



LESSON IX.—MAY 27, 1906.

Feeding the Five Thousand.

Mark vi., 30-44.

Golden Text.

My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.—John vi., 32.

Home Readings.

- Monday, May 21.—Mark vi., 30-44.
- Tuesday, May 22.—Mark vi., 41-58.
- Wednesday, May 23.—John vi., 22-40.
- Thursday, May 24.—John vi., 41-58.
- Friday, May 25.—John vi., 59-71.
- Saturday, May 26.—Matt. xiv., 13-21.
- Sunday, May 27.—Matt. xvi., 22-35.

(By Davis W. Clark).

Crucial times had come. John Baptist was martyred. Prudence suggested retirement. Weariness demanded it. The retreat would also afford the apostles an opportunity to report more minutely to the Master the experiences of their trial trip, two and two, through Galilee, from which they had just returned. So the boat which had been chartered for Jesus, and 'waited upon him,' was employed to put the weary toilers beyond the reach of the multitudes that pressed upon them even at meal times. . . . Head winds probably drove the little bark near the shore, and retarded its progress. Clandestine as the departure had been, it failed of its purpose. An ever-augmenting throng hurried around the head of the lake, and probably apprised some pilgrim caravans to the Passover of the coming of the great Nazarene. So, when Jesus' boat ran its keel upon the pebbly shore, there stood five thousand men, not to mention the women and children. . . .

So, far from being irritated by this foiling of His plans, Jesus's heart was touched to pity at sight of the shepherdless flock, and He began at once to instruct them in many phases of the doctrine of grace. In the absorbing interest of the theme, neither Teacher nor taught observed how the sun was dipping to the western horizon. . . . But the commissary of the apostolic college suddenly awoke to the situation. Five regiments! and no stores on hand or any country to forage upon. After some questions on Jesus' part, calculated to test His disciples' faith, but to which they responded with phenomenal obtuseness, He prepared to work what, in some respects, was His most remarkable and significant miracle. . . . The material basis of the miracle was paltry in the extreme.

'But one poor fisher's rude and scanty store, Is all He asks (and more than needs), Who men and angels daily feeds.'

There is a vivid descriptive touch in the Greek which does not appear in our version. Under Jesus' direction, the confused throng was resolved into the order of a French parterre. He had them sit plat-wise, so that they looked, in their high-colored garments, like veritable flower beds, with green turf intervening. . . . After the cheerful grace, which Jesus never omits, He puts a morsel of bread and fish in the hand of each apostle and sends him forth to serve. What he breaks off is larger far than that which remains. But that which remains is undiminished. And all are fed and filled. . . . As a lesson in frugality, the unused fragments are ordered to be gathered up. Each hesitating apostle holds in his hands the tangible evidence of

the reality and magnitude of the miracle wrought.

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

Lovely evidence is here of the implicit confidence which maintained between Jesus and His apostles. They came to Him. They told Him what they had done, what they had taught. They were sure of His sympathy. If they needed correction they knew it would be done in love. . . . The eldest disciples have no monopoly, however, of Jesus' sympathy. He is touched with a feeling for us, too. We can come to Him also; to 'tell Jesus' is still the disciples' blissful recourse. . . . The same considerateness which Jesus showed for the health and comfort of His toilers He still feels for those who, in this latter day, are engaged in His service. Seasons of respite are indispensable for the highest effectiveness. A church imitates the Master when it gives an industrious pastor a vacation. It says, 'Go apart, and rest awhile.' . . . But apostles not preachers have a monopoly of Jesus' sympathy. The wideness of God's mercy is like the madness of the sea. It sweeps out to inclose all sorts and conditions of men. Jesus was as compassionate toward the five thousand as toward the Twelve. So His Saviour-heart goes out toward the great unchurched masses to-day. . . . Five crackers and two dried herring! Talk of feeding five thousand with them! But add to the crackers and fish the almighty of Jesus, and the proposition ceases to be ridiculous. The resources of the church for spiritual sustenance for the thousand millions of earth are palpably inadequate until the Saviour's power and blessing are added to the equation. Then there is enough and to spare. . . . The heavenliness of this miracle is evident in its orderliness. There was no unseemly scramble, inequality, or waste. All was precision, method, order. . . . Grace at meals is one of the sweetest and most impressive services of family religion. We have Jesus' example for it. If Paul could observe it in the midst of a shipwreck, there can scarcely be a domestic emergency which would justify its omission.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, May 27.—Topic—John Williams, and missions to the South Seas.—Ps. xcvi., 1-12.

