

THE LEADER WHO CARED

The International Sunday School Lesson for Dec. 19th is "Jesus Feeds the Multitudes."—Matt. 14 : 13-23.

By William T. Ellis.

"I have no interest in individuals," pompously declared a public official of the old order, to whom came the report, "Then you've got ahead of the Lord Almighty!"

Disdain for people, "the common herd," the plain, everyday folks who make up the bulk of humanity, is a first characteristic of the aristocrat, the snob and the cynic. Whereas the sure sign of the spirit of Jesus in a person is care for ordinary men and women. Great souls delight in common folks and common ways; in the qualities of the general run of mankind; in their joys and sorrows, their ideals and their heroisms.

A person may suspect that his sensibilities are becoming calloused if he does not take pleasure in his fellow men, and love to associate with them, whether they are Broadway throngs, or small-town crowds, or sweaty multitudes of Russian refugees, or congregated humans of any sort.

Some travellers delight to recount the differences between themselves and the "natives" amid whom they sojourn; and they describe themselves as heroes for undergoing what is the daily lot and life of myriads of other human beings. How silly and cheap and stupid! It is one with the age-long blunder of jolly spirits who delight in setting themselves up as superiors to their fellows.

Contrast the Jesus way, as our Lesson sets it forth. Aristocracy shuns crowds: Jesus lived close to the multitudes. He even cared that the impertinent, wonder-seeking rabble were hungry. His second greatest miracle, which today we study, was wrought to fill the bellies of an improvident multitude.

The bread-and-butter problem is the one thing that the whole world has in common. We have recently seen in the plight of the Russian refugees from the Crimea, how the sortily-nurtured and favored members of a privileged class may in a few days be reduced to the level of Armenian or Syrian refugees, wolfishly clamoring for food of any sort. At present all of this favored land is hearing, and generally heeding, a plea for the succor of the hungry children of Europe. This perpetual question "What shall we eat?" was not too material or commonplace to be beneath the notice of the Son of God.

The Gospel of Labor. Accredited by His calloused hands, and by His brotherly, understanding heart, Jesus of Nazareth is today the one acceptable leader of mankind

out of the dire distress and disorder of the world. His passion for common people. His patience with us ordinary folk. His steadfastness to us when another in disgust would leave us to stew in our own juice—the qualifications which commend Christ to the commonality of men and women as our day's Deliverer and Hero.

Seven short sentences, written on a second or third century scrap of papyrus, and dug up along the Nile less than twenty-five years ago, are known as "The New Sayings of Jesus." Each is introduced by the words, "Jesus says." The fifth saying is, "Raise the stone and thou shalt find Me; cleave the wood, and I am there." Upon this Dr. Henry van Dyke bases his beautiful poem, "The Tolling of Felix." Felix sought the Light as a desert hermit, where a saintly anchoress gave him this cryptic word. He fared forth to the life of labor, as a common toiler. At last, in the temple during evening worship, the Master appeared to him, saying:

"Hearken, good and faithful servant, true disciple, loyal friend! Thou hast followed Me and found Me; I will keep thee to the end.

"Well I know thy toil and trouble; often weary, fainting, worn, I have lived the life of labor, heavy burdens I have borne.

"Never in a prince's palace have I slept on golden bed, Never in a hermit's cavern have I eaten unearned bread.

"Born within a lowly stable, where the cattle round me stood, Trained a carpenter in Nazareth, I have toiled and found it good.

"They who tread the path of labour follow where My feet have trod; They who work without complaining to do the holy will of God.

"Where the many toil together, There am I among My own; Where the tired workman sleepeth, there am I with him alone.

"I, in peace that passeth knowledge, dwell amid the daily strife; I, the Bread of Heaven, am broken in the sacrament of life.

"Every task, however simple, sets the soul that does it free; Every deed love and mercy, done to man, is done to Me.

"Thou hast learned the open secret; thou hast come to Me for rest. With thy burden, in thy labor, thou art Felix, doubly blest.

