What Would Be the Use?

By SARAH E. McCAHEY

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MARY leaned forward in her wheelchair to explain to her visitor about the Hartford callers.

Elizabeth, her sister, sat near by, her pretty face tinted like a rose almost belying the fact that she, too was an invalid.

Myrtle, their caller, sat in a comfortable little rocker, her generous proportions filling all the available space.

"You know," said Mary, earnestly, "our Hartford friends wrote quite some time ago that they intended making a trip to Vermont, and they wanted to know if it would be convenient for us to have them here on their way back home some time in September.

"Of course, we wrote them that it was impossible for us to have guests under the circumstances, but that we would be delighted to see them and hoped they might call on their way home through Elmwood."

"And did they come?" asked Myrtle, curiously.

"We'll come to that later," gently interrupted her sister. "I haven't got them here yet."

"Go ahead," said Elizabeth resignedly. "Tell about seeing them coming down the street."

Mary smiled appreciatively at the remembrance and went on with her recital.

"One day in early September I was sitting in the bay window with my chair down close, and I saw a woman coming down the street looking at the house numbers. When she reached our house she looked up at the number and waved to someone invisible near the corner of the street, and presently our visitors from Hartford were in the room."

"My, but we were glad to see them and they were glad to see us!" exclaimed Elizabeth, her eyes dancing.

"And when we began to talk!" said Mary.

Elizabeth raised her eyes in mock horror.

"Talk? I never heard so much talk in all my life; everybody was talking, and at the same time. We talked clear up to the time my brother came home to supper, and you should have seen them! They almost kissed him." Elizabeth chuckled softly.

"After supper," began Mary again.

"After what!" cried Myrtle. "Did you two invalids get supper?"

"Why, of course!" said Mary, looking surprisedly at Myrtle's inhospitable question.

"For invalids, you do the most wonderful things," murmured Myrtle apologetically.

"Of course, we regretted we could not invite them for a prolonged stay, but, as I said before, that was impossible under the circumstances."

"That's what I call reversing the usual order of things," Myrtle said. "Instead of folks coming to see you to bring in a little cheer to you shut-ins you entertain them so well that the callers forget what they came for."

"I wouldn't quite say that," protested Mary, smiling.

"If I had to whisk around in a wheelchair, prepare meals, make my own clothes as nicely as you two do, and generally keep things going as smoothly as you do, I think I'd be apt to tell the world about it occasionally."

"What good would that do?" asked Mary; "what would be the use?"

"That's what I call spiritual superiority over physical difficulties. Now, with me, every pain I have I almost howl, and I have to talk about it into the bargain."

"What's the use?" asked Mary, smilingly.

"I want you to have this begonia slip, Myrtle," said Elizabeth, coming into the room with a small pot of green, glossy leaves on a little stalk.

"That was meant for you, Myrtle," said Mary, mischievously, "but Elizabeth wouldn't let me give it away."

Elizabeth's face sobered.

"It isn't that I did'nt want Myrtle to have it, but I raised it from almost a leaf, and I was curious to see how big it would grow," said Elizabeth as she looked pleasantly at Myrtle.

"I can understand that, Elizabeth," replied Myrtle. "I'd not want to give it away too readily; it's like parting with a bit of your luck. But I must be going. It's beginning to get dark." She rose from her comfortable rocker.

"Now, Myrtle, look out for the stairs," admonished the gentle Elizabeth," and don't catch cold during this changeable weather."

"Can you beat that?" mused Myrtle to herself, as she cautiously felt her way along the dark street. "Every time I visit those two brave shut-ins and see the pleasure they manage to extract out of the ordinary everyday occurrences of life, I come away feeling ashamed of myself and determined to never again, as long as I live, complain about anything that might happen to me."

Just then she reached the corner of Branston street and had to wait a few minutes for the evening traffic to race by before she might find an opening in it wide enough to allow her to dash across the street.

"I declare," she said exasperating[ly], "I never saw such confusion in all my life. Such poor system. Someone ought to complain—"

But at the familiar word she suddenly stopped short as the philosophy of patient Mary came to mind:

"What good will it do? What's the use?"

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of the Evening School, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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Lesson for January 31

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND MEN

LESSON TEXT—John 6:1-14; 32-37.

GOLDEN TEXT—Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.—John 6:35.

PRIMARY TOPIC—Jesus Feeds Many Hungry People.

JUNIOR TOPIC—Jesus Is Helped by a Boy.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Jesus Feeds a Hungry Crowd.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Why People Follow Jesus.

I. Jesus' Compassion for the Multitude (vv. 1-4. Cf. Matt. 14:4).

The sight of a crowd always excited the Lord's sympathy. He knew that they were as shepherdless sheep (Mark 6:34). They were going forth with no one to care for them. Besides, they were so ignorant that they had no appreciation of Him. Added to this was their physical hunger. This condition aroused the Savior's pity. This is true of the multitude today. Sin had so thoroughly blinded them that they are not conscious of their lost condition.

