



LESSON XII.—June 17.

The Feeding of Five Thousand

John vi., 5-14. Memory verses, 9-12. Compare Matt. xiv., 13-21; Mark vi., 30-44; Luke ix., 10-17.

Daily Readings.

M. Wilderness—Ex. xvi., 1-18.
T. Mountain—John vi., 1-15.
W. Withdrawn—John vi., 15-25.
Th. The Loaves—John ix., 26-59.
F. The Words—John vi., 60-71.
S. The Wise—Prov. ix., 1-12.

Golden Text.

'Give us this day our daily bread.'—Matt. vi. 11.

Lesson Text.

(5) When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? (6) And this he said to prove him; for he himself knew what he would do. (7) Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. (8) One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, (9) There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many? (10) And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. (11) And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. (12) When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. (13) Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. (14) Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

Suggestions.

When the heavy-hearted disciples of John the Baptist came to our Saviour to tell him of their grief, Jesus bade them and his own disciples, who had just returned from a preaching tour, to come with him away to a desert place where they might rest and commune together. They crossed over the Sea of Galilee and went up into a mountain near Bethsaida.

But the multitudes watched them from the shore, and when they saw where the little boat was to land they started around by the road at the head of the lake, and after some time arrived at the spot which our Lord had chosen for rest. Perhaps the disciples were inclined to look with impatience on the people, thinking that many had come merely out of curiosity; others simply because the crowd went, and they had nothing else to do, others from real need of healing for themselves or their dear ones, and perhaps a very few with real heart hunger, following Jesus for what they might learn from him of the kingdom of God. But the heart of the Saviour was filled with compassion for the people—these were the very souls that he had come to save. How should he teach them more about himself? This was the passover season, just a year before he, the Lamb of God, should be offered as the atoning sacrifice through whom the whole world might receive remission of sins. All the passover lambs had been but types of that great sacrifice which was to take place a year later on the dark hill of Calvary. As the flesh of the passover lamb was eaten, so in a mystical sense the flesh of the Lamb of God is the food of the soul. (John vi., 33-35.) This is a subject which must only be approached with the greatest reverence and humble dependence on the Holy Spirit to make real to the soul the true meaning of living by the Bread of Life. In order to explain this truth to the people, Jesus first gave them an object lesson of his perfect

ability to satisfy every need of the body. When they had seen his power over material things they could better understand that he could satisfy also the hungry soul.

The multitudes who had come around by the hot, dusty road had brought with them no refreshments. Jesus at once saw their trouble. He knows our sorrows; his heart is full of sympathy. Turning to Philip, one of the apostles, and a native of Bethsaida, Jesus asked where bread could be got for all these hungry people. He knew that he would not have to buy anything, but he wanted to see if Philip would suggest that Jesus should by a miracle provide food for the hungry. Philip, with swift calculation, replied in a businesslike way that two hundred pennyworth of bread would scarcely be enough to give a little to each one. Two hundred pence of their money comes to about thirty-four dollars of our money, but as in those days a penny was a day's wage, it would be counted as quite equal to a dollar nowadays. Philip perhaps did not even think of asking Jesus for the bread that was needed. The other disciples only suggested that the people should be sent away to the villages round about, to get refreshments. But Jesus commanded that they should feed the multitudes there, as they prepared to go, and buy food he asked them what they had with them. They seem to have brought no bread themselves, but they found a little boy who had, probably as his own lunch, five round, flat barley cakes and two small fishes. These they brought to our Lord with doubt and hesitancy—what could be done with such a small meal?

Our Lord commanded them to seat the men in companies on the grass, and taking the loaves in his hand, gave thanks first to God, then broke the loaves, and giving a piece to each of the disciples bade them feed the multitudes. Their faith was rising now; they dared to face the people with the small piece of bread in their hands, but as they gave it out, oh, wondrous miracle, the loaf increased until every man, woman and child had eaten sufficient to satisfy their hunger. Then as a lesson of carefulness and economy, our Saviour bade his disciples gather up the crumbs, and there were twelve baskets full of good pieces of barley loaf!

Junior C. E. Topic.

FRUIT-BEARING.

Mon., June 11.—Purity—Prov. xx., 11.
Tues., June 12.—Truthfulness—Ps. li., 6.
Wed., June 13.—Honesty—Rom. xii., 17.
Thu., June 14.—Kindness—Rom. xii., 10.
Fri., June 15.—The giving spirit—Acts xx., 35.
Sat., June 16.—True wisdom—James iii., 17.
Sun., June 17.—Topic—The fruit Christ wants us to bear—John xv., 1-10.

