

powers, so as to be able to prepare reports for the Synod in May. The Presbytery resolved unanimously to petition in support of the Temporalities Bill, and the Moderator and Clerk were authorized to sign said petition on their behalf. The Presbytery approved of the changes proposed in the remit on standing orders. The consideration of the report of the Committee on Sustentation and Supplement was deferred until the meeting to be held in May. The Presbytery adjourned, to meet in Hastings on the 5th of April at ten o'clock a.m., and was closed with prayer and the benediction.

PRESBYTERY OF GUELPH.—This Presbytery held the usual bi-monthly meeting in St. Andrew's Church on Tuesday, 21st inst.; the Rev. Mr. Middlemiss, of Chalmers Church, Elora, Moderator. There were nineteen ministers and eleven ruling elders in attendance. None of the business transacted was of special interest. Session records were produced from a large number of the Sessions in the bounds, and those were examined by committees appointed for the purpose, and afterwards attested in terms of the report made in each instance. A report was submitted from the Committee of Finance, setting forth the state of the different funds connected with the Presbytery, and showing the congregations in arrears to any of these. The clerk was instructed to correspond with such, and to intimate that unless the arrears were discharged by next meeting it would be moved that a committee be sent to the congregations to bring the matter expressly before them. It was stated that reports on the state of religion, in answer to the circular issued by the General Assembly's Committee on the subject, had been received from only seven Kirk Sessions. The clerk was instructed to forward these to that committee, and at the same time to inform them that the Presbytery had held a conference and adopted resolutions on the subject. The committee appointed to consider and report on the comparative merits of a Sustentation or Supplemental Scheme for ministerial support, reported in favour of the former, but the Presbytery, by a vote of thirteen to four, re-affirmed a resolution adopted by it several months ago in favour of the Supplemental Scheme, which is the one at present in force in the Church. A minute on the death of the late Mr. John G. Macgregor was submitted by a committee appointed to draft it; it was adopted and ordered to be engrossed in the minutes, and a copy to be sent to the widow. A report was handed in from a committee appointed to examine the statistics of congregations, as published in the appendix to the minutes of the last General Assembly. The committee, and especially the convener, were thanked for their services, and re-appointed for the purpose of examining those that were coming in for the year now closing, and reporting upon them, so far as they can, at the next meeting. Dr. Wardrope gave notice of an overture he would submit at the first meeting, for transmission to the Assembly, for the publication of the Psalms of David, with music, to be bound up with the present Hymn Book. Commissioners were appointed to the General Assembly, which is to meet at St. John, New Brunswick, on the second Wednesday of June next, as follows: Drs. Wardrope and McKay, Messrs. Ball, Mullan, Dickson and Torrance, ministers; with Messrs. Burnett, Black, Dunbar, Wood, McCrae and Davidson, ruling elders. Notice was given that at next meeting it would be moved to repeal a former decision of the Presbytery that each congregation in the bounds be required to contribute its proportion to a fund to defray the expenses of those appointed to attend the meeting of the General Assembly, thus laying it upon each commissioner to bear his own. The clerk was authorized to procure student supply for Second Church, Garafra and Eden Mills, during the summer. It was ordered that the circulars received from the Assembly's Committee on Temperance should be sent down to Sessions, replies to the same to be forwarded to the Synod's Committee on that subject sometime before the meeting of that body. No other business was taken up calling for public notice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.—Rev. Dr. Reid has received the following sums for the several objects mentioned, viz.: A Friend, Dorchester Station, for Foreign Mission, China, \$2; W. A. Cobourg, for Home Mission \$1; Foreign Mission \$1; "A Man who makes God his insurer," for Home Mission, \$6; "One to whom the Lord has been gracious," for Home Mission, \$500;

"Yess," Keady, for Home Mission \$2, Foreign Mission \$1.50, French Evangelization \$1.50; A member of St. John's Church, Brockville, for Foreign Mission, \$5; A Friend, Kirkwall, for Foreign Mission, China, \$10; Anonymous ("Nobody"), for Home Mission, \$100 also for Foreign Mission \$100.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—In addition to the sums already acknowledged, \$8 was received last week from the congregation at Carlisle, per Rev. John Rennie, of Allsa Craig, to be applied to Mr. Sieveright's church erection work at Prince Albert, N.-W. T. It should also be mentioned that \$155 was collected in Toronto by James Campbell, Esq., for the same purpose, contributions having been given not only by Presbyterians, but by members of other Churches.

D. J. MACDONNELL.

St. Andrew's Manse, Toronto, 28th March, 1882.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XIV.

