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100¢ a bottle. All druggists.

One bottle of Ayer's Hair Vigor saved my hair from falling out, started it to grow again nicely.

JULIUS WITTE,  
March 28, 1899. Canova, S. Dak.

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LENA G. GREENE,  
April 13, 1899. New York, N.Y.

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**The Sabbath School.**

**INTERNATIONAL L.E.SON.**

**Third Quarter Lesson 4 July 22, 1900**

**PETER'S CONFESSION AND CHRIST'S REBUKE—Matthew 16: 13-26.**

Read Mark 7: 31-8: 30.  
Commit Verses 24-26.

**GOLDEN TEXT—If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.—Matt. 16: 24.**

**HISTORICAL SETTING.**

**Time.**—Autumn of A. D. 29, a few weeks after the last lesson.

**Place.**—On the way from the Sea of Galilee to Caesarea Philippi, a city situated twenty-five or thirty miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee, near the head waters of the Jordan, at the foot of the Lebanon Mountains.

**THE NEW EPOCH.**—This journey marks a turning point in the education of the disciples. It is only six months before the crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus reveals to them more clearly his nature as the Messiah, and the nature of his kingdom, and shows them the necessity of his sufferings and death. He also begins the organized church.

**JESUS IS THE MESSIAH—Vs. 13-17.**

When Jesus came. The place from which he came is not stated, but it would naturally be through Bethsaida on his way northward to the coast. Parts, district of Caesarea Philippi. He asked his disciples, to draw out the faith of his disciples, and to reveal to them more fully his nature and his redeeming work. *Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?* The Son of man was a title he frequently applied to himself. Who do men say that I, who appear as a man, am? Some say... John the Baptist, returned to life. Some, Elias. Greek form of Elijah, who had turned the nation from heathen worship to the true God. And others, Jeremiah. The Greek form of Jeremiah. *Or one of the prophets, is it, that one of the old prophets is risen again.* But whom say ye that I am? What have you learned about me and my work during the two or three years you have known me? And Simon Peter answered. Peter answers as spokesman, just as he does in many other cases. *Thou art the Christ.* The Messiah for whom the people were looking and hoping. "Christ" is the Greek and "Messiah" is the Hebrew for "anointed." *The Son of the living God.* The Son of God in the highest sense, which could be asserted of no other being. God is here styled living because he is the source of true life. *Blessed art thou.* Because thou has opened thy heart to the truth; because thou hast such firm confidence in such a Saviour. *Simon Bar-jona, i. e., son of Jonah.* For flesh and blood (man) hath not revealed this unto you. It has not its origin in the mere human knowledge. But my Father which is in heaven. God gave the truth.

What think ye of Christ? is the most important question for us. It is the crucial question of our religious life, which will measure its power, its comfort, its quality.

The value of open confession. It required great courage for Peter to confess a truth contrary to public opinion. But such confession confirms one's faith, makes clearer the truth, and strengthens one's loyalty.

**THE TRUST COMMITTED TO THE DISCIPLES—Vs. 18, 19.** Although their understanding of the Messiah and his kingdom was very imperfect, yet Jesus showed them how great was the trust committed to them. This was a part of their training. *Thou art Peter.* Greek, Petros, a stone, a piece of rock. *Upon this rock I will build my church.* The assembly of all real Christians is the spiritual temple in which Jesus Christ is the builder. And the gates of hell. The gates being the place where business was transacted and assemblies held, is an Orientalism for throne and power, as "Sublime Porte," i. e., sublime gate, designates the Turkish government. *Shall not prevail against it.* Church forms and organization may change, but the real church abides forever.

**Practical.** (1) This truth of the feeble beginnings in the presence of all the mighty world powers is full of comfort to the church. (2) The thing Christ looked for in the men whose shoulders he wished to roll the world was something when the tides of the world were flowing away from Jesus, this man stood erect and declared that notwithstanding all learned men were saying one thing, and all the people another, he still was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. The world is crying for rock Christians. Of gentle Christians, and affable Christians, and kind-hearted Christians we have abundance. Christians should stand like rock amid the seas which surge and roar. *I will give unto thee.* The others were included, as Peter had nothing in kind that the rest did not have.

**The keys of the kingdom of heaven.**

The kingdom of heaven, not the abode of the blessed, but the kingdom of God on earth, is represented under the figure of a city with gates, or of a large house with gates for entrance, and doors of treasure rooms.

1 Peter and the other apostles were the instrument through which the world was to be brought into the kingdom. For instance, on the day of Pentecost through Peter's preaching three thousand persons entered the kingdom in one day. And through the testimony of the apostles, their work, and the Scriptures they wrote, all that have become Christians have come into the kingdom.

