

CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.

I. QUAR., LESSON III., JAN. 20, John 6:25-35.

**Golden Text – "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."
– John 6:31.**

AFTER the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, and the manifested disposition of the people to take him by force to make him a king, Jesus, knowing that such was not the Father's plan, withdrew from the multitude and even from his disciples, sending them in advance of him to Capernaum, while he retired to the mountain alone for a season of communion with God. Possibly his human nature felt the force of the temptation to accept of present advancement and at once enter upon the work of blessing the world, instead of pursuing the long and tedious purpose of God. It was a repetition of the temptation in the wilderness, and he doubtless needed the reinforcement of divine grace through prayer and communion with God. And if our Lord needed frequent seasons of such communion, how much more do we, his followers. Let us remember his words, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

Before the day dawned, the Lord improved another opportunity to impress upon his disciples the lesson of his divine anointing. Walking upon the waves of a stormy sea, he bade them trust him, saying, "It is I, be not afraid."

The day following proved how eager and excited the people were over the power of Jesus manifested among them; for multitudes had taken shipping and gone to Capernaum seeking for him. Their seeking him, however, was not from a clear apprehension of his divine credentials, but rather from curiosity and probably an increasing determination to push him forward to the ruling position, from which they presumed he shrank merely from a sense of modesty.

Verses 26,27. The Lord read their thoughts and sought to draw their attention away from the mere facts of his miracles to the lessons which they and all Israel should have learned from them; viz., that they were the divine testimonials to his Messiahship, the seals of God, whereby they might know him, and that therefore they should believe on him and become his disciples and followers.

Verses 28,29. To their question, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God" – the works that would please God – he replied that the work most pleasing and acceptable to God would be their exercise of faith in him, as the one whom God had sent in fulfilment of his promise to their fathers. Thus the Lord indicated the importance of a right faith. Many to-day ask the same question, hoping to please God by their works, and underrating the importance of faith. Such a course is contrary to the Lord's teaching: first get the faith rightly established in Christ; receive him into the heart, and then out of the heart filled with his spirit will flow words and deeds pleasing to God. Without faith – the faith inspired by the divine Word – it is impossible to please God.

Verses 30-36. In their unbelief the quibbling multitude began to draw a comparison between the miracle which Jesus had worked in their midst and the more extensive miracle of feeding all Israel in the wilderness with manna from heaven; and they demanded a similar sign. But no such gratification was granted them: they had sufficient evidence upon which to found faith had they been so disposed, and upon that evidence Jesus founded his claim and declared himself the bread of life – the manna sent down from heaven, the bread of life for all Israel and the world as well. This gift of God, this bread from heaven, was a greater miracle than the feeding with manna in the wilderness.

Those who partake of this manna, he declared, should never die. Though they sleep (in the Adamic death), they shall not be hurt of the eternal death (the Second Death) from which there shall be no resurrection.
