

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson VI, Nov. 9:19. Peter's Great Confession, Matthew 16: 13-24.

Commentary.—I. Peter's Confession (vs. 13-17). 13. Jesus came into the coasts—Jesus with his disciples had been in Bethsaida where he healed a man of his blindness, and now they came into "the coasts," or parts, of Caesarea Philippi. Mark speaks of their coming "into the towns" of Caesarea Philippi. Caesarea Philippi—it was called by this name, or Caesarea Philippi, to distinguish it from the Caesarea on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It was built by Herod Philip, who named it in honor of Tiberius Caesar, the Roman emperor. This was largely beyond the region of Jewish influence, and the farthest north Jesus journeyed, whom do men say—Jesus did not at first ask his disciples what opinion they held respecting him, but drew out from them the views held by others. He was preparing the way for them to tell what they themselves believed. The Son of man—This was the usual term Jesus applied to himself, and it presents the human side of his nature. 14. some say—others—The opinions held by the people varied, but it was believed that Jesus was a remarkable personage, yet few acknowledged his real nature and office. Some said that John the Baptist had returned to life. Some thought that he was Elijah; others believed him to be Jeremiah, in accordance with the tradition that Jeremiah was to come and reveal the place where the sacred vessels were concealed; and others said he was one of the prophets, that is, one of the old prophets risen again (Luke 9:19). It appears that the thought that Jesus was the Messiah did not prevail among the people. 15. whom say ye that I am—This was the great natural question to ask at this point. Jesus would now have the disciples declare how they had been impressed by his teaching, his miracles and his personal influence. 16. Simon Peter answered—Peter was the spokesman of the disciples, not only on this occasion, but generally. His impulsive nature and his quickness of apprehension favored this practice. It is thought that he was the oldest of the twelve. Although Peter answered the question, his reply expressed the sentiment of them all. Thou art the Christ—Christ is the Greek word for "anointed," and Messiah, the Hebrew for the same idea. There was no hesitancy and no uncertainty. The declaration was positive and emphatic. The Son of the living God—This denotes the nature of Jesus in his relation to the Godhead. There is fully implied in this statement the fact of his divinity, as the former statement declares his office, as the Messiah. "God is here styled the living God, because he is the Author of all life and existence; hence, self-existent, eternal." Peter's confession contains the very essence of Christian doctrine. 17. blessed art thou—A genuine confession. Simon Barjona—Simon son of John, not, of course John the disciple. Bar is Aramic for son. Simon Peter's father was Jonah, or John. flesh and blood hath not revealed it—The knowledge that Jesus was the Son of God did not come to Peter and the other disciples from man or any other earthly source, but from God.

II. The church's foundation (vs. 18-29). 18. I say—Peter had spoken, now Christ had something further to say about the kingdom under the figure of the church. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church—'Thou art Peter' (Greek, petros, a stone). 'Upon this rock' (Greek, petra, the bed-rock). There has been much discussion as to what the rock is upon which Christ builds his church. The leading opinions are: 1. Peter alone. 2. Peter on an equality with the other apostles, whose spokesman he was. 3. The confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." 4. Christ himself. All these views are strenuously maintained by their respective advocates. A statement in Ephesians (2: 20): "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone," indicates that the main foundation is Christ, and the apostles and prophets are joined with him in the church's foundation. The confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is essential to the foundation of the Christian church. The apostles' confession of the divinity of Christ is the foundation of the church. The church includes all who accept Jesus as their personal Saviour and maintain faith in him. The gates of hell—The powers of the infernal world. Shall not prevail—The church of Christ is indestructible. Satan has put forth all his efforts for ages to overthrow Christianity, but all in vain. 19. The keys of the kingdom of heaven—A key is a symbol of authority, and the apostles were to have authority with respect to the church after Jesus' earthly mission was closed. Whatsoever thou shalt bind, etc.—This explains the use of the keys. The apostles were given authority to organize and direct the church of Christ on earth. The terms "binding" and "loosing" were much used among the Jews to denote forbidding and allowing. Wisdom and authority were to be given the apostles to govern the church, and what they did in that capacity would have the sanction of heaven. They were to be so directed in their preaching that they would speak with authority. They would utter the truths of the gospel, and what they said would be worthy of full acceptance by their hearers. 20. Tell

no man that he was Jesus the Christ—The declaration then of the Messiahship would have a tendency to arouse his friends in Galilee to attempt to proclaim him King.

III. Christ foretells His death and resurrection (vs. 21-23). 21. From that time forth—Having established the disciples in the faith that he was the Messiah, he could make known to them the course that lay before him. Unto Jerusalem—The capital city and centre of Jewish influence. Suffer many things, etc.—The opposition would constantly increase and culminate in his death at the hands of the highest officials of the Jews. The elders constituted the Sanhedrin. Raised—third day—a promise and prophecy of his resurrection. 22. Peter took him—Aside. Began to rebuke him—Peter's impulsiveness again asserted itself. He could not reconcile the course Jesus had declared was lying before him with the great fact of his Messiahship. 23. Get thee behind me, Satan—Jesus did not call Peter Satan, but indicated that Peter's rebuke emanated from Satan. Satan put the words in Peter's mouth, and Jesus used the same language that He did at the temptation in the wilderness. An offence—"A stumbling-block"—R. V.