II. Jesus' Conference With the Disciples Touching the Peoples' Need (vv. 5-9).

This was not done for His benefit, for He knew what He would do (v. 6). His object may be summed up as follows:

1. To Teach Them Their Sense of Obligation to the Multitude.

We are workers together with God (II Cor. 6:1).

2. To Teach Them Their True Helplessness in the Face of Such Great Needs.

The loaves and fishes were as nothing in the presence of five thousand men, besides women and children. Well might Andrew exclaim, "What are these among so many?" We may plant and water, but the increase entirely comes from God.

3. To Teach Them That Their Sufficiency Is From the Lord.

Without Him we can do nothing (John 115:1-8). Christians can no more carry on the Lord's work of themselves than the branch can bear fruit without the vine. The branch supplies the life and strength for the production of fruit. Philip's arithmetic was of no use in the face of such need. Jesus has all power, nothing is too hard for Him.

III. The Lord's Method of Accomplishing His Work (vv. 10-13).

Observe here the orderliness of Christ's work. He paused to give thanks for the scant supply, teaching us that we should always bring our abilities and gifts to God that He might bless them to His use.

1. The Lord's Part Was to Bless and Break the Bread, Even to Create the Needed Supply.

The disciples could not perform this part. The same kind of bread was provided for all, rich and poor, young and old, women and children.

2. The Disciples' Part Was to Distribute That Which He Had Passed and Consecrated.

This is true of the Christian worker today. Our part is to take from the hands of the Lord that which He has blessed and consecrated, and distribute it among the starving multitudes. We are not responsible for the supply, but are responsible for its distribution to all those who are hungry and perishing for the Bread of Life.

3. The People's Part Was to Sit Down and Eat.

They had no part in the provision, neither in its distribution, but only to take from the hands of the disciples and eat that which the Lord had provided. This is exactly our situation. The people are responsible for the taking and eating of the Bread of Life; faith with obedience is their part. This is an illustration of the part obedience plays in our salvation.

IV. The Effect of This Miracle (v. 14).

The people recognized Him at once as the prophet who should come. They believed Him for His works' sake.

V. Jesus, the Bread of Life (vv. 32-37).

1. What Bread Is to the Body, Christ Is to the Soul.

Bread is a staple food. It is necessary for the body. One never tires of it. Even so is it with Christ.

2. How to Obtain This Bread.

It is by coming to Christ and believing on Him.

3. The Blessed Issue of Taking This Bread.

The one who eats this bread shall never hunger, nor thirst. Hunger and thirst return after partaking of natural bread and water—not so with those who have partaken of Christ.

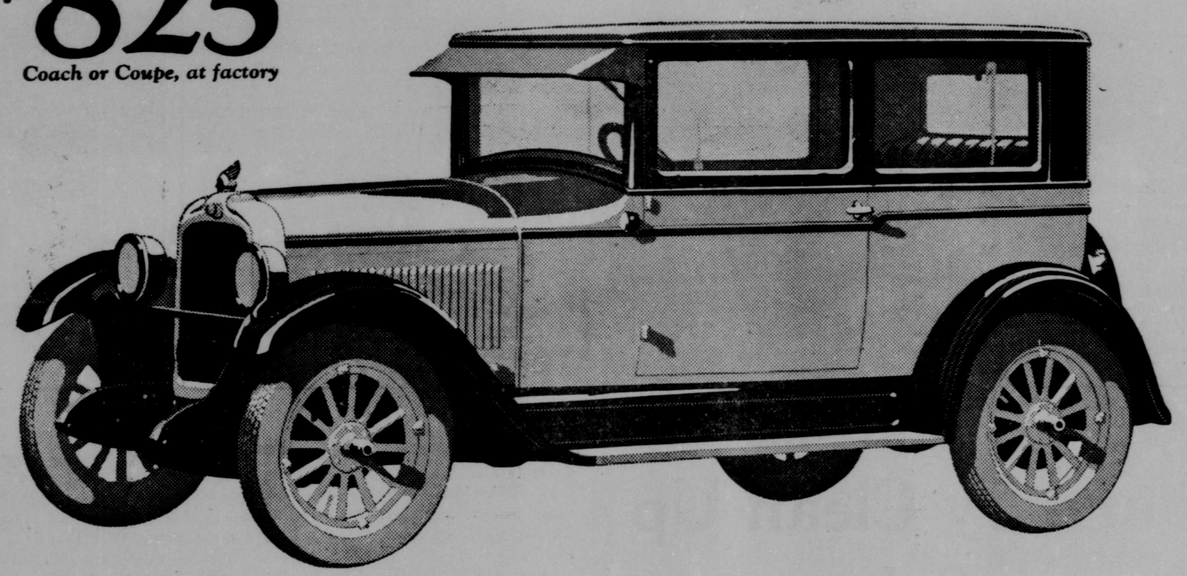
Ardent Prayer

As well might we expect vegetation to spring from the earth without the sunshine and the dew, as the Christian to unfold his grace and advance in his course without patient, persevering, ardent prayer.—J. Abbott.

Sin's Ending

There is more bitterness in sin's ending than there ever was sweetness in its acting. If you see nothing but good in its commission, you will suffer only woe in its conclusion.

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