



LESSON XI.—MARCH 13.

Death of John The Baptist.

TEMPERANCE LESSON.

Matthew xiv., 1-12.

Golden Text.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Revelation ii., 10.

Home Readings.

Monday, Mar. 7.—Matt. xiv., 1-12.
 Tuesday, Mar. 8.—Luke xxiii., 1-12.
 Wednesday, Mar. 9.—Acts xii., 1-4, 18-24.
 Thursday, Mar. 10.—Mark vi., 14-30.
 Friday, Mar. 11.—Luke vii., 16-23.
 Saturday, Mar. 12.—Matt. xi., 7-19.
 Sunday, Mar. 13.—Matt. xxi., 23-32.

1. At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,
2. And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.
3. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.
4. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.
5. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.
6. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.
7. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.
8. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.
9. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her.
10. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.
11. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother.
12. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

(By R. M. Kurtz.)

INTRODUCTION.

To-day we study the close of the life of Christ's forerunner, John the Baptist. Herod the tetrarch, when he heard of Jesus and his wonderful words and works, assumed that this was John the Baptist, whom he slew. Jesus had sent out his disciples, 'to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' During this time, while he was making his third preaching tour of Galilee, John was slain. Read Matthew x and xi., 1-15.

Herod the tetrarch was the son of Herod the Great, who slew the children of Bethlehem. He was also the ruler over Galilee and Perea. Josephus, the great Jewish historian, says that John the Baptist was imprisoned in Castle Macherus, near the borders of Arabia, a few miles east of the northern part of the Dead Sea.

THE LESSON STUDY.

Verses 1 and 2. 'At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus.'

The time was soon after the death of John and during Christ's third tour of Galilee. Reports of the Lord's wonderful teachings and deeds reached Herod, and, knowing the high character of John, the guilty king confused the identity of the two, concluding that John had risen from the dead.

'And therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.' The Revised Version says, 'And therefore do these powers work on him.' The rising of one from death, Herod thought, would indicate that he had supernatural powers. So he concludes the accounts of Christ and his works must refer to a risen John.

3-5. 'For Herod had laid hold on John.' The case was as follows: Herod had eloped with the wife of his elder brother Philip. She was also the niece of the brothers. John the Baptist, true preacher that he was, had not been afraid to rebuke this wickedness of even the king. From Mark vi., 19, 20, it is evident that, if left to himself, Herod might not have injured John, but his wicked wife had a grudge against John on account of his rebuke of their sin, and sought to have him slain. Herod, however, feared to go this far, knowing that the people looked upon John as a prophet. Moreover, Mark says: 'For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him he did many things and heard him gladly.' But one sin leads to another. By his adulterous marriage Herod had put himself under the dominion of a wicked woman, who now leads him to commit murder.

6-8. 'The daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.' The king was celebrating his birthday, and was surrounded by his leading men in civil and military life. Mark vi., 21. The daughter of Herodias, by her former husband, was doubtless a beautiful and graceful young girl, whose immodest dance (after the Oriental fashion) pleased the revelers at the banquet table, heightening the king's pleasure also, when he saw his guests' delight. In the excitement of the moment, and perhaps inflamed by wine, the king makes a rash promise to the dancer. The girl, whose name was Salome, had been instructed for just such an opportunity by her wicked mother. Indeed, the whole thing seems to have been planned by the unscrupulous Herodias. Salome therefore asked for the head of John the Baptist on a charger, or platter.

9-11. 'And the king was sorry: nevertheless for his oath's sake,' etc. The sudden murderous request sobered the king for a moment. He realizes the trap into which he has been led, but for the sake of his oaths (the plural is correct), and on account of those with him, he would not refuse the request.

So he sent to the prison and had John beheaded, and his head given to the girl on a charger. She in turn took it to her mother, so that Herodias might have positive evidence that the good man she hated was dead. It is supposed that this feast was at Macherus, where John was imprisoned, so that the girl's request was granted without delay.

12. John's faithful disciples performed the last tribute of their love to their leader, in coming and burying the headless corpse of this man who died because he dared to rebuke wickedness in high places. Then they went to Christ with their sad report.

There is something touching and suggestive in these last words of the lesson. When their leader was dead and they had no one to look to, they took their sorrow to Christ.

The centre of this lesson is the peril and wickedness of unbridled passion. Herod alone was not above learning from the man he here murders, but his lust and intemperance put him within the power of an evil woman, who would not scruple to trick him into a sworn promise to do what might be asked, and then made murder necessary to the fulfilment of the royal oath.

The lesson for March 20 is 'Jesus Feeds

the Five Thousand,' Matthew xiv., 13-23.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Mar. 13.—Topic—Appetites that unmake men. Dan. v., 1-5, 25-28.

Junior C. E. Topic.

ABRAHAM'S CALL.

Monday, Mar. 7.—Abram's journey. Gen. xi., 31, 32.

Tuesday, Mar. 8.—God's call to Moses. Ex. iii., 4-10.

Wednesday, Mar. 9.—God's call to Joshua. Josh. i., 1-5.

Thursday, Mar. 10.—God's call to Gideon. Judges vi., 11-14.

Friday, Mar. 11.—James and John called. Mark i., 19, 20.

Saturday, Mar. 12.—'Calleth for thee.' John xi., 28-29.

Sunday, Mar. 13.—Topic—God's call to Abraham and his call to us. Gen. xii., 1-5; Heb. xi., 8.

Little Things for Teachers.

Mr. Marion Lawrence gives the following pointed thoughts about 'Little Things for Teachers,' though not one of them is really 'little.'

Success in Sunday-school work, especially in managing and teaching a class, will depend largely upon your attention to little things, such as the following:

Be in your class seat before your scholars are.

When order is called come to order instantly. If you don't your class won't.

When the school stands you stand; when it sings you sing; when it reads you read. If you don't your class won't.

Have your lesson so well learned that you can teach it with nothing but your Bible before you.

Stand or sit so you can look every scholar in the face.

Ask plain, simple questions, and do it rapidly, being sure the restless scholar gets his share of them.

Make the most of every answer, whether it be right or wrong, never ridiculing a wrong answer.

Contribute a specific amount regularly each Sunday, and try to have your scholars do the same.

Is a scholar absent? Visit him before next Sunday. If you can't do it send him a letter. Don't fail to do one or the other.

If one be sick be especially attentive and sympathetic; and show it. That very sickness may be the bending of the golden grain for your sickle. If the absence is from indifference be very persistent with your visits or letters.

Pray for each scholar regularly every day by name.

Speak to your scholars whenever you meet them during the week; go out of your way to do it.

Visit your scholars as often as once a quarter, and interest yourself in their home surroundings.

Invite the class to your home occasionally for a good social evening.

Love them, and show it.

Never lose your temper.

Pray while you teach.

Keep sweet.

Like teacher, like class.—'Evangelical S.S. Teacher.'

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