

THE BOY JESUS AND THE DOCTORS.

By Alderman Armstrong, London.

The occasion of this event was the Feast of the Passover or the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. This like all the feasts of the Jews was instituted and ordained by God, Ex. 12: 11.

It was a two fold memorial, commemorative 1st of the destruction of the first born of the Egyptians both man and beast, Ex. 11-5.

2nd. Protection of the Israelites coupled with conditions, viz.: the sprinkling, with a bunch of hyssop, the blood of the lamb. Ex. 12: 21.

Notice the blood was to be upon the lintels and door posts—not on the steps of the house. This was to teach that the blood of sacrifice was too holy a thing to be trodden under foot. It was too precious for it was the sign of safety and deliverance. It typified the Christian rite of the Lord's Supper, holy and precious to all believers. The Passover feast was to be perpetual, an ordinance forever. At the time of this incident it had held a place in history for 1491 years, and since then for 1900 years, and still it holds its influence over the Jews in all parts of the world, wherever a colony of Jews exists. Christ was brought up to observe the rites and ceremonies of the Temple. He came not to destroy the law but to fulfil. In Himself He ended the Types. In Himself He was the anti-type. At the close of this feast the incidents of Christ in the Temple with the doctors "both hearing them and asking them questions" took place. The Bible places in a high position the duty of children to parents; there is only one higher place Duty to God. Matt. x: 37. When duty to God and duty to parents clash—parents must yield, God must be supreme.

From whence did Christ get all His knowledge and wisdom? His opportunities for education must have been limited! Joseph and Mary were pious but poor. Higher education, as we call it, was out of the question; though the highest education was within His reach. This secret is revealed in the fortieth verse. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him. Successful Christian service is not dependent upon intellectual attainments, but upon possession of the power and grace of the Holy Spirit." Acts iv: 8 and 13.

The divine spirit should inspire and control the Christian tongue as at Pentecost Acts 2 chapter.

After three days diligent search the missing "child Jesus" was found in the temple where He displayed His marvellous intellectual powers which greatly astonished all that heard Him, at His understanding and answers. Christ at that early age was the word, the mouthpiece of God.

What mighty results, wonderful words and works are accomplished even by human agency when the Holy Spirit is the teacher, the guide, the inspirer. The apostles so influenced "turned the world up-side down."

Paul, Luther, Wesley, and in times nearer to our own, Moody, Evan Roberts and Torry have been a source of blessing to men and revivers of religion in our churches and the secret of their power was the indwelling of the Holy Spirit speaking as the spirit gave them utterance. There are ever opportunities for usefulness, for consecrated talent; but consecration must precede usefulness. Even consecrated parentage may misunderstand the budding mysteries of a juvenile sanctified life. Joseph and Mary were filled with anxiety, care and natural impulses and instincts; but, alas! how far even these may get astray. Parents sorrow when they do not realize the developments of Providence. The Lords anointed asks: How is it that ye sought me?

Christ came laden with a mission from Heaven to men to teach the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. Here is the first lesson and we are told: "they understood not the saying which He spoke." Wist yet not that I must be about my Father's business? To the minds of Joseph and Mary in all probability the carpenters' bench would immediately appear; but what business could Joseph have in Jerusalem that a boy of 12 years could transact?

Jesus spelled Father with a capital "F."

Mary in her ignorance was wise. "She kept all these sayings in her heart." She knew of the supernatural Fatherhood. Since these days there have been many who have said in fact and deed, though not in word—"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business."

How much poorer the world would have been but for these "Father's business" men! Men with a divine mission who could not rest until it was accomplished. Jesus having taught this lesson disappears from public view until the "fulness of time." He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject into them obeying the law He came to fulfil. "Honor thy Father and thy Mother."

DAILY READINGS.

- M., Feb. 12. Jesus relieving distress. John 4: 40-5: 9.
- T., Feb. 13. Helping His own town. Luke 4: 16-24.
- W., Feb. 14. Feeding the hungry. Luke 9: 12-17.
- T., Feb. 16. On the Sabbath. Matt. 12: 1-13.
- F., Feb. 16. Praying. Matt. 11: 25, 26; Luke 11: 5-13.
- S., Feb. 17. Giving Himself. Luke 8: 43-48.
- S., Feb. 18. Topic—Christ's life. II. His life-work, and what we may learn about our own work. John 14: 8-14.

