

## INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSONS.

January 20. John VI: 25-35.

Bread is ever used as the symbol of the spiritual nourishment upon which the divine self exists. The corn of Egypt, the cakes of the shew-bread, the manna of the wilderness, the loaves of the miracles, the broken bread of the eucharist, these are only a few of the many forms in which the idea may be found and instructively compared. In spite of repeated warnings the conception is nearly always degraded and materialised by public teachers, and the meat which we are so frequently enjoined not to work for, is made the chief object of existence in a civilisation whose God is described in Romans xvi. 18 and Philipians iii. 19. The Lord's prayer has been materialised in this sense also, but the present passage clearly shows what is the daily bread for which we are to pray. If the 27 and 33 verses are read in conjunction, the sealing of the bread from heaven may be understood. Some of the churches observe this in their ceremonies, and the hot cross buns of Easter preserve a tradition of so-called pagan times. The bread of initiation referred to—the bread of Ceres,—may be considered in connection with the sealing of the tribes, etc., in Revelation. This living bread has been available in all ages and climes (see I Cor. x. 1-4), nor had its distribution been deferred till the Christian era.

January 27. Matthew xvi: 13-23.

Referring to the well-known facts of reincarnation, Jesus asks his disciples who the people thought he had been in his previous life on earth. Some thought John, some Elijah, some Jeremiah, some one of the lesser prophets. Peter, however, recognizes him as a greater than any of these, a Christ, a Buddha, a divine avatar. As flesh and blood (I Cor. xv. 50) cannot inherit the kingdom, so flesh and blood was unable to reveal this spiritual mystery to Peter. On this Rock, which is the indwelling Christ (I Cor. x. 4), is built that house eternal in the heavens, of many mansions, from living stones, into an ecclesia against which nothing shall prevail. Compare 2 Cor. v. 1; John xiv. 2; I Peter, ii. 4-8; Matthew vii. 24-27; Peter as representing the understanding, is taken by the Karmetic school as the Rock upon which the Christ-life is attained. Jesus forbade his disciples to tell anyone that he was the Christ. It

could only lead to superstition, as in the present day, instead of the true reverence of spiritual recognition, verse 17. Peter as the understanding, is the tempter, the adversary, of the intellect, or manas opposed to Buddhi or intuition.

February 3. Luke ix: 28-36.

The Mount of Transfiguration is the mystical Mount Meru, or Olympus, or Pisgah, or Sinai as it is variously depicted, and the command to "get thee up into the high mountain" is not a vain one. Prayer in the true sense is only possible in the regions of spiritual elevation. Various effects of prayer or meditation are enumerated by Patanjali in his 3rd Book, and the 41st Aphorism describes how the ascetic "by concentrating his mind upon the vital energy called Samana acquires the power to appear as if blazing with light." The three disciples, Peter, James and John, having been asleep, are unable to give an accurate account, Peter, as recorded, verse 33, not knowing what he was saying. They were wisely silent on the matter, verse 36, as all students should be of their occult experiences. Superstitious credulity or incredulous contempt are almost the only sentiments inspired by such narrations. The reverent soul will find a blush as miraculous in its way, perhaps, as a transfiguration. The higher mystical aspects of the incident are connected with the eastern doctrine of the descent of avatars. Compare the whole passage with Exodus xix, xx, xxiv and xxxiv, 29-35.

February 10. Matthew xviii: 1-14.

If a chela is simply a little child, the occultist has a new force added to this passage. Although the word translated converted, verse 3, occurs in about a score of other passages it is elsewhere rendered "turn" or "turn again." "Unless ye turn and become as little children, in no wise shall ye enter the kingdom of the heavens." The Revised Version adopts this reading, getting rid of theological encumbrances and making clear a simple fact in nature. Children accept naturally all the truths of theosophy, in fact, they often know them intuitively, and the constant diversion of their minds to the artificial conceptions of theology might well now, as then, call down the rebuke of verse 6. One's success or welfare in this life is of no account, verse 8-9. The Revised Version omits verse 11, but has it in Luke xix. 10.