2. Since the church could not be organized or the full gospel preached till after the death and resurrection of Jesus, he must have some authoritative representatives on earth to whom, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, could be committed the decision of questions that would necessarily arise. Hence Jesus says, *Whosoever thou shalt bind on earth, that is, forbid or declare forbidden. Shall loose on earth.* That is, allow, declare to be permitted. No terms were in more constant use in Rabbinic canon law than those of binding and loosing. They represented the legislative and judicial powers of the Rabbinic office. *Shall be bound in heaven.* Their decisions should be ratified and confirmed by Jesus in heaven and by the Holy Spirit.

Examples. The early history of the church shows how the apostles understood and used this power. For instance, the election of an apostle in the place of Judas (Acts 1: 21-26); the appointment of deacons (Acts 6: 2-5); the admission of Gentiles into the church (Acts 10); whether the Gentiles must conform to Jewish rites (Acts 15).

**THE NEED OF WIDER AND MORE CORRECT VIEWS.—V. 20.** Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was... the Christ. Why not proclaim this glorious truth from the house-tops?

(1) Because the time had not come. After his death they should proclaim it all the rest of their lives, but not at this time, for they themselves did not understand the true nature and work of the Messiah.

(2) Because the people would be turned away from their spiritual needs to the desire to realize the outward glories of their false conception of the Messiah as king.

(3) The announcement that Jesus was the Messiah would be likely to excite tumult and rebellion against the Roman government, the people trying to make Jesus the leader of the revolt. This would interfere with his plan of a spiritual kingdom.

Although the apostles accepted Jesus as the Messiah, yet they had much to learn about him and his kingdom. They continued to cherish the patriotic dream that the work of the Messiah would consist in the restoration of the Jewish theocracy in an unprecedented political and religious splendor.

**JESUS MAKES A NEW REVELATION CONCERNING THE MESSIAH.—Vs. 21-23.** From that time the disciples were now strong enough in their conviction that Jesus was the Messiah to have their errors concerning his nature and kingdom corrected. *How... he must go unto Jerusalem.* The capital of the Jewish nation, the symbol of the church, the place of the temple, and its sacrifices which he had come to fulfill. *Suffer many things,* as described in the last chapter of the Gospel. *And be killed, by crucifixion.* This is stated to guard the disciples from being disappointed when this event took place. They must see it as an essential part of the plan of salvation. *And be raised again the third day.* The resurrection of Jesus was essential to the proof that he was the true Messiah, essential to his work of redemption. *Then Peter took him one side to speak to him privately.* And began to rebuke him. His was a mingled motive of love and self-assurance that he was right. *Saying, Be it far from thee, Lord.* The plan of redemption outlined by Jesus was so contrary to all Peter's expectations and hopes, that it seemed inconceivable. *But he turned.* Turned round to the disciples. *And said unto Peter.* Publicly, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* Satan means "adversary." He looked for the moment through Peter, and saw behind him his old enemy, cunningly making use of the prejudices and impulsive honesty of the undeveloped apostle. *Thou art an offense.* A hindrance. *For thou savourest (partake of) the quality of not the things that be of God.* God's wise plan for his kingdom. But those that be of men. The natural, human view of the Messiah, a worldly kingdom. The cross of Christ is the central point of the gospel, the source of its power.

**THOSE WHO BELONG TO THE MESSIAH'S KINGDOM MUST HAVE THE SAME QUALITIES.—Vs. 24-26.** *If any man will (wishes to) come after me.* Be his follower, his

disciple. *Let him deny himself.* Renounce self as master and accept Christ as master. Self-denial is to deny ourselves everything wrong, no matter how pleasant it may be; it is to give up what is pleasant and right in itself when we can thereby best aid the cause of Christ and the redemption of our fellow-men; it is to serve Christ, to promote his kingdom at whatever cost; it is to make Christ first. Self-denial is the condition without which no high character can be attained. *Take up his cross.* Daily. The cross is a symbol of self-denial even to the utmost cost. *And follow me.* To follow Christ is to take him for our master, our teacher, our example. *For whosoever will save his life.* Wish to save it, by doing wrong, by avoiding hard duties and self-denial, by gaining worldly good at the expense of religion and righteousness. *Shall lose it.* Shall lose even the earthly rewards he seeks, and his eternal blessedness. *And whosoever will lose his life.* The lower life, the things that seem to worldly men to make life worth living. But note this is to be for my sake, and Mark adds, "for the Gospel's." The mere loss of life has no promised blessings. It is only loss for the sake of Christ that has this promise. *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world (which he never does), and lose his own soul? What good do worldly things do to one who is sick, or suffers the stings of conscience, or destroys the character which makes heaven possible? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Rev. 3: 16, "his life."*

**God's Gift.**

A physician whose life had been made beautiful with good deeds and a high faith once said:

If I have been happy or useful in the world it is due largely to the effect on my mind of a chance question from a stranger.

