

## NAZARETH DAYS.

WE know that the Lord was perfect in childhood and youth as well as in manhood. Have we meditated upon all that this perfectness meant? Each fitting quality was there in due proportion, and in harmony with all; like the sacred perfume which Moses made, where each ingredient was of like weight, and all tempered together, pure and holy. Could you describe to me a perfect child, a perfect youth, a perfect man? Jesus was all that, and more; for though in the likeness of sinful flesh He was God manifest in it, and perfect in His relationships with others as in Himself. A rosebud is not less beautiful because undeveloped. It is not imperfect, if immature.

Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men. We would not try to trace the progress of that increase, but desire to learn the divine beauty which belonged to each period of His wondrous life. There is a special character of beauty belonging to dawn and sunrise which the brightness of midday sunshine will not reveal.

The time was not yet when His own would hate Him without a cause, when the very perfectness would rouse the enmity of men, because

it was their condemnation. You cannot command nor buy men's appreciation. It must be won. It was afterwards in Nazareth that they wondered at His gracious words; but now, as Jesus went through the ordinary duties of life, the hearts of all were drawn toward Him. It was not yet His preaching, but practice, which so impressed His associates that He grew in their favour. God's grace was upon Him; yes, He was full of grace and truth. And was it not by manifestation of the truth that He so commended Himself to every man's conscience? Have we not noticed that the worldly can appreciate God's truth manifested in another, however much they may resent its application to themselves? In this we surely may profit by the Lord's example. Is there anything in the way we work or walk amongst our fellows which wins their approval because our manner and spirit are so like His?

Jesus was subject to His parents, although Lord over all. We learn wonderful things from His meekness and submission, which His Godhead power would never show us.

Dear young reader, are you characterized by the mind that was in Christ Jesus—lowliness, and obedience even unto death—or by the spirit of the age, self-assertion, and self-will? Strange indeed that disobedience to parents, a sign of the last perilous days, characterizes some who profess to love and follow the Lord.

Not only of His public ministry could the Lord say, "I am among you as he that serveth," but "I have been made a bondman from my youth" (Zech. xiii. 5, R.V.) tells how in earlier years He had taken a servant's place, and ministered to those about Him. Since Scripture does not record it, we need not inquire how His service was rendered in those Nazareth days; but we may be sure His heart was ever ready with truest sympathy, and His hand to help in the trials and sorrows of His neighbours, and He would even then be learning to speak those words in season to the weary which soon, in a wider sphere, would bring renewed hope to the labouring and the heavy-laden.

Although the time had not yet come for public testimony to the world, and He was showing that true greatness has the power to wait, from earliest days "My Father's business" became His interest and care. The kingdom of God and His righteousness had the first place in His thoughts, and His understanding and answers astonished the wise ones of the day.

The life of Jesus in each period of its development deserves our reverent study, but what a practical thought to remember that when the Lord was just the same age as some of our younger readers, He lived *solely for the glory of God*.

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