

I. JESUS AT THE FEAST. 40. The child grew—Same expressions used in reference to John the Baptist in ch. 1: 80. The words "in spirit" are omitted in the R. V.; but the meaning is the same. The development of both body and mind were natural. He displayed the kind of human nature every child would have had if sin had not come into the world, healthy, vigorous, wise. The verses following give us an example of his wisdom. **Filled with wisdom**—rather, "becoming," a continuous process is implied. He was subject to the limitations of childhood and had to learn by degrees like others. **The grace of God**—This usually means God's unmerited favor to sinners. Here it merely implies that God was well pleased with him, and gave him the sanctifying influences of his Spirit to perfect the loveliness of his character. Try to be like Jesus and God will help you to grow like him.

41. His parents—popularly so called. Joseph was all that a father could be to Jesus. **Every year**—The condition of the country at this time was distressing, but that did not prevent pious Jews from keeping the law at great cost of money and comfort. Read Ex. 23: 14-17; 34: 23; Deut. 16: 16. Mary was not required to go, although one school of rabbis taught that women should attend the passover at least, but she loved God's house and worship and counted it a privilege to share her husband's annual journeys. It was not likely that they took Jesus with them.

42. Twelve years old—"The stages of Jewish childhood are marked as follows:—at three the boy was weaned and wore for the first time the fringed or tasselled garment prescribed by Num. 15: 38-41; and Deut. 22: 12. His education began at first under the mother's care. At five he was to learn the law, at first by extracts, written on scrolls, of the more important passages, the Shema, or creed of Deut. 2: 4, the Hallel, or festival Psalms (114-118, 136), and by catechetical teaching in school. At twelve he was more directly responsible for his obedience to the law, and on the day when he attained the age of thirteen, put on for the first time the phylacteries which were worn at the recital of his daily prayer." (Ellicott). **The custom of the feast**—the custom referred to is the whole requirements of the feast, particularly the going up to Jerusalem. Others say that it refers to the custom of taking a boy to the feast when he was twelve years old.

43. Fulfilled the days—Seven Ex. 12: 15, 17. **The child Jesus**—R. V. "the boy." Until now he has been called a "little boy." **Tarried behind**—The words do not imply that he intentionally stayed behind. He was so interested in the discussions that he did not notice that they had started for home. **Joseph and his mother**—R. V. "his parents." **Knew not**—Their ignorance does not imply carelessness for (1) in going to these great feasts families and neighbors would join together, and form a large collection; (2) it is

not improbable that Jesus was with them as they were about to start from Jerusalem, and making preparations—seeing him then they might have felt secure as to his presence; (3) a part of the company might have left before the rest, and Joseph and Mary may have supposed that he was with them, until they overtook them at night and discovered their mistake. (Barnes).

44. Supposing him to have been in the company—This, according to Meyer, "presupposes a circumstance, unknown to us, which might justify that want of knowledge." **Company**—Caravan of fellow travellers. This was probably large. Galilee contained, according to Josephus, more than 4,000,000 inhabitants, and its quota of pilgrims would be many thousands. At the passover, the population of Jerusalem was sometimes increased from 120,000, to 2,700,000 males alone. "It should also be remembered that at the age of twelve an Eastern boy is far more mature than is the case with Northern nations, and that at that age a far wider liberty was allowed him." (Farrar). **A day's journey**—Supposed to be to *Beeroth* (El Bireh), six miles from Jerusalem. When nightfall came they "sought for" him (R. V.), and we can imagine their distress when they discovered that he was lost in the vast crowd that was now dispersing in every direction to all parts of the world.

45. Turned back again—The R. V. "returned," is too weak, "they turned right round and went back." **Seeking for him** (R. V.)—Of course they would look around as they returned in case he might be following the caravan at a distance, but the words grammatically mean that their object in returning to Jerusalem was to search for the boy. The word for "seek" indicates an earnest and prolonged search for a thing. These graphic verbal touches are worth noting.

II. JESUS IN THE TEMPLE. 46. After three days—The first day was occupied in the journey to Beeroth, part of the second in the return, and on the third they found him. Compare the time between the crucifixion and the resurrection, Matt. 27: 63; Mark 8: 31. **In the temple**—Probably in one of the porches in the court of the women, where the schools of the rabbis were held, and the law regularly expounded (Lange.) **Sitting**—the customary attitude of a pupil, Acts 22: 3. **In the midst of**—as we would say "amongst." He was one of the crowd of inquiring students around one or more of the rabbis. **Rabbis**—R. V. marg. "teachers."—The rabbis, by whom, as a "son of the law" he would be welcomed. They kept a kind of open free school for all such. **Asking them questions**—It must not be supposed that the modest youth assumed to be the instructor of greybeards. This is inconsistent with the 51st verse. The rabbinical method of teaching was the Socratic. Both master and pupil had an opportunity of shewing their sagacity and pen-