

Christ the Model: Model Education Of—Life Gleanings from EGW

The brothers and sisters of Jesus were taught the multitudinous traditions and ceremonies of the rabbis, but Christ himself could not be induced to interest Himself in these matters. While hearing on every hand the reiterated "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," He moved independently of these restrictions. The requirements of society and the requirements of God were ever in collision; and while in His youth he made no direct attack upon the customs or precepts of the learned teachers, He did not become a student in their schools. {FE 439.1}

Jesus would not follow any custom that would require Him to depart from the will of God, nor would He place Himself under the instruction of those who exalted the words of men above the word of God. He shut out of His mind all the sentiments and formalities that had not God for their foundation. He would give no place for these things to influence Him. Thus He taught that it is better to prevent evil than to attempt to correct it after it has gained a foothold in the mind. And Jesus would not by His example lead others to place themselves where they would be corrupted. Nor would He needlessly place Himself in a position where He would be brought into conflict with the rabbis, which might in after years result in weakening His influence with the people. For the same reasons He could not be induced to observe the meaningless forms or rehearse the maxims that afterward in His ministry He so decidedly condemned. {FE 439.2}

Though Jesus was subject to His parents, He began at a very early age to act for Himself in the formation of His character. While His mother was His first human teacher, He was constantly receiving an education from His Father in heaven. Instead of poring over the learned lore handed down by the rabbis from century to century, Jesus, under the Divine Teacher, studied the words of God, pure and uncorrupted, and studied also the great lesson-book of nature. The words, "Thus saith the Lord," were ever upon His lips, and "It is written," was His reason for every act that varied from the family customs. He brought a purer atmosphere into the home life. Though He did not place Himself under the instruction of the rabbis by becoming a student in their schools, yet He was often brought in contact with them, and the questions He asked, as if He were a learner, puzzled the wise men; for their practices did not harmonize with the Scriptures, and they had not the wisdom that comes from God. Even to those who were displeased at His noncompliance with popular customs, His education seemed of a higher type than their own. {FE 439.3}

In the days of Christ, the religious instruction of the young was thought to be so important that the town or city which did not provide schools for this purpose, was regarded as under the curse of God. Yet in both the school and the home, the teaching had become mechanical and formal. Since "in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren" (Heb. 2:17), and Jesus gained knowledge as we may do, the intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, which He evinced in His ministry, testifies to the diligence with which, in those early years, He gave Himself to the study of the sacred word. {FE 442.2}

And day by day He gained knowledge from the great library of animate and inanimate nature. He who had created all things, was now a child of humanity, and He studied the lessons which His own hand had written in earth and sea and sky. The parables by which, during His ministry, He loved to teach His lessons of truth, show how open His spirit was to the influences of nature, and how, in His youth, He had delighted to gather the spiritual teaching from the surroundings of His daily life. To Jesus the significance of the word and the works of God unfolded gradually, as He was seeking to understand the reason of things, as any youth may seek to understand. The culture of holy thoughts and communings was His. All the windows of His soul were open toward the sun; and in the light of heaven His spiritual nature waxed strong, and His life made manifest the wisdom and grace of God. {FE 442.3}

Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did, from the works of nature and the pages of God's holy word. As we try to become acquainted with our Heavenly Father through His word, angels will come near, our minds will be strengthened, our character will be elevated and refined, and we shall become more like our Saviour. And as we behold the beautiful and grand in nature, our affections go out after God; while the spirit is awed, the soul is invigorated by coming in contact with the Infinite through His works. Communion with God through prayer develops the mental and moral faculties, and the spiritual powers strengthen as we cultivate thoughts upon spiritual things. {FE 443.1}