"Nevermore thou needest seek Me; I am with thee every where; Raise the stone, and thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and I am there."

This is the gospel of labor, ring it ye bells of the kind! The love of Love came down from above, to live with the men who work. This is the rose that He planted, here in the thorn-curst soil: Heaven is blest with perfect rest, but the blessing of Earth is toil.

Friends Who Understand. Sympathy sometimes needs straighter than scholarship. Erudition has often been befogged and bemired in theological questions concerning Jesus: but simple saints, men and women bent beneath the burdens of life, have never lost their clear vision of Christ as their best Friend and surest Leader and sympathizing Saviour and one Revealer of God.

There is a profound teaching for our own disorganized day in the solitude of Jesus for the crowds; and in the swift, sure perception of the masses that Jesus understands them and can satisfy their deepest aspirations. None of the mechanical schemes for bringing antagonistic groups of society together, or for securing the supremacy of one over the other, is anything more than an aberration—a temporary expedient; whereas the Jesus mode promises the permanence and peace of good will. Jesus gave first place to the claims of the crowd upon Him; even His private grief over the death of His dear friend and interpreter and herald, John the Baptist, was set aside when the clamorous multitude followed Him into His lonely retreat.

Most of us would have resented with impatience this intrusion, complaining bitterly of the invasion of our privacy and our rights; and of our past services and present weariness. Not so the Master. He thought of the weariness of that host who had followed Him far, tired and hungry. Their quest for Him must have thrilled His compassionate heart. Every instinct of shepherdhood and Saviourhood was set vibrating by the spectacle of a multitude in whom another would have beheld only a curious mob of sight-seers.

There is a prevalent idea that this zeal for the people is a modern cult, a sort of socialism. Absurd! It is as old as the Bible; and it had its rise in the Spirit imparted to the friends and revealers of the Father in Heaven. A hymn of present popularity is "God Save the People"—which was written by Ebenezer Elliott about a hundred years ago:

"When wilt Thou save the people? O God of mercy, when? Not kings and lords, but nations, Not thrones nor crowns, but men Flowers of Thy heart, O God, are they; Let them not pass like weeds away, Let them not fade in sunless day. God save the people.

"Shall crime bring crime forever, Strength aiding still the strong? Is it Thy will, O Father, That men shall toil for wrong? 'No!' say the mountains; 'No!' the skies; 'Man's' clouded sun shall brightly rise, And songs be heard instead of sighs. God Save the people.

"When wilt Thou save the people? O God of mercy, when? The people, Lord, the people, Not thrones, not crowns, but men. God save the people, Thine they are; Thy children, as Thy angels fair, Save them from bondage and despair. God save the people."

Thered by A Short Rope. All of us, the most affluent and the most ascetic, are tethered by a short rope to the primitive needs of the body. Saltiness cannot subsist without food—though it needs less than glutinous. A physician has said: "It only takes one-third of what the average person eats to support life; the 'her two-thirds go to support the doc. rs.'" "Life is more than meat"—but it is also meat, as Jesus clearly showed in the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand.

In the presence of a hungry multitude, the disciple wanted to send them away. That very human characteristic earned in the ray the entitlement "Passing the buck." Divest yourself of responsibility—that is the main idea which has made expert self-excusers of all of us, in a sort of apostolic succession to these disciples who wanted to shirk all obligation for the crowd.

But the way of the Master was greater. "Give ye them to eat!" What a commandment for today. It implies multiplied power as well as multiplied store. God's servants are enabled by God's command. Why wait for world's statement to satisfy the yearnings of the people: "give ye them to eat"—right here and now, in your own shop or office or school or neighborhood. There is satisfaction for human ills in the spiritual riches which Christians already possess.