April 9. DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST {Mark vi. 14-29.
1882.

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

TIME.—Following the sending out of the twelve.

PLACE.—The Castle of Machaerus, on the east coast of the Dead Sea.

PARALLEL.—Matt. 14: 1-13; Luke 3: 17-20; 9: 7-10.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 14: "Herod" Antipas, brother of Archelaus (Matt. 2: 22)—sons of Herod the Great by one of his ten wives, Malchaze. He was only king by courtesy; he was what Luke correctly called "tetrarch" (3: 1); he had but a fourth part of his father's kingdom; "heard:" it took a long time for Herod to hear of Jesus; "he said:" so did others (Luke 9: 7)—he was alarmed; "therefore mighty works:" John had wrought no miracle; "do show forth:" lit. energise, or, work mightily in him.

Ver. 15: "Others said Elias:" he was expected to reappear (Malachi 4: 5), "a prophet, or as one:" it not Elias, one of the other prophets, or certainly he was like one of the prophets.

Ver. 16: "Herod—said:" his guilty conscience adopted this as the best explanation of what he heard. Note the emphatic "whom / beheaded." As there were those who believed on Christ in the household of Herod, it is likely that it was to them he talked. See Luke 8: 3; Acts 13: 1.

Ver. 17: Not the first nor the last instance of what power will do to the fearless speakers of truth. Neither class have ever wanted successors. "Herodias," an infamous woman—she was first married to her uncle, Herod Philip (not the tetrarch); him she left and married another uncle, this Herod Antipas, who, for her, put away his first wife: "Philip" said to have been a man of honour and justice—the best of the Herodian family.

Ver. 18: "John had said:" brave truth-speaker; "not lawful:" opposed to the God-given Levitical law.

Ver. 19: "Herodias had a quarrel:" Rev., "set herself against him." She knew not how far the influence of John might go with Herod to repent of his sin and put her away; "would have killed:" the idea is that she sought opportunities for this—kept it before her.

Ver. 20: "Herod feared John." Matt. 14: 5 says, "feared the multitude." Both correct, doubtless, as a result he set himself to guard John against Herodias, for "observed him" is more correctly "preserved him." Rev., "has kept him safe;" "did many things:" Rev., "was much perplexed" picture of a man whose passions would go on sinning, but whose conscience says "no," "did many things:" but not the one all-important thing.

Ver. 21: "Birthday:" not necessarily birthday; the word thus translated may mean any anniversary or festival; "lords—captains" men in official positions, "chief estates" chief men—men of influence.

Ver. 22, 23: Little doubt that this was all arranged by Herodias; she knew Herod and his weakness; "daughter:" Salome, her daughter by her first husband, "danced:" a sensual, disgraceful exhibition at such a feast; "unto the half:" an oriental mode of expressing liberality, so Abasuerus, Esther 5: 6; in a mere satrap like Herod an idle boast.

Ver. 24, 25: O mother! fiendish mother! see the power of hate, of bitter revenge, of luxury, enjoyment of all kinds were within her reach, but malice triumphed, and she said, "The head of John the Baptist;" and the daughter understood her mother—she lost no time—she returned "straightway"—immediately—with haste—perhaps fearing that the king might repent; "by and by." Rev., "forthwith;" "charger:" old English for a large dish.

Ver. 26: "Sorry:" likely enough he feared the consequences, but he is not the only one that rash folly has made sorry (Judges 11: 35, Dan. 6: 14), he was very sorry; "his oath's sake:" how sensitive such men are on some points; he could live in adultery and commit murder, but could not break a rash oath. We have his counterparts to-day.

Ver. 27, 28: "Immediately" the whole story points to the feast having been held in the same place where John was imprisoned. There was no lapse of days; the hideous object was placed in the daughter's hands, and by her given to her mother.

Ver. 29: "Laid—in a tomb:" to the next New Testament martyr, Stephen, was buried by "devout men" (Acts 8: 2); yet we don't read that they kept any relics of the

dead to worship. Matt. 14: 12 relates that this done they went to tell Jesus, perhaps so instructed by John, for he doubtless foresaw the possibility of such an ending.

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Dangers.—Classes of younger girls, particularly, will want to be telling about their birthday parties; who they had, and what they did. While you need not stop this entirely, don't let it take up too much time, and do not neglect to turn the talk into the channel of the right use of birthdays: to be made seasons of gladness because of God's mercies, and of fresh dedication of life to Him in loving gratitude. Do also about dancing; if you have nothing else to say, don't justify it by saying that modern dancing is different to that of Herodias; it may be, but is nevertheless sometimes as perilous to body and soul.

