



A Surprise Commission

Lovest thou me? ... Feed my lambs. – John 21:15

Rough and ready Peter, that horny-handed old fisherman, thought he was cut out for and best fitted to be a prime minister, or secretary of state, a bishop, a colonel, or a commander; and it seems he had several disputes with the other disciples as to whether he should not be the greatest among them.

How big must have been his surprise then, when he got his commission from Jesus as a junior worker and re-ceived orders to feed the lambs! What a mighty argument he could have made to prove that he was not fitted for work with the children!

To be sure, he had at least one boy of his own, and maybe several others. But then, he was a fisherman, and the care of the children was left to his wife. In fact, he had no fitness either by nature or training for that kind of work. All his associations had been with the big, burly men of the sea, and what did he know about talking to children?

But when Jesus, with infinite knowledge and wisdom and tenderness, looked straight into his eyes and asked him that searching question, "Lovest thou me more than these?" and then in reply to Peter's answer, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," said, "Feed my lambs," what could Peter say? So Peter was first commissioned to be a junior worker.

"But," you say, "did not Jesus mean young converts when He said, 'My lambs,' and might they not be men and women who were only newly converted?" True, it is probable that Jesus meant new converts, but new converts include children, for the children are often converted too, and did not Jesus say, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"? So any way we may explain the text, we cannot escape the fact that Peter was commanded to work with and for the children. And, if Peter, why not you and me?

John 21:15; Matt. 19:14