case of John the Baptist (Luke 1:15) and Isaac (Gal. 4:23, 28, 29) we see this exemplified when the ordinary agencies were present.

The world was lost. Millions of human beings were serving in cruel bondage, toiling in the most abject, degrading slavery, sold for nothing, with only death offered as the reward of their labor. The Son of God, in His Father's house in heaven, looked down in pity on them, and said, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." Heb. 2:11. He was not ashamed to call them brethren. They had lost the knowledge of God, and so were going to destruction, because just as to know Him is life eternal, so not to know Him is everlasting death; they did not know that God is the Father of all, and Christ came to make known to them their birthright. The "Son of the Highest" came as the child of the lowest; the Son of God was born of a woman, and thus henceforth was not ashamed to hold his original title by virtue of the fact that He was the Son of man.

#### **THE "LAW OF HEREDITY"**

Do you think it was nothing that He was sinless? You who talk of "heredity," and who sink down in indifference or despair because you had sinful men for your ancestors, give your thought to Him "who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh." Rom. 1:3. He was descended from Adam, as we all are, and all that was evil in human nature seemed to be concentrated in His ancestry. That ancestry included Phares, who was the child of prostitution and incest; it takes

in the harlot Rahab; David is most prominent in it, and the woman with whom he committed adultery was the mother of the line that reached from him to Christ. Farther down in that line we find Jehoram, the fratricide, who, by reason of his excessive wickedness, died a loathsome death, despised by his people; Ahaziah, whose “mother was his counselor to do wickedly,” and who “did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab,” of whom it was said, “there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord” (1 Kings 21:25); Ahaz, who did “according to the abomination of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel” (2 Kings 16:3); and Manasseh who “seduced Israel” to do “more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel,” and who “shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another.” 2 Kings 21:16. If you knew of such wickedness among your forefathers you would try to conceal it, and would say that you could not possibly be expected to be sinless with such an inheritance; yet Christ of His own free will had all the weakness and wickedness of His ancestry set forth for all generations to read; and He “knew no sin.” How could He be spotless with such a godless ancestry?—It was all due to His miraculous birth.

Yes; and He who knew no sin was “made to be sin for us,” “that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:12. That is, He restores to all who will have it, their birthright.

Yet more: He opens up to us the way of life, showing us not only how we may take our rightful place as sons of God, as pure as though we had never sinned, inheriting our nature direct from God, as pure as though we had never sinned, instead of from sinful flesh, but by His birth He shows what ought to be and may be the privilege of every child born of godly parents. Do you doubt it? you will not, when you have meditated long upon what it means to live in the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit; to have only the mind and will of God, and to yield the body as the holy temple of the Spirit of God, so that all the members are only instruments of His righteousness. When parents are in that state, then it must be that their children will be “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13); and to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord will be like training the flowers of Eden. It will be the same miracle that would have been manifest in every birth, if sin had not

brought the curse; but “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,” so that the life of Jesus may be perfectly manifested even in mortal flesh. He frees us from “the corruption that is in the world through lust,” and makes us “partakers of the Divine nature.”

“And His name shall be called Wonderful.” That is the name of the Child that is born to us, and the Son that is given to us. How wonderful He is, it will take all eternity to unfold.

Jesus is the ladder that reaches from earth to heaven, the bridge over the gulf between man and God, the bond that makes the two one. The strength and joy and blessing of the Gospel have been lost to thousands of earnest seekers after rest in God, because they, through Pagan and Papal teaching in the professed church of Christ, have regarded the bridge which God Himself has provided, as an impassable gulf, and the ladder as unapproachable. Let us learn by Him to draw near to God, that we may realize our rightful place as sons of God, loved in equal measure with Him “whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.”

