

LESSON IX—February 26

THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES. John 6. 1-14

GOLDEN TEXT: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." John 6. 51.

Primary Notes



Approach. There was once a poor boy who was starving. He had nothing to eat and no money to buy bread. A man who found him shivering and starving in the street pitied him and took him home to give him a good meal. There, on the home table, was spread before the boy bread and meat and other good things to eat. They were well cooked, and there was plenty of everything. The good friend with the warm heart pitied the boy and gave him everything freely. He wished him to eat and be filled. He told him to eat all he wished, and he would give him more to take away. But there was one thing the good friend could not do. He could not eat for the hungry boy. The boy must do this for himself, or the food would do him no good. Was it a hard thing to expect the boy to take and to eat what was given him? Surely not. If he were really hungry he would be only too glad to eat. What his friend gave he could surely take.

Jesus has many blessings for us. He gives, but we must take. If we trust him, as we should, and believe that he wishes to bless us we will take what he offers.

The Hungry People. Tell of Jesus's journey over the Sea of Galilee and the following of the multitudes. Picture the weary people, hungry and ready to faint, and Jesus's pity. He knew what he would do, but to give Philip a chance to show what he thought and believed, Jesus asked how bread could be gotten for them all. Philip thought it would take a great deal of money to get enough to give even a little to each one.

The Lad's Luncheon. Sometimes what one does not know another does, and then he should tell. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, knew more than Philip did. He had found a boy with a lunch of bread and fish, only five barley cakes and two small fishes, and "what were they among so many?" he asked. But when brought to Jesus this lad's luncheon was enough.

Describe minutely the comfortable seating of them all, the blessing asked, the loaves broken and given out, the hurrying disciples going to and fro giving out the food that was never less but constantly growing to be more and more.

How good it must have tasted, and how wonderful that there was enough for all, and twelve basketfuls left over!

"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet which should come into the world."

The Bread of Life. Those hungry men were satisfied for this time, but next day they needed food again. Jesus afterward told the people who listened to him of the Bread of Life which they could have always, and which would make their spirits live always in happiness and peace. He told them that he himself was the Bread of Life. He meant that he would be like bread to the spirit, he would do for the soul what bread did for the body. Bread keeps the body alive. Jesus keeps us alive. Bread makes us strong. Jesus makes us strong. Bread is good for us. Jesus is good for us. We grow by eating food. We grow better, more loving, and more patient and good by trusting Jesus and doing what he says.

Lesson Thought: Believe and Take the Bread of Life. Show that as we eat for ourselves so we must trust and love Jesus for ourselves. As we take bread and eat it to make the body strong and well, so we may take the mind of Jesus, the love of Jesus, the patience of Jesus into our hearts to make us grow in all goodness.

Thought for Teachers. As the lad's mother prepared and gave the luncheon which fed so many in Jesus's hands, so, perhaps, we may fill the hands of some little ones with what Christ may bless and use to help many. Let us make ready the loaves. Read and ponder the beautiful poem of "The Barley Cakes" below:

"Drudgery, drudgery all the day.
The grassy-green mountains, the breeze-swept lakes,
The fair, sweet flowers among the brakes,
The birdies that flutter about the trees,
The flocks on the hillsides—none of these
Gladden my life. I must throw away
My life's best days on the homely care
That falls to the lot of the housewife. Bare
As the rocks of Hermon the life of one
Who from dawn of day to the setting sun
Does nothing grander than sweep, or bake
In the ashes the little barley cake!

"Drudgery, drudgery. . . . ah, to-day
My lad goes into the desert to keep—
(My shepherd-boy brave!)—his father's sheep.
He must not know that my heart is faint,
Or catch the gloom of my sad complaint.
And shame to me that I've dared to lay
Across my threshold this bit of rue.
Forgetful that palm trees about me grew,
Fruitful and fair as the sixty and ten
That shaded the waters of Elin. When