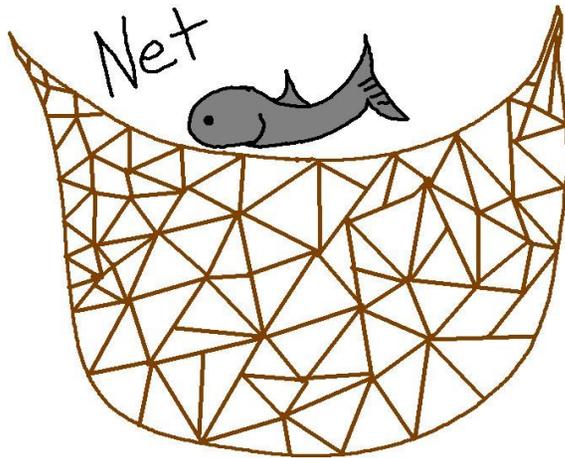


ourselves from His love by our sins and unmerciful life. He likewise forewarns us that the death of the sinner is evil and that judgment is not a scarecrow, but a reality. The Savior calls us, while it is not too late, to hasten to do good in His name, to start along the path of spiritual sobriety. To make an effort to break free from the whirlpool of every day cares. To think about the main thing, about one's soul, about the future life, about meeting the Lord.

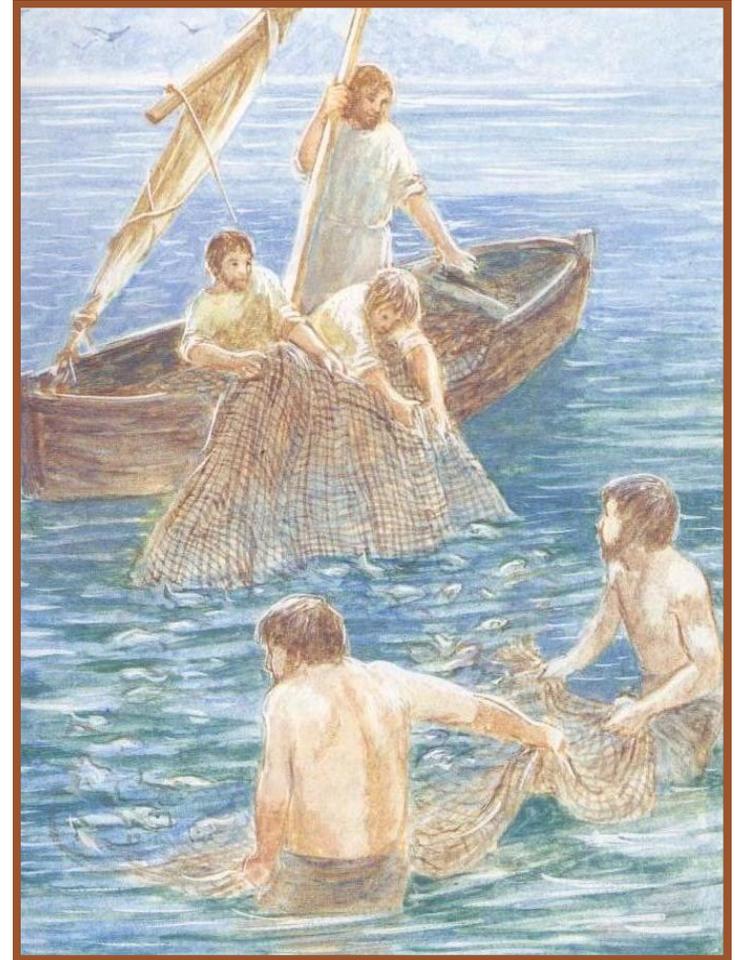
This disposition must be dominant in our soul throughout the course of our whole life. In this disposition there is nothing dark or melancholy, as some people far from the Church imagine. On the contrary, from it is born genuine, holy and pure joy, which we see in Christians who follow this path. May God grant that at the end of time, when we, according to the words of the parable of the net, are drawn to the shore of the Kingdom of Christ, we would prove to be with those who will be gathered... into vessels.

*(excerpted from: www.stjohndc.org)



PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinpire.com

The Parable of the Net



***The Savior calls us, while it is not too late,
to hasten to do good in His name,
to start along the path of spiritual sobriety.
To think about the main thing, about one's soul,
about the future life, about meeting the Lord.***

THE PARABLE OF THE NET

A parable is a short, fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle. Parables are never meant to be taken for the letter of their word. When taken literally, at face value, the entirety of its meaning is lost.

*We find the parable of the net cast into the sea in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew (Mt. 13: 47-50). The net is a symbol of the Gospel teaching, of the Apostles, those "fishers of men." The sea is the world. The fish of every kind are the human race. This parable indicates that the net, the Gospel preaching, will gather together all men without distinction, both good and evil, righteous and sinners. When the net is full an image of the end of time, then, those found in it will be divided. The good will be gathered into vessels, that is, they will be taken into the Kingdom of Heaven, while the bad will be cast away, that is, they will remain outside the Kingdom of Christ.

Between the net and God's future judgment, there is this similarity: While the fish are swimming together in the sea, it is difficult to discern their quality; but as soon as the net becomes full and is drawn to the shore, the fisherman distinguishes between the good and bad without difficulty. So also, the Church of Christ on earth (the Church Militant) consists of the most varied people of zealous Christians, who live according to God's commandments, and also of people who are negligent and simply lukewarm, that is, Christians in name only, but not in their life. While they are together, it is easy to distinguish between them according to the quality of their spiritual life. But the final, impartial judgment of God at the end of time will without fail reveal the difference between the righteous and sinners... Furthermore, in the parable of the net, it is said that the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. From the Lord's discourse on the Dread Judgment we know that sinners will go into everlasting fire (Matt. 25: 31-46)...

It appears that one might understand these words literally if Jesus always expressed himself thus about the impending future of sinners. However, it is known in other instances he expressed Himself differently. In the Sermon on the Mount, He compared the torments of sinners with abiding in the valley of fire (Gehenna) (Matt. 5: 29 [the original Greek has "Gehenna", which translate as "hell"]). When speaking of the lot that will befall those who have not accepted Him, He said that they be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, while many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 8: 11-12). Burning in a furnace was known to Jesus' audience from the books of the Old Testament: thus, Judah, the son of Jacob, condemned his daughter-in-law Tamar to burning (Gen. 38: 24); David cast into a kiln the inhabitants of the city of Rabbah whom he had subjugated. Nebuchadnezzar ordered Ananias, Misael and Azarias, who did not worship the golden idol, to be cast into a furnace made red hot by fire (Daniel 3: 21).

In general, among the people of the East, burning alive was one of the usual forms of the death penalty, and such a penalty was the most horrible and excruciating. Therefore, when Jesus spoke of the fearful punishment of sinners in the future, eternal life, and desiring to set their fate graphically before His audience, indicated punishment in a fiery furnace as a kind of likeness of that which awaits them if they do not repent and be reborn into a new life. Later, when responding to the Sadducees on the question of resurrection, Jesus likened people who will be resurrected for the Dread Judgment to spirits, to angels, and then He explained that the bodies of the resurrected will not be those sensuous bodies with which we are clothed during our earthly life. From this one can conclude that the sufferings of the condemned will be more spiritual than sensuous and bodily...

In the parable of the net, Christ shows that it is not He who curtails His love towards us, but that we alienate