

At the last one expressly mentioned by John (ch. 2 : 23) Jesus was in Jerusalem. *A feast of the Jews*; an explanation for the first readers of this Gospel, who were Gentiles. *Was nigh*. This accounts for the multitude, the crowd which had followed Jesus being increased by some great company on its way to keep the Passover at Jerusalem. Naturally the mind of Jesus ran forward to the next Passover, when He, the Lamb of God, was to give His life for men, vs. 52, 53.

Vs. 5, 6. *Saw a great company come*. The sight moved Jesus to pity, Matt. 9:36. *He saith unto Philip*. In the other Gospels (Matt. 14 : 15 ; Mark 6 : 35, 36 ; Luke 9 : 12) it is the disciples who lay the case before Jesus. Philip may have been business manager. *To prove him*. Jesus puts before him the magnitude of the problem, to test the disciples' faith in Himself. *He himself knew*. Throughout this Gospel Jesus is represented as working in obedience to a voice which He alone can hear (compare ch. 7 : 8 ; 12 : 28).

II. The Scanty Supply, 7-9.

Vs. 7-9. *Two hundred pennyworth*. A penny, that is the denarius, a Roman silver coin, was the day laborer's wage, about 17 cents. Including the women and children (Matt. 14 : 21), there may have been 10,000 persons to feed. Two hundred denarii (\$34.00) would provide a scanty portion for 3,000. *Andrew*; often mentioned with Philip, ch. 1 : 44 ; 12 : 20-22. He is a type of unobtrusive helpfulness. *A lad*; a little boy, but how highly he was honored ! *Barley loaves*. See Light from the East. *Two small fishes*; dried or pickled, merely a relish. *What are they ?* It was not worth while even beginning to work with so little—so the disciples thought. Had they forgotten the water made wine ?

III. The Plentiful Meal, 10-14.

Vs. 10, 11. *Make the people sit down* (Rev. Ver.); as though to get a hearty meal. Besides there must be no crowding about Him to prevent the weaker ones getting their full share. *Much grass*; not a desert place. In the spring the hillsides were covered with green grass. *Men...about five thousand*. The women would sit along with the men. May

we not imagine some of the children stealing up to Jesus to receive the food from His own hand ? The multitude was arranged in regular companies of fifty (Luke 9 : 14). The groups with their bright colored clothing would look like garden beds (so the Greek of Mark 6 : 40 indicates). *Given thanks*; like a father at the family table. He directs their thoughts to the Giver of the still invisible meal. *Distributed*. The loaves multiplied as the disciples passed the bread around ; and the fishes as well. *As much as they would*. In all the work of Jesus there is abundance (compare ch. 1 : 16). Note also, that "here, as in all Christ's miracles, the miracle is based on the natural, and not separated from the powers of God working all around us. The same God works in both ways. 'Natural means, laws and powers go just as far as possible for them, and then the supernatural comes in and does what they cannot do.'"

Vs. 12-14. *Gather up the fragments*. They must not make His generosity an excuse for thriftlessness. *Twelve baskets*; large wicker baskets, such as Jews carried when travelling. Each apostle would have one. When they began to carry them they would realize that the miracle was no dream. *When they had seen the miracle*; an impure faith, v. 30. *This is...that prophet*. See Deut. 18 : 15. They used this as a title of the Messiah. They wished to compel Jesus to declare Himself King (v. 15), and He withdrew. He wished to give them Himself as the Bread of Life ; they, unspiritual as they were, wished loaves and fishes, vs. 27, 35, 63.

Light from the East

BARLEY—Is still very commonly grown in Palestine and takes the place which oats occupies in Europe and America as provender for horses and asses. The bread made from it was and is still used by the very poorest of the people. When an Arab wishes to express the extremity of his poverty, he will say, "I have not barley bread to eat."

LOAVES—The grain is still very often ground by Arab women between two stones, the upper one of which is turned by hand. The flour or meal is then mixed with water