

Subject: The Boy Jesus, Luke II, 40-52.—Golden Text, Luke II, 52.—Memory Verse, Luke II, 52.—The Boy Jesus a Pattern for Youth.—Commentary. I. The growth and advancement of Jesus (vs. 40, 52). "The child grew." From this verse and verse 52 we learn that Jesus had a human body and soul. He was a genuine boy and grew like other boys, but He was sinless. Evil had no place in Him. "Waxed" is an old English word for grew. "Strong in spirit" "In spirit" is omitted in the Revised Version, but spiritual strength is meant. He became strong in mind and understanding. "Filled with wisdom" He was eminent for wisdom even when a child. "Grace of God" Grace commonly means favor. God was pleased with Him and showed Him favor and blessed Him.

42. "Increased in wisdom." This refers to His spiritual and intellectual development. Some one has said that "wisdom is knowledge made our own and properly applied." "And stature." There could be no increase in the perfection of His divine nature, but this is spoken of His human nature. His body increased in stature and His soul developed in divine things. "Favor with God." Though His entire being was in the favor of God, yet as that being increased in amount, the amount of favor increased proportionately. "And man." His character and life were beautiful and the better He became known the more He was admired. 41. "Went—every year." The Passover was one of the three great Jewish feasts which all males over twelve years of age were required to attend. 42. "Twelve years old." To a boy who had never been outside the hills of Nazareth, the journey to Jerusalem, the appearance of the city at this time, a sight of the temple, the preparations for the feast and, especially the feast itself, must have been an imposing sight.

III. Jesus lost and found (vs. 43-46). 43. "Fulfilled the days." The Passover week (Exod. 12:15). "Tarrying behind." Jesus was so intensely interested in the teaching of the rabbis that He failed to start with the caravan on the homeward journey. "Knew not of it." This shows the perfect confidence they had in the boy. 44. "In the company." The people traveled in caravans. Jesus evidently had been allowed a more than usual amount of liberty of action, as a child, by parents who had never known Him to transgress their commandments or be guilty of a sinful or foolish deed. 45. "Found Him not." They had probably left in the night to avoid the heat of the day, and in the confusion Jesus was lost. 46. "After three days." An idiom for "on the third day," one day for their departure, one for their return and one for the search. "They found Him." Jerusalem was overcrowded with millions of people packed into a small area, and they had none of the means to which we would at once look for assistance in searching for a lost child in a great city. "In the temple." Joseph and Mary evidently knew where they would be most likely to find Him. Jesus was probably in one of the porches of the court of the women, where the schools of the rabbis were held. "In the midst of the doctors." Teachers of the law, Jewish rabbis. "Hearing—asking." But it is not said teaching or disputing. He sat not as a doctor, but as an inquirer among the doctors.

47. "Astonished." The Greek word is very forcible. The import is that they were in a transport of astonishment and struck with admiration. "At His understanding." He brought with Him a clear knowledge of God's word. 48. "Amazed." To see such honor given to their boy, and to see such boldness in holding a discussion with these learned men. "Why," etc. This was the mildest sort of a reproof and probably given privately. "Thy father." This form of speech was necessary, for how else could she speak? "Sought Thee sorrowing" The word here rendered sorrowing is expressive of great anguish. 49. "How is it that ye sought Me?" This is no reproachful question. It is asked in all the simplicity and boldness of holy childhood. He is apparently astonished that He should have been sought, or even thought of, anywhere else than in the only place which He felt to be properly His home. "Wist" Know. "About My Father's business." See E. V. "In My Father's house" undoubtedly expresses the fulness of the expression. Better, in the things or affairs of My Father, in that which belongs to His honor and glory. These bear with them the stamp of authenticity in their perfect mixture of dignity and humility. It is remarkable, too, that He does not accept the phrase, "Thy Father, which Mary had employed." 50. "Understood not." They did not understand His mission. 51. "Jesus subject to His parents." 51. "Drew down with them." If His heart drew Him to the temple, the voice of duty called Him back to Galilee; and, perfect even in childhood, He yielded implicit obedience to this voice. "To Nazareth." Here He remained eighteen years longer. These were years of growth and preparation for His great life work. "Was and felt them." There is something wonderful beyond measure in the thought of Him, who without all things are subject to His Father, to earthly parents. "In her heart, expecting that he would be explained to her and she would understand." These facts are not to be overlooked.

