

October 4

Jesus saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. Mat. 4:19

ALL of life's affairs will teach us lessons profitable throughout its future, if we will receive them. Perhaps there was something peculiarly helpful in the fishing business--something peculiarly like the great

(Mat 4:18-20 KJV) "And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. (19) And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. (20) And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him."

R1521 "THE TWELVE APOSTLES THEIR CALLING, OFFICE AND AUTHORITY..."

Concerning this choice of the twelve, we learn that, while under various circumstances the Lord called each individually to forsake all and follow him, which they promptly did, (See Matt. 4:17-22; Mark 1:16-20; 3:13-19; Luke 5:9-11) there was also a special occasion upon which he dedicated them to their office as apostles... (Luke 6:12,13). Thus the twelve were marked as a distinct and separate class among the Lord's disciples. *Verse 17* also makes the distinction very clear between these twelve and the other disciples.

The other disciples, not so chosen, were also beloved of the Lord, and were doubtless in full sympathy with this appointment, recognizing it as in the interests of the work in general."

R5554 "The expression, "fishers of men," suggests many good features illustrative of the work of the Gospel Age..."

We are not to think of this comparison as perfectly representing this matter--but it has an illustrative power to be made useful in this connection. We do not really catch men as a fisherman catches a fish. The fisherman does the fish more or less harm in taking it out of the water, whether with a hook and line or with a drag-net; and those fish which are brought up in the drag-net are not honored in any manner. Our Lord used this illustration merely to represent how the Gospel fishing was to be done. His followers were to fish for men for the Kingdom--not to do them violence, but to do them good."

R3721 "Not all are called to an open, public ministry, devoting all of time, talent, effort and interest to the Gospel message. The majority of the called the Lord evidently intends to instruct as his disciples while they are about their ordinary business, the duties and responsibilities of life.

With these, however, it is necessary that there be a forsaking of boats and fishing tackle, etc., in the heart from the moment that a full consecration is made to the Lord. We cannot serve God and Mammon. We cannot have two objects in life, both equally prominent to our attention. The Lord will not have it so with those who are to be his joint-heirs in the Kingdom. This class must appreciate the privilege of fellowship in his labor, sufferings and hopes of glory to such an extent that their hearts will no longer be in the ordinary affairs of life, their ambitions will no longer be for wealth or name

work in which the apostles were to engage the remainder of their lives. Our Lord intimates this in His call. Fishing requires energy, tact, proper bait and that the fisherman keep himself out of sight. And these four things are requisites in the spiritual fishing in which the Lord privileges us to engage. We are to remember that as fish are easily

or fame from the world's standpoint. All such ambitions and hopes we must "for-sake" if we would be his disciples...

If we do not choose the Lord and his service and place these first before our hearts' affections, we will be counted as placing the others first--the interests of the natural man; and the Lord's appreciation of us and the reward he will give us will correspond. He has indeed blessings for all the families of the earth, but the special blessing presented in the exceeding great and precious promises of glory, honor and immortality are for those who love him supremely, more than they love houses or lands, business or wealth, family or kindred or self.

R874 "The heart's treasure is that for which we would and do make the *greatest* sacrifices of time, strength, convenience, etc..."

What you sacrifice most for, *becomes* your treasure. That which costs us most and which we give most for, we love most, and thus it is proved to be our treasure."

R3721 "Our exhortation to all who have forsaken all to follow the Lord is that we do not look back, that we estimate that we have made the grandest bargain imaginable, that we are in the way for obtaining the grandest prize imaginable, together with association with our Lord in his wonderful work and with the divine approval."

FOOTSTEP FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

(Rev 14:1-4 KJV) "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads...(4)...These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

R5446 "CHRISTLIKENESS THE EVIDENCE OF SONSHIP "*He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.*"--1 John 2:6..."

PROFESSION ALONE INSUFFICIENT

Many have made a profession of being members of the Body of Christ who do not give evidence of being His. Our text says that any one who professes to be in Christ ought so to walk even as the Master walked. And how did the Master walk? He lived daily in harmony with the will of the Heavenly Father. He was fully submissive to the Father's will. And this meant sacrifice unto death-- the cruel death of the cross.