IV. Conditions of discipleship (v. 24). 24. If any man will come after me—Will become my follower. Deny himself—He must refrain from every wrong, and must deny himself every lawful thing that would hinder his progress in following Jesus. Take up his cross—Be ready to suffer whatever it is necessary by virtue of being a disciple of Christ. The cross was the symbol of ignominy and shame, for crucifixion was the form of execution used by the Romans in the case of the worst criminals.

QUESTIONS—Where was Caesarea Philippi? What question did Jesus ask his apostles? Why did he ask it? What was their answer? Who did Peter say Jesus was? Who had revealed this to Peter? What was the rock on which Christ built his church? What is meant by the gates of hell? In what way did Christ give the keys of his church to the apostles? What is meant by binding and loosing?

### PRACTICAL SURVEY.

Topic—The Messiahship of Jesus.

I. A great question.

II. A great confession.

The events of the lesson were preceded by the desert miracle of multiplying the loaves and fishes, the hastened departure of the disciples, the mountain season of prayer and the reassembled multitude, to which was delivered the wonderful discourse recorded in the sixth chapter of John's gospel. The last resulted in the withdrawal of many of Christ's followers (John 6: 66). Antagonism was becoming more pronounced, and he naturally turned to test the fidelity of his disciples. In the lesson we have:

I. A great question. From the point of the lesson Christian history takes a new departure. In its study we pass the outer portals and enter the inner sanctuary, come more



WHERE I choose a hotel, I choose a trouble-maker. I do not want to be troubled by a hotel. I want to be comfortable. I want to be happy. I want to be at ease. I want to be in good luck. I want to be in good fortune. I want to be in good company. I want to be in good luck. I want to be in good fortune. I want to be in good company.

### THE WALKER HOUSE

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closely into touch with the true spirit and purpose of Christ's life and work. The time had come for a closer relation between himself and his disciples. From the hour of Peter's confession he began by way of preparation to unfold to them the deeper experiences of the cross and passion into which he and they were about to enter (Matt. 16: 24). The disciples had mingled with the thronging multitudes, and with them had listened to the teachings and beheld the works of Christ. Doctrine and miracle could but have produced some effect upon the public mind. Jesus had referred the messengers, sent from John, to his works. The public sentiment concerning Christ was exalted, but insufficient, unsatisfactory and uncertain. It connected him with the historic and heroic past, but fell fatally short of the great reality. "Who is Christ?" is the supreme question of the ages.

II. A great confession. Jesus passes from general to individual inquiry. "Whom say ye that I am?" It requires little of faith or knowledge to echo complimentary public sentiment. The church should always have a clearer religious opinion than the world. A personal certainty is essential to personal Christianity. Anything which muffles either Christ's character or his cross is destructive. There is no middle ground between his complete claim to essential divinity and imposture. He put forth the stupendous claim for himself and the Father repeatedly attested it. Peter's confession of Christ's divinity embodies the essence of Christianity and the faith of the ages. Upon this great truth Christ builds his church. Its certainty is her security. Against this stupendous truth the "gates of hell" can not prevail. The deity of Christ is essential to the value and virtue of his atoning sacrifice. It imparts infinite worth to his human sufferings and assures the permanency of his human sympathy.

III. A divine revelation. A true knowledge of Christ is always a matter of direct and divine disclosure (Luke 10: 22). Peter's confession was begotten of an inward spiritual revelation. As with Peter, so with Paul, who declared that the gospel which

was preached by him was not received of men, but was revealed (Gal. 1: 12, 13). "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12: 3). Intellectual assent is ineffectual without an inspired heart faith and recognition.

W. H. C.

# SUNDAY AT HOME

MAN AND THE SABBATH.

The question is constantly being asked "Is it right to work on a Sunday?" I say Sunday because that is our Sabbath Day, our weekly day of rest and worship, the first day of the week, distinct from the Jewish Sabbath which runs from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. Still for all practical purpose we use the terms as meaning the same thing, and there are endless diversities of opinion as to how the day should be spent.

To those who are absorbed in church activities, what more natural than that they should delight in attendance at two or three services during the day, provided that they can spare the time?

Others who feel the need for relaxation of body or mind, or both, spend the best part of the day out of doors in walking, declaring that the sermons of Dr. Meadows and Dr. Fields are in every respect equal if not superior to the spiritual pabulum they get at church. To a certain extent I agree that there is nothing like a restful day in the open air, and if Sunday is the only day on which it can be obtained, then few will disagree with its beneficial use in that manner. At the same time it is only right to point out that the majority of people nowadays have more leisure at their disposal than ever before, and that with the reduced pressure of work there is not the same need for devoting the whole of Sunday to recreation.

