

The Quiet Hour

Jesus The Bread of Life.*

BY WAYLAND HOYT, D.D.

"The other side of the sea" (v. 22). the side where the miracle was wrought. "The multitude" (v. 22). Part of it had dispersed, but some had remained, possibly in hope of breakfast, as the night before they had had a miraculous supper. They had noticed, too, that Jesus had tarried.

"There came boats from Tiberias" (v. 23). This parenthesis is thrown in to explain how this remaining portion of the multitude got over the sea to Capernaum.

"Seeking Jesus" (v. 24). But, as the subsequent narrative shows, not so much Himself as a wonderful they hoped He might give them.

"When comest Thou hither?" (v. 25). The "When comest Thou hither?" includes the how of the coming.

"Ye seek Me, not because ye saw signs" (v. 26). The spiritual, in Christ's view, is the main matter; if we simply help men physically, and stop at that, we have missed a chief part of real service. "Signs" are worthless except as they are finger-posts pointing to Jesus as the soul's Saviour; what Jesus did should be a reason for our accepting Him for what He is. That is a poor seeking which looks only at the material advantage Jesus can give; for example, when people join the church because it is respectable, or will help them in their business or social position. Jesus sees perfectly into our true motives; we may deceive our fellows, we cannot Christ. Let the "Verily, verily," of our Lord here teach us the importance of what Christ is saying to us in this lesson.

"Work not for the meat which perisheth" (v. 27). Of course Christ does not mean that we are to be idle and beggars; but that we are not to make food which perisheth the chief and only end of our endeavor.

"Eternal life" (v. 27). Eternal life does not mean only eternal existence, though it includes that; it means loving harmony with God and Christ. Eternal existence without this is eternal death: This loving harmony with God and Christ is Christ's gift; if we are to have it, we must receive it from Him.

"What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" (v. 28). "The works of God" mean works by which God's favor is to be gained, by which men may approve themselves to God.

"This the work of God that ye believe" (v. 29). It is not "works," many and painful, which can do it; it is one "the work." This one work is belief on Him who God hath sent. What is this faith? The best and most concise definition I know is this: assent of intellect and consent of heart to Jesus Christ. Says

another most truly: "The germ of all Paul's subsequent teaching of justification by faith is contained in this one simple sentence. The epistles are but an amplification of the gospel as proclaimed by Christ himself."

"What, then, doest Thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe Thee? what workest Thou?" (v. 30.) How blind they were how wilfully blind! They had just partaken of 600 miraculous loaves and fishes, and yet they demand of Christ an authentic sign! And as if that were not enough, they affirm that the miracle of the feeding of the multitude pales before and was overpassed by the ancient wonder of the manna. The point they querulously make is, that the manna came "out of heaven," as if any other than heavenly power could do what Christ had already done. So now men conjure up all sorts of quibbling objections, and the sad thing about it is that toward Christ men cannot see because so often they will not.

"My Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven," (v. 32). All good gifts comes primarily from God; the manna was God's gift through Moses, not a gift from Moses. Manna was a type foreshadowing Jesus. The type has been fulfilled in the antitype, Jesus Christ. Christ is not man merely, but divine, "out of heaven." He is the soul's true bread, real, life-giving sustenance.

"Cometh down" (v. 33). The bread of God is not a past, historic gift, something that was; it is something that is, for us here and now; now the "true bread" is ministered to us by the Holy Spirit; believe in a present, soul-satisfying, soul-sustaining Christ.

"Giveth Life unto the world" (v. 33). All true spiritual life is from Christ. This life is for the world; Christianity is the universal religion.

"I am the bread of life" (v. 35). Bread is necessity for the body; so Christ is necessity for the soul. Bread is a daily necessity; so is Christ to the soul. Bread is satisfying; so is Christ to the soul. Bread is sustaining; so does Christ sustain the soul. Bread is crowded with mystery; there are wonders in bread that no most arrogant science can explain; yet, though the mysteries are there, because of them we do not refuse the bread; nor should we refuse Christ though one of His names is "the Wonderful." Bread uneaten does no good; so it is only the accepted Christ who can be to us the forgiving and helping Christ. Christ is the one and sufficient food for the soul; coming to Him we find all our spiritual hungerings and thirstings met; we do not need to seek other soul food; He can still all hunger, quench all thirst.

"AM that which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (v. 37). Here are the two sides of the great matter. The divine side is, "All that which the Father giveth Me shall come unto me.

God is not going to be disappointed. Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. What an encouragement here for Christian workers! they shall not fail; they are bound to succeed. Sometimes there is nothing which can so encourage one as vision of this divine side of things. The human side is, "Him that cometh to Me"; this is what we must do, come to Christ, accept Him as personal Saviour and personal Lord.

"I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (v. 38). Learn the unity of will between the Son and the Father. How impossible it is that His unity of will should meet defeat! When one comes to Christ, Christ will keep him. "I should lose nothing." C. E. World.

Release.

When we have closed the sad, world tired eyes
And clasped the hands above the pulseless breast,
And stand with stricken silence crossed with sighs,
In the dim chamber of uncoiled rest
This is not death whose mytic lines invest
The white robed form with strange and stately grace,
But the glad passing of our sometime guest
To higher planes and realms of wider space.
It is not Death's chill fingers that endow
With unaccustomed beauty the still face,
And crown with starry majesty the brow
Late seamed with sorrows of our mortal race.
Not Death, but Life, that, parting, leaves the trace
Of new-found glory on its prison place.

A Step at a Time.

In accomplishing your day's work you have simply to take one step at a time. To take that step wisely is all that you need to think about. If I am climbing a mountain, to look down makes me dizzy; to look far up may make me tired and discouraged.

Take no anxious thought for the morrow. Sufficient for the day—yes, and for each hour in the day—is the toil or trial thereof. There is not a child of God in this world who is strong enough to stand the strain of to-day's duties and all the load of to-morrow's anxieties piled upon the top of them. Paul himself would have broken down if he had attempted the experiment. We have a perfect right to ask our heavenly Father for strength equal to the day, but we have no right to ask him for one extra ounce of strength for anything beyond it. When the morrow comes, grace will come sufficient for its tasks or for its troubles.

"Let me be strong in word and deed,
Just for to-day!
Lord for to-morrow and its need
I must not pray."
Theodore L. Cuyler.

The Advance of Christianity.

The following thought so beautifully expressed is from the pen of Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis: "As never before, the people feel that the secret of progress is the secret of Jesus Christ. Indeed, Christianity has been called 'a beautiful civilization.' Setting forth from Bethlehem, it has journeyed across the continents, its breath summer, its presence warmth, its footprints harvests. To-day Christianity does not stand upon the corners of the streets blowing a trumpet before it—it is stealing softly into the human heart, rebuking coarseness and vice and stealing away sorrow and sin. With a heart full of kindness and sympathy Christ has entered the earthly scene, and His tears, falling upon man's vices, are slowly dissolving them."

*S.S. Lesson July 8, John 6: 22-40.

Golden Text.—Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life, John 6: 35.