Junior C. E. Topic.

HOME MISSIONS.

- Monday, May 21.—Following Christ's example. Acts x., 38.
- Tuesday, May 22.—More blessed to give. Acts xx., 35.
- Wednesday, May 23.—Offering willingly. I. Chron. xxix., 6-9.
- Thursday, May 24.—As unto Christ. Matt. xxv., 34-40.
- Friday, May 25.—Love thy neighbor. Lev. xix., 34.
- Saturday, May 26.—The Golden Rule. Luke vi., 31.
- Sunday, May 27.—Topic—Why should we help home missions? II. Cor. v., 14, 15.

The Future Teacher.

In preparing teachers for the future we should begin with the child. Three factors enter into the teacher's make-up: namely, example, instruments, and practice. We expect our children to become teachers, mechanics, musicians, or artists. To do that, we talk these accomplishments, we seek to arouse a desire for these things, and we plan for them. We often talk to the children about becoming Christians, and thus being useful. If, as we believe, our agitation has a bearing on the child's future, why will not the same effect be produced if we agitate the Sunday school teacher problem? We magnify other callings, why not the Sunday school teacher's calling? Why not train our children for a permanent institution? The child will receive an incentive to teaching if the teacher is familiar with the lesson, has mastered it, and feels it a pleasure to teach. To the child, the teacher is the embodiment of knowledge, and he who presents the lesson intelligibly will create a desire in the hearts of some scholars to be able to present the lesson likewise, and to occupy the teacher's place. The example or pattern should be good.

The second factor is ample means or helps. A teacher must be equipped. The mechanic must have good tools to do his best work. The public school teacher needs the latest magazines and methods. As these need and have the best, so must the Sunday school teacher. There is no excuse for poor preparation or lack of helps; neither will excuses nor apologies suffice. The teacher must not everlastingly complain about the hard lesson, but by the use of means and objects, master it, and so make it attractive. If the lesson is mastered and explained to the class by familiar objects, the scholars get a desire to be able to do likewise. The Sunday school teacher must use object teaching, know history, geography, biography, and the Scriptures. If the scholar can see these qualifications in the teacher, the Sunday school teaching will become attractive. Such qualifications and instruments we have in the normal course and magazines. No one can become a good teacher with poor text-books.

The third factor is practice. There must be opportunity to practice what one knows to obtain the best results. Practice qualifies; use brightens and polishes. No student who has not opportunity to teach what he knows can be a good teacher. Every one who looks toward teaching in the Sunday school should have an opportunity to develop the power and talent of teaching.

Institutes and conventions should be attended; reading, correspondence, and every means possible should be employed to better prepare ourselves. Teachers should keep ahead of the classes, and lead them. Every teacher should leave worthy successors in his stead to take up the work after he lays it down. Thus we prepare teachers for the future.—P. H. Schell, in 'Religious Telescope.'

Our personality is not a closed circuit. It dips deep into God. It is rooted in him, as the tree is rooted in the soil. That which comes up from within is none the less from him than that which comes down from above.—Willard B. Thorp.

NEW 'MESSENGER' STORY COUPON.

We have been most fortunate in securing 'Saint Cecilia of the Court,' the new Serial Story that has just finished running in the 'S.S. Times' and was so much appreciated and talked about. The Sunday School teachers who have read it will agree with us that it is just the best possible kind of story for the 'Messenger', and one that will be long remembered. It will run for about three months during which such of your friends who have never taken the 'Messenger' may unite to form a club of three or more at TEN cents each.

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