I was a poor boy and a cripple. One day, standing on a ball field, I was watching the other boys with bitterness and envy. They were strong and healthy, well clothed and well fed. Some of the mothers of the players sat in carriages, waiting to see the game, in ending to drive their sons home after the game was over. I looked at them with an angry scowl, sick at heart. A young man standing beside me, and seeing, no doubt, the discontent on my face, touched my arm.

Say, bud! You wish you were in the place of those boys, eh? he said.

Yes I do! I broke out. Why should they have everything and I nothing?

He nodded gravely. I reckon God gave them money and education and health to help them to be of some account in the world. Did it never strike you that He gave you your lame leg for the same reason—to make a man of you?

I did not answer, and he turned away. I never saw him again. But I couldn't get his words out of my mind. My crippled leg—God's gift! To teach me patience and strength?

I did not believe it. But I was a thoughtful boy, taught to reverence God, and the more I thought of it the more it seemed to me the stranger had told me the truth. I did believe that God pitied me—and at last came to feel that it would please Him if I rose above my deformity, and by it was made manly and true. It worked on my temper, my thoughts, and at last upon my actions. Gradually it influenced my whole life. Whatever came to me I looked upon as God's gift for some special purpose. If it were a difficulty, He gave it for me to struggle with, to strengthen my mind and faith; if it were a helpless invalid cast on me for support, or even a beggar, I thought God had given me another chance to do His work.

The idea has sweetened and helped all my life. I wish I could find the man who gave me this password, which has lifted my life to a higher plane, and led me constantly to the Source of all good.

**The Boy Who is too Good.**

The problem of the bad boy is frequently discussed from various points of view, but we do not hear so much about the boy who is unco-guid. The lack is partly because there are not so many of him as of his avowedly mischievous and sometimes impish mate. Nor is he as numerous as he used to be, if we may judge from accounts that have come down from former generations. He is no longer held up as a model to natural boys and girls, and his unpopularity with his mates is thus left at its normal height instead of being foolishly increased.

The trouble with the child we are speaking of is that he is not so good as he thinks he is. He not only obeys his conscience, but he is proud that he does so; and his conscience keeps still about pride. Moreover, he wants every one else

to obey, not the conscience which has a right to pronounce upon their conduct, but his conscience. If he is sound at heart—and a good many such children are really sincere in wishing to do as they ought—he can sometimes be helped by a rebuke of his lack of charity. Nor will it do any harm to have the rebuke somewhat public. The bad boy should generally be dealt with by himself; the boy who is too good should sometimes be shown his fault in the presence of his companions. The experience and the after-comments of his mates will, no doubt, be unpleasant, but he is unpleasant himself, and the bitterness of heart will be likely to result in good.—Pilgrim Teacher.

**Weeding Your Garden.**

A young girl sat at the window, unhappy and discontented. She was looking at the landscape, but could see no beauty in the undulating hills in the distance, and with the fresh green of spring, or the young shrubs budding forth under her window. It was the first of May, when nature is at her best—not tired or scorched by the heat of summer. The mind must be at peace to thoroughly enjoy nature. A friend of the young girl's mother, coming out of the house, looked at the face so drawn by unhappiness. She stopped and said:

I am afraid, dear girl, that you have not weeded out your garden. The girl answered, I have no garden to weed. We hire a man to do such work.

It is impossible for you to hire any one to weed your garden; you only can do it.

The girl, with a surprised look, said, I do not understand you.

Well, my dear, it is the garden of your life I am talking about, and if you want beautiful flowers you must pull out the weeds. Envy, jealousy, anger, pride, selfishness are some of the weeds that grow very fast.

**KEEP YOUR TOP COOL.**—It is reported of Artemus Ward that he once offered his flask of whiskey to the driver of the stage on the top of which he was riding through a mountainous section. The stage-driver refused the flask in most decided tones. Said he:—

I don't drink; I won't drink; I don't like to see any one else drink. I am of the opinion of those mountain-tops—keep your top cool! They've got snow and I've got brains; that's all the difference.

There is a great deal of wisdom in his remark. Keep your top cool. Without a sound brain man is not of much use in the world. Alcohol, whether in beer, cider, wine, brandy, or whiskey, is a foe of the brain; and when it gets there, it inflames it and renders it unfit for use. Be like the honest stage-driver, and resolve to keep the top cool.

**AN EXCELLENT RULE.**—John Wesley's mother once wrote to him when he was in college: Would you judge of the lawfulness or the unlawfulness of a pleasure, take this rule; Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the reli-h of spiritual things; whatever increases the authority of your body over your mind, that thing to you is sin.

Does my life please God?  
Am I studying my Bible daily?  
Am I enjoying my Christian life?  
Have I ever won a soul to Christ?  
Is there anyone I can not forgive?  
How much time do I spend in prayer?

Have I ever had a direct answer to prayer?  
Am I trying to bring my friends to Christ?

Just where am I making my greatest mistake?  
Is there anything I can not give up for Christ?

How does my life look to those who are not Christians?

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