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Christ's Life. I. Lessons from His Boyhood.—Luke 2:40-52. Evidently Jesus' parents were in the habit of trusting Him, as they went a day's journey without worrying about His non-appearance. The most important thing a child can do is to listen well, the next most important thing is to ask questions wisely. A child may be about God's business as well as a grown-up, since the oldest man is but a babe in God's eyes. Is it any wonder that Christ was obedient to His earthly parents, since He came to earth in obedience to His heavenly Father? Though Jesus' "understanding and answers" aroused wonder, note that He was in the temple not as a teacher but as an eager learner. The Junior society is making it a joy to the children to be in their Father's house, and about their Father's business. Many parents fail to understand their children, as Joseph and Mary failed to understand Jesus. Mary's remedy is the right one to brood over them "in the heart." In all our dealings with children we are far more likely to underrate their capacity for spiritual truth than to overrate it. The church that does not care for its children is like a farmer who left his orchard alone till it was time for fruit. The child that thinks to postpone his Father's business till manhood is like an athlete that refuses to go into training. When gardeners wish to obtain new and fine varieties of flowers and fruits, they begin with the selection of the best seed and soil. Strike a match, and the light goes on endlessly. What are we to think of the endless outpourings of a good word spoken to a child? What lesson has Christ's boyhood for me? What am I doing to bring children to their Saviour? Have I the child heart in which Christ can live? The modesty, the filial piety, the perfectness of self control, contentment in mechanical labor, conscious sovereignty undisturbed, all this is in itself a wonder of divinity.—H. W. Beecher. Jesus is the example for all who are stepping from the careless immunities of early childhood into the graver region of budding youth.—Alexander Maclaren.

THE BEST LOVED. Miss Winifred Evelyn Constance McKee. Invited our dolls to an afternoon tea. But don't bring them all, For my table is small. Just let each little girl bring her dearest," said she. I felt in my heart it would not be polite To take my poor Rosa—she's grown such a fright! She is blind in one eye, And her wig's all awry, For she sleeps in my bed with me all through the night. I explained to dear Rosa just why she must stay, And I dressed Bonnetbelle in her finest array, And then, do you know, When the time came to go, I snatched up my Rosa and ran all the way! And—what do you think?—of the six dolls that came, There were four that were blind, there were two that were lame! And each little mother Explained to some other, "She's old—but I love her the best just the same!"—Hannah G. Fernald, in Youth's Companion.

STICK TO IT. A very successful business man was once asked the secret of his great success in life, and he said in reply: "Why, I decided early in life just what I intended to do and be and then I stuck to it. I often think that one reason why so many boys of our day fall in life is because they do not stick to a thing long enough to make a success of it." There is a world of good advice in the three little words, "stick to it." The vacillating boy who jumps from one thing to another will never succeed in life. One must have a sort of a bulldog tenacity in holding on to things if one is to make them "go." Sometimes one should stick all the closer to one's purpose when the outlook is most discouraging. As the lowest stage of the water at the seashore always precedes a turn of the tide, so the most discouraging state of one's worldly affairs often precedes a change for the better. Too many boys and men get this pernicious "get-rich-quick" idea into their heads, and they are not disposed to stick to anything very long if it does not promise immediate and large returns. Now the "get-rich-quick" idea is about as evil an idea as a boy can get into his head. It is first cousin to the "something-for-nothing" idea. It is a bad day in the life of a boy when he wants to come into possession of a dollar without having honestly earned it. It is a bad day for him when he begins to have a kind of a contempt for the slow and sure and honorable way of acquiring money. The boy who gets this idea into his head will never stick to anything very long, and he will be sure to develop into a scheming, visionary kind of a man who is forever on the eve of making a large fortune. He will spend a great deal of his time in "figuring out" large fortunes on paper while other men are simply sticking to their business and slowly but surely acquiring a competency. The "get-rich-quick" idea makes business good for our jails and State prisons. Many of their cells are occupied by adherents to the "get-rich-quick" methods of making money. It is an idea that invariably weakens one's moral perceptions. The stick-to-it method develops and strengthens character. Sudden possession of great wealth, even when that wealth is acquired honestly, is often the ruin of its possessor. He is not prepared to make a proper and wise use of a fortune that has cost him nothing. No one better understands the value of money than the man who has slowly and honestly acquired wealth. Such a man is more likely to regard his wealth as a trust to be used more for the benefit of others than for his own selfish uses. You boys who are so soon to become men cannot do a wiser thing than resolve that you will stick to the trade or the business or the profession you may adopt when you begin life for yourselves. Be sure that you are right in choosing what you want to be, and then stick to that one thing with unflinching resolution, and you will be far better off in the years to come than any "get-rich-quick" methods could ever make you.—J. L. Harbour, in the American Boy.

