

## FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

## International S. S. Lesson.

## LESSON III.—CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.—JAN. 20.

Jno. vi. 25-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He gave them bread from heaven to eat."—Jno. vi. 31.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Soul Food.

ANALYSIS.—The BREAD that Perishes, v. 26-29. of Life, v. 29-35.

TIME AND PLACE.—A Sabbath early in A.D. 29, the day after our last lesson, in Capernaum, now Tel Hum.

INTRODUCTION.—After having fed the multitudes, as recounted in our last lesson, Jesus sent His disciples on to Bethsaida, and Himself retired into the mountains there to spend the night in prayer. While His disciples were rowing in a northeasterly direction, toward Bethsaida, their boat was struck by one of those violent northern storms so common on Galilee. Between three and six o'clock, Jesus came to them walking on the boisterous billows, and there occurred that striking incident in the life of Peter, so indicative of his impetuous character. On entering the boat, Christ calmed the waves, and soon the little party were landed safely at Capernaum, instead of Bethsaida.

THE BREAD THAT PERISHES, v. 26-29.—Some of the people who had seen the disciples depart without their Master, had sought Him the next morning on the scene of His wonderful miracle, and found Him not. Now they discovered Him at Capernaum, and were surprised, not knowing that He had walked upon the storm-tossed sea in divine supremacy and thus reached the other shore. "Rabbi," they asked "when camest thou hither?" and He answered them, not as they expected, not with the reply their audible question required; but with the words which were suited to the needs of their hearts, the unexpressed desires of their souls. "It is not for the miracles as signs of a Father's love, as evidences of my Messiahship that ye seek me; but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were satisfied as a beast is with fodder." The reply was scathing, but the people felt the truth of it; and there are many professing Christians to-day to whom it applies with equal force, men who assume the cloak of religion for the gain it may bring them; and who would cast it off tomorrow if it ceased to pay. But Christ went on to say, "Labor not for the meat that perisheth; live not to eat, but eat for the glory of God; work for 'that meat which endureth unto everlasting life;' put your effort your best power and talent into that which the flight of ages can neither destroy nor tarnish. The interest of the people was thus aroused. Christ had led them away from the unprofitable consideration of how He had reached Capernaum, to the all important question of their eternal interests. "What must we do," "that we might work the works of God?" And how blessed is the reply. "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Not, "take a pilgrimage to the tomb of Abraham," or "Try to live a better life," or, "Give up everything, and go and live as hermits;" no, it is only believe. This is the essence of the Gospel. Peloubet says, "(1) As Christ is the truth, he that accepts Him as teacher will know the will of God. (2) As Christ commands only what is right, and all that is right, He who accepts Him as Lord and Master will do what is right, will conform his life to the will of God. (3) He that follows Christ follows a perfect example. (4) Christ imparts the spiritual life and love which are the source of all the truest good works. No work is really good unless it is filled with faith and love."

THE BREAD OF LIFE, v. 30-35.—Christ has now succeeded in getting the people in the frame of mind best suited to His imparting of truth. Their interest was thoroughly aroused, and they asked for some sign that might convince them of the reality of His claim, "for," they said, "Moses did a greater miracle than that of the loaves and fishes; he brought down bread from heaven, and fed two millions for forty years; thou has only fed a few thousand, with the coarsest fare, at one meal. Show us then some sign or miracle that we may believe thee." But Christ withholds the sign; instead He replies, "Moses gave you not that bread. But my Father giveth you the true bread," that is to say, He who through Moses gave the manna, giveth continuously, the true, all satisfying bread of God, which is He that cometh down from Heaven. Ah, this was a revelation to them of something they felt they needed, and the cry came, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." No doubt Christ's words were variously understood by His auditors; some thought that He referred to food for the body that would give immortality, while others had perhaps some dim conception of the spiritual significance of His teaching. In the next verse, however, Christ explains to them His meaning, as He says, "I am the Bread of Life." Wonderful truth, too faintly realized even by Christians to-day. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger," expresses the active phase of a Christian's faith in Christ. It is not a once coming, but a constant coming, whenever the soul yearns to find that complete satisfying Christ alone can give. "He that believeth on me shall never thirst," is the passive phase of the Christian's faith, and but serves to emphasize the fulness of Jesus for His children.

NOTES ON THE TEXT.—V. 25. Rabbi,—Master, teacher. V. 26. Miracles,—R. V. Signs.

