

must not forget to be faithful. The church that expects to go to heaven must live up to her expectations.

A working church is a missionary church. She is keeping pace and time with the age in which she lives. A working church is endeavoring to carry out the commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The church is living in an age that demands effort and zeal and honest labor.

Ah, but says some one, don't persuade the church to stop out of the apostolic path. Yes, that's right. But let the church examine herself to know if she is in the apostolic path, for a working church is just the church that is travelling the apostolic highway. There can be no growth nor progress in the divine life without activity. For this reason, no doubt, God has most graciously permitted us to co-operate with him in promoting the interests that are bringing the world to repentance. The church is God's place of business on earth, and the church should be the most busy place on earth.

We must not think that we simply enter the church to save ourselves, but we enter the church to help save others; it is in working for the salvation of others we save ourselves. The mission of the church is the salvation of the world; this brings into view the amount of work and faithful fighting the church has yet to do.

Again, a working church is a harmonious church; as members of one family her members are seeking the spiritual good of each other, promoting every interest that is conducive to happiness and tends to glorify the name of God. The scriptural definition of a working Christian is one that seeks not his own good, but the good of others, and the working church not only exists for the name, but for the blessing of others.

H. E. COOKE.

### THE CONVERSATION AT CESAREA PHILIPPI.

"Now when Jesus came into the parts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that the Son of Man is? And they said, some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 13-18. R. V.

In the above conversation Jesus asked of his disciples, first, Who do men say that the Son of Man is? and secondly, Who do ye say that I am? Peter's answer to the last question is, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. After Jesus had pronounced a blessing upon Peter, and said that his Father in heaven had revealed this unto him, he goes on to say, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. To what does the Saviour refer when he says "upon this rock I will build my church?" A correct answer to this is important, as it appears to me to be the leading thought in this conversation.

The question our Lord asked of his disciples is, Who do ye say I am? The answer is, the Christ, the Son of the living God. Then Jesus said to Peter, who had made this declaration, "flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you." Flesh and blood had not revealed what unto him? To this there can be but one answer, that is, this truth that you have just now declared, that I am "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus

adds, after he had addressed Peter personally, "upon this rock," that is upon myself, whom you have thus confessed to be the Christ, the Son of God, "I will build my church."

That this is a correct understanding of the words of our Lord in this conversation is evident from the fact that is in harmony with all the inspired writers who have written on this subject. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation. Isaiah xxviii. 16. This scripture Jesus applies to himself when he says, "Did ye never read in the scripture, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner." Matt. xxi. 42. Again, Peter, in quoting this scripture and applying it to Christ, also quotes from Isaiah viii. 14, where Christ is spoken of both as "a stone of stumbling and rock of offence." The Apostle Paul also applies this prophecy of Isaiah to Christ, speaking of him as both the "stone of stumbling and rock of offence." And in his letter to the Corinthians, in speaking of the "spiritual rock," says, "that rock was Christ." I Cor. x. 4.

From all these scriptures it must be clear to every student of the Bible that the "rock" on which Jesus says "I will build my church," must be himself. Indeed Isaiah says that this "stone," which he also calls a "rock," was "for a foundation," "a sure foundation;" not a "corner stone" built on something else, but the foundation. And Paul says, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." I Cor. iii. 11. What, then, becomes of all the attempts to make something else the foundation when Isaiah so expressly declares that Christ is the "sure foundation." And the Apostle Paul says no other can be laid but that which is laid, "which is Christ Jesus."

Having pronounced a blessing upon Peter for his confession, that he was "the Christ, the Son of the living God," and having reminded him that his Father in heaven had revealed this to him, and that he would build his church on this fact, our Lord goes on to say, "and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." According to the best authorities the word *hades* denotes "the unseen world, or the abode of the departed." The English word—*hell*—originally denoted about the same thing. It is from the Anglo-Saxon *helan*, to hide, and was a good translation of *hades*. But the English word—"hell"—now denotes a place of punishment, therefore cannot be a correct translation of *hades*. The revised version of the New Testament has retained the word *hades* in ten of the eleven places in which it occurs, and has translated *gehenna* by the English word *hell* in the twelve places in which it occurs. The one (*hades*) evidently refers to the unseen world, or place of the departed; the other (*gehenna*) to the place of punishment for the wicked.

This being the meaning of the word *hades*, rendered *hell* in the common version, our Lord could not have referred to the assaults of the powers of darkness against the church when he said, "the gates of hades shall not prevail against it," but rather to some power in *hades*, the unseen world.

David had said, by the spirit of God "thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell* (*hades*) nor suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." This prophecy Peter applies to Christ in proof of his resurrection from the dead. Acts ii. 24-27. This prophecy of David can only refer to the temporary abode of the spirit of Jesus in the unseen world, or *hades*, between his death and resurrection; and to my mind it is clear that it was to the certainty of his resurrection Jesus referred when he said "the gates of *hades* shall not prevail," etc.

Peter had made the good confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and Christ had said he would build his church on this fact; and because he claimed to be the Son of God he was put to death and passed through the gates of *hades*, but they could not hold him. He came forth from the silent grave, from the unseen world, and brought life and immortality to light, thus demonstrating to the world that he was all he claimed to be—the Christ of God. The gates of *hades* did not prevail against the fact confessed by Peter and upon which the church is built. The assaults of the powers of darkness against the church is understood by some to be the "gates of *hades*," which should not "prevail," etc.; but from the fact that these assaults have worked untold mischief against the church and greatly retarded its progress in all these centuries, it could not have been to these the Lord referred when he said "the gates of *hades* shall not prevail;" for they have prevailed just in proportion to the evil they have worked to the church.

While it is a glorious truth that the church will yet triumph and achieve a victory over all the powers of darkness combined, it is because the Christ, upon whom the church is built, has first triumphed over *hades* and death, "that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Heb. ii. 14.

It is a mistake to speak of the heroic efforts of the great reformers to bring the church out of darkness, as the gates of *hell* let loose against the church of Christ. Let us rather look at them from Luther down to A. Campbell, as instruments in God's hands to bring his people out of the darkness which had so long prevailed against the church. These great men were not infallible, but each, in his time, did grand work; and while we, who are enjoying the light they have caused to shine around us, regret that these mighty men did not see everything as clearly as we think we do, rather than speak of their work as the opening of the gates of *hell*, let us thank God for such heroes, and, seeing their mistakes, profit by them, and imitate their virtues.

E. C. FORB.

Port Williams, Oct. 16, '94.

### News of the Churches.

#### ST JOHN, N. B.

The following officers were elected by the Endeavor Society at its last monthly meeting: Miss E. Christie, President; J. S. Faglor, Vice-president; Frank E. b., Treasurer; Miss B. Stockford, Secretary, and Mrs. D. A. Morrison, Corresponding Secretary.

On the 12th the Social Committee gave a social in the Sunday-school room, which was crowded. Many strangers were present, many of whom promised to attend our regular services in future. This is considered the best social we have yet held, and everybody congratulates Sister E. Christie, who was at the head of the Social Committee.

Mrs. A. Johnston, mother of Sister Emma Johnston, passed suddenly away on October 19th and was buried on the 21st. Bro. Shaw conducted the funeral services, assisted by the Rev. A. McKinnon, of the Congregational church. The family has the sympathy of all in their hour of deep grief. "Let not your hearts be troubled."

Bro. A. B. Wallace, of Halifax, is doing business in St. John.

Bro. E. C. Bowers, of Westport, worshipped with us on the 21st.

Bro. Stewart left for Richmond on the 15th to attend our missionary conventions. He will no doubt give the readers of THE CHRISTIAN an account of his trip.