

Jesus From The Cradle To The Grave

PERMIT me to call your attention to the 52nd verse of the 2nd chapter of the gospel as written by St. Luke, where you will read these words: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

The subject of this discourse is One who has endeared Himself to earth's children by ties that death cannot sever. He is considered by many as the hero of every struggle, and while we represent Him this evening as a humble ambassador, we wish to try to reflect some points that were prominent in His character and that won for Him the respect and love of the world which knew Him best. We desire to-night to present Jesus to you in His humanity. It has been taught that Jesus was conceived and born under such peculiar circumstances that He was altogether different from other people, that the weaknesses that were placed upon the sons of men were unknown to Him; that He was God and therefore could not do wrong, had no desire to err, and that it was impossible for Him to transgress law. It seems to me that if this were the proper position to occupy, Jesus would cease to be the example for us to follow. If on the start He was so far ahead of us in the race for immortality and eternal life, it is unreasonable for anyone to expect that we would ever reach the zenith by His side.

We have thought that the people of the world have oftentimes been discouraged when they have been commanded to come up and reflect the character and imitate the life of Christ. In their humanity, in their weakness, in their darkness, in their blindness they were expected to do that which a Divine One accomplished; but when we reflect upon the life of Jesus from the cradle to the grave, we see a different picture from that which has been represented to us in the years ago.

Birth of Christ.

Jesus was born a baby, a real, true baby. Those of you who wish to turn and read the history of His entrance into this world—read the love story that found its birth in the barn of Bethlehem—will discover that that baby was born as other babies; surrounded by poverty as other children. It is true that the conception of Christ is considered a mystery, that, we must lightly pass over to-night; but suffice it to say that priestcraft has thrown a mystery around it that the Bible has never warranted. While we admit that Jesus had no human father after the flesh, yet we believe His conception was the result of law known to God. Let us illustrate: When we desire bread to eat, we know there is a law by which we may obtain it. We prepare the soil, we sow the seed and wait for the rain and dew and mellow rays of the moon and the kisses of the sun to do their work, and by-and-by it grows and ripens and we harvest it, thresh it, grind it, bake it, and we have bread. When we desire wine from the grape, we have to plant the vine and watch it grow, and take the fruit and prepare it according to law; but when Jesus was here and wanted bread and desired wine, He understood a law by which He could call the elements together and organize them, by which He could accommodate the guests at the Galilean marriage feast, and the thousands spread upon the hills over against Bethsaida. He understood a law by which He could organize matter and produce bread and wine. So God by a higher law brought into the world that same One who is called the Holy One of God; but His birth