

READ UP AND NOT DOWN.

BY ELLA GUERNSEY.

I thought my father tyrannical, once upon a time, when he insisted that I should bring to him the book that a young brother had told him "Sis read in bed after everybody else was asleep."

"Suppose I was only fourteen years of age, hadn't I the right to read books?" was my defiant question when a mild rebuke was given me for wasting precious time reading hurtful books, trying my eyes by reading in bed, and exposing the household to the danger of fire if I should fall asleep forgetting to extinguish the lamp too near my pillow. Never to be forgotten was the gentle, "Daughter, one cannot read even a light, trifling book, neither very bad nor good, without being affected by it in some way."

I was not stinted in good, helpful literature that father took special pains to put into my hands; but other girls read such splendid books, "The Emerald Necklace," "Duchess of So-So," and could talk glibly of Ouida, Zola, and authors whom I never heard mentioned in our house.

A few years rolled on, and I was mistress in my father's house, having charge of the domestic part of it. Our "help" was a sweet-souled young woman who had improved much after a course of good, helpful reading, but suddenly I noticed a change for the worse in Louise. A sullen look spoiled her usually bright face, and upon many occasions she flouted me, talking special pains to slur and to speak scornfully of women.

For two months Louise grew more cynical, placing women lower and lower, and attributing questionable or mercenary motives to pure, self-sacrificing women who lived only for the good of others. One day, tried sorely by her scoffs, I asked, "Louise, do you include your mother and sister when you assail our sex in such a wholesale manner?"

An angry light glowed in her eyes—her mother was almost an object of adoration. I waited for the wrath which spoke in her eyes to find expression in words, when a dear old friend drew from the basket of mending a book, "Puck," one of Ouida's works.

"I guessed the trouble, dearie. Let me read aloud something from its pages," and selection followed. selection.

"It's not a bad book," said Louise, sullenly.

"Did I say it was, Louise? I only said that it does not show women in a good light," returned our friend, calmly. "I couldn't read this book, at my age, without getting a little bitterness into my soul."

"All women are not good," retorted Louise. "Don't the papers tell of women being at the bottom of crimes?" she inquired, defiantly.

"Unfortunately, they do tell of failings oftener than of the brave battle the patient saints are waging with sin. Louise, I have ever thought, since I have known my Lord, that I had not time to waste in learning of the deeds of wicked or careless people. Time flies, and there is not enough of it in which to prepare for heaven or to help others along the way. I have never loved evil; why should I fret my soul by brooding over that which is vile? Long years I said in my heart, suppose the Lord should call for me hastily, in a moment, I do not want to have in my hand a book or paper with pages teeming with thoughts that fill me with doubts of all that is good. While there is an abundant supply of refreshing, simple, uplifting literature, the Lord's own workers, young and old, need look no further for help and pleasure. Genius or talent does not make of sin a virtue, no matter if the lustre be brilliant. If a book be a fascinating one, veiling, even making certain vices alluring, shun it, burn it, if possible. When the soul is filled with distrust and doubt, and we begin to view suspiciously our fellow-creatures, while reading a book, it is time to look closely into the matter. Suppose thee begins to read up and not down, from this time, as all Christian workers, young and old, should read," continued good Mrs. Lane.

In a few moments Louise took up the prettily-bound book and laid it upon the coals, saying firmly: "I haven't felt right since I first read this. I want to read up, indeed I must do it, as it seems that I'm so constituted that I read worldly, careless's

hurtful books to my soul's harm. Since I've found out that I've been harmed by reading it, I'll not place a stumbling-block in the way of another."

As for me, I thank God daily for the careful father who taught me to read up and not down, and I leave this for the young Endeavor to think over; is it wise to give any printed page a second thought except that which reads up?—*Golden Rule.*

A CHILD'S PRAYER.

BY E. M. CHAPMAN.

Father, keep thy little one
Safe this night;
Through dark hours, until the sun
Brings us light.

While the earth is fast asleep,
All at rest,
Thine Almighty eye doth keep
Vigil blest.

And thine arm is strong to save;
We need fear
Neither darkness, storm, nor wave:
Thou art near.

In the morning may I wake
Fresh and strong,
Find new things to undertake
All day long.

In the rugged path of life
Guide thou me,
Bring me through its toil and strife,
Safe to thee.

THE WORK OF SUPPRESSING VICE.

(By Anthony Comstock in the Golden Rule.)

When we consider that there are about eight millions of children and youth in this country, that each of these youthful minds is susceptible to the temptation and allurements of the Evil One, and that he loses no opportunity to ruin an immortal soul; and when we contemplate the insidious and deadly influences of the evils assailed by the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, and its auxiliary and kindred societies, then, and not until then, shall we come to any just appreciation of the importance to the public of these efforts in the line of moral reform. Believing in suppression before contamination, this society has for nearly seventeen years maintained a most vigilant warfare against the seed-sowing of corruption among the rising generation.

Ignorance of facts leads many persons to doubt the existence of these evils. Many minds are so constituted that they will not believe it possible that books, pictures, and articles such as this society has gathered up and destroyed by tons, can exist. Others, who know something of the character of some of these matters, still question their existence to any great extent; or think it impossible that such things should be disseminated among students in colleges, girls in seminaries, or children at school.