Whoever has our Lord's spirit, and is controlled by the same will, is a member of the Body of Christ, and will seek to walk after this fashion, to do the will of God in all things. This will mean a walk of holiness, of full devotion to God, and of opposition to sin... We are not to trust to our impressions, our own conceptions of what is right and

alarmed when they find that any one wishes to take them, so humanity is shy of being captured by anything--especially if they have the least suspicion that they may lose their liberties: and thus consecration appears to the world. Z.'04-26,27 R3308:3

advantageous, as many others do; but the Word of the Lord is to abide in us, and to govern our lives. Jesus said, "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me"--"everything written in the Book." And so it is to be with us. We must abide in Him, walk in Him, and be willing to do "everything written in the Book"--not merely forcing ourselves to it, saying, I *will* take this course; but saying, "I *delight* to do Thy will, O my God; Thy law is written in my heart."--Psa. 40:7,8.

(1 John 2:5-6 KJV) "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. (6) He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

R1802 "We all desire to be more spiritual-minded; but how can we? Answer: By feeding constantly on the Word, and by following closely in Christ's footsteps. (1 John 2:6; 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:22; Acts 10:38)... JAMES A. WEST"

R2648 "Whosoever keepeth his word [loves the word of God, and takes pleasure not in turning, twisting and endeavoring to avoid the force of that Word, but who keepeth or cherisheth it, loveth it, and seeketh to conform thereto] in him verily is the love of God perfected."--1 John 2:5."

R1707 "*If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.*"--John 12:26.

The idea of service is one which is becoming more and more obnoxious to the minds of all classes of people. Both nations and individuals seem permeated with such a spirit of antagonism that their service one to another is only that which self-interest demands, and is generally rendered grudgingly and stintedly, the understood motto being--The least possible service for the largest compensation.

But the very reverse of this is the spirit of Christ, whose pleasure it was, in the execution of God's plan of salvation and blessing, to render the greatest possible service without money and without price--making himself a living sacrifice, not receiving even the thanks, but, on the contrary, the reproaches, of those he served. "If any man serve me, let him follow me," he says. To serve Christ is to enlist under his captaincy in the very service to which he devoted all his energies, even unto death--the service of mankind along the exact lines of the divine plan. Therefore he refers us to his own sacrificing service. He does not say, *Go* in yonder way of humiliation and self-sacrificing service; but he says, *Come, follow*, where I have led the way! I have not despised humble service, and the servant is not greater than his Lord. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart." A proud spirit cannot

follow Christ. The current of thought and feeling must be changed to that of meekness, gentleness and love. The proud, haughty spirit must be converted, and with that conversion will come rest, peace and joy in following the Master's footsteps of faithful, untiring and self-sacrificing service...

"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be." The reward of a close following of the Lord--partaking of his spirit and entering heartily and self-sacrificingly into his service--is the sharing in due time in his glory and kingdom. "If any man serve me, him will my Father honor." "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

(Luke 14:27-30 KJV) "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. (28) For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? (29) Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, (30) Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

Mat 10:36-39 KJV And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household. (37) He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. (39) He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

R5425 "THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP -- LUKE 14:25-35 -- "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it."--Matthew 16:25...

The disciples were invited to become joint-heirs with Jesus in His Kingdom, that they might sit with Him in His Throne and participate with Him in His great work of human uplift--Restitution of all that was lost in Adam and redeemed at Calvary. He told them plainly that only through much tribulation would they be able to enter the Kingdom class; that the tribulations would prove their love of righteousness, their loyalty to God; and that God had purposely made the way so narrow that only the few, the very choicest of humanity in God's sight, could find it--a very few walking in that way to its further end of glory, honor and immortality.

