

When they had breakfasted, He drew from Peter a confession of his love and reinstated him as His servant and apostle.

I. Love and Labor, 15-17.

V. 15. *Had dined*; Rev. Ver., "broken their fast," breakfasted. *Jesus saith to Simon Peter*. Peter had enthusiastically abandoned his boat and fishing gear and hastened to Jesus on the shore (v. 7.) But his was an impulsive nature, and Jesus would question his motive and the genuineness of his love. *Simon, son of Jonas*. Jesus does not call him Peter, "the rock" (Matt. 16: 18), but Simon, his old name, which would remind him of his weakness and his sin (18: 25) and his unworthiness to be an apostle. *Lovest thou me more than these?* That is, more than these other disciples do, referring to Peter's boasted superiority in Matt. 26: 33. The words, however, may grammatically mean "more than the boat and the fishing implements and the old life," which Peter had just abandoned. In this sense it is a question of Peter's willingness to give up everything for Christ's sake. The former



FISHERMEN DRAWING THEIR NETS
From Peloubet's Notes

interpretation is probably the right one. *Thou knowest that I love thee*. Peter does not reply to the words "more than these," and knowing his short-comings, he scarcely dares appeal to his love for Jesus; but, conscious of his love, he modestly and humbly appeals to Christ's knowledge of the same. *Feed my lambs*. The word "lambs" denotes both the little ones of the flock and the disciples,

also, who, weak in the faith, needed to be carefully nourished. The giving of this responsible charge shows how completely Jesus trusted Peter.

V. 16. *The second time*. Jesus now drops the comparison implied in "more than these," but repeats the first part of the question, as though He would search Peter's love through and through. It stands the test, however, and Peter replies as before. *Feed my sheep*. The word for "feed" is not the same as in the preceding verse. There it meant "to feed, to nourish." Here it means "to shepherd," implying guidance and care, as well as feeding.

V. 17. *He saith unto him the third time*. Peter's denial was three-fold (ch. 18: 17, 25, 27) and Jesus gives him opportunity for a three-fold confession of his love. *Peter was grieved*; because Jesus seemed to doubt his love. The consciousness, too, that he had given room for doubt, stung Peter to the quick. *Lord thou knowest*, etc. He drops the "yea" of the former answer, and humbly rests his case upon the omniscience of Jesus, whose penetrating glance reads the thoughts and emotions of the heart. *Feed my sheep*. For the third time the new commission is given, thus completely restoring Peter to his former position as a trusted apostle. "Feed" here is the same word as in v. 15.

II. Suffering and Service, 18-22.

V. 18. *Verily, verily*; an emphatic way of beginning an important statement. *I say unto you*. Jesus with divine foresight sees how Peter's love is to be tried and tells him what he must pay as the price of devotion to this cause. *Thou girdedst thyself*. The long loose Oriental garment was tightened up around the waist when the wearer was starting upon a journey, or setting about some arduous work. The idea underlying the figure is that of the alertness and readiness for action, characteristic of youth. *Walkedst whither thou wouldest*. That is, as Dods interprets, "His own will was law and he felt power to carry it out." *When thou shalt be old*. The feebleness of old age is here contrasted with the vigor of youth. *Thou shalt*