

OUR COLUMN FOR PREACHERS AND TEACHERS.

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[May 30.] **Jesus Feeding Five Thousand.** (John 6 : 1-21.)

This is the only miracle recorded by the four Evangelists. John gives it, that he may introduce the important discourse on the Bread of Life, which follows.

About a year has elapsed since last lesson. The time between has been occupied with untiring labours in Galilee. Jesus has sent out the twelve disciples, and the Province is roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm and expectation—hence a great multitude followed Him. *v. 2.*

The sympathy and mercy of Jesus with men in their sorrows and woes, stands out in contrast with the selfishness of men's hearts.

JESUS AVOIDS THE EXCITED TRAVELLERS

to the Passover. Excitement is not favourable to clear judgments, and the wisest action. What cannot be avoided is turned to account to improve and instruct Philip, *vs. 5, 6, 7.* Notice His purpose, foresight, and aim as a teacher.

ANDREW INTRODUCES A BOY,

who puts himself and what he has at the service of Christ, and upon this incident the miracle turns.

FEEDING FIVE THOUSAND.

Jesus blessing the little—multiplying it for the many—careful of the fragments—more in the gathered fragments than in the store. *vs. 8, 9* Impressively setting the people in order. In the lesson we have miracle or sign and parable combined; illustration of glorious power—and instruction to faith for all coming time—Jesus Christ the Sor. of God.

The people justly conclude that that prophet has appeared (Deut. 18 : 15, 16; John 1 : 21), and in their enthusiasm they would make Him a king—unfurl the flag of revolution from their enemies.

These stirring events of the day is closed by sending the disciples and the people away. Jesus retires for communion. A critical period had come in His ministry.

The incidental storm, and the discouraged disciples, gives a new opportunity of manifesting His power over nature—calming the storm.

In every trial, perplexity or danger, let verse 20 cheer us, "IT IS I, BE NOT AFRAID."

[June 6.] **Jesus, the Bread of Life.** [Jn. 6 : 22-40.]

The feeding of the multitude is a suitable text for this discourse on the Bread of Life. The crowds have returned to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

I.—CARNAL VIEWS OF CHRIST, AND THEIR BLINDING INFLUENCE.

The people clamour for unspiritual signs of the Messiahship, and therefore miss the meaning of those signs given, *vs. 26, 27.* The people had SEEN—but had not PERCEIVED (Mark 4 : 12); witnessed the SIGN, but missed THE SIGNIFICANCE; grasped the symbol in perishable bread, but missed the substance, the living bread.

II.—SEEKING THE BREAD OF LIFE.

The people were not acting a part as hypocrites, but were impelled by low views of Christ and His mission ;

they were receiving Him as a "Bread King," who would supply them, as their fathers, with manna.

The beginning of a better life is in a desire, an aspiration. "What must we do that we may work," &c., and Christ's reply to soul-hunger—in all times, and to all peoples—"Believe on Him" God hath sent—He shall give the Bread of Life—Him hath the Father sealed.

The side of personal responsibility—Seek, Believe, Labour, Appropriate. The side of Divine grace—Give, Gift. *v. 37.*

III.—JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE. *vs. 35-40.*

There is an implied contrast between Christ and Moses. Moses had nothing to do with giving the manna. Exod. 16 : 4-7. The manna was but an earthly symbol, though supplied miraculously. Jesus is the true Bread—He came down from Heaven. He bestows everlasting life—He is life for the whole world.

IV.—THE GLORIOUS CERTAINTY OF TRIUMPH.

This coming into the world is not a problem of doubtful success or uncertain issues—while it has its human and Divine side.

[June 13.] **Jesus the Christ.** [John 7 : 37-52.]

Six months have elapsed since last lesson. The only notice of this period by John is in verse 1—details given fully by Mark, chapters 7-9.

I.—THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. Deut. 16 : 13-15.

This feast embraced the harvest ingathering, Exod. 23 : 16; also the dwelling in the wilderness, Lev. 23 : 33-44.

This lesson is a record of what occurred on the last day of the feast, which lasted seven days.

II.—CHRIST AND THIRSTY SOULS.

His offer of Himself, and His invitation to the people. *v. 37.* Water is a magic word in the east, specially in the sultry dry days of autumn—made very significant by the outpouring of water brought with high ceremonial from the pool of Siloam, in the golden pitcher. Isa. 12 : 3; 55 : 1; John 4 : 10. This specific offer of Himself would be monstrous from any other lips, whether prophet or apostle.

The essential thing is "DRINK" and be satisfied—do not dream or doubt—but drink. Notice the classification of hearts :—1. Hearts which believe, *v. 40*; 2. Hearts which doubt, *v. 41*; 3. Hearts which reject, *v. 44*; 4. Hearts half persuaded, *v. 46.*

THE INFLOW AND THE OUTFLOW OF THE LIVING WATER.

1. Participation of grace and truth. 2. Communication—out of the heart flows gladness and life-giving influence, gloriously illustrated on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2.

III.—CHRIST AND THE RULERS.

It is a view not without foundation, that Christ had been arraigned before the Sanhedrim for Sabbath breaking on His last visit to the city (John 5 : 16) the rest of the chapter being His defence before the court. He has been absent from the feasts for a year and a half, and now He comes up secretly. There is great diversity of opinion and division of sentiment among the people—some believe; others admit that He is a prophet, but decline to follow—other are animated by malicious enmity—even those who were sent to take Him are deeply impressed, *v. 46.* Nicodemus' defence, *v. 52.*