

Thus the young Jesus grew up without exciting any attention: for even when at twelve years old he showed himself in the temple, and conversed with the doctors there, they seem only to have considered him as a fine intelligent boy, anxious for improvement: and perhaps imagined that, like another Samuel, he was to be devoted thus early to the service of the Lord. But though "astonished at his understanding," it does not appear that their surprise went farther than that which we often feel at the sight of a boy in humble life who has contrived to attain an education beyond his apparent opportunities.

In this obscurity the youth grew up unnoticed; and it was not till he was entering on his thirtieth year, soon after the commencement of John's preaching, that he took any step towards making known his mission on earth. His first public act however was highly significant: he chose twelve apostles (*apostoloi*, or messengers sent) a number always remarkable to the Jews, for it referred to the twelve tribes, and coincided with the twelve princes of Israel, who led the march under Moses. In addition to these he chose seventy inferior disciples, who in like manner appeared to represent the seventy elders nominated by Moses for his assistance in hearing causes, a court which survived even to that time, under the title of the Great Sanhedrim.

These acts, in the eyes of the people then existing, must have been acts of dominion; he was evidently claiming to be the "prophet like unto Moses," whose advent that legislator had foretold, and for whom he had bespoken the obedience of the nation: and accordingly we find that from this time the jealousy of the ruling powers was excited. The Pharisees, bigoted adherents