EPWORTH LEAGUE LESSONS

SUNDAY, JANUARY TWENTY-FIRST

A Spirit-Filled Life.—John 14, 16, 17.

Herein is a mystery. Christ our Lord, through the Spirit, will dwell with us. It is more than a mystery. It hints at a truth which, if we could but feel its full significance, would change our whole bearing toward life. So far as we do feel it, the change is actually wrought in us. In saying us Jesus Christ has given us a new spiritual life. That life is his own. Apart from him we are as good as dead. If the divine life is not in us, no life we have can be of lasting value, however much it may promise. The great thing is that Christ is willing we should receive his Spirit, and live "in him." But there is something for us to do. Whatever is not favorable would be out of harmony with his Spirit, and must be put away. Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, evil speech, lying—all these must go. We must be willing that they should go, eager to get rid of them. They do not abide in Christ's presence, if we sincerely invite him we shall sincerely let go of them. And his presence will drive them away. The life which Christ gives is to be accepted as a reality—not a religious fancy. The Christian became a Christian by complete surrender of his own will and his own life; that surrender must be made permanent. The Comforter whom Christ sends must be welcomed as a sharer of all experiences and all desires, all life's activities must be in some way related to his presence. The insistence that a Christian should be like Christ is a good sign. Book after book is written to emphasize this thought, and sermon after sermon sets up this likeness as a standard for the Christian. Two classes of people miss this mark, and miss it in spite of their honest desire to reach it. The first class takes for its rule of life the question, "What would Jesus do?" Life is squared by that straight edge. It means large sacrifice, much self-humbling, and failure at last. For, however hard one may try, the attempt to imitate Jesus Christ is a mechanical and unfruitful struggle. The second class sees the failure of the first, and is naturally discouraged. "What use is it to try? You cannot succeed. These people have tried hard enough, and they are not succeeding." Or, perhaps there is some admixture of unbelief. "If that is all there is to Christianity it is not worth the effort."

The great mistake in all these cases is in not seeing that you cannot live like Jesus Christ until the Spirit of Jesus Christ lives in you. One of the most powerful causes of disease in London, says Professor MacNiven, is the inhalation of dust. The constant inhalation of particles of dust, particularly at times of fog, has a deleterious effect on the respiratory functions, producing bronchitis, pneumonia, and kindred diseases.

THE HEARTLESS FAMILY. There had been a severe thunder storm in the night, and old Mrs. Topham had, for a wonder, slept through it. Usually she rose, lighted her lamp, dressed herself, and sat down in a chair whose legs were set in glass tumbler. Instead of being grateful that she had not been aware of the storm, the old lady was filled with wrath when she heard of it the next morning. "I declare, I should think I was boarding 'stead of living among my own folks," she said. "Wan't there one of my children nor grandchildren that thought enough of me to wake me? There I might have been struck by lightning in my sleep and never known what killed me!" Youth's Companion.