SPARKS FROM OTHER ANVILS.

Congregationalist: There are in the United States 18,589,991 persons seeking more knowledge in schools of one sort or another. That is the best kind of a standing army.

Presbyterian Standard: Taken all in all, Southern Presbyterianism faces the future with an optimistic outlook. Just what the future may reveal, no one can say with certainty, but it is safe to predict that her course will be forward, and not backward. Almost unconsciously she is inscribing on her banner as a watchword, "Expansion."

Today is the only assured opportunity we have for expressing our love to our dear ones. Yet few of us live and love in full recognition of this fact. The illness of a loved one is a reminder that speaks this message to us. To enter the home and realize that the familiar voice of welcome is silent just now, helps one to ask himself whether there would be longings for the return of unused opportunities if that voice should never speak again. Today is filled with opportunities that are still ours. To use them to the limit of our loving powers, as though these opportunities were our last, is only to live as God would have us live. And if they are the last, what blessed memories they will make!

Lutheran Observer: The Sunday goes by, and once more life's duties are amid the tasks and burdens, the struggles and conflicts, and the temptations and wrongs in life. It is then that faith weakens and praise takes wings. Oh, that, we might know that the God we met on the Sunday is with us on the Monday—that the strong arm that was about us in his own house supports us out in his own world—and that the Father who communed with us at his own table communes with us in the sacrament of honest toil, faithfully done. "Lo I am with you," says the Master—not Sundays alone, but "always" and in all places—and "even unto the end of the world."

JESUS' WORK AND OURS.

Some Bible Hints.

There is nothing higher than Christ. When we know Him, we reach the climax of knowledge (v. 9).

If we want to see how God acts, we look at Christ's acts. Christ's life on earth is an epitome of God's eternity (v. 10).

We can do greater works than Christ because our works are founded on His, as a child on his father's shoulder can see farther than his father (v. 12).

Christ does not promise to do all things for us, but all things that we ask in accordance with His spirit (v. 14).

Suggestive Thoughts.

Christ came to earth to show us the Father; and to do this He had only to show us Himself.

God sent Christ into the world to save men; that was the side of God's nature that He wanted shown to the world.

If Christ's life-work was to show to men the Saviour-God, what Christian dares entertain any other life-work for himself?

Christ's life was more successful than any other life ever lived. Our success depends on imitating it.

A Few Illustrations.

Christ made His life a perfect mirror turned heavenward, so that looking upon Him we should see God alone.

When a true musician plays a composition by Mozart he has no thought of interpolating measures of his own. So our only aim in life should be to present Christ to men.

Pope's translation of Homer is more Pope than Homer; so some "Christians" lives are more themselves than Christ.

The Christ in a man is like the electricity in a Leyden jar; it shows itself at a touch.

To Think About.

- Are my life plans mine or Christ's?
- Am I satisfied with Christ's approval, or do I seek the world's?
- Am I seeking to continue Christ's work?

A Cluster of Quotations.

Blessed is the man who has found his work.—Thomas Carlyle.
O teach me to go through all my employments with so truly disengaged a heart that I may still see Thee in all things.—John Wesley.

It does not follow because a man is in business that he is a business man.—Joseph Parker.

There is no excellence without great labor.—William Wirt.

United We Stand.

If there is one other society anywhere within reach, form with it a Christian Endeavor union.

The purpose of these unions is mutual helpfulness. You can hold occasional joint prayer meetings and socials. You can exchange the plans each has found helpful. You can exchange leaders now and then. You can send each other brotherly messages and fraternal messengers.

Moreover, you can do more for others in this union than you can do separately. You can hold mass meetings to advocate Christian Endeavor, temperance, missions, any matter of public utility. You can carry on large classes for mission study, the study of civics, and of other themes. You can give efficient aid to city missions and charities. You can push church and society interests through a regular department in the local paper.

Of course an isolated society may do many of these things, but it is far easier and better to do them in a Christian Endeavor union.