Arguments similar to the following are often urged by these doubters. One says, "I don't see how they can circulate these things." Another says, "I never saw anything of this kind while I was at school." Others say, "Men would not dare put forth such matters," etc. Notwithstanding all this and much more, the painful fact still remains, that we have traced into the possession of youth belonging to our best families, attending our best institutions of learning, the most obscene, infamous, and damnable matters. The parent society alone has seized over forty-four tons of obscene books, pictures, plates, and other articles, besides about ten tons of gambling, lottery, and fraudulent paraphernalia. Other societies swell this total to nearly, if not quite, fifty tons of foul matter that has been seized since the commencement of this work in 1872. The parent association alone has arrested over 1,450 persons. Of publications issued in this country, and contraband by law, as being destructive of public morality, the plates and engravings for two hundred and ten different books have been seized by the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. Who can estimate the harm that the circulation of a single vile book is capable of doing? Multiply this by hundreds of thousands, and then what of morality among our youth? What of our future prosperity as a nation if our youth are debased, corrupted, and ruined by such influences?

To present vile matter to the mind of the

young is like hanging up in memory's hall a picture to be gazed at as often as perverted appetite or passion chooses to turn attention toward it. It is like making in a youth's mind a photographic negative of the foul thing, from which the tempter may, as often as he chooses to act upon the memory, reproduce it before the child's mind. Again, it becomes a plaything for corrupted imagination, a whisper of foul things, an insidious seducer from paths of purity and virtue. Indeed, when once admitted to the sacred precincts of the mind, the vile book or picture is a most active agency in soiling the imagination of man's heart, acting as a cranker-worm to secretly eat out self-respect, and undermine all that is holy and exalting.

Why are the pens of scholars so slow to write warnings against defiled imaginations? Why are ministers so silent against this class of foes that are insidiously undermining society, and destroying a desire and taste for holy things? They cry out against the evils of intemperance, and silly burdens of fashion, the lascivious dance, the dissipation of late hours, the absence from the sanctuary, the breaking of the Sabbath, dishonoring of parents, worldliness, and other evils; and yet, when it comes to this most deadly and active foe of morality, church and state,—the corruption and defilement of youthful minds and hearts, through licentious publications, pictures, and articles,—then they are alarmingly and painfully silent. False modesty has made cowards of us all.

O that parents, teachers, and pastors might become more deeply impressed with the dangers that surround the young, and might fortify themselves against evils which are not only honey-combing society, bringing shame and disgrace upon the family, but are cursing more and more each generation born into the world!

SCHOLAR'S NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON VI.—FEBRUARY 9.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH OF JESUS.—Luke 2:50-52.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."—Luke 2:52.

HOME READINGS.

M. Matt. 2:1-12.—Visit of the Magi.
T. Matt. 2:13-23.—The flight into Egypt.
W. Luke 2:40-52.—Childhood and youth of Jesus.
Th. Ex. 12:1-17.—The Passover Instituted.
F. Deut. 16:1-17.—The Yearly Feasts.
S. John 9:1-12.—"The Works of Him that sent Me."

LESSON PLAN.

I. Jesus at the Feast. vs. 40-45.
II. Jesus in the Temple. vs. 46-50.
III. Jesus at Nazareth. vs. 51, 52.
TIME.—A. D. '8. April, twelve years after our last lesson; Augustus Caesar emperor of Rome; Coponius governor of Judea, including Samaria; Herod Antipas governor of Galilee and Perea.

PLACES.—Jerusalem; Nazareth.

OPENING WORDS.

There is an interval of nearly twelve years between this lesson and the last. The recorded events of the interval are; the prophecy of Anna (Luke 2:36-38); the visit of the Magi (Matt. 2:1-12); the flight into Egypt. (Matt. 2:13-15); the slaughter of the children at Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16-18); the return to Nazareth (Matt. 2:19-23). All these events occurred probably within the first six months of our Saviour's life.

HELP IN STUDYING THE LESSON.

V. 41. His parents—only the men were required to go to the annual feasts (Ex. 23:14-17), but devoted women also went. 1 Sam. 1:7. The pass-over—celebrated at the full moon of the first month, in commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt. Ex. 12:21-24. V. 42. Twelve years old—at this age Jewish boys were called "sons of the law," and were considered responsible for obedience to the law. V. 43. Fulfilled the days—the seven days of the feast. Ex. 12:15; Lev. 23:5, 6. V. 44. In the company—probably a large one from Nazareth and the neighboring villages. Sought him—when they halted for the night. V. 46. After three days—counting from their departure from Jerusalem. In the temple—in one of the porches where the rabbis held their schools. Doctors—teachers. Asking them questions—as scholars generally did. V. 47. Understanding—as shown by his questions. V. 49. Wist ye not—know ye not. The Revised Version renders this question "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" V. 51. Was subject unto them—submitting to their authority and sharing in the labor of the workshop and the house.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How long an interval between this lesson and the last? What is recorded of the life of Jesus during this interval? Title of this lesson? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Memory verses?

