

FISHERS OF MEN

“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

-Matthew 4:19

The First Disciples

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 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. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.”

-Matthew 4:17–20

A Broadening Work

“Upon all who are engaged in the Lord's work rests the responsibility of fulfilling the commission: ‘Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.’ Matthew 28:19, 20.”

- Counsels on Health 316.3

“Christ Himself has given us an example of how we are to work. Read the fourth chapter of Matthew, and learn what methods Christ, the Prince of life, followed in His teaching. “Leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the seacoast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.” (Matthew 4:13-16.)”

- Counsels on Health, p. 316.4

“These humble fishermen were Christ's first disciples. He did not say that they were to receive a certain sum for their services. They were to share with Him His self-denial and sacrifices.”

-Counsels on Health, p. 317.2,3

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

“And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them.”

- Matthew 4:23, 24.

Combined Teaching and Healing

“The Lord's people are to be one. There is to be no separation in His work. Christ sent out the twelve apostles and afterward the seventy disciples to preach the gospel and to heal the sick. (Matthew 10:7, 8.) And as they went forth preaching the kingdom of God, power was given them to heal the sick and cast out evil spirits. In God's work teaching and healing are never to be separated.”

- Testimonies for the Church vol. 8, p.165.1

“In every sense of the word Christ was a medical missionary. He came to this world to preach the gospel and to heal the sick. He came as a healer of the bodies as well as the souls of human beings. His message was that obedience to the laws of the kingdom of God would bring men and women health and prosperity...”

- Counsels on Health 317.4

“Christ might have occupied the highest place among the highest teachers of the Jewish nation. But He chose rather to take the gospel to the poor. He went from place to place, that those in the highways and byways might catch the words of the gospel of truth. He labored in the way in which He desires His workers to labor today. By the sea, on the mountainside, in the streets of the city, His voice was heard, explaining the Old Testament Scriptures. So unlike the explanation of the scribes and Pharisees was His explanation that the attention of the people was arrested. He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes. With clearness and power He proclaimed the gospel message.”

- Counsels on Health, p. 318.1

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

“But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:”

- Malachi 3:1, 2

“And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

“Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.”

- Malachi 3:3, 4

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

“Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Testimony of John The Baptist about Jesus

- John 3:11;12

“Never was there such an evangelist as Christ. He was the Majesty of heaven, but He humbled Himself to take our nature that He might meet men where they were. To all people, rich and poor, free and bond, Christ, the Messenger of the Covenant, brought the tidings of salvation. How the people flocked to Him! From far and near they came for healing, and He healed them all. His fame as the Great Healer spread throughout Palestine, from Jerusalem to Syria. The sick came to the places through which they thought He would pass, that they might call on Him for help, and He healed them of their diseases.”

- Counsels on Health, p. 318.2

“Hither, too, came the rich, anxious to hear His words and to receive a touch of His hand. Thus He went from city to city, from town to town, preaching the gospel and healing the sick—the King of glory in the lowly garb of humanity. “Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty might be rich.”

- 2 Corinthians 8:9

“The most complete illustration of Christ's methods as a teacher is found in His training of the twelve first disciples. Upon these men were to rest weighty responsibilities. He had chosen them as men whom He could imbue with His Spirit, and who could be fitted to carry forward His work on earth when He should leave it. To them, above all others, He gave the advantage of His own companionship. Through personal association He impressed Himself upon these chosen collaborators. “The Life was manifested,” says John the beloved, “and we have seen it, and bear witness.” 1 John 1:2.”

- Education, p. 84.1

“The first pupils of Jesus were chosen from the ranks of the common people. They were humble, unlettered men, these fishers of Galilee; men unschooled in the learning and customs of the rabbis, but trained by the stern discipline of toil and hardship. They were men of native ability and of teachable spirit; men who could be instructed and molded for the Saviour's work. In the common walks of life there is many a toiler patiently treading the round of his daily tasks, unconscious of latent powers that, roused to action, would place him among the world's great leaders. Such were the men who were called by the Saviour to be His colaborers. And they had the advantage of three years' training by the greatest educator this world has ever known.”

- Education, p. 85.2

“In order successfully to carry forward the work to which they had been called, these disciples, differing so widely in natural characteristics, in training, and in habits of life, needed to come into unity of feeling, thought, and action. This unity it was Christ's object to secure. To this end He sought to bring them into unity with Himself. The burden of His labor for them is expressed in His prayer to the Father, “that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: ... that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.” John 17:21-23.”

- Education, p. 86.1.

“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us,
because he hath given us of his Spirit.

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the
Son to be the Saviour of the world.”

- 1 John 4:13,14

“And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

“And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

“And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.”

- Matthew 4:20–22

The Field is the World

“The prompt, unquestioning obedience of these men, with no promise of wages, seems remarkable; but the words of Christ were an invitation that carried with it an impelling power. Christ would make these humble fishermen, in connection with Himself, the means of taking men out of the service of Satan, and placing them in the service of God. In this work they would become his witnesses, bearing to the world His truth unmingled with the traditions and sophistries of men. By practicing His virtues, by walking and working with Him, they were to be qualified to be fishers of men.”

