

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

10 And Je'sus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 And Je'sus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle

that Je'sus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

15 When Je'sus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

16 And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Ca-per-na-um. And it was now dark, and Je'sus was not come to them.

18 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Je'sus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

General Statement.

Between the miracle of the last lesson, and that which we are now to consider, a whole year intervened, and the most active year of the Saviour's ministry. It was passed entirely in Galilee, throughout every part of which province Jesus journeyed, teaching and working miracles. Afterward, he sent out the twelve disciples to visit the villages and cities, preaching the Gospel. As a result, the entire province was aroused to the highest interest, and a general expectation was awakened that the kingdom of God was now to appear. Also, the passover was at hand, the third during the Saviour's ministry, and the roads were thronged with people going up to the annual feast at Jerusalem. Jesus desiring to escape the multitudes and to be alone for a time with his disciples, sailed with them from Capernaum to a secluded place near Bethsaida at the head of the lake. But the multitudes were eager to hear and to see him, and soon the little grass-covered plain by the sea was dotted with men and women, at least five thousand in number. All day long they hung upon the

Saviour's words, forgetting that the evening was at hand, and that the wilderness around could furnish them with no food. But there was One who felt their needs while they forgot them, and provided for them. He fed them with bread, after he had taught them by his words, and in the feeding showed at once a miracle and a parable: a miracle in the manner of the supply, and a parable in the gracious lessons which it suggested. The dull minds of the people, however, failed to apprehend the subtle teachings of the five loaves, and supposed that now a day of ease was about to dawn, and that they would henceforth be fed with bread from heaven, like their fathers in the wilderness. They would have crowned Jesus their king on the spot, and made him their leader; but he sent away his unwilling disciples first, and afterward the multitudes. Then he climbed the mountain to calm his disturbed spirit by prayer. In the darkness he saw the disciples' boat tossed by a sudden storm. He walked upon the waters to their relief, and led them to the shore in peace.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. After these things. A whole year after the events of the last lesson. **Jesus went over the sea.** From Capernaum, which had been for a year the headquarters of his ministry, he sailed with his disciples across to the north-eastern border of the lake. **The sea of Galilee.** A fresh-water lake, through which the Jordan runs. It is fourteen miles long, nine wide, and three hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea. **Which is the sea of Tiberias.** A clause added to explain the meaning to the Greek readers of the Gospel, as Tiberias, on the south-western shore, was the principal city upon the lake, and was well known.

2. A great multitude followed him. Drawn together by the report of the disciples, who had just returned from a preaching tour in all parts of Galilee, and increased by the fact that multitudes on their way to the passover desired also to hear the famous prophet. **They saw his miracles.** The purpose of the miracles was mainly to attract notice and give Jesus the respectful attention of the people; only in a subordinate degree to prove his divine authority. **On them that were diseased.** The writer notes that it was curiosity and a desire for physical benefit which drew the crowds after Jesus. This explains why it was that so soon after this miracle the multitudes forsook him. (1) *Note on one hand the tender mercy of Jesus, and his sympathy for human woes.* (2) *Note on the other the selfishness of men's hearts.*

3, 4. Went up into a mountain. One of the hills adjoining the small plain of Butlila, near Bethsaida. **Sat with his disciples.** He had taken them aside for private instruction, but his plan was interrupted by the coming of the multitude; so he went down to the plain and taught the people all day. **The passover, a feast of the Jews.** Again an explanation, which would be unnecessary if John were writing for Jewish readers. The passover commemorated the "passing over" of the Israelites' houses in Egypt; and was celebrated at Jerusalem. **Was nigh.** John's gospel is very careful in its notes of time, and thus enables us to fix most of the events of Christ's life in chronological order.

5, 6. Saith unto Philip. Philip was a man of slow spiritual understanding, who needed to be trained in his faith. **Whence shall we buy bread.** Jesus felt

the needs of the people before they felt them themselves. **Thy said to prove him.** To test his faith and to train it. **He knew what he would do.** Jesus was never overcome by circumstances. He had foreseen the need and provided for it. (3) *So he prepared a way of salvation before sin came into the world.*

7. Philip answered him. If he had put the question to John we can imagine how differently it would have been answered; but Philip dwelt on the plane of sight, and spoke as a practical man, who sees things as they are. **Two hundred pennyworth.** Two hundred denarii." The denarius was a Roman coin worth about sixteen cents, so that this would mean more than thirty dollars of our money.

8, 9. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He was with John the first of the twelve to follow Jesus (John 1, 40), and was a man of action, like his brother; but unlike his brother worked with people one by one rather than by preaching to them in a body. Every mention of Andrew refers to his bringing somebody to Jesus, a good example for Christian workers. **There is a lad here.** The whole miracle turned upon a boy who had forethought enough to bring his dinner with him. (4) *How much good a boy may do who puts himself at the service of Christ!* **Five barley loaves.** They were thin cakes, not unlike pilot-biscuit. **Two... fishes.** Small fishes, probably salted, eaten as a relish like dried herring.

10. Jesus said. He was fully conscious of his power, and had a divine purpose in the miracle. That purpose, as he explained on the next day at the synagogue, was to show himself as the bread of life. **Sit down.** All things were to be done in order, and the people were commanded to group themselves in companies of fifty and a hundred on the green grass, like "flower-beds," as Mark's picturesque words may be translated. Mark 6, 40.

11. Jesus took the loaves. Before they were only loaves, but touched by the hand of the Master they became a royal feast. **Given thanks.** Thanks-giving before meals was with Christ no mere form, but a communion with his Father. **Distributed to the disciples.** Herein was a parable of the Gospel, which Christ gives to his people, and they in turn give to their fellow-men.