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**Sabbath School.**  
**BIBLE LESSONS.**  
**THIRD QUARTER.**  
 (Condensed from Peloubet's Notes.)  
**Lesson VII. August 16. John 6: 1-14.**  
**THE FIVE THOUSAND FED.**

**GOLDEN TEXT.**  
*"I am that bread of life."—John 6: 48.*  
**EXPLANATORY.**

**I. JESUS RETIRES FOR A TIME TO HEROD'S DOMINIONS.—Ver. 1.** "After these things," Marking an indefinite period of time. "Jesus went over the sea." Probably from Capernaum. They went by boat (Mark 32), privately, to escape the crowds. They needed this restful retirement (1) for physical rest; (2) for instruction in review of their labors; (3) for communion with God; (4) for that wider and truer view of their work which comes from seeing it as a whole, as a landscape is seen from a mountain top. The other reason given (Mark 6: 14) was the death of John the Baptist.

**II. GREAT MULTITUDES FOLLOW HIM TO THE BETHSAIDA WILDS.—Ver. 2.** "And a great multitude followed Him." Some say Him leave in the boat, and knew by the direction to what region He was going. These reported to others. All this was doubtless early in the morning. The crowds went by land from the neighboring cities (Matt. 14: 13), such as Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida. "Because they saw His miracles which He did." The Greek words are very expressive, pointing clearly to repeated miracles of healing, on account of which crowds followed Him continually from place to place. The word for "miracles" here is "signs,"—signs of God's presence, and power and love; signs or evidences of Jesus' divine mission, and the truths that He taught.

**III. JESUS TEACHES THE MULTITUDE, AND HEALS THE SICK.—Ver. 3.** "The people crowded around Jesus, and He welcomed them, weary as He was, and in search of much needed rest. The Son of man is never indignant at eagerness and importunity, always at indifference. His compassion never fails.

**NOTE: GREAT TEACHING AND HEALING WENT TOGETHER.** Jesus knows our temporal wants as well as our spiritual. But now, as then, He ever leads us through earthly to spiritual blessings. The lower are the means to the higher. All workers for Jesus must follow this example. Christianity is a river of blessings flowing through the world, blessings to the bodies and minds, as well as the souls, of men. And blessing the body is a proof of its power to bless the soul, and of the sincerity of those who teach and preach.

**IV. JESUS COMMUNES WITH HIS DISCIPLES.—Ver. 3.** "And Jesus went up into a mountain." Rather, the mountain; the mountain range enclosing the plain, and from which He could look down upon the multitude below. "And there He sat with His disciples"; in the usual posture of teaching. Here they could rest, and report more fully what they had done on the evangelizing tour from which they had just returned; could talk over their plans, their successes, their mistakes, and receive the instruction they would soon need as to the true way of preaching the Gospel to the world, and as to the Gospel they should preach.

**V. THE MULTITUDES FAINTING WITH HUNGER.—Ver. 4.** "And the Passover." Held this year April 16, "a feast of the Jews." Stated for the sake of His Gentile readers, as the Gospel was written in Asia Minor; among Roman customs. This reference to the Passover is made (1) as a note of time; (2) as an explanation of such great multitudes in this wild region; (3) as a reason why they were without food, having exhausted the supplies they brought; (4) Godet assigns a fourth reason, as Jesus and His disciples could not attend the Passover feast at Jerusalem, they would keep such festival in a new and wondrous way,—its heart, but not its form.

**6.** "And this He said to prove Him." This was toward evening when the day began to wear away (Luke 9: 12). "Lifted up his eyes": from the hill overlooking the plain. "He saith unto Philip," Much is omitted here that is recorded in the other Gospels (Matt. 14: 14, 15; Mark 6: 34, 35; Luke 9: 11, 12).  
**6.** "And this He said to prove Him." Not for counsel or advice, but to test Philip's faith; whether he had such faith in Jesus as the Messiah as to believe that He could satisfy the multitude with food, as Moses did the Israelites in the wilderness with manna, or as Elijah kept the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17: 13-16). This gives us a glimpse into the educational method of the great Teacher.

Proving is intended to have a double result: (1) to show what one is, and (2) by this process of testing, to strengthen the good. Philip's faith was both made manifest and made stronger. Life to us is a probation and an education. A probation by the very process of educating, and educating by the process of proving. "For He Himself knew." This is sweet comfort: Jesus knows. He always knows all about it. He knew how many people there were there. He knew how much bread it would take; He knew how many fish He would want, and how He meant to feed the crowd, and send them all away refreshed. He knew all before it happened. And He knows exactly, dear friend, where your help is to come from in your hour of trouble.

