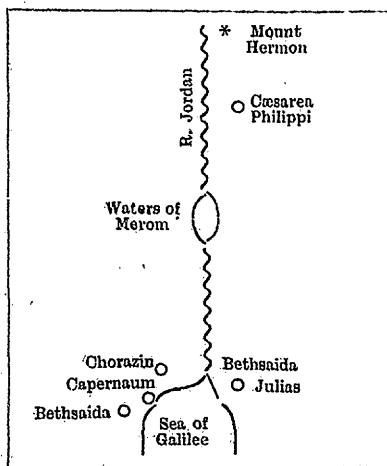


1-3. *Thursday*. Peter's Witness for Christ; Acts 4: 5-12. *Friday*. Cost of Confessing. Matt. 10: 32-42. *Saturday*. Believing and Confessing; Rom. 10: 1-11. *Sabbath*. Confessing and Enduring; 2 Tim. 1: 1-12. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

HELPS IN STUDYING.



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 Caesarea Philippi, where the conversation recorded in our lesson took place. Parallel passages, Mark 8: 27-33; Luke 9: 18-22.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Christ Confessed, vs. 13-17. II. The Church Founded. vs. 18-20. III. The Cross Foretold. vs. 21-23.

I. THE CHRIST CONFESSED. 13. Coasts—neighborhood, environs. **Caesarea Philippi**—(See Bible Dictionary). 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). **14. John the Baptist**—Herod thought this (Matt. 14: 1-2). **Elias**—the Greek form of *Elijah* (Matt. 11: 14; Luke 1: 17). No one seems to have said that he was the Messiah. **15. Simon Peter answered**—With his usual forwardness Peter spoke first, expressing, and at the same time stimulating, the faith of the rest. **The Christ**—the Messiah of whom the Scriptures spake. **The Son of the Living God**—This was spoken in a heathen country, with idol temples all around them. It was a ringing defiance of the powers of heathenism. (John 6: 69; Acts 8: 37; Heb. 1: 25). **17. Simon Bar Jona**—"Son of Jonah." His old name is used to make the contrast with his new one more striking. **Flesh and blood**—The concise and comprehensive terms of this confession, as well as the truth they contained, were due to no mere flash of genius, nor were they derived from any human source, but they were directly revealed to Peter and the rest of the apostles by God himself. (1 Cor. 2: 9, 10.)

II. THE CHURCH FOUNDED—18. Peter—Gr. *petros* "a stone," a fragment of a rock. **Upon this rock**—Gr. *petra*, "a rock," a mass of rock. "Upon that which entitles you to be called *Peter*—the fearless confession of me as the One Saviour of Sinners—I will build

my church. (1 Cor. 3: 10, 11; Eph. 2: 20; Rev. 21: 14.) **Gates of hell**—R. V. "hades." Eastern rulers held their courts at the gates of their cities. Here was the place of public concourse. (Gen. 22: 17; Ruth 4: 1; Lam. 5: 4.) So we speak of the Turkish power as "The Sublime Porte" (or gate). "Hades" means the unseen world, the realm of death. Here it stands for "the powers of darkness," all the forces of evil. **19. The keys**—the power of admitting and excluding. Authority to govern and exercise discipline in the church ("the kingdom of heaven"). This they did under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who inspired them. Christ here speaks to Peter as the representative of the Twelve. (See Matt. 18: 18, 19; John 20: 19-23.) **Shalt bind**—declare to be forbidden. **Shalt loose**—declare to be permitted. This power was given to the apostles only. **20. Tell no man**—Because they did not yet fully understand the nature of this kingdom; it might excite tumults among the people; exasperate his enemies, and thus raise unnecessary obstacles to their work in the future.

III. THE CROSS FORETOLD. 21. From that time—This was his first plain announcement (Mark 8: 32) of his approaching death. See also Mark 6: 31; 10: 33; Luke 18: 31; 24: 6. **22. Began to rebuke him**—Peter took him aside to remonstrate against his speaking of such an ending to his ministry. This was not the kind of coronation that he had fancied for Jesus. **23. He turned**—towards the disciples (Mark 8: 33). **Get thee behind me Satan**—The very words used to the devil at the Temptation (Matt. 4: 10),