

## The Sunday School

### BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

First Quarter, 904.

JANUARY TO MARCH.

-Lesson XI.—March 13.—Death of John the Baptist.—Matthew 14: 1-12.

The lesson includes the three accounts, Matt. 14: 1-12; Mark 6: 14-29; Luke 9: 7-9; the message of John from his prison (Matt. 11: 2-10); together with a glance at the intervening story in Mark 5: 1-6; 13; and the instructions to the disciples (Matt. 9: 27-11: 1).

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.—Rev. 2: 10.

#### EXPLANATORY.

I. THE TROUBLED CONSCIENCE.—Vs. 1, 2. 1. AT THAT TIME. DURING the third Galilean tour, the time immediately following the death of John. HEROD THE TETRARCH. Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great (who slew the Bethlehem innocents), and heir to one-fourth of his kingdom.—Galilee and Perea. Hence he is called "tetrarch," which means ruler of a fourth part. HEARD OF THE FAME. Better, "heard the report concerning" JESUS. The many marvelous miracles wrought by Jesus and his disciples, and the doctrines he taught, had so penetrated and stirred the whole people that the news entered the palace and reached the king.

2. SAID UNTO HIS SERVANTS. His officers who were discussing who this strange man might be, some saying that he was the expected Elijah, some that John was arisen from the dead, others that one of the old prophets had come to life. These diverse opinions perplexed Herod. Herod did not know what to think, but he finally concluded that this is John the Baptist, whom he had murdered, risen from the dead. "If we mistake not, that discolored head was rarely thenceforth absent from Herod's haunted imagination from that day forward till he lay on his dying bed. THEREFORE MIGHTY WORKS DO SHED FORTH THEMSELVES IN HIM. Better, as R.V., "do these powers work in him."

II. THE FAITHFUL PROPHET REPROVES THE KING.—Vs. 3, 5. FOR HEROD. Mark adds himself, influenced by personal reasons pertaining to his family, and not urged on by others. HAD LAID HOLD ON JOHN. Arrested him. This was in March, A.D. 28, a year before the birthday festival described below. JOSEPHUS says that it was at Castles Macherus. Perhaps in a cage, of iron bars to which friends of the prisoners could come with food or for gossip, but with no convenience or provision of any kind for living or sleeping, and only a bare stone floor.

4. FOR JOHN SAID. Imperfect, implying that he kept saying. IT IS NOT LAWFUL. Herod, as we have seen, had broken several laws of God and man. John was preaching against sin, denouncing crime to urge men to repentance, and he could not do this effectively to soldiers, publicans, and Pharisees, if he let the sins in high places go unrepented, and failed to urge kings and princes to repent, and come into the kingdom of God. Unrepented crime in high places teaches, indorses, and propagates crime.

#### TIMELY CALLING.

How the Pastor Saved a Life.

A man near Fort Gay, W. Va., made an entire failure in getting strength from the kind of food he ate and not knowing that the trouble was with the food kept on losing health until the doctors gave him up to die.

It was supposed to be consumption because he was wasting away steadily and slowly dying. His minister called from time to time and one day brought along a package of Grape-Nuts thinking from what he knew of the famous food that perhaps it might help him. The sick man took it at once and from that day he began to get well. In writing he says:

"I walked to town to day 3 miles. Having gained over 40 pounds in about two months my neighbor don't know what to say. I frequently am told it was as if I am raised from the dead. Everybody here knows of my case, you can tell people to write to the Postmaster or Rev. L. D. Ryan. I will make a sworn statement that Grape-Nuts saved my life." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

This is another illustration that where all other food fails one can be brought back to health and strength on Grape-Nuts. "There's a reason."

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among the people.

5. HE WOULD HAVE (wished to) PUT HIM TO DEATH, urged on by Fictitious. HE FEARED THE MULTITUDE, who might rise up in revolt, or report him to the Emperor, if he killed a prophet. He was even then on the verge of war, and was likely to bring untold evils on the nation. He hated John too, who with his mighty eloquence could arouse the people to revolt, as Queen Mary feared John Knox, and Ahab feared Elijah, though urged on by Jezebel.

III. THE BIRTHDAY FESTIVAL. A TEMPERANCE LESSON.—Vs. 6, 7, 8. WHEN HEROD'S BIRTHDAY WAS KEPT. Observed by a great banquet to which the nobles and military officers were invited. The festival was probably at Castle Macherus, where Josephus says that John was imprisoned, on the borders of the kingdom of Aretas, the father of Herod's discarded wife. THE DAUGHTER OF HERODIAS, by her former husband. Her name was Salome, and she afterwards married her uncle, Herod Philip II., tetrarch of Ituraea. DANCED BEFORE THEM, "in the midst" as in R.V., sent by her mother to take advantage of Herod's condition when wine had warped his judgment and dulled his conscience.

7. PROMISED. TO GIVE HER WHATSOEVER SHE WOULD ASK. Even to half of his kingdom; a wild, and reckless promise that could have been made only by one who had lost his wits by drunkenness.

IV. THE MARTYRDOM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.—Vs. 8, 12, 14. AND SHE, BEING INSTRUCTED BY HER MOTHER. She went to her mother and said, "What shall I ask?" Which of all the beautiful things offered her,—palaces, jewels, gorgeous apparel,—all that a girl's heart could desire? Her mother replied in words Salome repeated to the king. GIVE ME HERE, NOW, on the spot. For if not done at once, before Herod had time to think and escape from the influence of the wine and excitement of the hour, it might never be done at all. JOHN BAPTIST'S HEAD IN A CHARGER. A large platter, which was "charged," i.e., loaded with meats to be brought to the banquet.