It is a poor Christian who cannot spare time to attend at least one service a week in his or her Master's house; for, after all, there is a direct command to Christians to join together in worship, and, since outdoor services are not a standing feature of our time it is fitting and proper that we should meet together in the places sacred to the service of God and hallowed by the associations of generations of worshippers.

A correspondent asks me this: "Is it right, as some of the present-day clergymen say, that if you go to Early Communion you can do practically what you like for the rest of the day; or are we to keep to the old rule, and do no work on the Sabbath? Did not Christ Himself give an indication of His views when He plucked the ears of corn while walking through the cornfield on the Sabbath, and did He not say that it was right for His disciples to do likewise and to eat the corn? And does not the Book say that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath?"

True, my young friend. He also performed miracles on the Sabbath, and performed the problem to His antagonists of what a man should do if his ox or his ass fell into a pit on the Sabbath Day. I don't see anywhere in the New Testament that Christ refused to admit that necessary work must be done on that day. As to what we consider necessary work nowadays, that is a matter which must be left to the conscience of the individual Christian and the circumstances attending.

Another point put before me is this: "Would it be wrong to forego church for once and go into the country? Would it be letting the flesh gain dominion over the spirit if one went for pleasure, or would it merely be keeping the law that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and must be kept clean for it? Surely it would be a crime not to keep them sound and healthy by taking outdoor exercise at the proper time. Is Sunday the proper time?"

Again, did not Christ walk across the fields on Sunday? Was not that His recreation? Is He not our Example, and are not to follow Him? Before churches were made there were fields and woods, trees and plants, grass and flowers. Where did Abraham have his altar? In the open, on the top of a mountain. That was where he was going to make his greatest sacrifice. Wasn't the Greatest Sacrifice made? In a church? No. It was made in the open air, on Calvary's Mount. Did God say, "That will not do, it wasn't made in church"? No, it was accepted. If it hadn't been, where should we be now? Why, there wouldn't be any church to go to on Sunday or any other day. In His Agony, did Christ go to a synagogue? No. He went to a garden, the Garden of Gethsemane. When He went to talk with His Father He went to the wilderness or on the top of a mountain. That was where He prayed. Shall we not pray where He did? Is it for us to say, "It is wrong to pray in a field or a wood, one can only pray in church?"

Certainly not. Prayer is never out of place, wherever and whenever the need of it is felt, but some people are so constituted that they require the environment of a church to put them into what they would call the right frame of mind. Others never feel so close to God as they do in the open air. At times like this, too, we must bear in mind that, owing to the strain of the past five years, many people have tired nerves, tired hearts, tired spirits that fall to find in church the rest they so badly need. That, I am afraid, is the fault of the churches—they lack the power of the ability to convince the great mass of the people that they have a true message of rest and peace to the soul. While that is so we shall always find thousands who prefer to spend their Sundays in the country whenever possible.

### World's Harvest Calendar.

The world's schedule for cutting cereals is as follows:

- January—New Zealand, Argentina.
- February—East India, Upper Egypt.
- March—Egypt, Chile.
- April—Asia Minor, Mexico.
- May—California, Texas, China, Japan.
- June—Southern United States, Turkey, Spain.
- July—United States, Austria, Germany, Southern Russia, England, Switzerland.
- August—Canada, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Poland.
- September—Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Siberia.
- November—South Africa, Peru.
- December—Uruguay, Australia.

### The Apocrypha.

All the Old Testament apocrypha, fourteen in number, have been translated into English and are included as apocryphal books in some editions of the Bible. They were formerly printed under a distinctive heading between the Old and the New Testaments, and in that form can still be found in many of the "family Bibles." They are always included in the so-called Septuagint, a version of the Bible used by the Greek church.

## TOWN PLANNING

### Important Conference to Be Held in Hamilton Shortly.

It is expected that all the city and most of the town and village councils in Ontario from Niagara Falls to Windsor will be represented at the South-Western Ontario Town Planning Association's conference to be held at Hamilton in the Royal Connaught hotel, on Nov. 27 and 28, as matters of vital interest to the welfare of the people will be considered. Able speakers will address the meetings on subjects of interest to progressive municipalities. Among them will be: Lawrence Veiller, New York City, secretary of the National Housing Association; J. A. Ellis, Toronto, director of the Government Bureau of Municipal Affairs; Thomas Adams, Ottawa, Federal Town Planning Adviser; N. Caubon, Consulting Engineer, Ottawa; W. J. Donald, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, Niagara Falls, N. Y.; Sir John Williams, Toronto, and a cabinet minister of the new Ontario legislature.

A shoe that is uncomfortably tight may be fixed by laying over the place a cloth wet in very hot water. As the leather steams it expands.



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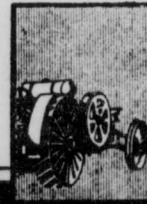
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