With the people of that age the value of all things was determined by outward show. As religion had declined in power, it had increased in pomp. The educators of the time sought to command respect by display and ostentation. To all this the life of Jesus presented a marked contrast. His life demonstrated the worthlessness of those things that men regarded as life's great essentials. Born amidst surroundings the rudest, sharing a peasant's home, a peasant's fare, a craftsman's occupation, living a life of obscurity, identifying Himself with the world's unknown toilers,--amidst these conditions and surroundings,-- Jesus followed the divine plan of education. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life-- God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. {Ed 77.2}

His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips, and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. He lived in a peasant's home, and faithfully and cheerfully He acted His part in bearing the household burdens. He had been the Commander of heaven, and angels had delighted to fulfill His word; now He was a willing servant, a loving, obedient son. He learned a trade and with His own hands worked in the carpenter's shop with Joseph. In the simple garb of a common laborer He walked the streets of the little town, going to and returning from His humble work. {8T 222.2}

Since He gained knowledge as we may do, His intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures shows how diligently His early years were given to the study of God's word. And spread

out before Him was the great library of God's created works. He who had made all things studied the lessons which His own hand had written in earth and sea and sky. Apart from the unholy ways of the world, He gathered stores of scientific knowledge from nature. He studied the life of plants and animals, and the life of man. From His earliest years He was possessed of one purpose; He lived to bless others. For this He found resources in nature; new ideas of ways and means flashed into His mind as He studied plant life and animal life. Continually He was seeking to draw from things seen illustrations by which to present the living oracles of God. The parables by which, during His ministry, He loved to teach His lessons of truth show how open His spirit was to the influences of nature, and how He had gathered the spiritual teaching from the surroundings of His daily life. {DA 70.2}

Thus to Jesus the significance of the word and the works of God was unfolded, as He was trying to understand the reason of things. Heavenly beings were His attendants, and the culture of holy thoughts and communings was His. From the first dawning of intelligence He was constantly growing in spiritual grace and knowledge of truth. {DA 70.3}

As He grew older He continued to increase in wisdom. He applied Himself diligently to a study of the Scriptures, for He knew them to be full of invaluable instruction. He was faithful in the discharge of His home duties; and the early morning hours, instead of being spent in bed, often found Him in a retired place, searching the Scriptures and praying to His heavenly Father. {CT 260.1}

In childhood, youth, and manhood, Jesus studied the Scriptures. As a little child He was daily at His mother's knee taught from the scrolls of the prophets. In His youth the early morning and the evening twilight often found Him alone on the mountainside or among the trees of the forest, spending a quiet hour in prayer and the study of God's word. During His ministry His intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures testifies to His diligence in their study. And since He gained knowledge as we may gain it, His wonderful power, both mental and spiritual, is a testimony to the value of the Bible as a means of education. {Ed 185.1}

Our heavenly Father, in giving His word, did not overlook the children. In all that men have written, where can be found anything that has such a hold upon the heart, anything so well adapted to awaken the interest of the little ones, as the stories of the Bible? {Ed 185.2}

"The Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." Luke 2:40. {MH 400.2}

Thus prepared, He went forth to His mission, in every moment of His contact with men exerting upon them an influence to bless, a power to transform, such as the world had never witnessed. {MH 400.3}

The education of Christ, during the time He was subject to His parents, was of the most valuable kind. . . . The physical and mental exercise that was necessary to the

performance of His tasks developed both physical and mental strength. His life of industry and retirement closed the avenues through which Satan could enter to tempt Him to the love of vanity and display. He waxed strong in body and spirit, thus gaining a preparation for the duties of manhood and for the performance of the important duties that afterward devolved upon Him. {ML 131.4}

Jesus was an earnest, constant worker. Never lived there among men another so weighted with responsibilities. Never another carried so heavy a burden of the world's sorrow and sin. Never another toiled with such self-consuming zeal for the good of men. Yet His life was a life of health. Physically as well as spiritually He was represented by the sacrificial lamb, "without blemish and without spot." In body as in soul He was an example of what God designed all humanity to be through obedience to His laws. {ML 131.5}