

same time, he was too prone to rely entirely on human means, and slow to grasp the reality of help from the unseen. *Whence . . . buy bread?* From Jesus we learn to have pity on those in need, and also to be practical in giving them help.

V. 6. *To prove him*; to test his sympathy, for one thing, with the hungry people, and also his faith in the master's power to provide for them. Jesus used circumstances and events, as they arose, for the training of his followers. *Knew what he would do.* He had resources at his command which it was difficult for the disciples to realize.

### II. The Scanty Provision, 7-9.

Vs. 7, 8. *Two hundred pennyworth . . . not sufficient.* The denarius, translated "penny," was about 16 cents, so that this sum would be about \$32. *Andrew . . . saith.* Andrew was a ready, serviceable man (ch. 1 : 40-42 ; 12 : 22), anxious to be of as much use as possible, —most valuable qualities in a follower of Christ.

V. 9. *A lad*; a little boy, a "laddie," but not too young to become a partner with Jesus in a great work. *Five barley loaves*; very cheap and coarse food, used by the poorest of the people. *Two small fishes*; small pickled fish, eaten with bread, as a relish. Probably the boy had this little store for his own meal. *What are these among so many?* (Rev. Ver.). So, looking at our own abilities and means, the carrying of the gospel to the world seems a hopeless task. But our business is to bring the powers we have to Jesus, that he may use and multiply them.

### III. The Satisfying Meal, 10-14.

V. 10. *Make the people sit down* (Rev. Ver.). The meal was to be orderly, so that none might be overlooked. There was to be no crushing or hurrying, as they were to have a solid meal. Picture the feelings of the disciples as they went about arranging the groups. The people had enough confidence in Jesus to do as they were bidden. *Much grass*; as contrasted "with the cornlands and olive-yards of the opposite shore, where the large crowd could not easily have found a place to lie down." (Dods.) *Men . . . five thousand.* The women and children must have largely swelled the numbers.

V. 11. *Jesus . . . had given thanks.* The Jews were accustomed to pronounce a blessing at meals. A regular form was, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the world, who bringest forth bread from the earth." *Distributed to the disciples . . . disciples to them . . . set down.* The provision came from Jesus; it reached the multitudes through the disciples. So, only Jesus can provide salvation; but the tidings of it must be carried to the world by human agency.

Vs. 12, 13. *Gather up the fragments . . . nothing be lost*; not that the wonder of the miracle might be more apparent, but to remind the disciples that divine gifts are not to be trifled with, that they are not to presume on the gifts of their heavenly Father. "Infinite resource does not justify waste." *Twelve baskets*; strong wickerwork baskets used for carrying provisions, fruits, etc. Some scholars think that each of the disciples may have had one. *Which remained over and above.* Emphasis is laid on the superabundance of what was left. Jesus dispenses royally.

V. 14. *This . . . that prophet*; the prophet like Moses (Deut. 18 : 15-19), through whom God had given the manna to Israel. This prophet was commonly understood to be the Messiah, and it was a current belief among the Jews that the rule of the Messiah was to be accompanied by extraordinary material plenty.

Vs. 15-21 narrate the incident of Jesus walking on the water.

### Light from the East

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THE BAKING OF BREAD—Two kinds of grain are used for food in Palestine, wheat and barley. Occasionally the ears of corn were prepared for use by roasting (1 Sam. 17 : 17), but usually a kind of coarse meal or flour was made by grinding with mortar and pestle, or more commonly with a handmill made of two stones. The meal was mixed with water and kneaded; it was sometimes made lighter by the use of leaven.

The firing was done, and is still done, in three ways: (1) A little fire is kindled in the sand or stones and when these are well heated, the ashes are scraped aside and the flat cake of dough laid down and covered with the