

The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Second Quarter Lesson 12, June 17, 1900

THE FEEDING OF FIVE THOUSAND—John 6: 5-14

Compare Matthew 14: 13-21; Mark 6: 30-44; Luke 9: 10-17.

Commit Verses 9-12

GOLDEN TEXT—Give us this day our daily bread.—Matt. 6: 11.

HISTORICAL SETTING

Time.—About a year after the last lesson, immediately after the martyrdom of John and just before the Passover, April, A. D. 29. The Passover began that year April 16.

Place.—The plain of Bethsaida, belonging to Bethsaida (Luke 9: 10), a "desert"; i. e., an uncultivated, uninhabited place, a short distance southeast of Bethsaida, on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES.—After the martyrdom of John, Jesus and his disciples left Galilee for a time. The excitement on account of Herod's murder of John might end in a political revolt, which was entirely contrary to the plans and principles of Jesus inaugurating his kingdom. He crossed over the Jordan into the realm of Herod Philip, and went up among the hills, and there in retirement he conversed with his disciples.

THE GATHERING MULTITUDES; FIELDS WHITE TO THE HARVEST—V. 5. The people noticed the sailing of Jesus over the Sea of Galilee, and could watch the course of the boat nearly all the way to Bethsaida. The great roads to Jerusalem passed near the head of the lake. These were thronged with pilgrims going up to the Passover. Pilgrims from every part of Galilee were also going up to Jerusalem. They had time to go out of their way to see and hear him who whose fame had gone over the whole region. Therefore, when Jesus looked up from his teaching on the hillside, he saw a great company come unto him. They came because of the miracles of Jesus, and evidences of His divine mission, and the truths that he taught. But the attraction was not merely curiosity and wonder, but also a semi-consciousness that these showed that Jesus was the prophet who would help them.

A BUSY DAY: JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES AMONG THE MULTITUDES. 1. Before Jesus' vision were the great multitudes like sheep without a shepherd. Their bodily hunger and need of healing were but a type of their deepest hunger for spiritual food and the more deadly disease of sin. The hungering multitudes were a picture of the great world, restless and hungry. They need eternal life; they are dying for want of the bread of life, but do not realize what it is they need.

2. In the earlier part of the day, while the crowds were assembling, Jesus was teaching his disciples. They had just returned from their tour around Galilee, and would wish to talk over their successes, their mistakes, and receive the instruction they would soon need as to the true way of preaching the gospel. The death of John the Baptist would also be a theme, and many a wise word on duty, and faithfulness, and the martyr's crown would be spoken. Thus were the disciples being trained for their future work for the multitudes.

3. When Jesus saw the multitudes he was filled with compassion for them. Jesus has compassion for all the people of the world. He desires to be their Shepherd, and he has come to furnish them with healing and with the bread of life.

4. Jesus came forth from his retreat, and welcomed the multitudes, and taught them concerning the kingdom of God.

5. He healed them that had need of healing. He thus (1) showed them his authority as a teacher, his works giving weight to his truths and promises. (2) He was showing what his kingdom meant for suffering humanity, a river of healing for body and soul. (3) He proved the sincerity of his compassion for them. Blessing the body is a proof of the power of the gospel to bless the spirit, and of the sincerity of those who teach and preach.

6. The day was closed by prayer and solitary communion with God.

THE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS.—Vs 59. Jesus... saith unto Philip, towards evening, Jesus (speaking to Philip, whose home was at Bethsaida, and who therefore was acquainted with the region and the people).—"Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John).

Philip—"Two hundred pennyworth (\$34 worth) of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little" (John).

The Apostle.—"Feed the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge and get victuals" (Luke).

Jesus.—"Give ye them to eat" (Luke).

The Apostle.—"Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread and give them to eat?" (Mark).

Jesus.—"How many loaves have ye?" (Mark).

Andrew.—"There is a lad here," etc. (John)—v. 9.

Five barley loaves Round, flat cakes like large cracker. Barley was the poorest food of the people. The lad probably brought them for his own lunch. Two small fishes. The small and generally dried or pickled fish eaten with bread. Millions were caught in the lake. "What are they among so many?" Five crackers and two sardines for five thousand hungry men, besides women and children!

SOME LESSONS.

I. Jesus asked the question of Philip (v. 6) to prove him, to test him. To reveal to himself and to others what his training had done for him in understanding and trusting Jesus. To strengthen his faith, to develop his character.

II. Often in their work would arise the question, "What are these among so many?" These few disciples, these few instrumentalities, these weak powers, these few principles of truth,—what are these among the millions of people to be brought into the kingdom, and the mighty powers of opposition to be overthrown? Jesus by his miracle showed them that in him lay the power that could multiply these feeble instrumentalities. It was a miracle of instruction in cheer and hope and faith, a miracle of promise of victory. We need not be troubled by our small talents, or meager means, or few opportunities, if we consecrate them to him and his service. Most of the greatest results in the world have begun thus.