With this view clearly before our mind's eye, there is a reasonableness in the hard terms of discipleship. Only those willing to comply with such terms, and thus to demonstrate their love and loyalty to God, could properly be entrusted with the great power, glory and honor which will be granted to the Kingdom class, in association with the Redeemer, as soon as it shall have been completed. Let us examine these words carefully, meanwhile measuring ourselves--not our flesh, but our spirit, our intentions, our desires...

"He that loveth father or mother *more than Me* is not worthy of Me." The word *hate* is apparently used in contrast with love. To be a disciple of Christ, then, means that we must love supremely the Lord and the principles for which He stands, so that love for others would comparatively be hatred.

This proposition in its very start signifies a cutting-off --so far as the man is concerned, the will, the purpose --of every other love that would conflict with our love for the Lord and with our obedience to His will. Our earthly loves are to be counted as nothing in comparison. We are to be ready to sacrifice at the Lord's command every earthly hope, aim, object, and to lay down our lives willingly, gladly. Such as manifest a devotion of this kind can be trusted with anything. Of these the Lord speaks, saying prophetically, "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord, in that Day when I (come to) make up My Jewels."--Malachi 3:17.

The fact that Jesus was of this character Himself, and placed the Father's will above all other considerations, is an assurance that all amongst His joint-heirs in the Kingdom will have the same mind, the same spirit. He assures us that the Kingdom will not be a selfish one, but the very reverse. The kings and princes and judges of that Kingdom will be not only irresistible in power, but incorruptible, unbearably. With them the Divine standard will be first, in the absolute sense...

"As He was, so are we in this world"--ostracized, misunderstood; reprov'd, slandered. Only those who can stand such an experience can be winners of the crown to which Jesus referred, saying, To him that overcometh I will give a crown of life, and permit him to sit with Me in My Throne.

Who is sufficient for these things? asks the Apostle. And he furnishes the answer: "Our sufficiency is of God"; and in the promises--"My grace is sufficient for thee; My strength is made perfect in weakness"; and again, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

(Mat 16:24-25 KJV) "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (25) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

HG622 "The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." 1Cor. 1:18

It is very remarkable that the Cross, which symbolized the most ignominious form of capital punishment under the laws of the Roman Empire, should be the symbol of Christianity... Was not this anticipated in the Divine prophecy which declared, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" -- a cross? And did not our Lord Jesus use this very word Cross with a proper figurative signification considerably in advance of his own crucifixion, saying, "If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me." Matt. 16:24

Evidently the Cross, the shame of the Cross, the ignominy of the Cross, the ordeal pictured by the Cross, were foreordained picture-lessons--lessons of the self-denial and sacrifice expected not only for Messiah, but for all those who would be associated with him as his "Bride" class, "members of his Body," his "Royal Priesthood," his "Peculiar People," his "Holy Nation."

R2616 "The Apostle mentions some of these crosses, and declares that the endurance of them are marks of his faithfulness as

a servant of the Lord: "In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings," by dishonor, by evil report, as deceivers and yet true, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things. (2 Cor. 6:4-10) How much our Master knew of being counted a deceiver, while yet he was the true one, of being called Beelzebub, while really the Prince of light! What a cross it must have been to endure such slanderous misrepresentations, and contradictions of sinners against himself; and how faithfully he bore the cross. And shall not all of his followers expect to similarly share this cross with him, and be misunderstood, misrepresented, misjudged, by those who are more or less blinded by the Adversary! Such dishonor, such evil reports, are amongst the things which our Lord specifically declared would be a part of our cross-bearing when he said, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad (in all such cross-bearings), for great is your reward in heaven."

In a word, our Lord calls upon his disciples to follow him, in direct opposition to the world-current. He declares that the disciple must not expect to be above his Lord in being spared such experiences, but promises great rewards at the end of the journey--life eternal, with exceeding glory.

R2615 "SELF-DENIAL AND CROSS-BEARING CONDITION "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me [be my follower], let him deny himself, and take up his cross." Matt. 16:24...