**9.** "There is a lad here." Greek, a little boy. "Which hath five barley loaves." Small, thin cakes, baked hard on the side of the oven. They were rather brittle or crackers.  
**THE LITTLE BOY.** Nameless, poor, never again mentioned, this lad drew our attention fully as much as Peter or Philip. (1) He was poor, as the barley loaves show; (2) he was thoughtful and seriously inclined; (3) he was generous; he might have sold his supply to the highest bidder, for doubtless there were those in that throng who would have been willing to pay a good price for what he had on hand of provisions. There was a corner in bread-stuffs at that time, of which, however, the lad refused to avail himself.  
**"And two small fishes." The Greek operation is a diminutive; it properly means what was eaten along with the bread, and specially refers to the small and generally dried or pickled fish eaten**

with bread, like our sardines, or the herrings which are pickled in Holland and Germany. Millions were caught in the lake. We know that both the salting and pickling of them was a special industry among the fishermen. "What are they among so many?" The whole force of Andrew's remark, with its diminutive words, rests upon the smallness of their power to help, while Philip had dwelt on the greatness of the need.

**VI. THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES.—Ver. 7.** "Make the men sit down," or recline, according to the customary posture of eating. "There was much grass." Making it pleasant and clean. The pastures at that season were in their full spring splendor. "About five thousand." beside women and children (Matt. 14: 21), who, according to Oriental usage, must kneel to eat. "And Jesus took the loaves." That it might be known whence the supply came. "And when He had given thanks, looking up to heaven, (Luke), Thus recognizing the Giver of all good. "He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down." A beautiful illustration and foreshadowing of their future work of bearing the bread of life to perishing sinners. The disciples had the privilege, as all disciples still have, of being the almoners of Jesus, distributing His good gifts to their fellow-men. Ministers never fill the people's hearts, till God fills their hands. "As much as they would." No one went hungry. So ever with God's Gospel: there is enough for all and to spare.

**VII. GATHERING UP THE FRAGMENTS.—Ver. 12.** "Gather up the fragments that remain." It is usual to understand by the fragments broken by the multitude during their meal; but it is more probable that they were pieces broken by our Lord—pieces of bread undisturbed or unconsumed because of the abundance of the supply.

**WHY THEY WERE REQUIRED TO GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS.** (1) The design is to bring out the preciousness of the food which Jesus had given. (2) He likewise exhorts His disciples to frugality; for the increase of the bounty of God ought not to be an excitement to luxury. God loveth a bountiful, not a wasteful, hand. It teaches a wise economy in the small affairs of life. (3) It shows to the disciples the spiritual truth that the more they gave of the Gospel blessings to others, the more they would have themselves. (4) It completes the proof of the miracle, for more remained than there was to begin with.

**13.** "And he filled twelve baskets." All four accounts have the same word for basket, *cophinus*, i. e., the wallet which every Jew carried when on a journey, to keep himself independent of Gentile food, which would be unclean (comp. *John 8: 14*). Each of the twelve gathered into his wallet and filled it full. Of the size of these baskets nothing definite is known. "Of the five barley loaves," and of the fishes (Mark), is added to assert the identity of these fragments with their origin, the five loaves of the last mentioned by Andrew. There was one barley loaf for each 1000 men. "Which remained." Here is an apt symbol, this, of that love which exhausts not itself by loving, but, after all its outgoings upon others, abides itself richer than ever. We have done but for these, of the multiplying which there ever is a true dispensing.

**VIII. THE EFFECT ON THE PEOPLE.—Ver. 14.** "Then those men." Who had been fed and satisfied. "This is of a truth that (saith) the Prophet that should come (literally) the most provoking man I ever saw." So said one of our best members to me the other day. I had just been reading in the tenth chapter of Hebrews, and, recalling the twenty-fourth verse, which says, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." I replied: "So you love John and you are trying to do him all the good you can, are you not?"

"Love John! How can I when he is so aggravating! I hope that Love will love him in spite of his faults, but I don't. And it would be useless for me to try to do anything for him, even if I felt like it, for he would reject all my efforts."  
 "But you are a Christian. You have accepted the Bible as your teacher, and Christ as your model. You read in the seventy-eighth Psalm this in regard to the Hebrews: 'How oft did they provoke Him in the wilderness, and grieve Him in the desert.' But did God therefore cease to love them and withhold the manna? We read in the New Testament that the unbelief and the cavils of the Jews provoked our Lord. But did He give up teaching on that account? Did He get angry and go back to heaven, saying: 'I won't suffer for a race of such a nature as this. I will have no more of them.' No; no; the more they provoked our Lord, the more He loved them, the more He loved them, the more earnestly He tried to save them. He said, 'Love your enemies,' and added, 'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?'"