III. This is a charming lesson for small boys. How interested this boy must have been.

This young boy was a small Christian Endeavor Society. Compare the parables of the leaven, of the mustard seed, of the pound that became ten pounds.

Compare the little seed which "old Naaman how he could be healed."

THE FIVE THOUSAND FEED—Vs. 10, 11. Jesus said. Make two men (the people) sit down. They sat by hundreds and fifties. The people sat down, literally, in table companies, arranged like guests at table; some companies of a hundred and some of fifty, in squares or long rows open at one end, so that the disciples could pass along the inside and distribute the loaves. There was much grass. This would make it clean and pleasant sitting. Five thousand. Men, besides women and children. And Jesus took the loaves. That it might be known whence the supply came. And when he had given thanks. Thus recognizing the Giver of all good. He distributed to the disciples, as a matter of convenience, and as an object lesson both to them and to the people. The divine gifts were conveyed through human instrumentality. Doubtless the faith of the disciples was severely tried when they were required to advance each man to his separate hundred with his morsel of bread. As much as they would. No one went away hungry.

FIVE LOAVES OF INSTRUCTION. I. The example of Jesus in blessing the bread before eating. Food mingled with gratitude, love, and obedience is doubly good.

II. Jesus was made known here, as to the disciples at Emmaus, in the breaking of bread. Each communion season should be a miracle of loaves to us.

III. The hope of the world's salvation is in the wonderful power of God in multiplying the little; the numbers, the wealth, the power of Christians are enough for the salvation of the world, if they will distribute what God gives them, and if his blessing goes with it.

IV. Our duties and our privileges are not measured by what we can do ourselves, but by what God is willing to do through us.

V. Jesus conferred a great privilege on the disciples in making them the instruments of conferring his bounty. He could have rained manna from heaven, or summoned angels to help, but he gave this privilege to his disciples.

GATHERING UP THE FRAGMENTS.—V. 12-14. When they were filled. Every person had all he wanted. Gather up the fragments. The broken pieces that would be fit for food at another time. That nothing be lost. Be wasted. Filled twelve baskets. They were small hand-baskets specially provided for the Jews to carry Levitically clean food while traveling in Samaria or other heathen districts. They were made of rushes, reeds, twigs, or ropes. This is of a truth that prophet. The Messiah. The miracle was convincing and they sought immediately to hail him as their king. But Jesus sent them home and went up into the mountain alone to pray.

BASKETS OF PRECIOUS TRUTHS. I. This was for these Orientals a lesson in thrift. Nothing could

exceed the lavish wastefulness of the poor Oriental when a man of good fortune has filled his hands with plenty. He absolutely takes no thought of the morrow.

II. Let nothing be wasted or lost in God's work. Using well or wasting the fragments of time, of opportunity, makes the difference between success and failure.

III. This is especially true of spiritual work. Often the best results are gained from the use of fragments of our business or daily life.

IV. Illustrations We extract beautiful colors from the dung heap, and delicious perfumes and essence from offal of the streets. Every day we are finding out more and more that nothing is useless. Each year purposeful men grow rich out of trifles that the careless cast away. The sewers of Paris have made one man wealthy with treasure beyond that of gold mines. The wastes of a cotton mill founded the fortune of one of the greatest families in England. Peter Cooper used to say that he built the Cooper Institute by picking up the refuse that the butcher shops threw aside.

V. Jesus taught his disciples a lesson of giving. They gain spiritual life by imparting it. A missionary can do most for the heathen is most prosperous at home in all spiritual usefulness.

VI. This is especially true of teachers. They gain clearer views of truth by teaching others. They grow richer in all that is best in life by giving to others what they have received.

VII. Illustration. As the vessel's oil increased, not in the vessel, but by pouring out; as herethe barley bread multiplied, not in the whole loaf, but by breaking and distributing; and as the grain bringeth increase, not when it lieth on a heap in the garner, but when scattered upon the land, so spiritual grace is best improved, not by keeping them together, but by distributing them abroad.

VIII. A desert neither receives nor gives, and it always remains barren and poor. Every heart that receives and gives forth grows rich in holiness and love, and everything that belongs to its commerce.

Miraculous Results of Absent Treatment. My wife solemnly affirms that she will get a divorce if I say anything about it, said Jones with a smile. But it is too good to keep, so I tell you. Mrs. Jones had been ailing for some time, and falling into the hands of one of the neighbors who is a faith curist she became imbued with that peculiar belief. I laughed at her, but she remained firm and said she was convinced that she could be cured only through faith. As her illness was nothing serious, I said nothing more, congratulating myself that I was ahead what the doctor would have charged her.