But now we come back to the original proposition of our text, and inquire particularly respecting the declared terms of discipleship, What do they signify, and how do they apply to us individually in our daily lives? What is it for us to deny ourselves? It signifies that having consecrated ourselves to the Lord we should have no wills of our own; self should be ignored, or, as the Apostle Paul expresses it, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." "Reckon ye yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." Self-denial, then, means to ignore self-will, self-gratification: and this includes all the earthly ambitions and desires, the sinful, and no less those that are laudable and proper. We pledge ourselves at the very beginning that we are not following our own inclinations and our own wills, but are to be wholly subject to the will of our Head, the Lord Jesus...

Cross-bearing is closely related to self-denial, and yet a distinction between them may be noted. Self-denial relates more particularly to passive obedience and endurance for the Lord's sake; cross-bearing relates more particularly to activities in the Lord's service, which we find to be contrary to our natural inclinations. Faithfulness in self-denial means courage and zeal; cross-bearing means victory, overcoming. Our self-denials may be victories gained in our own hearts, of which others may know nothing, and of which they should know nothing, if we desire to have the fulness of the Lord's blessing, for we are to make sure that we do not deny ourselves to be seen of

men, but merely for the Lord's approval. Our cross-bearings, however, may be seen, to some extent at least, by those who are in close contact with us, and especially by those who are walking in the same "narrow way."

R3237 "Our Lord's sentiments were, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." (*Psa. 40:8*)... Let us see this clearly, and if there is anything lacking in respect to the sacrifice of our wills let us give it our first attention. He who has completely sacrificed his will to the Lord's will has gained the victory at the start which will make all the remainder of the "narrow way" comparatively easy. He who has merely hacked and mutilated his will instead of killing it outright, will find extra difficulty at every step of his journey, and can never gain the victory until he has finished the sacrifice which he imperfectly began.

IN WHAT DOES CROSS-BEARING CONSIST?

...It is a pleasure for us to do the Father's will—no cross about that. We delight not only to consecrate our wills, but the Lord's law of righteousness is in our hearts to such an extent that we delight to serve the right, the Truth. Our cross-bearing comes when we find that the Truth, so beautiful to us, so charming, is hated by others and draws upon us their anger, malice, hatred, as the same truths drew the same opposition upon our Master. Our faithfulness in cross-bearing consists in our willingness to stand

up for the Truth and for every principle of righteousness;—meekly, humbly, yet firmly, speaking the truth in love, no matter what the cost of friendships broken or enmities enkindled, or evil words spoken against us falsely for the Truth's sake...

CROSS-BEARERS MUST BATTLE WITH THE FLESH, ALSO

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." (1 John 2:6)...

This, however, does not mean that he either should or could, in an imperfect body, walk up to all the perfection of his Lord, who even in the flesh was perfect. It means just what it says, that we should walk as he walked—in the same way, in the same direction, toward the same mark and standard that he recognized and established. The Apostle Paul gives us a suggestion along this line, very helpful when rightly understood. His words are, "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:4) To walk after the flesh is to walk after sin—to knowingly, willingly, intentionally, do those things which we recognize to be contrary to the divine will, even though we should not go to the extreme of wickedness. So, likewise, to walk after the Spirit does not mean to walk up to the standard of the Spirit, which would be impossible for us who were born in sin, shapen in iniquity, and thus blemished by sin according to the flesh. As "New Creatures" we are living in the earthly tabernacle, which is imperfect; and so long as we are thus limited, we cannot do all that

we would. As "New Creatures," begotten of the holy Spirit, we desire to do perfectly. We desire that every thought, word and act should be perfect in the sight of our heavenly Father...

It is because we could not walk up to the Spirit, up to the perfect standard of the divine requirement, that God has mercifully provided an arrangement of *grace* on our behalf. By this grace, those who start as members of the body of Christ, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus—to walk henceforth not *after the flesh*, but on the contrary to walk *after the Spirit*, and as nearly as possible up to the Spirit's requirements—have their deficiencies made up for them by their Redeemer's meritorious sacrifice...

