

The Sunday-School.

FIRST QUARTER,
LESSON XII.—Mar. 20.

JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND.

MATTHEW 14: 13-23.

The lesson includes the parallels in all four Gospels, Matt. 14: 13-23; Mark 6: 30-46; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 1-15, 22-65.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life.*—John 6: 35.

HISTORICAL SETTING.—*Time.*—The Spring of A. D. 29. Soon after the martyrdom of John the Baptist. It was about the time of the Passover, for only then is the grass green.

Place.—The plain of Butaiha, 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.

Place in the Life of Christ.—In the third year of his ministry; during his great Galilean ministry. The gospel gaining a large hold upon the people, but with increasing opposition.

Learn by heart John 6: 27-29, 33-35.

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES SAIL TO AN

UNINHABITED REGION BELONGING TO BETHSAIDA.—V. 13. *When Jesus heard of it.* The death of John the Baptist. *He departed thence.* From Galilee. *Into a desert place apart.* The wild pasture lands and uninhabited country southeast of Bethsaida.

The Reasons for His Departure. 1. The death of John the Baptist. The excitement on account of Herod's murder of the prophet might end in a political revolt. The desire shown after the feeding of the five thousand to make him king was an expression of this tendency to revolution.

2. Perhaps, also, he desired a few hours for solitary communion with God, for the refreshment of his own spirit, agitated by the death of John.

3. From Mark 6: 30, 31, we learn that coincident with these reasons Jesus suggested to his disciples that it would be a fitting time for them to rest. They needed this retirement for physical rest, for instruction, for communion with God.

IMMENSE CROWDS, AS SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD.—V. 13. *They followed him on foot.* Some had noticed the direction in which Jesus went. They went along the road that skirts the shore. Those who looked forward to better times would flock to the expected Messiah, and sick and hungry souls would be attracted by one who could help them in their many hungers and needs and hopes.

JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES IN SECLUSION AMONG THE HILLS.—John 6: 3. Jesus gathered his disciples around him in some nook on the mountain side, and there sat with his disciples talking over their plans, their successes, their mistakes, and receive needful instruction.

JESUS HAVING COMPASSION ON THE MULTITUDES.—V. 14. *Jesus went forth.* From his retreat. *He saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them,* for they were like sheep without a shepherd. The hungry multitudes were a picture of the great world, restless and hungry. Jesus has compassion for all the people of the world. His soul longs to help them.

Jesus did for them what was needed. He welcomed the multitudes. He taught them concerning the kingdom of God. *And he healed their sick.* Showing the nature of the gospel he preached. Blessing the body is a proof of the power of the gospel to bless the spirit.

Vs. 15-18. *When it was evening.* When the day began to wear away *His disciples came to him,* saying, *Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and country round about, and lodge, and buy themselves victuals.* Jesus said, *They need not depart, give ye them to eat.* They said, *We have but five loaves and two fishes;* but what are these among so many? *Bring them hither to me.*

Again and again the disciples would ask in their future work, What are these among so many? so few workers, such feeble instrumentalities, in view of all the powers on the side of evil. They could look back at this miracle, and take courage.

Vs. 19, 20. *And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass.* To recline, the customary posture of eating. *And looked up to heaven,* as the source of all good, *he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples.* 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. *They did all eat.* No one went away hungry.

Instruction. The example of Jesus in blessing the bread before eating. The hope of the world's salvation is in the wonderful power of God in multiplying the littles. Our duties and our privileges are not measured by what we can do of ourselves, but by what God is willing to do through us.

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

Vs. 20-23. *They took up of the fragments that remained.* The broken pieces. The gathering of the fragments was an object lesson of precious truth, for more remained than there was to begin with. *Twelve baskets full.* Each of the twelve apostles had one. They were small hand baskets.

Precious Truths. 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.

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

THE HEART OF THE LESSON.

The central truth is that Jesus is the Bread of Life. He does for the spiritual life just what food does for the body.

It sanctifies its hunger. That soul is dead which does not hunger. Life is a succession of desires and their satisfactions. You cannot be sanctified unless you first have the desire. Jesus can give satisfaction to every form of the soul's hunger. For instance, the soul hungers for love. Jesus brings a perfect, deep, divine love to us. The soul hungers for forgiveness, and Jesus brings forgiveness. The soul hungers for immortal life, and Jesus gives it to us. The soul hungers for God, for heaven, for holiness, for usefulness, for

happiness. And every one of these Jesus satisfies.

Food is the means of growth. All our growth is by means of these desires and their satisfaction. Thus we keep hungering for righteousness, and the hunger is satisfied.

