



LESSON,—SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 1908.

Jesus the Bread of Life.

John vi., 2-37. Memory verses 32, 33.
Read John vi., 22-51.

Golden Text.

Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. John vi., 35.

Home Readings.

- Monday, March 2.—John vi., 22-34.
- Tuesday, March 3.—John vi., 35-52.
- Wednesday, March 4.—John vi., 53-71.
- Thursday, March 5.—John vii., 1-13.
- Friday, March 6.—John vii., 14-27.
- Saturday, March 7.—John vii., 28-32, 45-53.
- Sunday, March 8.—Ps. lxx., 12-28.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Last Sunday's lesson was about a great big picnic out in the fields where there were thousands of people to be fed, and do you remember who brought the provisions? Yes, it was a little boy, but when he started out he didn't have to carry such an awful lot of food as that would mean, did he? No, he only had his own little lunch basket with five little rolls and two dried fishes in it. It was Jesus you remember who made them do for all those people. Then after the people had gone away for the night Jesus and the disciples went back to Capernaum. Here the crowds soon found him again and told Jesus how they had been looking for him everywhere. Do you think Jesus was pleased to have the people come to him like this? You know we sing that little hymn 'Come to the Saviour, make no delay,' and many other hymns like that, and Jesus often in the Bible tells us to come to him. These people, however, did not come to Jesus because they loved him, but because they thought it would be a good idea to always get food without paying for it, and Jesus who can see everybody's heart knew this. Then he tried to tell them the real reason why he came to earth. Not to feed their bodies, but their spirits.

Talk awhile of this higher spirit life and how Jesus makes it grow strong and beautiful just as our bodies grow if we give them the proper food.

FOR THE SENIORS.

This is the continuation of last Sunday's story and, unfortunately, the natural conclusion as regards the people. The hours of Christ's wonderful teaching had been forgotten in the hope for present physical benefit. What had been to Christ merely a voucher for the authority of the earlier teaching had rather taken its place in the eyes of the people. This seems to be Christ's meaning in verse 26. The word 'miracle' is properly rendered 'sign' in the revised version, and Christ would seem to say 'You come to me not because you understand the meaning of such a sign of my power, but because you look for further physical benefits through a power that has only touched your curiosity.' Then he tries to turn their thoughts to higher things. The divine patience of Christ is again wonderfully exhibited. Among men how easy it is for those who have caught a higher vision to despise the minds that cannot appreciate their view. That the people understood somewhat, however, is evident from their comparison of Christ to Moses—'If indeed you claim to be the greater prophet of whom Moses spoke (Deut. xviii., 15) then your 'sign' of yesterday is not sufficient. One meal's supply does not compare with a forty years' supply in the desert.' Patiently again Jesus brings them back. God, not Moses, was the source of that old-time gift of physical food, and again he has sent them food, but this time of a higher nature, food for the

spirit, not the body. The emphasis Christ places on the simile of food should make us careful to see that Christ actually does serve the same purpose in our spiritual life that food serves for the body. This thought it is that the Lord's Supper expresses so beautifully.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE'.)

Verse 29. Work is too often thought of as belonging only to the visible realm, as being wrought by hand or limb. Brain labor, heart labor, is often more intense, more exhausting than hand labor. Faith is indeed a work—perhaps the hardest work of our life. It has to wrestle with unbelief, to resist the insidious attacks of doubt. We have to 'hold fast our confidence,' our faith, as St. Paul says. Men often speak of faith as if it were the easiest of all things to be obtained; as if they had only to be passive and it would be awakened in their hearts. It is neither awakened nor sustained without inward spiritual labor.—Garrett Horder.

Verse 37. That. R. V., that which. All that which the Father giveth me. 'Was it not natural for Jesus at this hour to fall back on the eternal purpose of His Father as that which, notwithstanding all the disappointment and unbelief He was experiencing, should be carried out? His mission was divinely ordained; and it lay not in man's unbelief or opposition or indifference to thwart its success.' Reith. Him that cometh. 'The giving, God's act; the coming, man's.'—Reith.

I am accustomed to regard the moral and the spiritual in the light of a diet or daily bread, which only then becomes daily bread when I make it my rule of life, and never lose sight of it the whole year round.—Goethe.

To believe on Christ is initial faith; to receive Him is appropriating faith; to understand Him is intelligent faith; to assimilate Him is active faith.—Cornelius Woelfkin.

Faith is the root of all good works; a root that produces nothing is dead.—Wilson.

(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES'.)

Verse 15. 'Jesus was wont, even as we are, to refresh a wasted strength by draughts from the celestial springs; and as Antaeus, in his wrestling, recovered himself as he touched the ground, so we find Jesus, in the great crises of his life, falling back upon heaven.'—H. Burton.