Topical Analysis.—(1) A guilty conscience (14-20). (2) A rash oath (21-23). (3) A terrible request (24, 25). (4) A cruel murder (26-29).

This whole lesson is a parenthesis in the history of the work of Jesus. The circumstances narrated had occurred previously, how long we are not sure; probably, from the evident freshness of the thing in the mind of Herod, quite recently. While it is in some respects a sad lesson, telling as it does of guilt, the success of crime, and the sudden, cruel death of a good man, it may be relieved by showing that John's work was done. Paul said that he "fulfilled his course," and the executioner's sword was only the passage into the glories of his Master's kingdom.

On the first topic, we may show what a whip of scorpions is a guilty conscience. Here was a man who had succeeded in his wickedness; he was in the enjoyment of his sensual pleasures, and the man who had dared boldly to reprove him had been laid in the tomb. But had Herod rest? No! the ghastly sight of the head in the charger was before him continually. So the tyrant who ordered the massacre of St. Bartholomew, he also, under the influence of a bad woman, heard to the end of his days the shrieks of his victims, and at night had to be lulled to sleep by the strains of music. This man, it is thought, was a Sadducee; if so, how vain his creed to keep down the terror to which his guilt gave birth. Teach that sin is the seed of sorrow, of fears, of torment; that the reaping sometimes follows the sowing with terrible rapidity, as it did here; but come sooner or later, come it will. A guilty conscience gives a dreadful form and voice to everything, even that which is beautiful and musical; it is to live

"Like a scorpion girt by fire
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death."

Pray with and for your scholars, that their consciences may be kept tender, that even the smallest sin may cause them sorrow until pardoned and washed away.

On the second topic, you may briefly point out the dangers of sinful pleasures: how one sin leads to another, and how what might have been not only an innocent but a helpful celebration, an occasion of gratitude—became a snare and a pitfall. Is it not so with many of our youthful gatherings to-day—"parties," as they are called? Is there not too often much in them that is appallingly like the first downward steps of sin? If men and women, boys and girls, willingly breathe an atmosphere of impurity and improper excitement, moral disease will certainly follow, and, unless God's mercy prevents, moral death. Teach here, then, that there must be no dalliance with sin in any shape. Balazam did, and it cost him his life, Samson did, and the loss of his sight, a prison, and violent death followed.

On the third topic it will be sufficient to point out how sin and hatred, secretly nourished, deaden all that is gentle and pure in the heart. Here was a woman, a mother, so filled with bitterness and murder that she could deliberately plan that her daughter should be the means of bringing her enemy within her power, and could instruct that daughter to ask for the bloody proof of his death. We may well join in the prayer of Ps. 71: 4. Show how hatred leads to murder, and what a comment this history is on 1 John 3: 15.

On the fourth topic we see the moral coward, and how he shelters his cowardice under the guise of conscientiousness, miserable self-deception. How much more to his honour and peace if he had disregarded his rash promise when he found that it was going to land him in murder. Tell your scholars that there is a higher conscientiousness in violating sinful promises, if they have been led into making them, than in keeping, and that what is most acceptable to God is obedience and love. You may also instil the truth that a false shame—the fear of what men will say—should never cause them to do the wrong or neglect the right. Herod sacrificed conscience to courtesy; conscience was violated in the promise; the oath was a crime which the breaking of it would not have been. Next and not far from the crimes of the thoroughly bad man—the black-hearted scoundrel—are those of the weak man, who knows the right but does not dare to do it, and knows the wrong but does not dare to avoid it. The names of Herodias, the bold planner of the murder of the Baptist, and of Herod, the weak instrument of its accomplishment, are linked together in eternal infamy.

Incidental Lessons.—The danger of toying with known sin.

That worldly festivities are a time of temptation.

That the wicked will hate the good.

That the moral coward, though on a throne, is a slave.

That no promise, no matter how solemn, can bind us to commit sin.

That good men may die for the truth. Stephen, James, Paul, the Master. See almost every page of Church history for 1800 years.

Main Lesson.—On Conscience.—Sin is the parent of a troubled conscience. Shun the one, you are spared the other.

A guilty conscience is a hell upon earth.

We may shut the mouth of the preacher, but conscience will speak.

Outsins are the ghosts that will haunt us with terror here and hereafter. Lev. 26: 17, 36. Ps. 53: 5. Prov. 28: 1. Isaiah 48: 22; 57: 20, 21.