Every faculty of the soul needs food that will strengthen and sustain its life, develop its powers, make it grow into the fullness and perfection of its nature.

Another fraction of food is to generate warmth, vitality, energy, power, activity. Jesus inspires, energizes the soul in all its activities.



OUR DEBT TO THE CHILDREN.

This is the day of right royal cheer, of blooming flowers, of singing birds, and a day to help other children to the good things of the kingdom, by teaching our own children to give to others. It has come to be one of the most joyous and most helpful festivities of the whole year. The day was born out of a deep missionary interest. And while we are blessing the world with the gospel, we are raising up a generation of men and women that will have an abiding interest in all Christian work. The Sunday-schools of to-day will be the churches of to-morrow. We owe a debt to the children. We must train them up with large vision and broad sympathies. To fail to do so proves us recreant to a most solemn trust.

Children's Day may be wholly given up to the children with profit. Let the day impress their hearts, and the influence of it will linger with them in after years as a delightful memory. No doubt the day will be more universally observed this year than last. Seek to make it a day of not only speech-making, songs, large crowds, etc., but also a day of large gifts to send out the gospel.

The meaning of Children's Day for missions is that the spiritual forces in the child nature shall be recognized and used. That what has in large measure lain dormant in the past, or that has been cited to enforce the theories of theological controversialists, shall be put to active service for Christ in the conversion of the world. Through the missionary movement among the children we are beginning to understand that the teaching of Christ and the utterances of Isaiah, the great evangelistic prophet, about children were no mere figurative statements with symbolical meaning, but were the sober truth.—*Christian Standard.*



If Women Only Knew

That half their ill are due to impoverished blood, they would use Ferrozone and be saved lots of pain and suffering. Ferrozone is a perfect food for the blood and supplies the strengthening elements needed to maintain health and vigor. Ferrozone is a splendid tonic for weak nervous women and drives away those depressed feelings of dead weariness. You'll have strength, lots of it, your complexion will improve, you will feel ten years younger after a course of Ferrozone which builds up the whole human organism; try it. Price 50c.

Let the vow that not an unkind word of others shall ever be heard from our lips be laid trustingly at his feet.

It Will Prolong Life.—De Sota, the Spaniard, lost his life in the wilds of Florida, whither he went for the purpose of discovering the legendary, "Fountain of perpetual youth," said to exist in that then unknown country. While Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil will not perpetuate youth, it will remove the bodily pains which make the young old before their time and harass the aged into untimely graves.

Ayer's
One dose of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral at bedtime prevents night coughs of children. No croup. No bronchitis. A
Cherry Pectoral
doctor's medicine for all affections of the throat, bronchial tubes, and lungs. Sold for over 60 years.
"I have used Ayer's Cherry Pectoral in my family for eight years. There is nothing equal to it for coughs and colds, especially for children."—MRS. W. H. BRYMER, Shelby, Ala.
25c., 50c., \$1.00. All druggists. J. C. AYER CO., Lowell, Mass.
Night Coughs
Keep the bowels open with one of Ayer's Pills at bedtime, just one.

How about yourself? Do those about you know that you are a Christian? Are your habits and conduct an evidence to them that your religious principles control your life? Are you an aggressive Christian? Do you do and say things to make others think seriously about their soul's salvation?

Let the gentleness that refuses to take offence, that is always ready to excuse, to think and hope the best, mark our intercourse with all.

Prevent Disorder.—At the first symptoms of internal disorder, Parmelee's Vegetable Pills should be resorted to immediately. Two or three of these salutary pellets, taken before going to bed, followed by doses of one or two pills for two or three nights in succession, will serve as a preventive of attacks of dyspepsia and all the discomforts which follow in the train of that fell disorder. The means are simple when the way is known.

By his grace the most commonplace life can be transfigured with the brightness of a heavenly beauty, as the infinite love of the Divine nature shines out through our frail humanity.

A Medicine Chest In Itself.—Only the well-to-do can afford to possess a medicine chest, but Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil, which is a medicine chest in itself, being a remedy for rheumatism, lumbago, sore throat, colds, coughs, catarrh, asthma, and a potent healer for wounds, cuts, bruises, sprains, etc., is within the reach of the poorest, owing to its cheapness. It should be in every house.

No one can love God and serve the devil.

After Work or Exercise

POND'S EXTRACT
Soothes tired muscles, removes soreness and stiffness and gives the body a feeling of comfort and strength.

Don't take the weak, watery witch hazel preparations represented to be "the same as" Pond's Extract, which easily sour and generally contain "wood alcohol," a deadly poison.