Dr. McClymont, in the 'New Century Bible,' writes, 'While this death upon the cross was to prove the greatest of all stumbling-blocks to those who had hoped to find in him a temporal Messiah (I. Cor. i., 23; John xii., 34; Matt. xvi., 22), the resurrection and ascension to which it was to lead would bring the explanation and fulfilment of what he had been saying. It would not be so hard to conceive of Him as the bread come down from heaven when he was believed to have ascended up to heaven in his glorified humanity, to send down the Holy Spirit into the hearts of his followers and thus unite them with himself.'

Jesus feeds the soul in every part. 'How many characteristics are necessary to make our character Godlike. We do not know. There must be love, humility, submission, patience, hope, gentleness, joy, and all the qualities that entered to compose the character of the Son of God.'—Cornelius Woelfkin.

BIBLE REFERENCES.

I. Cor. xi., 23-26; Matt. iv., 4; Luke xii., 23; Isa. lv., 2; Psa. xxxiv., 8.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, March 8.—Topic—The wise use of time. Eph. v., 15-21.

C. E. Topic.

Monday, March 2.—Bringing children to Christ. Mark x., 13-16.

Tuesday, March 3.—Brought by a father. Mark ix., 17-27.

Wednesday, March 4.—Brought by a woman. John iv., 28, 30, 39.

Thursday, March 5.—Bringing a deaf man. Mark vii., 32-37.

Friday, March 6.—Bringing a blind man. Mark viii., 22-26.

Saturday, March 7.—Bringing the sick. Matt. iv., 24.

Sunday, March 8.—Topic—Bringing our friends to Christ. Mark ii., 1-5.

That Unruly Boy.

(By an Ex-Superintendent, in the 'S. S. Journal'.)

He has been in the several Sunday schools, four in all, which I have had the honor to serve as superintendent; he is in your Sunday-school. For the unruly boy 'ye have always with you.' He is the bane of his teacher's life. Not that he is stupid, for he is not constructed after that pattern; besides, providence helps us to bear with stupid boys. On the contrary, the unruly boy is bright, 'smart,' as the Yankee would say, aggressive and progressive, heady and restrained.

Such a boy was Arthur Morgan. He was in his fourteenth year—the know-it-all age with the average boy—of regulation height, of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to, but withal slovenly in his attire. The itinerant system found in him a shining example, since for good and sufficient reasons his class relations were often changed. One after another of his teachers had suffered from the demoralization that invariably followed in his train, and so it came to pass that one day the last one to wrestle with him said to me with burning indignation, 'Arthur must go! I can bear it no longer; he is not worth saving!' The statement startled me. In an instant a 'plan' for Arthur's regeneration flashed across my mind and as quickly crystallized into a determination to give him something to do, to load him with direct personal responsibility, whereupon I said to the teacher, 'Try Arthur or two weeks longer, and if at the end of that time you do not request me to let him remain in your class I will relieve you of his presence.' To this proposition the teacher assented, reluctantly, however, and evidently for my sake.

Just before the close of the session on that day I said to the school, 'You will be interested in an announcement I am about to make, which is this: Beginning with next Sunday we shall have three ushers, one for each aisle, selected from the ranks of our young men. They will be at the entrance to this room at precisely a quarter after two o'clock, fifteen minutes before the opening of the session, to attend to the seating of new scholars and visitors, whether they be strangers or members of our own church or congregation. When prayer is to be offered the door shall be closed and remain closed during that exercise and re-opened at the conclusion thereof. When all persons shall have been provided with sittings the ushers shall repair to their respective classes. The ushers will answer politely all inquiries concerning our Sabbath and week-day church services and extend a welcome to all strangers. I am going to appoint only such young men as I know will be quiet, dignified, courteous, free from frivolity, and who will refrain from whispering with each other. I then announce the names of the appointees as follows: Sylvester Bond, Arthur Morgan, Julien Forbes.' And whereas real sensations are few and far between in this life, the mention of Arthur's name as one of the trio was the signal for an expression of ill-concealed surprise on the faces of the entire school.

On the following Sunday the ushers were in their appointed places at the minute named, and, as a matter of course, I was there to witness the inauguration of the scheme. As for Arthur, though he was sandwiched in between two of the steadiest boys in the school, his conduct was in no sense inferior to theirs; and whereas in the matter of his personal appearance he had been indifferent to the verge of slovenliness, the transformation was complete. In a word, he had acquired self-respect and a regard for the opinions of other people concerning himself. Nor is this to be despised, for in the language of an old school reader, 'A young man is not far from ruin when he can say without blushing, "I care not what others think of me."' Best of all, however, the unruly boy was transformed into an orderly scholar and became a good citizen. At the end of a fortnight his teacher not only esteemed him 'worth saving,' but requested me to leave him in his class, which I gladly did. Moral: Give the unruly boy something to do, and you will find him worth saving.