

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON II.—THE BOY JESUS.—JAN. 12.

(Luke ii. 40-52.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."—Luke ii. 52.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Growth in Grace.

ANALYSIS.—**D**istressed **P**arents, v. 40-45, doctored **P**erplexed, v. 46-47, useful **P**icty, v. 48-52.

TIME AND PLACE.—B.C. 5—A.D. 26. Nazareth and Jerusalem. The Temple incident occurred in the year A.D. 8, Christ being twelve years old.

INTRODUCTORY.—Six months after the birth of John, Jesus was born. Though living at Nazareth, Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem in obedience to an edict requiring all the people to be enrolled. On the night of their arrival the holy Child was born in the stable of the inn. His birth was announced by angels to some shepherds. When forty days old he was presented to the Lord in the temple at Jerusalem. Luke ii. 22-38.

Soon the wise men of the East came, seeking the child who was born King of the Jews. Herod was much disturbed by their enquiries, and sent the wise men to find the child and bring him word—his secret intention being to destroy him. Warned of God not to return to Herod, the wise men went home another way. Herod then determined to kill all the children of Bethlehem of two years old and under, and God warned Joseph in a dream to flee with Mary and the child Jesus to Egypt. After Herod's death Joseph, Mary, and the child returned to Nazareth. Here Jesus dwelt as boy and man for nearly thirty years.

VERSE BY VERSE.—V. 40. The child grew—waxed strong—filled with wisdom.—Three things are here told of Christ's development from infancy to boyhood. He grew; growth is the strongest evidence of life; He was life itself; if He is in us there will be continual growth. He waxed strong; mere increase in size is not the truest growth; solidity of foundation, quality of material, and strength of superstructure are essential qualities. He was filled with wisdom; growth and strength are good and necessary, but without wisdom they are useless. He who was filled with wisdom, is now made unto us wisdom, 1 Cor. i. 30. The grace of God was upon Him.—This was the source of His growth, strength and wisdom. The same source is as freely and fully ours.

V. 42. When He was twelve years old.—At this age the Jewish boy assumed for himself legal obligations, began to wear phylacteries and learn a trade. To Christ must have come strongly at this time the sense that He had upon Himself the legal obligations of the whole world.

V. 43. The child Jesus tarried in Jerusalem.—What strange thoughts must have filled the boyish mind as He lingered in the Temple which He now realized was rightfully His dwelling place. What wonderful foreshadowings of events in years to come must have flooded His imagination as He walked the streets of the city, its rejected King. He tarried behind, not heedlessly, but on His Father's business which so intimately concerned the salvation of you and me. His mother knew not of it.—This is a striking tribute to the loving trust and confidence so implicitly put in the divine Child by His mother.

V. 46. They found Him in the Temple.—How often to-day we hear the complaint of too much church going, and too many meetings for our young people on the part of professing Christian parents. They forget that the church is in an especial sense God's earthly dwelling place, and that we must be about our Father's business. Strange, but we do not find worldly parents urging their objections so strongly against too much party going, or too many dances. Must we conclude that the worshippers of mammon are more zealous than the worshippers of God? In the midst of the doctors.—Since that notable day when the twelve year old boy

perplexed and astonished the learned doctors of Jerusalem, God has been using the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. A child in years or intellect may possess the wisdom of God in such measure as to make foolish the philosophy of a Huxley or a Darwin.

V. 49. How is it that ye sought me?—Mary might have known where He would be found. His natural place was in His Father's house, His occupation, about His Father's business. Our friends should be able to say of us that wherever we are, we are in our Father's company, and whatever we are doing, it is our Father's business.

V. 50. They understood not.—You must expect to be looked upon as impractical and misunderstood if you talk about your Father's business.

V. 51, 52. He was subject unto them—and increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.—So Christ was blessed in the path of obedience, and His greatest blessing was the favor of God. The favor of man did not last long, nor serve Him in the hour of extremity. We can afford to count it out of our calculations if we are sure of being able to count on the approval and blessing of the Father.

BY WAY OF ILLUSTRATION.

The Father's Business, B. F. Jacobs, meeting an old friend, was asked, "What is your business now?" He answered, "Same old business, praying and getting souls saved." "Oh, I thought it was real estate." "That is only incidental, my real business is to save souls."

Uncle John Vassar spoke to a stranger one day in a hotel parlor about her relations to Christ. She was much moved and afterward repeated the conversation to her husband, who was indignant and said, "You should have told him to mind his business." The wife replied, "If you had heard him, you would have thought he was minding his business."

Subject unto them.—Should any true-hearted child, however great his gifts, consider the child place in a home unworthy, since the Son of God found the Father's business for so many years in such a humble peasant home! Says Canon Farrar, "A life spent in brushing clothes and washing crockery and sweeping floors—a life which the proud of the earth would have treated as the dust under their feet—a life spent at the clerk's desk, a life spent in the narrow shop, a life spent in the laborer's hut, may yet be a life so ennobled by God's loving mercy that for the sake of it a king might gladly yield his crown."

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

TORONTO.—The Church of the Covenant Juniors on Christmas morning visited the Aged Women's Home, Sick Children's Hospital, Nursing at Home Mission, and Children's Shelter, singing hymns and distributing gifts at each institution. They also presented a grown up friend in the congregation with a comfortable rocking chair, and carried a bouquet of flowers to a widow lady.

Ambition.

First Day—It strengthens—2 Cor. v. 9-15.

Second Day—It weakens—Prov. xxv. 6, 7, 16, 27, 28; xxvi. 1.

Third Day—It exalts—2 Tim. iv. 1-8.

Fourth Day—It debases—Isa. x. 12-19.

Fifth Day—It leads upward—Rom. ii. 1-10.

Sixth Day—It leads downward—Luke i. 46-53.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, JAN. 12.—THE PERIL AND THE POWER OF AMBITION, Luke ii. 52; Dent. viii. 11-24.

A series of prayer meeting topics for the new year were published in this department last week by mistake. They are excellent in themselves, but are not as some may have supposed, the Christian Endeavor Topics for 1896.

HIDDEN TEXT AND CATECHISM.

CATECHISM.					TEXT.				
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