It is for this reason that we are told that we are reckonedly justified—"justified by faith." Mark now the words of the Apostle, "Where sin abounded, there did grace so much more abound." He here expresses a general principle of the divine arrangement. Those hearing the invitation in this present time, and desiring to accept God's grace and call, are all thus put on an equality: he who has little character with many weaknesses and imperfections, has accredited to him of the Lord's grace and merit proportionately; he who has more of character naturally and who needs, therefore, less of grace, gets also according to his needs. But let it be clearly noted that there is "none righteous, no, not one"—none who can come up to the divine standard. All need to have the Lord's merit imputed to them."

R3307 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)

FISHERS OF MEN

--LUKE 5:1-11.--JAN. 31.--

Golden Text:--"If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed."--John 8:31.

CAPERNAUM lay near the shore of the Sea of Galilee, a beautiful little lake of world-wide honor and distinction because of our Lord's association with it, and well stocked with fish, as we may judge from this lesson. It was to this lake shore near Capernaum that Jesus came after his rejection at Nazareth. He had a different reception here: the people pressed upon him to hear of the word of the Lord, and for convenience to himself and to them Jesus got into the fishing boat belonging to Simon Peter, that he might from the boat more effectually address the people, who doubtless sat or stood on the shore.

We are inclined to wonder frequently that more of our Lord's discourses have not been preserved for us in the Gospel accounts. What we have are fragmentary, the sermon on the Mount being the principal one. As for the other references to Jesus' preaching, they are merely brief extracts--his parables and dark sayings. As an illustration of the latter, note his declaration that he was the bread that came down from heaven, of which if a man eat he should never die. Many of those who heard said, This is a hard saying, and walked no more with him. Our chief instruction in the great doctrines of the Gospel--respecting the ransom, our justification through faith in the precious blood, our adoption, begetting, resurrection, and the difference between the First Resurrection and that of others subsequently, etc., --comes to us through the epistles of the apostles and through the record of their discourses as given in the book of Acts.

At first we would be inclined to wonder why this should be so, why we should not get our chief instruction on matters pertaining to the future life and godliness from the words of our Lord. But we understand the matter clearly since we discern that it was necessary that our Lord should pay the ransom price before any of our race could be adopted by the Father and receive the spirit of adoption. This explains the whole situation; for without the spirit of adoption we could not understand spiritual things, and consequently the things of a heavenly character which Jesus declared were parables and dark sayings to those of his time who heard them; for instance, his discourse on the new birth to Nicodemus, who could not understand. Our Lord remarked in this connection the fact that he taught

merely earthly things and not heavenly things, saying, "If I have told you earthly things and you understood not, how would you understand if I should tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12) Seeing that his hearers were not prepared to understand the heavenly things, our Lord gave his attention chiefly to discourses on earthly things, and to parables and dark sayings, which the Spirit would subsequently make known to his faithful ones.

THE NATURAL MAN APPRECIATES NOT SPIRITUAL THINGS

This gives us a larger view of our Lord's ministry: first, teaching the natural man such things as the natural man could understand; secondly, healing the natural man's ailments, and thus laying a broad foundation for the spiritual work which he would begin at Pentecost and carry out during this Gospel age through his representatives the apostles, and those who should believe on him through their word. Throughout this Gospel age the Lord himself has been the teacher of the Church, which is "his body"--"his brethren": he has been attending to every feature of our instruction, feeding us upon the Truth -- "things new and old." He is still the instructor, and whatever we receive through the apostles is merely his message through them and not their own messages. And whoever now speaks in the Lord's name is authorized to speak merely as a representative and ambassador, who must refer for his authority back to the words of the Lord himself, or to the words of those whom he inspired or directed in a plenary manner--the twelve apostles, Paul taking the place of Judas.

