

FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES

– MARK 6:30-44. – SEPT. 22. –

Text: "Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life." – John 6:35.

WHEN THE TWELVE APOSTLES returned to Jesus they exclaimed, "Even the demons were subject to us in Thy Name." But He said unto them, Rejoice not specially because of this, let your special rejoicing be that your names are written in Heaven. They explained to Jesus the instance of their tour and what they had taught; and He called them away to a desert place to rest awhile, because of the crowd and because they had not even time to take nourishment. So they went privately to such a place by ship. But the news went also and the crowd went on foot from various cities.

Jesus would have no time to Himself. His entire life was devoted and being rendered up a living sacrifice to the Divine service, in feeding the sheep of Jehovah's flock, and, of course, His own sheep also, because all that were the Father's were His. As He looked upon the multitude, He felt a yearning compassion for them. He saw their needs: "They were like sheep without a shepherd"; and He continued to teach them.

But, says one, did they not have synagogues, and regular reading of the Scriptures? Did they not have Scribes, Pharisees, Priests and Levites? How could they be without shepherding? Ah, well, they had a soul-hunger, which the forms, ceremonies, rituals and burdens bound upon them could not satisfy. They were really wanting the "Bread of Life" which Jesus had – which Jesus *was*, for He personified the Truth. Why then did they not receive it? What was their defense? They were bound by superstition, prejudice, the fear of man, traditions of the ancients, and the opposition of the great and the learned of their time.

Did they not frequently inquire, "Have any of the Scribes and Pharisees believed on Him?" Again, "Do our rulers indeed know that this is the very Christ?" The common people always referred to the learned. The learned therefore have the greater responsibility. Jesus declared of them, "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge"; you will neither enter into the favor of God yourselves, nor will you permit others to enter in who so desire. – Luke 11:52.

And is not this in a large measure true today also? The learned of the colleges and principal pulpits are telling the people that the Bible is not the Divine Message which Jesus and the Apostles declared it to be. They are telling the people that Moses and the Prophets did not write the books accredited to them; and thus indirectly they are telling the people that Jesus and the Apostles were deceived when Jesus said, "Moses wrote of Me," and the Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah said thus and so. Thus the people are becoming more and more unbelievers in respect to the Bible.

But what will the great and learned teachers of today give to the masses as a soul-satisfying portion instead of the Bible? Oh, they tell us, "***This*** is the good tidings, the Gospel: Your forefathers were apes; a law of Evolution prevails. As a result we have come as far as we are. We need no Savior, because we had no fall. We have no Redeemer, because if we were restored to our original condition it would make monkeys of us. God has allowed the law of Evolution to operate in you and in your children. You thus live in your children, and by and by will reach a very high plane of existence – not that you ***yourself*** will have any knowledge of that, for ***you*** will be dead, but your children will have that joy instead."

What is there in this to satisfy soul-hunger? Ah, nothing! No wonder the lament is going up all over Christendom that the public no longer care to go to church; that they can scarcely be bribed to go, even with the attractions of talented essays and choirs rendering operatic music, nor even be attracted by vaudevilles and worldly trash. Alas!

what we need is that all of God's people should unite their hearts and voices in proclaiming the Gospel which Jesus and the Apostles taught – the Gospel of the Kingdom – Messiah's Kingdom – and the glorious work it will accomplish for men, and the glorious privilege it will be to obtain a share in that Kingdom. Surely then church attendance will be better and without any of the attractions and gewgaws now thought necessary. Let us with one heart and with one mind return to the Gospel Message of the New Testament.

THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS

The multitudes in their enthusiasm went a long journey from home without making proper provisions for food. The disciples urged that the meeting break up and that the people be sent home. Jesus suggested, "Give ye them to eat." But they declared they had nothing wherewith to feed so many, and that if even they should go to purchase it would cost much for even one satisfying portion.

Finally they found five loaves and two fishes. By Jesus' direction they seated the multitudes in companies on the grass, and the five loaves and two fishes, under heavenly blessing, were divided and divided, again and again and again, until all had portions and ate to their satisfaction; and the fragments amounted to twelve baskets, while those who had partaken were 5,000.

This wonderful miracle not only attests our Lord's sympathy, but it also spoke volumes to the people of the Divine power that was in the Great Teacher; but there is still another lesson which it teaches us. Like all of the miracles which Jesus performed it was merely another foregleaming, or illustration, of His coming glory and of the coming blessings. He who provided the nourishment for the 5,000 is shortly to be the Great King of Glory, whose Kingdom will extend from shore to shore, and bring blessing and refreshment to all mankind. **[R5087 : page 266]**

This miracle speaks to us of the power that our Lord will then have for providing for the necessities of the whole world. True, we do not expect that during the reign of Christ the world will be miraculously fed, but rather in accordance with the Scriptural promise, "The earth shall yield her increase"; and again, "I will call for the wheat, and will increase it," etc., etc. But specially the feeding of the multitude reminds us of the fact testified in our text that Jesus is "The Bread of Life" – the Divine Provision for the necessities of the whole world.

"I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE"

As the Church now partake of the merit of Christ's sacrifice, and become members of His Body, the one Loaf, and thus are made partakers of the eternal Life through Him, so in God's due time the Bread from Heaven is to feed the multitudes of earth. During the thousand years of His reign, the Bread of Life will be freely distributed amongst all mankind. That Bread of Life is the Truth – particularly the Truth related to and connected with the great redeeming work of Jesus. He is to be the Bread of Life to the world, because He bought the world with the sacrifice of His own life. The Bread that came down from Heaven they may all freely partake of and live.

The Church, however, in this present time, has another privilege which the world in the future will not share, and that is represented in the Lord's "cup." His "cup" to us represents our privilege of suffering with Him and becoming His joint-heirs in the Kingdom.

