

(R. V.), and arrived before them. **Ran afoot**—It was those who "knew" that did so. They went by land. If the boat required "to tack" against a head wind they could easily "out go" it. **Out of all the cities** (R. V.)—the towns and villages around the north end of the lake. John accounts for the large number by saying "a great multitude were following him because they saw his miracles." Yet they did not perceive that these were "signs" of his Messiahship, or of spiritual truths (John 6: 26 R. V.) It was the curiosity of an idle crowd. A large number of them, doubtless, were on their way to the passover (John 6: 4). Jesus did not go up to the festival at this time (John 7: 1), because the ruling Jews sought to kill him, and his hour was not yet come. **Out-went them**—arrived there before them.

34. When he came out—"having disembarked." Referring to John 6: 3, we find that Jesus had ascended the hillside with his disciples, and was seated when the multitude gathered to him again, and moved his compassion. They were doubtless some time in assembling by successive bands. At this point John inserts the remark that it was Passover time, either to account for the multitude or as implying that such a miracle and the discourse following were appropriate to the season. **Was moved with compassion**—Compare Matt. 9: 36. "Mark alone records the thoughts of Jesus on the occasion, imparted perhaps to Peter, and communicated by him to the evangelist." (Lindsay.) He gave up all idea of taking a rest. **As sheep not having a shepherd**—The figure may have been suggested by the rugged, dangerous, pastureless aspect of the country around them. It refers, of course, to their spiritual condition. "They had no guides but the blind scribes and Pharisees. They had no spiritual food but the man-made traditions." (Ryle.) The same feeling made Jesus utter Matt. 11: 28-30. **He began to teach**—A solemn and dignified manner of speaking is implied. Jesus knew what their greatest need was and discoursed to them of the kingdom of God, but he also healed the sick. (Luke 9: 11.)

35. When the day was far spent—It was probably late in the afternoon—the "first evening" (Matt. 14: 15), or past three o'clock. In verse 47 the "second evening," after sunset, is mentioned. **His disciples**—"Comparing the various passages, the course of events seems to have been:—(1) Jesus taught and healed; then (2) he asked Philip, *Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?* Philip had not the faith to accept the partnership in a miracle which the word "we" invited him to, and answered (3) that two hundred pence would not buy bread enough (John 6: 5-7); (4) our Lord went on teaching and healing; (5) at even the apostles asked him to send the multitudes away; (6) he asked them to feed them; (7) they answered as Philip had done; (8) he told them to go and see what bread could be had; a boy offered what he had; and (9) Andrew brought it to Jesus." (Lindsay.) Jesus

did not need Philip's advice, for he had already determined on working the miracle, but he asked the question to prove him (John 6: 6), whether he had learned the lesson of the miracle at Cana or not, for he was there (John 1: 43: 2: 2). It is a test both of his intellectual capacity, his resourcefulness, and his faith in the ability of Christ to meet the emergency. It was Judas who usually made purchases (John 13: 29.)

II. THE SCANT SUPPLY. 36. Send them away—So far as the disciples could see this was the kindest thing they could do. Many of them were passover pilgrims, and would have no homes to go to, but must purchase food and lodgings.

37. Give ye them to eat—This was also said "to prove" them. The "ye" is emphatic. "God sometimes asks us to do for him more than we can, as when he commands us to keep his whole law, but always to shew us how easy it is to rest on himself." (Lindsay.) **Two hundred pennyworth**—A penny, or *denarius*, was a small silver coin worth about fifteen cents. It was considered a fair day's wages for a laboring man (Matt. 20: 2), and therefore was equivalent to at least a dollar with us. It was a famine price for a measure (*choenix*—1½ pint) of wheat (Rev. 6: 6). With this reply compare Num. 11: 21-23; 2 Kings 4: 43. It was a hurried estimate, not of what would suffice, but of what would give each one a little (John 6: 7). Two hundred dollars worth of bread divided amongst, possibly, 10,000 persons, would give *two cents* worth to each. Some suppose that the sum named by Philip was the whole amount in their common purse. But it is not likely that they would have so much.

38. When they knew—They found some provisions in possession of a lad ("one lad"), but whether his own, or carried for the disciples, does not appear. At any rate they are cheerfully given up to Christ. **Loaves**—These were barley cakes (John 6: 9; see Judges 7: 13). They were as large as a plate, quite thin, and firm, but not brittle. **Fishes**—John calls them by a name (*opsaria*) which means, generally, dainties used as "a relish." They were small fish, like sardines, dried or pickled, and eaten with bread. John tells us that the disciples added "but what are these among so many?" Compare 2 Cor. 2: 16; 3: 15. The means often seem dishearteningly inadequate when we do not remember the divine power which makes them efficient.

III. THE ABUNDANT MEAL. 39. Sit down—Greek "recline," the customary position at meals. **By companies**—"After the manner of table parties," (*symposia*) i. e. around the sides of a square or oblong. **Green grass**—This shews that it was the springtime. John says "there was much grass in the place" (6: 10). The arid country east of the Sea of Galilee is green only in the rainy season.

40. In ranks—literally "in garden beds."