

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

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St. John and the Robber.*

AN INCIDENT FROM EUSEBIUS (*Hist. Eccl., Lib.*
iii., *Cap. xxiii.*)

BY REV. W. H. WITHROW, D.D.

My son, my son! nay, fly not from me—me,
Thy father in the Gospel of our Lord.
Far hast thou wandered from thy early faith,
But not too far for Christ's dear love to bring
Thee back. Even as I, with tottering feet,
Have sought thee out upon the rugged hills
Of Ephesus; so, but with tenderer love,
The Lord Christ, yearning, seeks thy soul.

Nay, now

Thou weep'st, baptized a second time in thine
Own tears. I knew thou would'st forsake thy
dire

Apostacy and turn again to the
Dear Lord that bought thee with His blood.

Here, on

This bosom lay the Holy Head. These lips
That speak have felt His blessed kiss. These
eyes—

Oh, why were they not blinded first!—beheld
The agony, the streaming wounds, the pale
Death-swoon, and then the hill-side tomb. But
in

The Isle of Patmos, drear and lone, I saw
The heaven ope, and by the throne of God
That Form—though, oh, how changed!—which
erewhile was

So marred; that brow, once crowned with
thorns, but now

*A touching story is told by Eusebius of St. John meeting in his old age a robber who had been in his youth a Christian and his own disciple. The aged apostle addressed the wretched robber in the tender words paraphrased in the following lines.

With glory crowned. And low before His feet
The elders and the angels fell. Oh, fall
Thou, too, my son, in lowly penitence
Before Him now, and rise in trustful faith;
And as these lips that Christ hath kissed now
give

Thee, erring but repentant, the fond kiss
Of peace: so feel that God, the loving God,
Now prints the seal of pardon on thy soul.

O little children, love ye one another;
And, once a robber band, be now a band
Of brothers in the Lord. Do good to all.
Await with watchful souls the coming of
The Christ, who comes and will not tarry.

Watch!

Be strong in God and in the Spirit's might;
And, little children, love ye one another.

The Seven Churches of Asia.

THE lessons in the latter part of November refer to the wonderful vision of St. John in the Isle of Patmos. He is said to have lived to a great age and to have grown constantly more and more like Jesus, his beloved Master, being filled especially with the spirit of love. He was driven away from Ephesus in some time of persecution, fifty or sixty years after the death of Christ, and sent an exile to Patmos, a little rocky island in the Ægean Sea. It was in Patmos that he had this glorious vision of the Saviour. John did not know Jesus at first, and was so overcome with awe and a sort of fear that he "fell at his feet as one dead." He had never seen Christ in his glory and majesty; but as soon as he knew it was the dear Lord who said, "Fear not," his courage and strength came back again. The Saviour, besides sending messages to the Churches, *revealed*, or made known, to John things that would come to pass in the future, and commanded him to "write" them.