

Gather up the fragments; the broken pieces that were not used. *That nothing be lost*; a lesson in thrift. *Filled twelve baskets*. The fragments were thus larger than the original supply. "All four accounts have the same word for basket, *cophinos* (our 'coffer'), that is, the wallet which every Jew carried when on a journey, to keep himself independent of Gentile food, which would be unclean. Each of the twelve gathered into his own 'basket,' and filled it full." (Camb. Bible.) *Barley loaves*. The words show that the fragments were identical with the original loaves. (v. 9.)

V. 14. *Then those men; who had eaten. This is . . . that prophet.* It was commonly

thought that, according to the prophets, the coming Messiah would banish all earthly want. This creative miracle was so in keeping with that thought, that they concluded Jesus was the prophet of Deut. 18: 18, whom they identified with the Messiah. The rest of the chapter shows us how little they knew of the real Messiah, for when on the following day (v. 22), having followed Him to the other side of the lake, He applied to them the test of spiritual life (v. 53), many became offended and forsook Him. (v. 66.) To identify themselves, body, soul and spirit, with this Nazarene, was more than their pride could bear. A Messiah King they would have crowned with enthusiasm.

LESSON APPLICATION

When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? v. 5. Two things are taught us in this verse concerning Jesus. One is His unselfishness. Mark tells us that He had not time to eat. The coming of the multitude would prevent His getting His needed repose. But, instead of uttering impatient words, as we might have done, about the thoughtlessness of the crowds in pursuing Him, our Lord immediately thought of their great need and of how it was to be supplied. He was willing to give up His rest to provide food for the poor, weary, tired people He saw climbing up the hill. How often we have been too tired to run an errand for a busy mother, or amuse a younger brother or sister or do some other kind act! "Too tired" in such cases often means, too selfish. The other thing about Jesus which appears here is His sympathy with the bodily needs of men. He knew what it was to be tired and hungry and thirsty. "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," of whatever sort they may be. (Heb. 4: 15.)

And this he said to prove him; for he himself knew what he would do, v. 6. The test which Jesus applied to Philip was one suited to the peculiar character of the man. Philip was a practical, matter-of-fact person, to whom it was very difficult to believe in any power

which could not be seen or felt or measured. It was he who, in the upper room, asked for an immediate sight of God (John 14: 8), not understanding how God could be known in any other way. Philip has been called "the realist among the disciples." The only way that occurred to him of meeting the need of the multitude for food was by means of money, and his calculating mind told him that even to give each a little would require more than was available. The Master left him to wrestle with this problem all day, and then, at evening, showed him that there was an unseen power of which he had not thought which could provide for the crowds. So Jesus still tests us by setting us to grapple with difficult tasks. But our comfort is that He knows to what the testing is to lead and, at the end, we shall have, as Philip had on the evening of that memorable day, a firmer and more intelligent faith in the power of Christ. Sometimes we are tested by trials and sorrows, but, as the following lines teach us, Jesus will bring us safe through them all.

"One who has known in storms to sail,
I have on board;
Above the raging of the gale,
I hear my Lord.
He holds me when the billows smite,
I shall not fall.
If sharp 'tis short, if long 'tis light;
He tempers all.