Strange as it at first appears to most people, Christ is never truly revered until He is recognized as one with us. Every form and act of worship which does not proceed from a knowledge of Christ as one with humanity, in all things like unto His brethren, and of “God with us” in Him, is but some grade of idolatry. He is our Brother, and although He “is passed into the heavens,” it is only as “the Forerunner”—the member of the family, who has gone before to prove our claim, and to demonstrate the right of human beings to the inheritance of the everlasting kingdom of God—to a place on the throne of the Lord, among the princes of His people. The title by which Christ always makes Himself known is “the Son of man.” “God sent forth His Son, born of a woman.”

Remember that Christ did not come to this earth to inaugurate some new order of things, but to reveal “that which was from the beginning.” His name is called Wonderful, because childhood is itself wonderful, and is a reality only in Him. Do not be frightened, thinking that we are dishonoring Christ, in applying the name “Wonderful” to all children. Although He is “made higher than the heavens,” He is still “the firstborn among many brethren,” and though the Government be upon His shoulder, he shares the burden with all His brethren. He is a Kingly Priest, after the order of Melchizedek, but we also are created to be “a royal priesthood.”

It is not with the advent of Jesus in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago, that childhood became wonderful; that was only that men might clearly see, and learn to appreciate, the wonder. Christ was manifest in the flesh, in order that mankind might learn the worth of humanity, and not merely of humanity in general, but of every individual human soul. From the beginning some souls had received clearness of vision to enable them to see into the innermost sanctuary,—God's worship,—and grasp the eternal mystery. One of these was David, who in words that every person ought to be able to use as his own, said:—

“Thou hast formed my reins;

Thou hast knit me together in my mother's womb.

I will give thanks unto Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

Wonderful are Thy works;

And that my soul knoweth right well.

My frame was not hidden from Thee,

When I was made in secret,

And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance,

And in Thy book were all my members written,

Which day by day were fashioned,

When as yet there was none

of them.”—Ps. 139:13-16, R.V., margin.

Even though the child have not the inestimable privilege of being well born, the birth is none the less wonderful, and the human infant is the most wonderful of all the marvelous works which God has made, through which to make know His “everlasting power and Divinity.” Whatever the disadvantages of birth, they are all overcome in the new birth; and whatever the failure of the parents before the birth of the child, it is their privilege and duty to cooperate with the Holy Spirit's work of begetting him anew, by bringing him up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

According to that which is “written in the law of the Lord,” Jesus was formally presented and dedicated to the Lord at the age of six weeks. Luke 2:23. By Moses God had said, “The firstborn of thy sons thou shalt give to Me.” Ex. 22:29. “For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are Mine, both man and beast; on the day that I smote every firstborn in Egypt I sanctified them for Myself.” Num. 8:17.

It is not, however, the firstborn only that belong to the Lord. He says: "Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine." Eze. 18:4. The firstborn were specially set apart to Him at the departure from Egypt, because on that night all the firstborn in Egypt were destroyed, except those of the families that had the blood of the passover lamb sprinkled on the doorposts. That was a representation of the destruction of all the wicked, and a lesson to the effect that only those who are covered by the life of "Christ our passover" (1 Cor. 5:7) can be saved.

On that occasion the firstborn stood for all. They alone were destroyed on that night, but all the children of Egypt perished in the Red Sea a few days later, even as all who do not repent will perish; and not only the first born, but all the children of Israel who trusted in the Lord were saved, even as "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Of the time when all the wicked shall be destroyed, we read, "At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people. Thus saith the Lord, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Jer. 31:1-3.

#### **ALL FIRSTBORN IN CHRIST**

Further, the Levites were chosen and set apart to take the place of the firstborn, in the service of the temple. Num. 8:12. But all whom Christ looses from their sins in His own blood, are made not only priests, but kings. Rev. 1:5, 6. God's choice among His people is not one single family or tribe; but to all He says: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (a people for God's own possession); that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." 1 Peter 2:9. So the infant Jesus was dedicated to the service of God, not alone to show that all children, last-born as well as first born, should be devoted to God, but to make such sanctification possible. "Ye are complete in Him."

