

NOTES ON THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR MARCH 20.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand.
(Matthew 14: 13-23.)

Golden Text.—Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. (John 6: 35.)

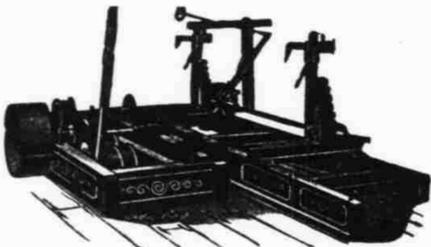
A Ministering Teacher.—Jesus, looking upon the multitude, was moved with compassion toward them, we are told. What a beautiful insight it gives us into the mind of Christ to learn that he was thus touched with pity for the people. Mark gives us the striking similitude in which this throng of people seeking Jesus is spoken of as sheep without a shepherd. So indeed they were, for the priests and rulers who should have cared for them were recreant to their trust, and they were in danger of perishing spiritually.

A Great Miracle.—When Jesus had finished his work of ministering to the spiritual needs of his hearers and had healed all their sick, a new need arose. The people were physically hungry, for they were a long way from their homes, and few, if any, had brought provisions with them. The distress of the multitude, however, was simply a further call for the compassion of Christ, and he responded to the appeal by the wondrous miracle recorded in our lesson.

A Boy Helper.—A striking part in this great miracle of feeding the five thousand is played by a mere lad who had with him five loaves and two small fishes. Namless though he is, this boy has been a potent influence for good, for whenever the story of the feeding of the multitude has been told, the part played by this boy helper has also been recounted. So his simple service will always be remembered as an inspiration to deeds of helpfulness, which while they appear small, yet are often the means under the divine providence of largest blessings to others.

Abundant Provision.—One fact that strikes us forcibly in the story of this miracle is the abundant provision which was made. Every one was satisfied, or "filled," as it is expressively said in the Scriptures, and yet after they had all finished eating, twelve basketfuls of the fragments were taken up. This generous provision for the needs of the multitude should teach us to be liberal, while on the other hand the care exercised by our Master that none of the fragments should be lost should warn us against the sin of wastefulness.

The Bread of Life.—Our treatment of this lesson will not be complete, if it does not include a reference to the teachings of Jesus, which



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followed this miracle and were suggested by it. We find the Master's comments upon this incident in the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. Here Jesus directs the thoughts of his hearers away from the bread which perishes to the provisions made for their eternal life through himself.

Jesus is still the Bread of Life. Without this bread our souls must surely die. With it we shall have life forevermore.

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