## Application and Illustration.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

LABOR NOT FOR THE MEAT THAT PERISHES, v. 27.—A band of explorers, crossing an Australian desert, found the only food was

a certain plant, which, while it alleviated their hunger, had no virtues to sustain life. Yet because they felt satisfied after a hearty meal they believed it nourished them. They were deceived. Hunger was stayed, but their strength wasted. Day by day they grew weaker and died of starvation. To feed upon sensational literature, fashionable attire, society, gossip, worldly pleasures and popular sermons is to spend money for that which is not bread and labor for that which satisfieth not. Isa. lv. 2.—S. S. *Illustrator*.

UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS TO COME TO CHRIST, v. 35.—Come to Christ and believing on him are here made parallel, showing that faith in Jesus Christ is the sinner's going to him in heart as his Saviour. To every believer Jesus is the satisfying portion of the soul. (Pa. xvii. 15.)

"My next step," said an anxious inquirer, "is to get deeper conviction." "No," replied a Christian friend, "your next step, and only step, is to go to Christ just as you are. He does not say, come to conviction, come to a deeper sense of sin, which you have been laboring to get; but He says, 'Come unto me.'" "Ah," she exclaimed, "I see it now. Oh, how self-righteous I have been, really refusing Christ, while all the time I thought I was preparing to come to Him." "Will you go to Jesus now?" was hastily asked. She looked up with a smile, and then humbly, yet decisively, said, "I will." And the Lord in the richness of His grace enabled her so to do.—*Earnest Worker*.

FEED ON JESUS CHRIST, v. 35.—I wonder if that thought makes itself perfectly clear to you, grand and beautiful as it is? Stop and think a little about that strange, undetectable thing we call life, and its feedings down in the lower orders of existence. Rock is a lifeless, unorganized mass. It disintegrates in cold and moisture. That mysterious thing we call life begins to feed on it, and the disintegrated rock becomes an organized plant—a lichen, perchance. The lichen, we say can live on the rock. The rose can not do it—it must have richer, more nourishing food, though decomposed elements still, or the life will go out of it. The horse must have a higher order of food, more elements, fresh, not decomposed, or the life will not abide there. Man, a still higher order of being, must be more daintily fed still, or the life principle will leave his body. But man has a spirit as well as a body, and the spirit must be fed. The food of the spirit is the revelation of Christ; *He is life*, and when the spirit has vital connection with him through faith and love and obedience, the life flows into the spirit and brings the deepest satisfaction for all its wants. So it is that he that cometh to Him shall never hunger, and he that believeth on him shall never thirst.—*Lookout*.

## CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, Jan. 20.—"A Christians problems and perplexities," 1. Kings iv. 29-34. (We cut Topic Notes this week from *The Lookout*, a valued contemporary.) This meeting should be arranged in each society to meet, so far as possible, the real problems and perplexities of its own members. In order to do this, the subject should be announced as far in advance of the time of meeting as possible, and all persons requested to write down the questions that express their own perplexities. When the evening for the meeting arrives let those questions be read. (It may be necessary to do some sifting in order to eliminate unprofitable questions.) The attention of every member should then be given to a serious consideration of these questions, not in a theoretical way, but with the purpose of helping the perplexed. It would be well to have the pastor and some other experienced Christian present in order to assist in the solution of the more difficult problems. In some such way as we here suggest, this meeting may be made one of unusual interest and profit.

We need not wonder that Christians find perplexities, and are confronted by problems they are not able to solve. Although they have been enlightened by the Word and Spirit of God, they are not omniscient. Many things are yet unrevealed (Deut. xxix. 29). Even Paul, to whom was granted such largeness of vision, says that we now know only in part, and that we see through a glass, darkly. We are as little children in understanding (1. Cor. xiii. 9-11.) It is a necessity that we walk by faith; we rejoice in hope of the time when we shall walk by sight, (II. Cor. v. 7; I. Cor. xiii. 12.)

REFERENCES.—Luke xi. 31, ii. 46, 47; Pa. lxxiii. 2-20; I. Cor. xiii. 9-12; Rom. viii. 16-23; Heb. vi. 17-19, xii. 6-11; John xiii. 7; Phil. i. 22, 23.

## Singing Intelligently.

Being at a meeting of young people not long ago the writer was struck by a senseless error made continually in the singing of a certain well-known hymn. This hymn "There's a royal banner given for display," was sung frequently at Cleveland last July, and the same mistake is frequently made. There is a line in the chorus "For Christ count every thing but loss," and nine persons out of ten sing the italicized word as "counts," and thus make what otherwise is a solemn injunction, a meaningless phrase; evidence that they have no clear idea what it is they are singing about. This is not as it should be. The service of song is as much a matter of worship as prayer and preaching, and demands of those who take part in it of intelligent participation as either of these. Let there be more attention given to the spiritual side of our praise, in proportion to the attention paid to its musical and harmonious aspect.