But now it is the word signifying *men*, as  
distinguished from women and children.  
And this is a particular touch of accuracy  
in the account of an eye-witness, which has  
not I think been noticed. Why in the  
other accounts should mention be made  
only of the *men* in numbering them? St.  
Matthew has, it is true, “*beside women  
and children*,” leaving it to be inferred that  
there was some means of distinguishing ;—  
the others merely give “[*about*] *five thousand men*” without any explanation. But  
here we see how it came to be so—the *men  
alone* were arranged in companies, or alone  
arranged so that *any account* was taken of  
them: the women and children being served.  
promiscuously; who indeed, if the multitude were a paschal caravan (?), or parts of  
many such, would not be likely to be very  
numerous;—and here again we have a point  
of minute truthfulness brought out.

**11.]** On the process of the miracle, see notes  
on Matthew. St. John describes the distribution as being the act of the Lord Himself,  
and leaves the intervention of the disciples  
to be understood.

The *giving thanks*here answers to *blessing* in the other Gospels. It was the ‘*grace*’ of the father of  
the family; perhaps the ordinary one in  
use among the Jews. St. John seems to  
connect with it the idea brought out by St.  
Luke, “*He blessed* **them**,” i.e. *the loaves*:  
see ver. 23.

**12.]** Peculiar to John,  
The command, one intent of which was  
certainly to convince the disciples of the  
power which had wrought the miracle, is  
given by our Lord a moral bearing also.  
They collected the fragments *for their own  
use*, each in his basket (*cophinus*), the ordinary furniture of the travelling Jew, to  
carry his food, lest he should be polluted  
by that of the people through whose territory he passed; see note on Matt. xv. 32.  
Observe, that here the 12 baskets are filled  
with the fragments of the *bread alone*:  
but in Mark, with those of the fishes also.

We must not altogether miss the reference to the 12 tribes of Israel, typifying  
the church which was to be fed with the  
bread of life to the end of time.

**14.]** On **the prophet** see note on ch. i. 21,—  
“*Art thou the prophet*?”

**15.]** After  
such a recognition, nothing was wanting  
but that the multitudes who were journeying to the Passover should take Jesus  
with them, and proclaim Him king of the  
Jews in the holy City itself.

The  
other three Evangelists, while they do not  
give any intimation of this reason of our  
Lord’s withdrawal, relate the *fact*, and St.  
Luke preserves in the very next verse *a  
trace of its motive*,—by the question