

## The Sabbath-School.

### THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS.

FEBRUARY 6th.

LUKE 11 : 40-45.

Golden Text : Luke 2 : 40.

**T**WELVE years betwixt this lesson and the last, respecting which Luke is silent. Matthew alone records the flight into Egypt, ch. 2 : 13-15 ; the murder of the innocents, and the return of the Holy family to Nazareth, ch. 2 : 16-23. V. 40. *The child grew, &c.*—may we not suppose that there was already dawning upon his mind the consciousness of his divine nature? Col. 2 : 9. Vs. 41, 42. *The feast of the Passover*—For the institution of this feast see Deut. 16 : 1-16. The celebration lasted seven days. Every male Israelite was bound to be present every year, except the sick, aged, and boys under 12 years. Women were not obliged to go, but they might, if they chose, take part in the feast. It is likely this was the first time Jesus had witnessed this celebration. Being now twelve years old he was called a "Son of the Law," and would be required to perform all religious duties. What a wonderful sight to the "Child Jesus" must have been the holy city at this festive season. Usually, there would be 2,500,000 people in and around it. Every house would be crowded with pilgrims, while numbers would erect tents and booths outside the gates. They would arrive, at latest, on the evening of the 14th *Nisan*, or Abib, the first month, Lev. 23 : 5-8. For a full description of the observances and the vast number of victims see 2 Chron. 33 : 1-18. Vs. 43-46. *Jesus tarried behind*—Something more than youthful curiosity detained him. He must have been intensely interested in the Temple and its services. As for Joseph and Mary, they would be thrown off their guard by the bustle and confusion of leaving, probably at night, so as to avoid travelling in the heat of the day. They are surprised to find him in one of the schools of the Rabbis—*sitting in the midst of the doctors*—the most learned of the nation, who made the Scriptures their lifelong study. *Asking them questions*—The method of question and answer was the customary form of Rabbinical instruction, which we do well to imitate. V. 47. The time was coming when His teaching would astonish the most learned amongst them. Matt. 7 : 28. John 7 : 15, 46. V. 48. *Amazed*—to find him *there*, and that so much notice was taken of him. He had never given them an anxious thought before. *Sorrowing*—that they had not looked better after him. V. 49. *How is it?*—The light of a higher world was breaking in on his soul, and now *He* is amazed that they should have looked for him any where else but in the House and on the affairs of his "Father : " up to this time Joseph had been so called, but from this time, never. Vs. 50, 51. *They understood not*—like the disciples at a later period they could not penetrate the deep meaning of his words, ch. 18 : 34. Mark 9 : 32. Matt. 11 : 3. Though his heart was in Jerusalem, to exemplify filial obedience, he returns to his hallowed obscurity in Nazareth. These, the first recorded words of Jesus, bear testimony to Himself and stand related to his last words, Acts 1 : 7, 8.

## The Preaching of John the Baptist.

FEBRUARY 13th.

LUKE 11 : 7-18.

Golden Text : Luke 3 : 8.

**J**OHAN THE BAPTIST was born near Hebron, about six months before Christ. His birth and work were foretold by the angel Gabriel, ch. 1 : 13-19, by Isa. 40 : 3, and by Mal. 3 : 1. Like Jesus, he grew up in solitude until about 30 years of age, when suddenly he burst upon the scene, preaching, with an energy and boldness peculiar to himself, the near approach of the Messiah's Kingdom, called the "Kingdom of Heaven." Calling men to repentance, John instituted a new rite, that of baptism, for those who confessed their sins and promised amendment of life—not as a *means* of salvation, but only as a symbol and seal of their acceptance of his doctrines. Though austere in manner and rude in dress, his message was the most important yet made known to men—the great truth that the Kingdom of Heaven was the reign of God in the soul of man—that true religion must be practical and earnest, in the heart and life, not in mere external form and observances. Hence Christ's exalted testimony to him—"There has not arisen a greater," Matt. 11 : 11. Compare Matt. 3 : 1-12. Mark 1 : 1-18. John 1 : 19-28. V. 7. *O generation of vipers!*—These startling words were not addressed to enquirers after salvation, but to those who came out of mere idle curiosity, or to criticize and sneer, The Saviour himself was no less severe in addressing such people, Matt. 23 : 13-33. *Viper*—a poisonous serpent, emblematical of whatever is hurtful and deceitful, Job. 20 : 16. Rom. 3 : 13. Vs. 8, 9. Neither national prestige nor ecclesiastical connection can save from the wrath to come. Men's motives are to be judged by their actions. A fruitless fig tree is made by our Lord to represent the whole Jewish nation, Luke 13 : 6. *Fire*—see Matt. 7 : 16-20. John 15 : 6. V. 10. *What shall we do?*—see Acts 16 : 30, 31. Vs. 11-14. John has an answer for each according to their place and station ; self-denial and charity were commended to all, James 2 : 15 : tax-gatherers were warned against covetousness : soldiers were exhorted not to abuse their power. Vs. 15-16 contain a remarkable testimony to the power of John's preaching, but he does not take advantage of his popularity—he magnifies Christ and humbles himself, John 3 : 28-30. The baptism of the Spirit is contrasted with the baptism of Water which only represents it. For the impatient there would be, indeed, a baptism of *fire*, but for the contrite, a deeper knowledge of God and a closer communion with him. V. 17. *Whose fan?*—The same figure in Jer. 15 : 7, and Luke 22 : 31, *Wheat and chaff*—The *justice* as well as the *mercy* of God is faithfully preached, as by Christ himself, Matt. 13 : 30, and 25 : 41-46. V. 18. *Many other things*—as in John 1 : 29, 34, and 3 : 27-36. The same is said of Jesus, John 21 : 25. *We need the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We need repentance. What shall we do?* is an important question for all.