Our Lord had been probably a year engaged in preaching, first in Judea, and latterly in Galilee, at the time this lesson opens. He was evidently already acquainted with these fishermen mentioned in our lesson, Peter, Andrew, James and John. It was probably at an earlier interview that our Lord gave Simon his surname of Peter, as it occurs in this lesson. These fishermen had probably met with Jesus and heard his preaching on other occasions, and were his disciples in a general sense of the word--that is, followers of him, believers on him, advocates of his teachings. Now, however, the time had come for our Lord's selection of the twelve apostles who should be with him continually and see his miracles and hear his teachings and

be witnesses of all things said and done: and they in turn might in due time serve as his special representatives and be able to give to us, and to all of his subsequent followers accurate and truthful records of the principal events of his ministry.

After preaching to the company on the shore from his seat in the boat, Jesus proposed to Simon and Andrew, the owners of the boat, that the boat be taken into deeper waters and the nets cast for fish; but Peter informed the Lord that this would be useless as the day was unfavorable, or for some reason the fish were not in that quarter of the lake at that time, for he and his companions had toiled all night and caught nothing. Nevertheless, to please the Lord, they did as he suggested. As they began to gather in the net they found it to be heavily laden with fish, more than their boat could hold. Their partners in the other boat were beckoned to, and gave a helping hand to save some of the fish. The lesson had its designed effect; Simon Peter at once fell on his knees before the Lord, recognizing that no ordinary human being could have produced such results under such circumstances.

THE LORD LOVES ZEAL AND ENERGY

There is something very noble about Simon Peter: his impulsiveness by itself is an attractive trait. The zeal and energy with which he was disposed to take hold of any matter considered worthy of his attention is admirable. Indeed we know that Peter, James and John were the three whom the Lord specially loved of the twelve--the three who seemed to have the zeal, energy and vim which the Lord appreciates. They were practical illustrations of the admonition, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Peter's words to the Lord, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man," represented his acknowledgment of the great difference between himself and the Master. He caught the true situation, that he was a sinful, imperfect man, while the one before him, the Master, was perfect and in full accord with the Father, and therefore permitted to be the dispenser of the Father's mercies.

Peter's real sentiment was probably the reverse of his expression. He meant, "O Lord, although I am a sinful man, permit me to be near thee, that I may be blessed by contact with thee." This was the proper attitude of heart and the real prayer, which Jesus answered in making him one of his chosen twelve.

The narrative breaks off suddenly and does not tell us whether it was the same hour or the next day that Peter, Andrew, James and John forsook their fishing business--their boats and nets--that they might be specially the companions of our Lord and ultimately his representatives, his apostles. We may reasonably suppose that the partnerships in this fishing business were family affairs, and that Peter left his boat and implements in the hands of brothers or sons or other partners or associates; and that likewise the sons of Zebedee left their paraphernalia in the hands of their father or others who had previously been interested with them in business. Indeed this thought is fully borne out by the fact that after our Lord's death, about two years later, these same men proposed returning to the fishing business, and apparently had some interest still in the boats, nets, tackle, etc. It was on the last-mentioned occasion that Jesus again gave a great draft of fishes, and that Simon Peter was the first again to recognize that the power to perform such a miracle could belong to no other than the crucified but risen Lord, whom he then recognized as the one upon the shore.

CALLED TO A HIGHER VOCATION

Our Lord's words to Peter were, "From henceforth thou shalt catch men." These words were applicable also to Peter's associates, and doubtless were applied to them later as an invitation that they should with Peter join the Lord as his disciples or apostles. The account in Mark 1:17 mentions Andrew the brother of Simon Peter, and his partner in business also, and gives the invitation in slightly different language, namely, "Come ye after me and I will make you to become fishers of men." Probably the Lord made use of both expressions, but in any event they are of similar import.

