

## "JESUS - THE MAKER OF MEN"

WE WOULD SEE JESUS. You may have noticed on the altar or the communion table in some churches, two capital letters, the one an "A" and the other a rather strange symbol not found in the English language. These two letters are ALPHA and OMEGA, the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. Their meaning is not difficult to understand; they simply say that Jesus is the "A" and the "Z" of our Christian faith. If we want to know what God is like, we look to Jesus. If we want to know what we should be like, we look to Jesus. If we want to know the meaning of life, we look to Jesus. Our faith centers in him.

Once again we have entered the season of Lent when we shall review with eyes of faith the meaning of our Lord's life and death. Men for nearly two thousand years have looked to Jesus as their ideal. Many characterizations have been made of his greatness. This morning we will see Jesus as he calls his disciples. Next Sunday we shall see Jesus as the great physician, and on the following Sunday, we shall see Jesus as the great teacher. Our faith centers in him.

WHEN SIR ISSAC NEWTON first announced to the world the Law of Gravitation, there was a man who said that he had a "deranged poetical fancy"...a polite way of saying he was close to being insane. Another critic scoffed and said, "This crazy mathematician will not have twenty followers in his lifetime". To his critics, Newton said:

"I see a man must either resolve to put out nothing new, or else be prepared to defend that which he introduces".

And so it is with any man who seeks to lead others to a new way of thinking or living. This was certainly true in the case of Jesus as he began to tell men of the way of love.

There were those who said he was a crazy man, in league with evil spirits.....

There were those who said he blasphemed....

And there were probably those who said he'd never have over twenty followers.....

Some called him a fanatic....

But inspite of what his critics said, he was no fanatic. He didn't want to fool the people for his own gain. He didn't want to make a big show. He didn't want irresponsible hangers-on. In fact, he turned away several people who came to join him in his work early in his ministry. However, Jesus did feel the need of help. Therefore he picked twelve disciples to help him.

The first disciples chosen according to the Gospel reports were the two fishermen, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother. Jesus saw them casting their nets into the Sea of Galilee. He said to them:

"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they left their nets and followed him."

In a similar straightforward manner, he called the others. Perhaps his cause appealed to some. But most of them were captured by his magnetic personality. One thing is sure - AND THAT IS THAT JESUS HELPED TO MAKE THESE MEN WHAT THEY WERE - strong, daring, courageous person! Jesus is the divine maker of men. He transformed their lives, and by the same token he can change our lives. What is there about those early disciples that has meaning for our own discipleship?