

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON II.

April 9, 1882.] Mark 6: 14-29.

DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 14-16.

14. And King Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad;) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mightily works do shew forth themselves in him.

15. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

16. But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

17. For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias's sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.

18. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not.

20. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

21. And when a convenient day was come that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;

22. And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

23. And she swore unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

25. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

26. And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

27. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought; and he went and beheaded him in the prison,

28. And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29. And when his disciples heard of it they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth."—Ps. 37: 12.

TOPIC.—Dying for the Truth.

LESSON PLAN.—1. HEROD'S CONSCIENCE. 2. JOHN'S FAITHFULNESS. 3. JOHN'S MARTYRDOM.

Time.—March or April, A.D. 29, soon after the last lesson. **Place.**—Macherus, on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea.

HELPS TO STUDY.

INTRODUCTORY.—Three Herods are mentioned in the New Testament. The first was Herod the Great, who was king of Judaea when Jesus was born, and who murdered the little children of Bethlehem. Matt. 2. The second was Herod the tetrarch—Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great; this is the Herod spoken of in this lesson. The third comes to notice in the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. He belonged to a later generation. Our lesson tells us how Herod Antipas came to put to death John the Baptist. Parallel passages, Matt. 14: 1-12; Luke 9: 7-9.

I. HEROD'S CONSCIENCE.—(14-16.) V. 14. **KING HEROD**—he ruled over Galilee and Perea. **HEARD OF HIM**—the fame of Jesus was now spread throughout all the country by his preaching and miracles. **HE SAID**—his conscience smote him: he remembered that he had wickedly put John to death. While others thought Jesus might be the expected Elijah or one of the old prophets, the conscience-stricken king thought the murdered John had risen from the dead. V. 15. **ELIAS**—the Greek form of Elijah, who was foretold as the forerunner of the Messiah (Mal. 4: 5), and who in a certain sense did reappear in John the Baptist. It is a **PROPHET**—literally, "he is a prophet as one of the prophets"—that is, a prophet like those who have gone before him, but not the Messiah for whom all are waiting. V. 16. **IT IS JOHN**—the very man whom I have put to death.

II. JOHN'S FAITHFULNESS.—(17-20.) V. 17. **FOR HEROD HIMSELF**—it was done at his command. **IN PRISON**—in the castle of Macherus, near the north-eastern end of the Dead Sea. **HERODIAS'S SAKE**—she was a granddaughter of Herod the Great. She was first married to Philip, by whom she had a daughter Salome—probably the one who danced and pleased Herod. Herod Antipas divorced his wife and persuaded Herodias to leave her own husband and live with him. V. 18. **JOHN HAD SAID**—boldly and faithfully reproved him. V. 19. **HERODIAS HAD A QUARREL**—more literally, "held herself against him." V. 20. **HEROD FEARED JOHN**—he knew him to be a good man, and feared because he had unjustly put him in prison. **OBSERVED HIM**—rather, "kept him," saved him from the malice of Herodias. He did many things that John advised, but he would not change his wicked life.

III. JOHN'S MARTYRDOM.—(21-29.) V. 21. **A CONVENIENT DAY**—a day suitable for the purpose of Herodias. She watched her opportunity to obtain by device the death of her enemy. V. 22. **DANCED**—not with others, but alone, like the trained dancers of the theatre. V. 23. **HE SWORE UNTO HER**—a foolish and wicked oath made under the influence of excitement and wine. V. 25. **BY AND BY**—immediately. **CHARGER**—a large flat dish like the modern walter. V. 26.

THE KING WAS EXCEEDING SORRY—but the company at the table insisted that his oath should be kept. V. 27. **IMMEDIATELY**—if he had waited until the excitement of his drunken revelry had passed off, he might have been saved the commission of such a crime. An executioner was sent at once to the prison, and John was beheaded. His head was brought to the daughter of Herodias, who gave it to her mother. His body was probably thrown out of the castle, as was common with the bodies of criminals. His followers gave it affectionate burial.

TEACHINGS:

1. Beware of doing wrong, for a guilty conscience is a tormentor.
2. Feasting and revelry often lead to crime.
3. The faithful man is faithful in rebuking sin.
4. A bad promise is better broken than kept.
5. Fear of public opinion is a poor substitute for fear of God.
6. It is better to die in a prison for the right than to sit on a throne in wickedness and crime.

REMEMBER that thinking well of the preacher will not take the place of repenting and obeying God's word. Avoid making rash promises; you may be brought into serious trouble by them. Never nourish a grudge against any one.

LESSON III.

April 16, 1882.] [Mark 6: 30-44.]

THE FIVE THOUSAND.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 41-44.

30. And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while; for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

34. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

35. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed:

36. Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat?

37. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

38. He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

39. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

41. And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42. And they did all eat, and were filled.

43. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

44. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I will abundantly bless her provision. I will satisfy her poor with bread."—Ps. 132: 15.