But this dedication of the child to the Lord, which should be done in its earliest infancy, is not the work of but a single hour. The human house, God's temple, complete though it be at the very beginning when first dedicated, is constantly growing, and therefore needs a new consecration every day, indeed every hour. The adult can

dedicate himself to God, even though it has never been done for him by his parents; and he can renew his consecration day by day; but the parents must devote the child, and on them devolves the duty of keeping the dedication complete; and to the extent that they fail in this is the way made more difficult for him in after life.

### **THE POSSIBILITIES OF CHILDHOOD**

How few parents appreciate the wondrous trust committed to them, and the grave responsibilities resting on them with the little child. Leaving out the question those who regard it as an unwelcome intruder come to rob them of selfish pleasure and self-gratification, it is a fact that most of those who welcome the advent of the newborn babe with joy, regard it for months of its life more as a plaything than as a sacred gift from God, to be given to God. How few there are who think that the serious education of the child should begin with the first days of its life, and never end.

People are most astonishingly blind concerning the receptiveness of their own children. They would feel deeply affronted if anyone should intimate that their child was lacking in intelligence, yet they themselves will not give it credit for having as much quickness of perception as the family dog. All sorts of nonsense is talked to it, and in fact it scarcely ever hears anything else. Then all its winning little ways are noted and freely commented upon in its presence, and it is constantly being stimulated to show them off, especially before company. All this is done in seeming total unconsciousness that not only are valuable opportunities being neglected; but impressions are being made that can be effaced only at the expense of much effort, and which may cause lifelong pain and sorrow to the innocent victim of the vanity and ignorance of its parents.

Now it is a fact that not only no other creature, but no adult human being, has so clear perceptive faculties or so vast a power of comprehension as a child. At no other period of one's life does one learn so much as in the first two years. Within that period, or by the end of the third year, at most, the child learns a language, and in many cases two, or even three, without any difficulty, besides accumulating by observation a great store of facts. No naturalist ever observes so closely, or to so good purpose, as a little child. The deep things of God, which are hid from the wise and prudent, are revealed unto babes (Matt. 11:25); yet most parents seem to think that it is impossible to make any religious impressions on the mind of a child under three or four years of age, or that its whole life may be



permanently shaped before that age. Indeed, very few give it a thought.

We do not of course mean that a child of tender years should be drilled in theological dogma; for that is not necessarily religious teaching even for an adult; but the parents who know the Lord as a personal Friend, and who have learned to recognize the Life, as it is manifested, and who also appreciate the almost infinite possibilities in the soul committed to their keeping, will learn of the God who has entrusted His child to their care, how to order the child, and what they shall do to it. In Christ all things are possible, for He is set forth as "*the Man*," the example for all other lives, the measure of their possibilities, and the means for their fulfillment.

LONG before the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten and beloved Son of God, came into the world as a little baby and lived here as a little child, the prophet Isaiah had written of Him, "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." Isaiah 53:2.

Nazareth, the city where Mary and Joseph lived when Jesus was a boy, was a place with such a bad reputation, and so many wicked people lived there, that when Nathanael heard first of Jesus of Nazareth, he said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" John 1:46. He could hardly believe that Jesus of Nazareth could be the Son of God, the Seed so long promised and expected.

Growing in such a soil, in the midst of such surroundings, Jesus was indeed as a "root out of a dry ground." But the power of God's own holy life was in this Seed, and nothing but purity and beauty could spring from Him. In the midst of sinners, He lived, even as a child, a life of perfect purity, "holy, harmless, and undefiled."

"From His earliest years Christ lived a life of toil. In His youth He worked with His father at the carpenter's trade, and thus showed that there is nothing of which to be ashamed in work. Though He was the King of Heaven, yet He worked at a humble trade, and thus rebuked all idleness in human beings. All work done as Christ did His work is noble and honorable. Those who are idle do not follow the example that Christ us given; for us from His childhood He was a pattern of obedience and industry.