How the disciples must have stared at the incredible command of Christ! With five loaves and two small fishes they were to feed more than five thousand orientals, whose appetites at a free feast is proverbial. They could not see it; neither can a preacher see where he is going to get a thousand sermons in the next ten years; or a writer where he is to find thousands of articles and ideas in the same time; or a home-maker how she is to cook more than ten thousand meals in ten years, or sew on thousands of buttons, or scrub faces times beyond counting, or wash countless thousands of dishes. Nevertheless, the principle that applied to the disciples still prevails: Go ahead with your duty; you possess more than you know. Trust yourself for larger things, and trust God whose word you obey.

It may seem like an anti-climax to the Lesson, but because it is an essential part of the teaching of the story, and because it is decidedly a truth for the time, we remind ourselves of the message of thrift which comes from the twelve baskets of gathered fragments, after the miracle had been wrought. Our Lord

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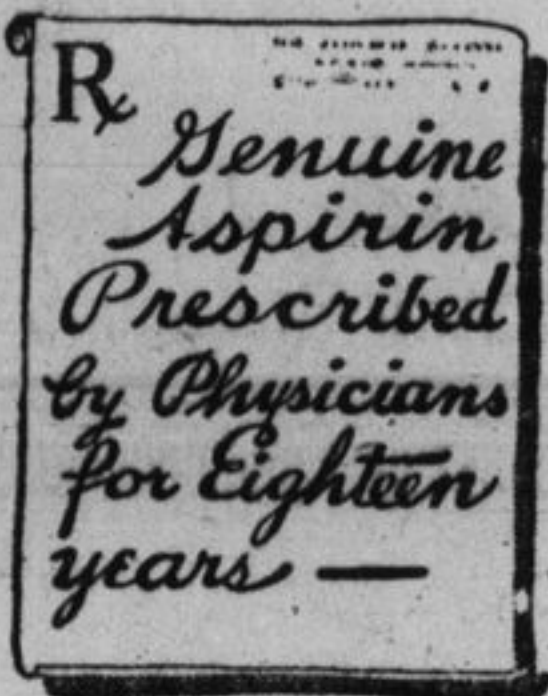
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is a Lord of ordered life and law. The solicitude of the Master for the fragments of food should quicken respect for all means of sustenance of life. Our western world, so spendthrift in the past of nature's lavish resources, needs now to learn to save as well as how to make. Our wasted food would feed one of the hungry smaller nations.

Married to Old Sweetheart. New York, Dec. 16.—Twenty-two Italians were married a few days ago in one big ceremony at St. Raphael's church, New York, at the end of one day's business at Ellis Island. The eleven brides, all Italians, were met at the clearing house for immigrants by their sweethearts, all of whom are ex-soldiers of the Italian army and now laborers in Pennsylvania. They trooped into the Marriage Bureau here with Father Moretto, of St. Raphael's Society, and brightened a dull day's business in marriage licenses. Within an hour they were married. A few days previously the same priest had married ten couples under similar circumstances.

HEALTH OFFICIALS WARN THE PUBLIC. With the memory of the epidemics which have swept the continent the past three years, health officials are everywhere advising the public to treat any case of cold, however slight, promptly. They point out that neglect, even of a simple cold, is liable to lead to dangerous forms of disease, many of which are considered contagious. Bear this warning in mind and keep a box of Grip-Fix in the house. As soon as the first signs of a cold appear start taking the remedy. It works quickly and, if taken promptly, will relieve even a bad cold in a single night. Grip-Fix contains in capsule form just the drugs your physician might prescribe—Aspirin, Phenacetin, Quinine, Salol, Caffein Citrate, Camphor and Camphor Monobromate. Nothing is known to the medical profession which will break up colds or grippe quicker. It is sold in capsule form for convenience in taking and also to give prompt action. Grip-Fix is sold by all druggists at 35 cents per box. Get a box to-day and keep it handy around the house.

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David McKibbin, aged thirty-five, who drove the International Limited between Belleville and Toronto for many years, is dead in the latter city. He was for forty-six years a Grand Trunk engineer.