

thee thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. And to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," etc., etc (Matt. xvi. 15-20.) Peter, then, is the rock on which the everlasting Church is built, the corner stone of the solid foundation on which that majestic structure so securely repose. All Christian antiquity maintains that in the words above quoted, our Divine Redeemer promised the primacy of Peter and of his office, and it no less unanimously teaches that this promise was fulfilled when our Saviour gave to Peter the commission to feed the lambs and sheep of His flock: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep," (John xxi. 16-17,) that is, according to the interpretation of the Fathers; the whole flock of Christ:—bishops, priests, as well as the simple faithful. It is not our purpose here to argue and contend for a doctrine, but simply to state an article of faith professed by over two hundred millions of the human race, and held as a fundamental doctrine by the living Church in all ages down from the time of its institution by Christ. From the very first, we find acknowledged the supreme power of St. Peter and of his successors in spirituals over the universal Church. The writings of the early Fathers and the decisions of the first General Councils leave no doubt on this point. Thus, according to the Fathers, Peter is the "solid rock,—the great foundation,—to him the keys of the kingdom were granted,—to him the sheep were assigned, and he is the universal shepherd. He is the pillar of the Church—the eye of the Apostles—the mouth of the Apostles—the head of the Apostles—the prince of the Apostles—the one who has the primacy of the Apostleship, 'and primacy over the universal Church.'" The Fathers also call the Roman Church the "matrix of all the churches;" "it is the head See—it is possessed of a superior principality—it is the head of the churches—the Apostolic See—the fountain, and other churches are the streams." To it all must have recourse. "He is profane—an alien—an antichrist who is separated from Rome." And of the Pontiff who occupies the See of Peter, they say, "This is the fisherman's successor—he holds the place of Peter—he has the charge of all—he has the primacy in all things—the chief Pontiff—the bishop of bishops—the primate of all the bishops," etc., etc., etc.

Such, Dearly Beloved Brethren, is the teaching of all Christian antiquity, in fact, the teaching at all times, of the universal Church, in regard to the primacy of St. Peter and of his successors; and impartial history is there to attest that this doctrine has not remained a mere abstract truth, but that it has always been put into practice.

But let us see what does this primacy imply. It implies, on the part of the Pope, a universal jurisdiction over the entire Church, over all the children of Christ, the right of convoking General Councils and of appointing bishops, the duty of feeding with salutary doctrine the lambs and sheep of the fold of which he is the supreme shepherd; it implies, therefore, the right of free access to the whole Church, the right of controlling and direct-