"He was as a pleasant sunbeam in the home circle. Faithfully cheerfully He acted His part, doing the humble duties that He was called to do in His lowly life, Christ became one with us in order that He might do us good. He lived such a life of poverty and labor as

would help the poor to understand that He could sympathize with them.”

“He did not choose to be the son of a rich man, or to be in a position where men would praise and flatter Him. He passed through the hardships of those who toil for a living, and He could comfort all those, who have to work at some humble trade. Those who know the kind of life Christ lived can never feel that the poor are to be despised, and that those who are rich are better than the humble.”

All the beauty of this “tender plant” was just the unfolding of the precious Seed of which we have already learned, just as the flower is the unfolding and opening out of the seed that we sow in the ground. So when Jesus the Seed comes into your hearts, (and He has promised to do this if you ask Him,) this same life will unfold in you just as it did in Him when He dwelt in Nazareth. So as you read of the child life of Jesus, how He was obedient to His parents, and anxious to learn the Word of God from those whom He had appointed to teach it how He “waxed strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him;” how He helped His father in the carpenter’s shop, and “increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man;” in all this God is teaching you what you too will be if this precious Seed is allowed to spring up in your heart. Like Jesus you will “grow up before Him as a tender plant,” and no matter what your outward surroundings may be, like Him you will be “holy, harmless and undefiled,” kept from the evil that is around you.

**Luke 2:41-62.**

THE visit of Jesus to Jerusalem when He was twelve years of age is the only recorded incident in His life from infancy to His baptism at the age of thirty, yet it throws a flood of light on the scene, and makes us feel as well acquainted with the youth of Jesus as we possibly could by means of any ordinary biography.

**INCREASING IN WISDOM**

VERSE 40 tells us that “the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.” Those who have the Revised Version will see by the marginal reading that, according to the literal Greek text, He grew and waxed strong, “becoming full of wisdom.” He was in no respect different from other children, except in submission to authority, to those immediately over Him, and to the Word of God. He was not born with all the wisdom which He afterwards exhibited, any more than He was born with a

man's stature and strength. There are those who would have us believe that all men are born with all the wisdom that they will ever have, and that education consists merely in drawing it out of them,—an idea as absurd as it is dishonoring to God; but while comparatively few believe that piece of nonsense, very many seem to think that it is true of Jesus Christ,—that He differed from everybody else, in that He never had to learn anything. The Scripture tells us that “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature.” Luke 2:52. No one would think of such a thing as a child born into the world six feet tall; but that would not be nearly so marvelous as a child born into the world with a man's wisdom. The latter would be a monstrosity indeed.

AT twelve years of age the Jewish child becomes a man ecclesiastically. No synagogue can be formed unless there were ten men, no matter how many women and children there may be. While this was not necessarily the case in the time of Jesus, the custom has probably arisen from the fact that it was at that age that the males first presented themselves in the temple before the Lord, according to the requirement of the law. See Ex. 23:17. After this time Jesus undoubtedly went up to Jerusalem every year, but this is especially mentioned because it was the first occurrence.

#### **A LESSON FOR PARENTS**

THE feast was over, and the people were on their way home. Joseph and Mary missed Jesus from their side, but gave themselves no concern over the matter, supposing Him to be with some of their acquaintances. But when after a day's journey they saw nothing of Him, they began to be alarmed, and, not finding Him with any of their friends in the company, they returned to Jerusalem, where another day was spent in search. To His mother's reproving words, “Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing;” He replied, “How is it that ye sought Me?” Luke 2:48, 49.