It ran along for some time while my wife continued to gain, and at last she announced that she was fully cured.

Now, then, John Henry, said she, I never again wish to hear you say anything about mind cure being imagination. I am sure that I would have been a dead woman if I hadn't taken the treatment that I did. And to think he never set eyes on me!

He never what? I gasped. Set eyes on me! I took the absent treatment. I sent Prof. Fake \$5 to treat me by his famous absent treatment.

Do you mean to say, said I, that you sent a fakir \$5 to treat you? That's just what I did! And to think the most wonderful thing about it was that I was aware the moment that he received my letter and opened it, although he was a thousand miles from me. Why, I commenced gaining right from that moment! It is simply wonderful! You can say what you like, but you can't deny that I am a well woman, and all through the wonderful absent treatment that I received.

I should have said something right then and there had I not heard the postman's whistle and gone to the door to get my mail. There was a letter for my wife from the dead letter office and when she opened it out dropped her letter to Prof. Fake. She had misdirected it and the fakir had never received it. She says—but on second thought I hadn't better tell you what she says.—Detroit Free Press.

Would You Dare Tell God That? Mary is a thoughtful little girl. She is very careful about what she says. Her brother is quite unlike her in this respect. She thinks before she speaks, while he speaks and thinks afterwards; and very often when too late he is sorry for, or ashamed of, what he has said.

One day he came home very angry with a schoolmate about something that had happened on the playground. He told Mary about it, and the more he thought and talked of it, the angrier he

grew, and he began to say terribly harsh, bitter and unreasonable things about his comrade. Some of the things he said Mary knew were not true; but he was too angry and excited to weigh his words. She listened for a moment, and then said, gently, Would you dare tell God that, Ralph?

Ralph paused as if some one had struck him. He felt rebuke implied in her words, and he realized how wickedly and untruthfully he had spoken.

No, I would not tell God that, he said with a red face.

Then I would not tell it to anybody, said Mary.

Oh, that's all right for you to say, said Ralph; but it you had such a temper as I've got—I'd try to get control it, said his sister, gently. When it's likely to get the upper hand of you, just stop long enough to think, Would I dare tell God that? and it won't be long before you'll break yourself of saying such terrible things.—Young People's Weekly.

WEDDING YOUR GARDEN.—A young girl sat at the window, unhappy and discontented. She was looking at the landscape, but could not see no beauty in the undulating hills in the distance, clad with the fresh green of spring, or the young shrubs budding forth under her window. It was the first of May, when nature is at her best—not tired or scorched by the heat of summer. The mind must be at peace to thoroughly enjoy nature. A friend of the young girl's mother, coming out of the house, looked at the face so drawn by unhappiness. She stopped and said,—

I am afraid, dear girl, that you have not weeded out your garden. The girl answered, I have no garden to weed. We hire a man to do such work.

It is impossible for you to hire any one to weed your garden; you only can do it.

The girl, with a surprised look, said, I do not understand you.

Well, my dear it is the garden of your life I am talking about, and if you want a beautiful flower you must pull out the weeds. Envy, jealousy, anger, pride, selfishness are some of the weeds that grow very fast.

JAPANESE CHILDREN.—Twice a year the children have a festival all their own. The boys' festival occurs on May 5, which is the festival of Hachiman, the god of war. The girls' holiday takes place on March 3. Every dolls' shop in the large cities is decked with tiny models of people and things, and the happy children swarm delightfully in and out of the shops. During the boys' holiday the towns are adorned with immense paper carps (fish), floating in the air from poles, after the manner of flags. They vary in size from the largest, which represents the eldest male in the house, down to the smallest, which stands for the baby son. The significance of this pretty custom is as follows: as the carp swims up the river against the current, so will the sturdy boy, overcoming every obstacle in his pathway, rise to fame and fortune.—Youth and Age.

HE WAS NOT AFRAID.—A story of absolute steadfastness under persecution comes to the Missionary Review of the World from Bagdad. A man was converted through reading the Bible at the bookshop of the Arabian mission. He came to Bagdad on military duty, and was very bold, going frequently to the home of one of the missionaries, and going openly to church. Of course he was soon arrested and imprisoned. His wife came to see us, and it was most touching to hear her tale, how the soldiers surrounded their house, entered and seized him.

Ah, lady, she said, they loaded him with irons and carried him to prison; the officials tried to frighten him, but he was not afraid. He never denied Christ, he never denied Christ, she repeated. They threatened to crucify him if he dared to say in their presence that he believed in Christ, but he answered, Crucify me if you will, but I am a servant of Christ, and will not deny Him.

A remarkable feature is that this woman seems far more in earnest now than before her husband's imprisonment; his boldness seems to have saved his own life and inspired hers.

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