

inestimable blessings, such a happy consummation, shall be brought about only as the new Ruler's sway is accepted and his commands obeyed. The British flag means British freedom, but that freedom—one of the treasures of earth—is enjoyed only by those who are loyal to the king and government which the flag represents. So the peace and emoluments of the Redeemer's kingdom can only be real as the king and government, the Christ and his will, become appropriated and are made dominant in the lives and affairs of men.

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Say something appropriate to the new topics and studies beginning this New Year. Show their interest and importance. Urge all to begin with renewed diligence the Bible study involved in the new topics now beginning. Remember the subject of study is "The Life of Christ." Our present topic deals with "The Expectation of the Messiah." Note the five points in the foregoing exposition: Where to begin, where the Ruler came, how the Ruler came, etc., and appoint five persons each to take and develop one of these points for the meeting. Make clear that the expectation of the Messiah is still an expectation unless he is accepted as Saviour, teacher and Lord. Exhort all thus to receive him.

IAN. 10.—THE INFLUENCE OF CHRIST IN THE HOME.

Luke. 2: 51; Eph. 6: 1, 9

The first recorded words of Jesus are the words spoken to Mary his mother, when she and Joseph found the Christ-boy in the temple after they had departed for their Nazareth home. Luke 2: 41-51. The words were: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Most significant words these. What did they imply?

1. They implied the consciousness of a divine vocation. Here is the solemn "must" of which we hear the echoes all through his after life. Sonship implies obedience, and the sense of sonship implies filial submission. This ideal grew in depth with his growing years, but here we have it clearly discerned as the guiding star of his life. Happy the boys and girls, the young men and young women, who feel not only the pressure of a law, but the hand of a Lawgiver, and who say, not reluctantly, but gladly, "I must."

2. These first recorded words of Jesus implied that all human ties were subordinate to his Father's will. The call to the Father's business was more imperative than the call to Mary's side. The dawning on the soul of that consciousness of supreme duty does not extinguish the light of filial duty to parents, nor darken the brightness of any of the sweet relationships of family and kindred. But it decidedly puts them second.

"MY FATHER'S BUSINESS," WHAT?

The Father's business on which he entered at twelve years of age, was not preaching, and working miracles, and going about doing good in a public manner. What was it, then? His Father's business for the time being was to remain at home in Nazareth with his parents, to be a dutiful child, a glad, hopeful youth, and an industrious growing man. If his affections attracted him to the temple, the voice of duty called him back to Nazareth, and to that voice he rendered implicit obedience. The veil that concealed his higher nature, after being for a moment lifted, was allowed to fall again and his normal life passed back into its former course.

"SUBJECT UNTO THEM."

There is something wonderful beyond measure in the thought of him unto whom all things are subject submitting to earthly parents. No such honor was ever done to men or angels as was now done to Joseph and Mary. He was "subject unto them." He rendered cheerful, willing obedience to righteous parental authority, and "increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." We do not read of any ambition in Jesus to be independent. We do not find him remonstrating or murmuring against the restraints of home and beginning to remind himself or others that the time had come for self-management, irrespective of paternal guidance. Shall not the son or daughter in a Christian home deem that good enough and great enough which a Saviour, who was also the Creator, thought happy enough and honorable enough for him?

A GREAT LESSON.

What a lesson of patient waiting for the wider sphere does Jesus teach the young people in this part of his life! Conscious of power, or often only stung by restlessness, some young people are inclined to think home a very contracted field and to despise its quiet monotony and chafe at its imposition of detailed obedience. Jesus Christ lived till he was thirty in a poor little village, buried among the hills, worked as a carpenter, did what his parents bade him, and was content till his "hour" came. Vanity, selfish ambition, proud independence, are always in a hurry to get away from the modest shelter of the parental roof, and make a mark in the world. But the true son is the more the son of Mary because he feels himself subject to God. He nourishes his pure spirit in sweet seclusion, not solitude, till the time comes for larger service in a wider sphere. The wider work in the meantime is quietly postponed for the narrower tasks.