Surely in these words and in this record we have a lesson for parents. It was most certainly recorded for their learning. The lesson to be learned is that parents should know where their children are. “How is it that ye sought Me?” Sure enough; if they had been mindful of their duty in the first instance, they would not have needed to seek Him. That He was in no danger, and exposed to no special temptation, was not due to their care. The place for every child is with its parents, and every hour of the day and night the parents should know where it is, supposing or even knowing that a child is with

“kinsfolk and acquaintance,” does not relieve parents of their responsibility. Many a child has been ruined, or has at least acquired habits that required much discipline to overcome, by making what we supposed to be the most innocent visits. Parents cannot be too jealous in their watchfulness as to their children’s associates. Nobody can take the place of the parent, and nobody should be expected to while the parent is alive. Nobody else can be expected to have the same watchful interest in the child that the parent has. No right-minded person will resent such watchfulness on the part of the parent, and no true parent will begrudge the time and trouble. Too much trouble to look so closely after children? Ah! how few parents understand that they themselves are the chief gainers by their care for their children. In bringing up children in a proper manner, the parents get most valuable discipline, and learn far more than the children do. The parent who does not learn more from his child than his child does from him, does not do his duty, or is very dull. Keep watch of the children! You need the discipline as much as they do.

#### **THE WISDOM OF A CHILD**

“THEY found Him in 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.” Luke 2:46, 47.

It is not uncommon to see a representation of this, entitled, “Jesus disputing with the doctors.” Nothing could be farther from the truth. Jesus was the manifestation of God; God is love; and love “doth not behave itself unseemly;” but it would be most unseemly for a child of twelve years to dispute with old men. He was listening attentively, and asking questions, not for the purpose of puzzling the doctors and showing His skill, but for the purpose of learning; and He was also modestly answering their questions. This would be becoming in any child. He was “sitting in the midst of the doctors,” at their feet as a learner (Acts 22:2); and not standing as an instructor.

THE people were amazed at His understanding and answers. Here again is where most readers of this narrative fail to learn the lesson that is intended for them. They take it for granted that Jesus was an anomaly, “an exceptionally forward child,” and that no other child of twelve could be expected to know as much as He did. All this is a mistake. It is no doubt true that very few, if any, other children have ever manifested the same wisdom and understanding at the age of twelve that Jesus had does not signify that they could not, He was made “like unto His brethren” in all things, in order that in all things

His brethren might be made like unto Him. Not only in His suffering, but in every act of life. He was "leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps." 1 Peter 2:21. Jesus showed just the wisdom that any well-trained child ought to show. He was a child as well as a man in order that children as well as men may live and be saved by His life. His life perfected in a child today will make that child even such as He was.

ALL that heard Him were astonished, but they ought not to have been. That is, if the Word of God had been heeded by them as it should have been, such things would have been common; it would not have been thought an extraordinary occurrence. It is a thousand pities and a burning shame that such wisdom is still so uncommon. If Christians had read this part of the record of the life of Jesus to profit, it would not be an uncommon thing for children to know as much of truth as most doctors of divinity do. And what then of the older people? Why, they would of course know correspondingly more.

GOD has revealed unto babes things that have been hid from the wise and prudent, and therefore we do often find children "wise beyond their years," as it is mistakenly said. No child is ever wise beyond his years, but thousands are less wise than they ought to be at any given age. And whenever a child does manifest some degree of the wisdom and understanding that God designs that every child should have, most people who see him are so ill-advised as to talk and act as though he were a prodigy, until his wisdom is in danger of becoming foolishness. The child that before was simple and natural, now supposing that he knew anything unusual becomes pert and self-conscious, and imagines that everybody in admiring him, or that if they are not they ought to be, and will take pains to attract attention to his supposed superior wisdom, which by that very act he loses. It is most pitiful that most people, by their failure to understand how much a child ought to know, directly hinder the advancement of children in knowledge. There is need to learn of the Lord Jesus.