Brooklyn, N. Y., Sunday Simpson M. E. Church celebrated its sixty-first anniversary. The subject of Pastor W. J. Thompson's morning sermon was "Warp and Woof in the Warp." Pastors and members in the woof. The text was from I Thessalonians 1:8. Mr. Thompson said: "The warp consists of the threads running lengthwise through the entire fabric. The woof consists of the threads crosswise and prompted by the weaver's fancy, may vary with each shot of the shuttle. The warp of Simpson Church is that which through these sixty-one years has remained unchanged and is unchangeable. The woof, comprising pastors and members, by inexorable necessity and purposeful design changes and, evermore must change. Faith is a prominent thread in the warp. Conscious of our spiritual growth we reach out after God if happily we may find and be aided by Him. God is not found out by searching. The futility of the quest adds welcome to Jesus who reveals the sought-for God as the Father. We hold forth Jesus the authoritative revealer of God and our relation to Him as the light of the world. Absorbed in His talks and walks, we are caught up in His life, and by that life conformed to his likeness. Thus Jesus saves men by His life. Also by His death. The obstructions to the tunnel-boring under Manhattan and the rivers, overcome by the engineers' sacrifice, measure their devotion to their ideal—rapid transit. Christ's sacrifice of His life revealed His complete love for His ideal, the salvation of man, and makes that salvation complete. We preach Christ and Him crucified as the all-sufficient saviour of men who receive Him. Philosophers reason men into discipleship. Without violence to reason, and invoking it only so far as it is a part of conscience, we command men everywhere to repent and believe. Repent by ceasing to do evil; believe by the trustful appropriation of the Christ life and death. Our forerunners in this are John the Baptist, Peter and flaming evangelists on to Whitfield and Moody. Our justification is the witness of sin forgiven, and lives bringing forth the fruits of righteousness. Fear is in the warp. It is ours by generous hereditary legacy, and compasses things, beasts, men and devils. When fear is uppermost it dwarfs. Neither moral nor religious giants are the product of fear. What pygmies wrimble, fear of disaster, makes. Intimidation from eclipses and comets science shows to be baseless. The fear of beasts, which vanishes before the prowess of the hunter. Fear of physical man departing with war. Fear to speak one's convictions and advocating measures he disbelieves, thus counting for less than nothing, and deserving expatriation from a democracy—these are all unwholesome fears. The sooner banished the better. Moral fear. Wordsworth calls duty the "Stern Daughter of the Voice of God." She is a task mistress over us. Our superior therefore we fear. Her commands, like a chrysalis, metamorphoses into the pleasures of duty. Fear of the law drives the criminal to outward legal acts. The best citizens are moved without fear. William Lloyd Garrison, the great moral champion, the centennial of whose birth this day is, when dragged through the streets of Boston by a mob, said "his soul was devoid of fear." Fear is the beginning and not the end of morality. Godly fear. Petronius argued fear made the gods. Some religions have their devils. We have ours who goeth about as a devouring lion. The Old and New Testaments have 518 references to fear. It may be helpful for the beginnings and salutary with certain temperaments, but fear is only the beginning of wisdom. The almightiness of Jehovah makes us tremble. But He draws near to us in the flesh as we become one with Him. His power is for us. Fear from the least to the King of Terrors is abolished. All power is for our good and we can no longer fear. Fear gives place to love and sinks to the nether side of the warp in remembrance of the judgments of the lawgiver. The terrors of the law are replaced by the grace of the gospel. Fear is the beginning of wisdom, its end is love. In our necessitated helplessness in infancy and youth we depended upon our fathers. That dependence must be brought forth as the foremost filial feeling, love. All men have this tutelage, and to them Jesus reveals God as the Father who excels the most devoted father in giving good things. The devotee of many gods may be sober until he is intoxicated at the feast of Dionysius and be righteous throughout all. To the same devotee wisdom is a virtue if he is a statesman and courage if he is a soldier. There are different virtues for different times and different people. Jesus revealed Deity as one God and Father, therefore, virtue is, one and love; the fulfilling of all virtue. To offend in one point of love is to be guilty of all because righteousness is a unit. The acknowledged master in my craft addresses my ambition with "You can be an artisan, equal to me and I will aid you." He has my heart's best love. The absolutely perfect God addresses my loftiest ambition with "Be ye perfect as I am perfect and My proffered grace, all-sufficient, is yours for the asking." It follows my heart's supreme love, wells up to God. The most prominent thread in the warp is "Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength." God, the Father of all, then geography, national boundaries, is a matter of the head and not of the heart, and merchandise a commodity in things and not in men. Accordingly, in the beginning of this era it was predicted, a William Lloyd Garrison should toll the death knell of slavery. But destiny is in the hands of God, and does not lightly decide. Christian love is social and does not concentrate love to the neighbor and unite to the rest of the world. The noblest of men and women, the noblest of leaders of man to man, Thomas Hobbes, said that the noblest thing would be to know my mind, but to know the entire world like that

