

Methods for Further Research

1. The Panel, The Forum, The Round Table and Group Reports.
2. What was the primary goal of the Master's training program? Has the church added other goals?
3. How far wrong are the present-day ministerial training for the realization of the goals?
4. Compare and contrast, Fishermen and hunters.
5. Examine the character of the first five disciples and write your evaluation of them. Are they different from men today?
6. In what respects do you differ with the author on the needed equipment for effective fishing for men?
7. Have you done all you could to bring your friends to Christ?

Study III

April 20, 1952

Jesus of Nazareth

John 1:43-51

The Stigma of the Home Town

In present day street language, Nazareth "was oily and smelly." It had a bad name, an unsavory reputation and was associated with the foul, the impure and the immoral. The character of the people who live in certain areas and places usually become the reputation of the place. People give cities personalities, characters and reputations. Is this a true logical fact? Discuss in detail with illustrations to prove your point of view.

In your own city is a community with bad names. Make a list of all the places near you which have bad names. In Detroit we have "Paradise Valley," "Black Bottom," "Hasting Street," "Skid Row," "Hells Half Hole" and the like. Certain characters in certain areas spoil the name of that area. Thus Nazareth had an unsavory reputation, known far and near. What is your city or commu-

nity noted for? What is its nickname?

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" was a proverbial saying meaning that the city had fallen so low in decency and self-respect that anybody who was somebody would not dare live in it. When Philip heard that Jesus was from Nazareth, a city of questionable reputation, he jumped to an illogical conclusion that this Jesus of Nazareth was a nobody from the treatment Jesus received there (Mark 6:1-6 and Matt. 13:53-58). Read these references and discuss. Do these readings verify the bad name of Nazareth? Make this a Research Project and assign a group to bring in a report on Nazareth.

As you study Jesus of Nazareth, the men He trained, the religion which has grown out of His life, teachings and work, you will find that He was an historic figure. As

the Founder of Christianity which Paul organized, this Jesus of Nazareth can stand the test of any critical view. Fosdick in his book, "The Man from Nazareth," chapter I, A Real Man, Not a Myth, gives a list of the founders of religions. Buddhism has its Gautama; Zoroastrianism has its Zoroaster; Islam has its Mohammed; Judaism has its Moses. Mystical religions have grown around the mythical figures of Jupiter, Juno, Venus, Mars, Isis, Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Dionysus and Mithra. Their founders laid no claim to Divine Sonship. They made no claim of rising from the dead.

He was a carpenter by trade, a human being by nature, a lover of flowers and children, lived with the poor, and was treated as an orphan. He knew how to be weary, hungry and angry, yet without sin. His family called him insane; his church branded Him as an heretic; His government labelled Him a traitor. Today Christianity worships Him as the Saviour. Do you who study these studies know Him?

Who and What Was This Jesus of Nazareth?

Was he simply a good man, an idealist, a dreamer, the product of a previous age? Study what His friends said about Him; talk with His enemies about Him. Study His life, teachings, miracles, parables, philosophy of life, His attitude toward God, His views on the worth of persons and your conclusion will be with that of the officer: Never a man spoke like this man. You will say with Paul: His name is above every name.

Compare Him with all the figures of history and founders of movements. Compare His message with that of the sages. Examine the wis-

dom of what He said. You will find that He dealt with eternal values and universal principles. Trace His family tree in Matthew and Luke. The Old Testament sees Him as a Prophet, Priest and King. The gift of the Magi were in keeping with this view, gold, frankincense, myrrh. The New Testament sees him as a Preacher, Healer and Teacher. The nations think He is heaven's answer to earth's call for help. He is not a Greek legend or the fabrication of an overheated imagination. He was a person, an historic personality. The Four Gospel Writers present the perfect figure of this Jesus of Nazareth. It is His biography. The Pauline writings are interpretations of His life, works and death.

Their writings portray the national sympathies of the writers. Each seeks to interpret Jesus according to their national sympathies. Matthew wrote for the Jewish type; Mark wrote for the Roman type; Luke wrote for the Greek type; John wrote for the Alexandrian type. Each interpreted Jesus for a race. Time has shown that He is bigger than a race except the human race. In Him, humanity reaches its unity. He was and is for all mankind. Thus He must train a group of men to carry His views to all men. If He was a Galilean, in His veins were many bloods. If He was the Son of man, as Luke shows, He is related to men everywhere. He said his sisters and brothers were those who did the will of God. He satisfies the hunger of the human heart as the "Bread of life."

He was not the creation of the evangelists who wrote their brief biography. He was their Creator. He is the Absolute. He was not the product of His environment but produced an environment. This Jesus