I. JESUS AT THE FEAST. vs. 40-45.—What is said of the child Jesus? What was foretold of him in Isa. 11:2? Where did his parents go every year? What was the passover? What ordinance has taken its place? At what age did his parents take Jesus with them? What took place as they returned? Where did they seek him? What did they do?

II. JESUS IN THE TEMPLE. vs. 46-50.—Where was Jesus found? What was he doing? At what

were all astonished? What did Mary say to Jesus? What was his reply? What is our "Father's business" for us? John 4:34; 1 Cor. 10:31. When should we begin it? What is the chief end of man?

III. JESUS AT NAZARETH. vs. 51, 52.—Where did Jesus go with his parents? How did he behave toward them? How should all children be like him? Which is the fifth commandment? In what did Jesus increase? How may we gain the love of others?

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

1. That Jesus knows the wants of children, for he was once a child.
2. That he has set an example that children should follow.
3. That children should love the house of God and begin early to serve him.
4. That like Jesus we should love and obey our parents.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW.

1. What is said of the child Jesus? Ans. The grace of God was upon him.
2. At what age was he taken to the feast of the passover? Ans. At the age of twelve years.
3. What did he do at the close of the feast? Ans. He stayed at Jerusalem.
4. How long did his parents seek him? Ans. Three days.
5. Where did they find him? Ans. In the temple with the teachers of the law.

LESSON VII.—FEBRUARY 16.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.—Luke 3:7-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."—Matt. 3:2.

LESSON PLAN.

I. Preparing for the Messiah. vs. 7-14.
II. Foretelling the Messiah. vs. 15-20.
III. Baptizing the Messiah. vs. 21, 22.

HOME READINGS.

M. Luke 3:1-22.—The Ministry of John.
T. Matt. 3:1-17.—The Baptism of Jesus.
W. Mal. 4:1-6.—The Forerunner Foretold.
Th. Isa. 40:1-11.—The Voice in the Wilderness.
F. John 1:19-36.—John's Testimony to Jesus.
S. John 3:23-36.—John's Later Testimony.
S. Isa. 55:1-13.—The Saviour's Call.

TIME.—A. D., 26, summer and autumn, eighteen years after the last lesson; Tiberius Caesar emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate governor of Judea; Herod Antipas Governor of Galilee and Perea. John was now thirty years old.

PLACE.—The wilderness of Judea, the hilly and thinly-inhabited region west of the Dead Sea and the lower Jordan.

OPENING WORDS.

All that we know of the early years of John the Baptist is recorded in Luke 1:80. At the age of thirty he came forth from his retirement and began his work. Great multitudes flocked to him, and he preached to them the baptism of repentance. Parallel passages, Matt. 3:1-17; 14:3-5; Mark 1:1-11; 6:17-20.

HELP IN STUDYING THE LESSON.

V. 8. Bring forth fruits—show your sincerity by your conduct. Begin not to say—do not think that you will be saved because you are Jews. V. 12. Publicans—tax-collectors. V. 13. Appointed—the lawful tax. V. 15. Were in expectation—of the Messiah. V. 16. Cometh—will soon appear. Shoes—soles of wood or leather fastened to the foot by straps; to unloose them was the work of a slave. Holy Ghost and fire—making them pure and holy. V. 17. Fan—a fork or shovel by which the grain was tossed into the air that the chaff might be blown away. Wheat—the good. Garner—the granary. Chaff—the wicked. V. 19. Herod the tetrarch—Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great. V. 21. Jesus also—see Matt. 3:16, 17; John 1:32-34. Praying—probably in silent prayer. The Heaven was opened—to Jesus and to John only. V. 22. Like a dove—the emblem of purity and peace. A voice—the voice of God the Father.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Who was John the Baptist? When and where did he begin his ministry? What did he preach? Title of this lesson? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses?

I. PREPARING FOR THE MESSIAH. vs. 7-14.—Whom did John rebuke? Why did he call them a generation of vipers? What question did he ask? What did he exhort them to do? What warning did he give them? What is repentance unto life? What did the people ask him? What was his answer? Who also came to be baptized? What direction did he give them? Who else asked the same question?

II. FORETELLING THE MESSIAH. vs. 15-18.—What were the people thinking about John? What did John say of his work? How did he foretell the coming Messiah? What would be the Messiah's baptism? What further did John say of the Messiah? What instance of John's faithfulness is here recorded? How did he suffer for his faithfulness? (See Matt. 14:3-12.)

III. BAPTIZING THE MESSIAH. vs. 21, 22.—Who was now baptized? What followed his baptism? Why did the Holy Ghost thus descend upon him? What voice came from heaven? Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

1. That we must repent of our sins if we would be saved.
2. That if we repent we will forsake our sins and do what God commands.
3. That God will certainly punish those who do not live good lives.
4. That baptism with water will not save us; we need to be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW.

1. What command did John give those whom he baptized? Ans. Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.
2. What warning did he give? Ans. Every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast down into the fire.
3. What did he foretell of the Messiah? Ans. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.
4. What followed the baptism of Jesus? Ans. The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove upon him.
5. What did a voice from heaven say? Ans. Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.