

What a training for service! "Follow me," He said, "and I will make you to become fishers of men." "Take up your cross and follow me." "Learn of me." "Abide in me."

Besides this He imparted to them priceless *instructions*. He taught them the nature of His divine kingdom, His own personal character and claims, the nature of true holiness, the simplicity, spirituality and power of prayer, the excellence of humility, the essential duty and blessed results of self-sacrifice, the sin of hypocrisy and formality, the spirituality of worship, and the supremacy of the Word of God over all human traditions. He revealed to them also the future, unfolding the prospects which lay before the church, the Jewish people and the Gentile world. He revealed the advent and the work of the Comforter, to whom they were in future to look for guidance and help. It was by these instructions and influences that He fitted His disciples to be the promulgators of a pure, spiritual, universal religion, with charity as wide as the world, with consciences sensitive about sin, yet free from superstitious scruples; with habits of obedience to the divine law, though emancipated from bondage to human customs, and with characters cured of pride and passion, impatience, selfishness and self-will. Christ employed as His first ambassadors God-given, God-taught and God-sent messengers, and even these He had both sifted and trained.

Hence it is evident that the development of *spiritual life* is the great thing to be aimed at in missionary training. Woe to the church if she neglects this, or gives it a secondary place! Her messengers will be of little use, for unspiritual agents can never accomplish spiritual work. Are we not building up a spiritual temple? Must not each stone of it be a living stone, seeing the house is to be the habitation of God through the Spirit? If, then, the end in view be spiritual, so must the means and methods be—we must follow the example of Christ.

The effect of this training was to transform the men who received it. They became a wonder in the world. Men marvelled at these Galilean fishermen—ignorant and unlearned as they were in earthly things—that they should possess such spiritual light and love, such wisdom and boldness as they evinced. Men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Yes, they had *been with Jesus*. That was the secret of their power; that was the method of their training. The society of Christ was the school of their apostleship, the college in which they graduated. They had been with Jesus, and as the Father had sent Him so He sent them into the world, promising himself to be with them, and with their faithful successors even to the end of the age.

The calling, qualifying and directing of the laborers thus commenced by our Lord was afterwards continued by the Holy Ghost through the church. He sent forth missionaries unto the Gentiles. The Apostolic Church acted directly under the Spirit's guidance. "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Then the church fasted, prayed, laid their hands on those men and sent them away. That is, they set apart and sent out those whom God had qualified and called. The Lord was with these missionaries and wrought glorious things through their instrumentality.

We cannot improve on this example of the primitive church. The Acts of the Apostles form the best guide-book for missionary societies and missionaries. The impulse and the energy must always come from heaven. Successful missionaries are God-appointed men. We must pray for such; watch and wait for them; welcome them and utilize them as they are given.