^[1] All of life's affairs will teach us lessons profitable throughout its future, if we will receive them. Ordinary affairs and business of every kind, in proportion as it is conducted along honest, proper and reasonable lines, will give valuable instruction and preparation for spiritual usefulness in the Lord's service, if they be properly received and wisely improved. Perhaps, however, there was something peculiarly helpful in the fishing business-- something peculiarly like the great work in which the apostles were to engage the remainder of their lives. Our Lord intimates this in his call. Fishing requires energy, tact, proper bait, and that the fisherman keep himself out of

sight. And these four things are requisites in the spiritual fishing in which the Lord privileges us to engage. Thus he admonished, "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves." The Apostle Paul, speaking along this same line of the wisdom he used in presenting the Gospel tactfully, says, "Being crafty [wise] I took you with guile"--with bait. The Apostle took advantage of the natural tendencies and inclinations of his hearers to present the Gospel in the most practical form without, however, shunning or refusing to declare one single feature of it. In this his course is a model for us. We are to remember that as fish are easily alarmed when they find that any one wishes to take them, so humanity is shy of being captured by anything--especially if they have the least suspicion that they may lose their liberties: and thus consecration appears to the world.

The apostles were not, as fishers for men, representing men or human institutions. They were not trying to get disciples into some sectarian bondage. They were fishers of men for the Lord and as the Lord's representatives; as though God did beseech men through them. Their mission was to catch men with the glorious hopes and prospects of the Gospel; to bring them into such relationship with the Lord that they would fully and gladly surrender their all to him. And this is the same course that is properly before the Lord's representatives to-day. We are to catch men for the Lord and for his service, not for our personal profit or gain--not for sectarian upbuilding. We are not to give our own liberties to men, nor to seek to take away the liberties of others at the behest of men or sects. The message that goes forth from the true fishers of men whom the Lord commissions is nevertheless a message which implies a loss of liberty and a loss of life to those who are successfully caught. However, the fishing business does not fully illustrate the matter, because all who are of the Lord's catch must be willingly his, else they will not remain caught, but be cast forth: and their loss of personal liberty and life means a gain of glory, honor and eternal life.

Our Lord used this fishing business as the basis of one of his parables, saying that the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a net cast into the sea which after gathering fish of every kind will be finally brought to shore. That net undoubtedly represented this Gospel age, and a general catch of all classes of people, suitable and unsuitable for the Lord's purpose as respects the Kingdom. The bringing of the net to the shore properly represents the "harvest" time of this age--the reckoning time, the time when this catch is concluded. The parable proceeds to say that the suitable fish were gathered into baskets and the unsuitable were cast away--cast back into the sea. So the Gospel call, the Gospel net, the Gospel fishermen of this Gospel age are gathering out of the world of mankind a peculiar class of people suitable to the Lord's purposes in the Kingdom, and though others may get into it they are not desired and will relapse again to worldly conditions. The fishing of the next age will be different and on a much larger scale.

APOSTLESHIP MORE THAN DISCIPLESHIP

There is a difference between apostleship and discipleship. There are but "twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:14), but the number of disciples is considerably larger. The word disciple signifies pupil or learner; and all who are now being called of the Lord, all who are now being caught as acceptable fish under the present arrangement are those who desire to be taught of the Lord and willingly respond to his teachings. Our Golden Text sets forth the conditions upon which we may be disciples, namely, that we not only accept the Lord but that we continue in his word--continue to be taught of him--continue to learn in the school of Christ. Before we enter his school we must learn that we are sinners by nature and that we need just the washing or the cleansing that he prescribes as necessary before we can enter his school or become his disciples. After we accept the word of counsel respecting the need of washing in the precious blood, and after by faith accomplishing this cleansing of sins, and after we have started as pupils, we find that there are various lessons to be learned, all necessary to our progress.

It is the Teacher who is to be the decider of what lessons we need, what experiences, what trials, what difficulties, what encouragements, what assistance are necessary to us. The promise is, that no good thing will he withhold. He will give the warnings, the corrections, the encouragements, the blessings and the promises, according as we need them and are in a condition to make profitable use of them. Not everyone who starts to be a disciple will win the great prize as a graduate from the school of Christ into the Kingdom of glory and joint-heirship with the Master; but he who faithfully and patiently continues in discipleship--continues to learn the lessons which the great Master teaches, until he shall have finished his course, will surely receive his crown at the hands of the Lord.

^[1] Oct. 4 Manna, Mat. 4:19