

LESSON IV.—January 27th.

The Great Confession. MATT. 16: 13-23.

(Commit to memory verses 13-16)

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Matt. 16: 16.

PROVE THAT

Confessing Christ leads to salvation. Rom. 10: 9.

LESSON HYMNS.

CHILDREN'S HYMNAL, Nos. 30, 60, 146, 98.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Quest. 5. *Are there more Gods than one?* A. There is but one only, the living and true God. Quest. 6. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?* A. There are three Persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The Great Confession; Matt. 16: 13-23. *Tuesday.* Another Confession; John 6: 66-71. *Wednesday.* The Chief Corner-Stone; 1 Peter 2: 1-8. *Thursday.* Peter's Witness for Christ; Acts 4: 5-12. *Friday.* Cost of Confessing. Matt. 10: 32-42. *Saturday.* Believing and Confessing; Rom. 10: 1-11. *Sabbath.* Confessing and Enduring; 2 Tim. 1: 1-12. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. After his discourse at Capernaum on "The Bread of Life," many of his followers forsook Jesus. They were disappointed in him. He would not come up to their expectations of an earthly prince, and his doctrine was above their spiritual comprehension. It was the turn of the tide of his popularity. Henceforth he meets with increasingly bitter opposition. For a time he leaves Galilee and takes a tour to the north, passing through Casarea Philippi, where the conversation recorded in our lesson took place. Parallel passages, Mark 8: 27-33; Luke 9: 18-22.

LESSON PLAN. The Christ Confessed. vs. 13-17. II. The Church Founded. vs. 8-20. III. The Cross Foretold. vs. 21-23.

I. **THE CHRIST CONFESSED. 13**—"We here begin the second great division of our Saviour's ministry on earth, introductory to his sufferings and death. Up to this time we have had no distinct intimation, like that in verse 21, of these events. This intimation is brought in by the solemn question and confession now before us. As the former period of his ministry was begun by a declaration from the Father of his Sonship, so this also, on the mount of Transfiguration." (Alford.) **Coast**—R. V. "parts." Mark says, "the villages of Casarea Philippi." He asked his disciples—He did not ask them because he did not know, but in order to draw out an expression of their faith in him. Luke tells us that he had just been alone praying (Luke 9: 18). **The Son of man**—R. V. "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" Jesus wished to bring out whether they admitted that title to be his in the sense of "Messiah." The answer shews that they did not, but that they considered him to be another forerunner, like John the Baptist.

14. John the Baptist—This was Herod's opinion (Matt. 14: 1, 2). **Elijah**—the Greek form of Elijah (Mal. 4: 5; Matt 11: 14; Luke 1: 17.) **Jeremias**—the Greek form of Jeremiah. From the books of the Maccabees we learn that the prophet Jeremiah was associated in the minds of the Jews with the restoration

of that national glory whose extinction he had wept over. He stood first in the prophetic canon as the greatest of the prophets. **One of the prophets**—Luke says, "that one of the old prophets is risen again." All agreed that he was but a man.

15. But who say ye that I am—"This was the decisive moment in which the separation of the New Testament "church" from the Old Testament theocracy was to be made. The hour had come for the utterance of a distinct Christian confession." (Lange.)

16. Simon Peter answered—He spoke for himself and the rest of the apostles. Chrysostom calls him "the mouth of the apostles." The faith expressed was not exclusively his, nor was personal pre-eminence assigned to him for uttering what the others believed as truly as he. That Peter should speak first is in keeping with his impetuous character. "Simon Peter was one of the quickest to perceive truth, and the readiest to utter it. Jesus' question was like a match to powder, and the convictions within him, condensed in a compact form, burst out from the fulness of his heart." (Peloubet.) **Thou art the Christ**—the Messiah of whom the prophets spake. **The Son of the living God**—"The confession is not made in terms of the other answer; it is not 'we say' or 'I say,' but 'thou art.' It is the expression of an inward conviction wrought by