

love good more strongly than you now love it; you want to love it so much as never to love any sin better. But you want what neither others nor yourselves, by yourselves, can give you. "No man can come unto God unless God will draw him." You may say, "Perhaps He will not draw me, and therefore I never shall be able to come to Him." Nay, but hear His own promise:—"No father will give his son a stone when he asks for bread; and if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children"—if you know by experience how kind are your earthly parents, how much they would give up for your good, how carefully they would do all in their power to benefit you—"how much more shall your Father That is in heaven give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

Be assured that no request which you can make to the kindest of earthly fathers will ever be so sure to be readily granted as the request which you may make to your heavenly Father that He will teach you to love Him. Pray to Him constantly for His help to open your eyes and soften your hearts, and be sure that such prayers will not be in vain. Pray to Him to show you what He thinks of the evil that you are every day committing, and to make you think of it in the same manner, and depend upon it that you will judge of it, ere long, very differently from what you now do; and this is in your own power. You can, if you choose, bend your knees, and utter words to God; you can speak to Him in your hearts at certain seasons, whether you have opportunity to bend your knees or no. You can make a point of so speaking to Him every day—of forcing yourselves to do it, if you cannot do it willingly; and then if you go on in this way, merely resolving and practising to speak of God—I care not in how few words, so that they are the words of your own hearts, asking Him to be merciful to you, and to make you His own true children—he assured that the will and the love of His service will very soon be given to your prayers, and you will be brought by the Holy Spirit to know and to love the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

## II.—THE BOY JESUS.

Remember that when Christ took our nature upon Him, and went through every stage of human life to show us our peculiar duties in each, one of the only two things remarked of Him before he arrived at manhood is His dutiful regard to His parents—"He went down to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." The other thing recorded of Him is, that it was His pleasure to gain such knowledge as would fit Him for the discharge of His duty in active life hereafter. He was found by His parents in the temple,

"sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions." It is strangely mistaking the meaning of this account, and utterly destroying its usefulness, to call this, as some have done, "Christ's preaching in the temple;" as if, at twelve years old, and long before He had begun His ministry, He would have attempted to teach the authorized teachers of His country. The drift of the story is wholly different; it does not represent Him as doing what no one could imitate without presumption and folly, but as doing and feeling what all those of His age ought to do, and feel also. He was anxious to gain improvement, and took pains of His own accord to gain it. How often do you neglect it when it is brought before you, and every wish of your friends urge you to acquire it? He was interested in what He heard, and tried to get a thorough understanding of it. He did not only sit and hear what was said, as if that were of itself any use, but He wished to heed and profit by it. He was found hearing the doctors in the temple and asking them questions. If anything in what they said was too hard for Him—if He could not fully comprehend it, He asked for more explanation. He asked questions about it because He wished to know it. You will say, perhaps, that this was about religious subjects, and these are very different from common lessons. It is true it was about religious subjects, but it seems that it was with a view to His future calling in life; it was to gain that knowledge which afterwards shone forth so admirably in His own discourses, when, like the wise householder in His own parable, He brought forth out of His treasures things new and old, and made every object in nature, and every truth relating to human society and human character, serve the purposes of the kingdom of God. The point in the example is, that you should in youth gain the knowledge which may make you better and wiser men hereafter—which may enable you to glorify God in your generation by a wise and understanding heart, and an able and eloquent tongue—which, amidst the infinitely varied relations of society in our days, where there is scarcely a subject on which ignorance does not make us less useful, and knowledge more so, may enable you to ornament the common intercourse of life, and to direct with judgment its practical concerns, filling you with a lively perception and an ardent love of what is beautiful, of what is true, of what is good. After all, this must, in some degree, be a matter which you must at present be content to believe on the testimony of others. The object of education is to benefit your manhood, and you must therefore arrive at manhood before this benefit can be fully tasted or comprehended.—