- Gospel Workers, p. 24.2

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

- Matthew 11:29, 30

[Christ said ,His Yoke is easy. To contrast the laws of the Pharisees, which was a Veritable “ Yoke” yet even Christ's commands must be submitted to, though easier to be kept.]

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

“Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

“There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?”

- James 4:10–12

“Thus were the first disciples appointed to the work of the gospel ministry. For three years they labored in connection with the Saviour, and by His teaching, His works of healing, His example, they were prepared to carry on the work that He began. By the simplicity of faith, by pure, humble service, the disciples were taught to carry responsibilities in God's cause.”

- Gospel Workers, p. 24.3

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

-1 John 3:3; 5:4

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:”

-1 Timothy 1:5

“There are lessons for us to learn from the experience of the apostles. These men were as true as steel to principle. They were men who would not fail nor be discouraged. They were full of reverence and zeal for God, full of noble purposes and aspirations. They were by nature as weak and helpless as any of those now engaged in the work, but they put their whole trust in the Lord. Wealth they had, but it consisted of mind and soul culture; and this every one may have who will make God first and last and best in everything. They toiled long to learn the lessons given them in the school of Christ, and they did not toil in vain. They bound themselves up with the mightiest of all powers, and were ever longing for a deeper, higher, broader comprehension of eternal realities, that they might successfully present the treasures of truth to a needy world.”

- Gospel Workers, p. 25.1

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

- Matthew 5:17–19

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

“He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

“Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.”

- 1 Timothy 6:3–5

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

- Matthew 5:20

Christ taught with authority. The sermon on the mount is a wonderful production, yet so simple that a child can study it without being misled. The mount of beatitudes is an emblem of the high elevation on which Christ ever stood. He spoke with an authority which was exclusively His own. Every sentence He uttered came from God. He was the Word and the Wisdom of God, and He ever presented truth with the authority of God. “The words that I speak unto you,” He said, “they are spirit and they are life.”

- Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 407.2

“In the precepts of His holy law, God has given a perfect rule of life; and He has declared that until the close of time this law, unchanged in a single jot or tittle, is to maintain its claim upon human beings. Christ came to magnify the law and make it honorable. He showed that it is based upon the broad foundation of love to God and love to man, and that obedience to its precepts comprises the whole duty of man. In His own life He gave an example of obedience to the law of God. In the Sermon on the Mount He showed how its requirements extend beyond the outward acts and take cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

- Acts of The Apostles, p. 505.1

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”

- Titus 2:11–15

“It was Christ who spoke the law on Mount Sinai, and He knew the bearing of all its precepts, the glory and majesty of the law of heaven. In His sermon on the mount, Christ defines the law, and seeks to inculcate in the minds of His hearers the far-reaching claims of the precepts of Jehovah. **His instructions** came as a new revelation to the people; and the teachers of the law, the scribes and the Pharisees, as well as the common people, were astonished at His doctrine. The words of Christ were not new, and yet they came with the force of revelation; for they presented the truth in its proper light, and not in the light in which the teachers had set it before the people...”

“He showed no regard for the traditions and commandments of men, but opened the eyes of their understanding to behold wondrous things out of the law of God, which is the foundation of His throne from the beginning of the world; and as long as the heavens and the earth remain, through the ceaseless ages of eternity, it will be the great standard of righteousness, holy and just and good.”

- Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 237.1

“Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

“He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.”

- John 7:16–18

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

“Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

“Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

“Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

- Matthew 7:15–20

“Christ came to our world as the good Shepherd, to go into the wilderness to seek for the lost sheep. Here were His first disciples, called to leave their fishing boats and follow Him, to learn from Him how to become fishers of men. They could not receive a correct idea of the special work to be done by studying in the schools of the rabbis; nor could they learn there how to do this work. They must receive a fitness for this work in the school of the great Teacher, under His special supervision.”

- 20 LT., MS., p. 128 1905 par. 4

“Laying aside His royal robe and kingly crown, Christ came to this world as a man, to live among men a life free from spot or stain of sin, and thus to demonstrate that human beings may meet and resist the enemy, refusing to be led into sin. Every provision has been made for men and women to become sons and daughters of God, victorious over the power of darkness.”

- 2O LT., MS., p. 128 1905, par.5

“It is those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement who receive the benefits of His mediation in their behalf, while those who reject the light which brings to view this work of ministration are not benefited thereby.

The Jews who rejected the light given at Christ's first advent, and refused to believe on Him as the Saviour of the world, could not receive pardon through Him. When Jesus at His ascension entered by His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary to shed upon His disciples the blessings of His mediation, the Jews were left in total darkness to continue their useless sacrifices and offerings. The ministration of types and shadows had ceased...”

“The condition of the unbelieving Jews illustrates the condition of the careless and unbelieving among professed Christians, who are willingly ignorant of the work of our merciful High Priest. In the typical service, when the high priest entered the most holy place, all Israel were required to gather about the sanctuary and in the most solemn manner humble their souls before God, that they might receive the pardon of their sins and not be cut off from the congregation. How much more essential in this antitypical Day of Atonement that we understand the work of our High Priest and know what duties are required of us.”

Christ in His Sanctuary, p. 161.1

“And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

“I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

“As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.”

- John 17:13–18

“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

- John 17:19–21