"But how can I love that which is not lovely? I admire a rose because it is beautiful, but I do not love it, rather than which is not only unlovely, but a pest!"  
 "Yes, there is something even in a thistle that we can admire, although it is not as lovely as the rose. But we are talking now, not about inanimate objects, but about moral and immoral beings. In regard to them, the case is different. When we cannot love them with the love of complacency we can, and should, love them with the love of compassion. And when we cannot see in them; as

they now are, any beauty, we should remember that they were created in the image of God, and that this image, though now obscured, may be restored. I met a man once who held in his hand what seemed to be a mere pebble. But he told me that it was a diamond in the rough. He was taking it to a lapidary to be polished. He said that it was worth one thousand dollars. So that provoking John Duncan, rough as he seems, has a soul worth more than the world, a soul for which Christ died, and you ought to love Him for Christ's sake, and try to save him. Why, that man, if regenerated by the Holy Spirit, will shine as a sun in the heavenly firmament for ever and ever."

Now, perhaps my use of that verse in Hebrews may not have been exegetically correct, but it has done its purpose upon my brother the fact that the more provoking people are to us, the more we ought to love them. I remember a case like this: A good man had been grossly insulted by a neighbor who was also a brother in the church. We all thought that he would resent the insult, and be very angry with the insulter. Instead of that, when the matter was mentioned, his eyes filled with tears, and he said: "I am very sorry for A. I wish that I could do something to show him how I love him." He knew that he was unjustly treated, and he felt that one who could so treat him needed to be won by love from his injustice and uncharitableness. If we all could cultivate this spirit, returning love for scorn, and kindness for injury, what a blessing to our brotherhood the Church would be! And the world would take knowledge of us that we had been with Jesus and learned of Him.

**A Story About Crabs.**

The Ancients tell a very instructive fable about the crabs, who once deliberated in a council what to do in order to amend their backward walk. "It is a shame for us," said the speaker, addressing the assembly, "to walk contrary to all other animals, and to be the only one of our kind who is unfortunate in his business, as once they say, 'He walks like a crab.' We must suffer this no longer. As regards ourselves, we are too old to change our habit; but let us make it a law that every person shall train his young one, by all ways and means, never to walk otherwise than forward. Our descendants will then gradually amend the disgraceful oddity of our species." The law proposed was unanimously adopted and the meeting dissolved.

"It is now time," said the old crab to his young one, "that you learn to walk." "How must I do it?" enquired the youngster. "Lift up your feet, one after the other, and put them straight ahead; and pay attention not to walk in any other way," was the parent's reply. "Father, walk ahead and show me," the youngster's demand. The old one began to walk in his old fashion; the young one followed him at once in like manner. "Hold!" cried the old one, in anger. "Did I not tell you to walk straight ahead, why do you obey me?" "I cannot do differently from your example," the little one meekly replied. To be brief the old crab could effect nothing to the purpose by all his exhortations and threats; and this is the reason why all the crabs still walk backward.

**Longing for the Home Land.**

George Macdonald, in one of his sermons, expresses a feeling which finds an echo in many hearts: "Never, in the midst of the good things of this lovely world, have I felt quite at home in it. Never has it shown me things lovely or grand enough to satisfy me. It is not all I should like for a place to live in. It may be that my unbelief comes from not having eyes open enough, or keen enough, to see and understand what He has given; but it matters little whether the cause lie in the world or in myself, both being incomplete; God is, and all is well. All that is needed to set the world right is a new heart, and no man can enter heaven could be right with it—it is that I care for God as He cares for me; that my will and desires keep time and harmony with His music; that I have no thought that springs from myself apart from Him; that my individuality have the freedom that belongs to it as born of His individuality, and be in no slavery to my body or my ancestry, or my prejudices or any impulse whatever from region or unknown; that I be free by bedside to the law of my being, the better living, making will, by which life is life and my life is myself."

Sometimes what seems like a little thing, keeps men out of the kingdom when they have come very near to its borders. It is frequently a question of practical sin. King Herod came to Kadesh-barnea. He listened to the words of one of the greatest preachers of all time. When he heard the sermons of John the Baptist his heart was troubled within him and he was convicted of his sin, and he "did many things," and heard John gladly, but he kept some of his sin. That expression: "He did many things," is very suggestive. But when John like a good physician pressed his finger on the sore spot in Herod's life and character, and said, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother Philip's wife," then Herod chose his sin rather than eternal life. He shut John up in prison and afterwards put him to death at the request of an impious girl. Oh, friends, it may be it is one sin in your life, a sore spot, that God touches with His finger. Beg of you give up the sin and choose life, rather than death, and blessing rather than cursing.—*B. Fay Mills.*

Nothing is easier than fault-finding. No talent, no self-denial, no brains, no character, are required to set up in a grumbling business. But those who are moved by the opinion desire to do good, are the ones to be commended for their child-like love of McLean's Worm Syrup when needed.  
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