His soul was like a star and dwelt apart. And yet his heart the lowliest duties on himself did lay!

GROWTH IN WISDOM.

Under such conditions as are here set forth, we might infer that the Christ-boy would grow in the best qualities of character.

1. His growth was real. His human nature must have had the inexperience and ignorance of childhood, and must have passed, in a normal manner, to wider knowledge and clearer self-consciousness. There is nothing to startle us in this conclusion. Growth does not imply imperfection. It only implies incompleteness and therefore development in time. The capacity of his human spirit increased, and therefore his wisdom increased.

2. His growth was steady. "He fulfilled his own law of growth"—first the content, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Most of us grow by fits and starts and in the wrong direction. In his growth there were no pauses, no sinful elements mingled, no powers unduly developed or deformed. His childhood had no failings and sins in it that could be retained abode with him in his manhood.

3. His growth in wisdom was by the use of means. Life taught him. Scripture taught him. Communion with his Father taught him. The heavens and the earth taught him. His own heart taught him. But the result of all those was a human character which had so perfectly assimilated them all that no trace of any particular influence appears in it. So, in lower fashion, to quote MacLaren's familiar genius uses all the outward means available, but is their master, not their servant.

A HELPFUL OUTLINE.

The mutual duties of children and parents. (Eph. 6: 1-3.)

1. Children are to obey and honor their parents: (a) Children owe to their parents an inward affection and regard. (b) They are to honor their parents by external tokens of respect. (c) They are to obey the first commands of their parents. (d) They are to receive in a teachable spirit the instructions, counsels, and reproofs of their parents. (e) They should remunerate the favors received from their parents. (f) They are encouraged in their obedience by the divine promise.
2. The duties of parents to children: (a) To instruct their children in the doctrines and duties of religion. (b) To regulate the amusements and diversions of their children. (c) To maintain the worship of God in their houses. (d) To let their conduct be exemplary. (e) To prepare their children for some worthy calling. (f) To commend their children to God in all things.

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

In this topic the leading idea is Christ in relation to his home. Here two things done: 1. Have some member prepare a brief narrative on the "Childhood of Jesus." (See any good Bible dictionary.) 2. Have another member prepare a brief paper on "Christ in his home at Nazareth, and the lessons it teaches." (See help in foregoing exposition.) If you wish to make a general study of the relation of children to parents, and parents to children, use the "Outline" given in the exposition, giving one section to a member. This will employ twelve members of the League.

Smiles.

Miss Smart—Have you ever been through algebra?

Yes, but it was in the night and I didn't see much of the place.

Mother: "Tommy, what's the matter with your little brother?" Tommy: "He's crying because I'm eating cake, and won't give him any." Mother: "Is his own cake finished?" Tommy: "Yes'm, and he cried while I was eating that, too."

The dog had been chasing his own tail for a quarter of an hour. "Papa," quoth Willie, "what kind of a dog is that?" "A watchdog, my son," responded the parent. Willie pondered a moment. "Well," he finally observed, "from the length of time it takes him to wind himself up, I think he must be a Waterbury watchdog."

The mother of a little three-year-old boy had been away from home over night, and on her return asked: "And how did my little boy get to sleep last night without mamma?" "O," he replied, "papa twied to sing to me like 'ou does, an' I des went to sleep weal twick, so I wouldn't hear him."

A man named Casey was appointed to a government place. Technically, it had to be held by a lawyer, which Casey was not. The Benchers of the Law Society, however, undertook to obviate the technicality. "Well, Casey," said the examiner, "what do you know about law, anyway?" "To tell the truth," replied the candidate, "I don't know a single thing." The examiner reported in his affidavit "that he had examined Mr. Casey as to his knowledge of the law; and as to the best of his information and belief, he had answered the questions that he had put to him correctly." The aspirant was thereupon admitted.