#### **THE SOURCE OF THE WISDOM**

THE wonder exhibited by those who heard the child Jesus in the temple wait the same as that afterward manifested by those who heard Him teach as a man. They said, "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" Matt. 13:54. "Is not this the carpenter's Son?" And again, "Is not this the Carpenter?" Mark 6:7. Yet He knew no more than any carpenter may know. He Himself has told us the secret of His wisdom and power. "I do nothing of Myself;

but as My Father hath taught Me. I speak these things.” John 8:28. “The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me. He doeth the works.” John 14:10. He who said, “If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John 14:33. “Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.” Verse 12. “For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” Prov. 2:6. That was the Word that dwelt in Christ. Then “let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” Col. 3:16.

ALL that Jesus knew He learned from the Word of God. Bear in mind that at that time the Old Testament Scriptures were all that existed. But it was not by simply poring over the leaves of the Bible, that Jesus got His wisdom. That is the Word of God, yet the Word of God would not be diminished in the least if every Bible were sought out and burned. Men’s knowledge of the Word would be interfered with, but the Word would abide just the same, unharmed, The Word of God, which teaches wisdom is spread over the face of all nature. Every leaf of the forest helps to make God’s great Book. Here Jesus learned, and it is from the Book that is open to the poorest, and is plain to the most unlettered, that Jesus taught the people. Yet everything that may be learned in all creation, is epitomized in the Bible. Just because Christians have not appreciated the Bible, has there been so great a mass of “science falsely so called” accepted in the Church as true wisdom. No school that ignores God’s written and living Word can ever make a scholar equal to the man who may never have studied in the schools, but who has lived by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

THE reason why the people were so astonished at the understanding of Jesus was that He held to the simple Word of God, while they knew nothing but the tradition of men. They were great sticklers to custom: He wished to know only what was right. The doctors dealt in imagination—the product of their own heads; Jesus held to facts—the infinite thoughts of God. Truth is simple, and very easy to comprehend; it is only man’s envelopment of it with speculation, that has made it seem obscure. The Word of God is light (Ps. 119:105), and the opening of it given light; “it giveth understanding to the simple.” Ps. 119:130. On Christ rested “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might,

the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; making Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord” (Isa. 11:2, 3); but the same Spirit is given freely to all who wish to receive in order to obey wisdom in seeking men, and begging them to accept her. She “crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scoring, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at My reproof; behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you.” Prov. 1:20-23. Whoever will heed the reproofs of the Lord, and profit by them, will have wisdom that this world knows nothing about.

### **THE FATHER’S BUSINESS**

“WIST ye not that I must be about My Father’s business!” said Jesus when His parents found Him in the temple. “And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.” Although He was but a child, He knew that He was a child of God, and He knew His Father’s will. Yet He was not puffed up by His knowledge; of course not, because whoever has the wisdom that comes from above, and who knows that it comes from above, and not from himself, cannot become puffed up or elated over it. People think it a strange thing that anybody should really know the will of the Lord, and what the Lord has for him to do, when the fact is that every child ought to know it.

WHAT was the Father’s business for the Child Jesus to attend to?—It was to be subject to His parents. He did not neglect His Father’s business in going down to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary, and being subject to them. “Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.” Col. 3:30. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.” Eph. 6:1. Most people think that if they go about their Father’s business, they must leave home, and engage in some “mission work.” Well, Jesus was charged with the greatest mission ever committed to any being and He discharged it faithfully; and He was never more the Saviour of the world than when He was in Nazareth subject to His parents. There is a lesson here for old and young. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” Eccl. 1:10. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Col. 3:17. This is to be about your Father’s business.

FINALLY: the sum of all that may be learned in this narrative is found in this: “The Word became flesh.” The Word was God, and God was

manifest in the flesh; but this was simply for a light to the world, that the same might be manifest in all men. "The Word of God is living and active, and sharper then any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow." Heb. 4:12. Take the Word as your guide, become full of it, eat it and assimilate it and thus it will become flesh, and you will not only know, but will do, the will of your Father which is in heaven.