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THE PECAN. The pecan is a variety of the walnut, growing most abundantly in our Southwestern States. As we see it for sale, it is a thimble-shaped nut, pointed at both ends, about an inch and a half long, has been taken from its outer shell, cleaned and polished by turning very rapidly in cylinders, until the black lines which are often on it are seldom seen on its bright reddish shell. A tree is usually thirty years old before it bears many nuts. The kernel is very oily, but to many people the best nut of all to the taste, yet it has an inner coating quite "puckery" to the lips and tongue. Pecans are at their best when filling the soft nest of a removed hard date stone. The sweet date takes away the "pucker," while the little pecan gives life and flavor to the very rich sweet date. Surely all kinds of walnuts are fruits "fit for the gods" especially for Jupiter—from whom they derive their family name of Juglans (nuts of Jupiter)—if the gods are really fond of such trifles and have mythical means of cracking them.—M. E. M., in The Christian Register.

Men's Pockets. They had been expatiating on the peculiarities which distinguished the members of the human race from those of the animal kingdom. "We all differ and yet we're a good deal alike, young and old," remarked a veteran who had been listening to the conversation. "A story I read recently regarding a forgotten bunch of keys started a train of thought: You know that a boy's pocket has amused his elders ever since boys had pockets. There's a little of everything in it. Now, just for the fun of it," he continued, turning to the man on his left, "fish up what you're carrying in your righthand trousers pocket." The letter colored slightly but complied. In three trips he brought to light a ring with eleven large keys on it, a knife with a broken blade, an empty match safe two queer coins and something that looked like an overgrown raisin. "Precisely what I expected," said the first speaker. "I'll bet that outside of your latchkey and maybe a key to your office or desk you can't even guess what you're lugging those keys. They used to fit something or other, but you've moved, and the something or other's been sold or given away or left behind. Your knife won't cut, there are never any matches in that matchsafe, the coins are pocket pieces, but you keep them, and that dried, weakened horse chesnut's for rheumatism. If it were ever a remedy or a preventive—which it wasn't—the life went out of it long ago." The object of these remarks admitted that the case had been summed up correctly. "I know it," concluded his friend. "Nine men out of ten are loaded with that kind of rubbish. It's true that a boy carries fish lines and beetles and chalk and apple cores and a country store assortment generally, but he knows what to do with the whole collection, and does something with it every halfhour. That's where we have to admit that the joke's on us if we are entirely fair."—Providence Journal.

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CLEVER RING TRICK. Here is a clever and puzzling trick: Sew a plain gold ring to the middle of a handkerchief by a piece of silk about four inches long, letting the ring hang from the end of the thread. Of course, no one must know of this ring, and put it on the table for all to see. It must be a plain gold ring, of course, like the one you have sewed to the handkerchief. Quickly hold up the handkerchief, with the attached ring next to you, so that it will be out of sight, and be sure that there is no light behind you, as in that case, the shadow of the ring would show through. Crumple up the handkerchief, hold