

Notes on the Lessons.

LESSON I--January 6th.

John the Baptist Beheaded. MARK 6: 17-29.

(Commit to memory verses 26-28.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Matt. 10: 28.

PROVE THAT

Integrity sometimes brings trouble, Dan. 3: 19.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Quest. 1. *What is the chief end of man?* A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

LESSON HYMNS.

CHILDREN'S HYMNAL, Nos. 248, 117, 205, 40.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* John the Baptist Beheaded; Mark 6: 14-29. *Tuesday.* The Witness of John; John 1: 19-27. *Wednesday.* John's Teaching; Luke 3: 7-14. *Thursday.* Christ's Testimony; Matt. 11: 7-15. *Friday.* Fear and Fearlessness; Luke 12: 1-12. *Saturday.* Martyrs for God; Heb. 11: 32-40. *Sabbath.* The Crown of Life; Rev. 2: 8-11.

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. The mission of the Twelve had greatly extended the fame of Jesus, and the preaching of a "kingdom" had led some to inform Herod regarding him, lest the new movement should have political importance. Herod, however, quite understood its purely religious character, but his conscience and his superstitious fears led him to declare that Christ was John the Baptist, whom he had beheaded, risen again from the dead. This remark of Herod's is explained in our lesson, which gives an account of the martyrdom of the great Forerunner. Parallel passages, Matt. 14: 1-12; Luke 3: 19-20; 9: 7-9.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Fearless Preacher. vs. 17-19. II. The Birthday Banquet. vs. 20-25. III. The Martyred Prophet. vs. 26-29.

I. THE FEARLESS PREACHER. 17. Herod—Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. He was tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis. **Laid hold upon John**—The arrest took place some time before (Matt. 4: 12; Mark 1: 14). **Bound him in prison**—His place of confinement, according to Josephus, was the castle of Machaerus, about nine miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. Herod was probably at this time engaged in war with his father-in-law, Aretas, whose daughter he had driven away when he took Herodias. In this war he was defeated, and the Jews rejoiced at his discomfiture as a judgment upon him for murdering John. **Herodias**—She was a grand-daughter of Herod the Great, and wife of her uncle Herod Philip I. **Philip**—a half-brother of Herod Antipas. He had fallen under the displeasure of his father and was excluded from the succession. He lived in retirement at Jerusalem. He must not be mistaken for the tetrarch, Philip, who was another half-brother of the same name, and who married his daughter Salome, the dancer of our lesson.

18. John had said—"The tense implies that he said it more than once. It was the burden of John's exhortations to him." (Alford.) He reproved Herod for his general profligacy. (Luke 3: 19). Compare Nathan and David (2 Sam. 12: 7), and note the different spirit in which a true child of God takes a

faithful rebuke. John was a true prophet. (Ezek. 2: 5-7). He risked his life when he rebuked Herod, but he feared God rather than man. We become responsible for sin that we do not denounce when a fitting opportunity occurs. **It is not lawful**—for three reasons: (1) Philip was still living. (2) Herod's wife was still alive. (3) She was within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, being his niece (Lev. 18: 14; 20: 19), and of affinity, being his brother's wife (Lev. 18: 16; 20: 21). The emphasis seems to be laid on the last reason. It was an aggravation of the crime of adultery. Josephus says that John's bold rebuke was only a pretext, so far as Herod was concerned. He was shameless enough not to feel hurt by it. His real reason was lest John should stir up an insurrection.

19. Had a quarrel against him—R. V. "set herself against him;" lit. "cherished inward wrath against him." Watching for her opportunity of revenge. **Desired to kill him** (R. V.)—She had a settled and persistent determination on the subject. Matthew says that Herod would have let her have her way but that he feared the multitude (Matt. 14: 5; 21: 26; Luke 20: 6). The next verse gives another reason. Probably both were true.

20. Herod feared John—"As Queen Mary feared Knox, or Ahab, Elijah." His conscience made him a coward. (Illustrate by