

the church of God. However, to call this "the gates" would be to use a very strange figure. It is quite clear, when we think about it a little, that the phrase, "the gates of hell" is not a reference to something that is attacking the church, but to something that is holding prisoners in subjection. A good analogy would be the case of the wall that separates West Berlin from East Berlin. This wall has been put up to hold as prisoners the Germans who live in the Soviet zone, many of whom have risked their lives in trying to escape. Many West Berliners seek to help their relatives and friends to escape from oppression and slavery. They do their best to dig under the wall, or to help people to climb over it. If you were to say that the Berlin wall will not prevail against the citizens of West Berlin, you would mean that they would be able to release their friends in East Berlin from the slavery that this wall represents.

When Jesus spoke of "the gates of hell," He was not speaking about the situation of people after death, but about those who are today in bondage, headed for eternal destruction. He was speaking of those who are on their way to everlasting suffering in hell. He said that it will be possible for the church to rescue many whom Satan has bound. Then, speaking to Peter as a representative of His true church, He continued: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

It is easy to see the relevance of this promise to every member of the true church of Christ. One of us sees a man who is bound by Satan and on his way to hell, headed for eternal destruction which he merits for his sin against God and against Christ. If we do nothing to bring to this man the message of salvation through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, thus leaving him bound, the man is bound on earth, and will remain bound through all eternity. God has made the church His representative as the means of bringing the message of salvation to