9. AND THE KING WAS SORRY. Not penitent, but troubled and anxious. He had expected some entirely different request. There was danger and a troubled conscience in the gift. NEVERTHELESS FOR THE OATH'S SAKE. It should be "oaths," not "oath's" which is a printer's or editor's error. The word is plural in the original. PRIDE, AND THEN WHICH SAT WITH HIM. Pride, and fear of immediate public opinion, turned the scale, for John would have few friends in that assembly. Probably if the oath had been secret, he would not have hesitated to break them. HE COMMANDED IT TO BE GIVEN HER. The wily Herod as had gained her desire, which for a year had been refused by Herod.

10. BEHEADED JOHN IN THE PRISON. If the feast was at Macherus, the prison was in one of the dungeons of the castle, and the request was answered in a very brief time.

11. HIS HEAD WAS BROUGHT IN A CHARGER. As needs to be, at least. "The sight of the Baptist's head would be a feast to Herodias. She seemed to triumph after a year's waiting." SHE BROUGHT IT TO HER MOTHER, who thus seemed to have gained her object, but she finally failed. She died in exile. John was silenced, but conscience and the voice of God were not silenced. The stain of blood could never be washed away, no "all the perfumes of Arabia sweeten" the guilty soul.

12. AND WENT AND TOLD JESUS, who was most interested as the one of whom John was the forerunner and friend. They doubtless afterwards became the disciples of Jesus. So should we go and tell Jesus all our troubles and works.

#### GOD'S THANK YOU.

Little Jack was a four-year-old, and a great pet of mine, with yellow curls and blue eyes, and he had sweet affectionate little ways. One day his cousin, a boy of sixteen, set Jack to work for him. He told him to pull up some weeds in the field while he finished his story. Little Jack worked away until his fingers were sore and his face was very hot. I was working in my room when a very tired little boy came up to me. "Why, Jackie, what have you been doing?" I asked. The tears came into his eyes and his lips quivered, and for a moment he did not speak. Then he said: "I've been kind to Cousin Jack; I worked awfully hard for him and he never said thank you to me." Poor little Jackie! I felt sorry for him. It was hard lines not to have a word of thanks after all his hard work. But that night, when I had put him into his little cot, he said to me: "Auntie, this morning I was sorry that I pulled the weeds, but now I am not sorry. How is that?" I asked. He said: "Cousin Jack thanked you." "No, he hasn't," but inside me I have a good feeling. It always comes when I have been kind to anyone, and do you know, I've found out what it

is. "What is it, darling?" I asked. And throwing his arms around my neck, he whispered: "It is God's thank you!"

#### SOME COMPETITION 'HOWLERS.'

(Westminster Budget.)

The 'University Correspondent' publishes an amusing list of 'howlers' said to have been perpetrated in the answers to a competition:

Cum grano salis—Although with a corn thou dancest.

Prenez garde que votre cheval ne prenne pas le mors entre les dents—Take care that your horse does not die of the tooth-ache.

King Alfred the Great, was a very good man, and when he died Lord Rosebery preached his funeral sermon.

The diminutive of man is mankind.

Question—Define the first person. Answer—Adam.

Wycliffe's great work was the translation of the Bible into Middle English, because he thought the people would be most likely to understand the English spoken in the Middlelands.

Question—Why does true English history begin with the reign of Henry VII? Answer—Because up to this time it was all lies.

A parallel straight line is one that when produced to meet itself does not meet.

To remove air from a flask—Fill the flask with water, tip the water out, and put the cork in quick.

The probable cause of earthquakes may be attributed to bad drainage and neglect of sewerage.

Question—Define a point. Answer—A point is that which has no magnitude, but only length and breadth; and there is a point in a circle where all straight lines are equal.

The ends of the parabola will never meet, though, of course, this could be done by waking one small enough.

Asked to explain what a butters is, one boy replied, "a woman who makes butter," and another, "a female butcher."

One had defined Primate as the wife of a Prime Minister.

A job's comforter is a thing you give babies to soothe them.

A skyscraper is an over-trimmed hat.

Political economy is the science which teaches us to get the greatest benefit with the least possible amount of honest labor.

An emolument is a soothing medicine.

In the United States people are put to death by execution.

'The Golden Horn' and 'The Golden Fleece' are the names of public houses.

Gravity was discovered by Isaac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the autumn, when the apples are falling from the trees.

A large number of teachers took part in the examination, which produced these extraordinary answers, but we are not told that they were responsible for any of them.

#### NELLY SHAKE HANDS.

One day my brother was out driving in the country when a stranger stopped him by exclaiming, "Halloo! that used to be my horse."

"Guess not," replied my brother. "I bought her at a livery stable, and they told me she came from Boston."

"Min!" said the man. "What do you call her?"

My brother answered that the horse was sold to him under the name of "Pink."

"Ho," said the man, "that isn't her name."

Suddenly he cried out sharply, "Nelly!"

Quick as a flash the horse picked up her ears and looked around.

"Nelly," said the man, stepping in front of her, "shake hands!"

Up came the horse's right hoof for the man to take.

"Now use the other hand, Nelly."

And she raised her left forefoot.

"There!" said the smiling man, "dye suppose that wasn't my horse?"—Our Dumb Animals.

Coleridge says: "It is childish to talk faith as imperfect without charity or love. As well might you say that a fire, however bright or strong, is imperfect without heat, or that the sun, however cloudless, is imperfect without beams. The true answer would be, it is not faith at all, but utter and reprobate faithlessness."

And Roman says: "Love makes long sweet, and had set me easy. Nothing is plain that we do. And this is gospel teaching. It is with working by love that the church's noble race—the commandments are exalted into privileges—ordinances become happy means of fellowship with God."—Es.

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