C. E. Topic.

June 17.—Abiding in Christ. John xv., 1-10.

The Teacher.

The teacher, to be a success, must teach—must be able to impart truth. The lesson of the day will not have accomplished its purpose if the child has not grasped its meaning, been made to appreciate its value, and become earnest to incarnate it into his life. From the independent, ready-tongued, rough-mannered newsboy; the uncouth, surly, bashful hunter's child, to the refined, delicate, lovable scholar, there is a wide difference, but the teacher who knows how to teach, and who has mastered the lesson to be taught, will grapple each soul to his soul, and not leave the scholar till the truth that is so real to him becomes real, vitally, savingly, joyfully so to the child. The teacher who has succeeded in doing this is a success. Methods are of the individual. Of them, no rules can be made. It is for the teacher to be his own true self, consecrated, full of common-sense, enthusiastic, persevering and with the eye single towards Him who is the 'Author and Finisher of our faith.' Thus equipped he will be able to break the Bread of Life to the hungry hearts of his pupils. And who to-day are 'hungering and thirsting after righteousness' like the children? There is no child, who, ere he has laid his head in the lap of sleep, has not at some time lifted up his soul and cried from the depths of his heart, 'I want to be good.' It is the teacher's duty, the teacher's joyful privilege, by the power given by the Holy Ghost, to so instruct and help the child that he may make that longing desire a living reality.—'Christian Guardian.'

'Helps.'

(By the Rev. J. J. Summerbell, D.D., in C. E. 'World'.)

I was superintendent once, for eleven or twelve years, of a Sunday-school which was considered the model school of a considerable district. The general public did not know that the 'assistant superintendent' was the great element of success. He was the 'helping' superintendent; not a vice-superintendent, not one to take the place of the superintendent in occasional absences, not one in line of succession to the office; but a 'help.' He never opened the school, he never taught a class, he never made a prayer in public, he never made a speech, he never performed any duty requiring the ability to use his own language before listeners; but he was a genuine 'assistant' superintendent.

He was present in the room early, he saw that the officers were at their places, and that the various duties of the hour were provided for. He never assumed authority, but would call the attention of the superintendent to any lack of activity in any department, and would supply information keeping things running smoothly in any interim, doing it all gently, quietly, and successfully; so that people who were informed of his work said that he had wonderful tact.

But that was not the point; he had the gift of the men spoken of in I. Cor. xii., 28, as 'helps'; 'God hath set some in the Church, first missionaries, secondly prophets, then gifts of healing, 'helps,' governments, divers kinds of tongues.' It is a gift of high value. My 'assistant superintendent,' did not know that he had any gift, but that made him more valuable; he never tried to do things which were beyond his capacity.

Many a preacher is made successful by his 'help.' Many a general is crowned with victory, from the aid of some member of his staff, who is hardly a 'helper,' only a 'help,' and who receives no credit for the work which he had 'helped' his nominal leader to accomplish. 'Helps' are not the most prominent ones in the church, but are an absolute necessity. The church can do without a spire, but it cannot stand without a foundation-stone. The river must receive the tribute of the helping brooks.

One might almost say that 'helps' were more needed by Christianity than apostles or prophets; for Christianity is useful in proportion to its helpfulness to humanity. For helpfulness the 'helps' are indispensable. Christianity can exist without orators, but not without the helpful work of its 'helps.' The world can exist without Alexanders or Gladstones, but not without plough-boys.

An ounce of helpfulness is worth a ton of advice.

Use of Sunday-Schools.

A good Sunday-school secures religious instruction to the children of families who otherwise would receive none at all. We speak not now of this benefit derived from the Sunday-school by the children of godless families, but, surprising though this may be, by the members of homes which are avowedly Christian homes. Yes, there are many so-called religious families who furnish no teaching of a spiritual character to their little ones. There is no conversation of a religious nature ever addressed to them, nor is there at any time an enquiry into the condition of their souls. What a blessed thing it is that there are faithful, conscientious, and devout teachers, who fill the gap left vacant by neglectful parents and supply a need so deplorable. In the consideration that from them only the children of some families receive the religious instruction they ever get, how careful should the Sunday-school teacher be to present the truth of the Gospel to every member of his class every Sunday and to seek to apply it with all earnestness.—Rev. M. G. Hansen.