TOPIC.—The Compassion of Christ.

LESSON PLAN.—1. THOUGHTFULNESS FOR HIS DISCIPLES. 2. COMPASSION FOR THE PEOPLE. 3. PROVISION FOR THE HUNGRY.

Time.—April, A.D. 29. **Place.**—A desert place belonging to Bethsaida Julias (Luke 9: 10), not far from the entrance of the Jordan into the Sea of Galilee, and east of it.

HELPS TO STUDY

INTRODUCTORY.—Jesus now returned to Capernaum, and the twelve came to him there. The people flocked to him, bringing their sick to be healed. With thoughtful care for the twelve, who needed rest, he crossed the Sea of Galilee with them to a solitary place not far from the city of Bethsaida. But when they landed they found the multitudes had passed round the head of the lake by the shore, and were waiting for them there. How the loving heart of Jesus overflowed with compassion for them, and how he provided for their wants, we learn from our lesson to-day. Parallel passages, Matt. 14: 13-21; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 1-14.

I. THOUGHTFULNESS FOR HIS DISCIPLES.—(30-32.) V. 30. **THE APOSTLES GATHERED**—they had been away in the work to which he had sent them. V. 31. **HE SAID UNTO THEM**—he saw that they were wearied by their continued labors, and proposed that they should go to a quiet place where they could get the rest which the multitudes would not give them there. V. 32. **A DESERT PLACE**—a solitary, uninhabited region. This was at the south-eastern corner of the plain of Butala, not far from Bethsaida.

II. COMPASSION FOR THE PEOPLE.—(33, 34.) V. 33. **RAN AFOOT**—it would take a rapid walk of about three hours from Capernaum to reach the place. V. 34. **MOVED WITH COMPASSION**—this throng, of course, put an end to all plans for privacy and rest. Jesus would not refuse the eager crowd. He spake unto them of the kingdom of God and healed those that had need of healing. Luke 9: 11.

III. PROVISION FOR THE HUNGRY.—(35-44.) V. 35. **WHEN THE DAY WAS FAR SPENT**—most of the people had been all day without food, and they showed no inclination to depart. The disciples, having no supply for them, asked their Master to send them away. V. 37. **TWO HUNDRED PENNYWORTH**—about thirty dollars, or, as money was then worth nearly ten times what it is now, three hundred dollars. But they

had no such funds on hand; and if they had, it would only be a crumb apiece. V. 38. **FIVE (LOAVES) AND TWO FISHES**—a scant supply even for thirteen men if they were hungry. For five thousand how absurd! But this was the plan of Jesus. He was going to feed all these men from this small supply. V. 40. **IN RANKS**—literally "by plato," like garden-beds; in groups, for convenience in distribution. V. 41. **BLESSED**—after giving thanks—he multiplied the little store; so that this great crowd had all they wanted, and to spare. V. 43. **TWELVE BASKETS**—more was left than there had been at first. There were three reasons for the command "Gather up the fragments": (1) to discourage waste and teach economy; (2) to provide for future want; (3) to keep for a while in their sight the substantial memorial of the miracle.

TEACHINGS:

1. We lose nothing by following Jesus.
2. A desert with Christ is better than a palace without him.
3. He cares for those that follow him.
4. He suits his blessings to the wants of his people.
5. Dividing our blessings with other often multiplies them to ourselves.

REMEMBER that you have more need of the bread of eternal life than of any earthly good. As you pray for daily food—"the meat which perisheth"—seek with even greater earnestness for the bread that came down from heaven. "He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." John 6: 58.

THE PATH OF DUTY.

A young man went one evening to consult his minister respecting the situation which he filled in a large drapery establishment. His master required him to tell falsehoods about the goods, and to cheat the customers whenever he could do so; and his conscience told him that this was wrong. His minister advised him to refuse to act thus dishonestly.

"I shall lose my place," said the young man.

"Then lose your place; don't hesitate a moment."

"I engaged for a year, and my year is not out."

"No matter; you are ready to fulfil your engagement. But what was your engagement? Did you engage to deceive, to cheat and lie?"

"Oh no, not at all."

"Then certainly you need have no hesitation through fear of forfeiting your place. If he sends you away because you will not do such things for him, you will know him to be a bad man, from whom you may be glad to be separated."

"I have no place to go to, and he knows it."

"I would go anywhere, do anything, dig potatoes, black boots, sweep the streets for a living, sooner than yield to such temptation."

"I don't think I can stay there; but I don't know what to do or where to look."

"Look to God first, and trust in Him. Do you think He will let you suffer, because out of regard to His commandments you have lost your place? Never. Such is not His way. Ask Him to guide you."

The young man acted upon the advice given. He was dismissed from his situation, but he found another, where he established a character of integrity and promptness, and entered afterward into business for himself. He prospered and is now a man of extensive property and high respectability.—*The Welcome.*

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