

ent interpretations. Thus many of them, as Ambrose, Hilary, Chrysostom, and others, consider the Rock to mean, not *Peter himself*, but the *Faith* which he had manifested in declaring of Jesus, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God": while Jerome and the eminent Augustine taught, that it signified *Christ Himself*, whom Peter had just confessed.\*

Those who maintain that *Peter* is the Rock to which Christ alludes, go upon the supposition, that the Greek name *Peter* and the word translated *Rock* are one and the same, or at least, of the same meaning. But a slight knowledge of the original language affords sufficient means of knowing that such is not the case. The word *Petra* signifies, as it is rightly translated, a Rock, *large, firm, unmoveable, fit for a foundation*; while the word *Petros*, *Peter*, signifies a *Stone, a fragment of a rock, small, moveable, fit to be used in building*. This different meaning of the two words might be amply proved and illustrated from Scripture. Thus in 1 Cor. x. 4, "For they drank of that spiritual *Rock* which followed them, and that *Rock* was Christ." In this and numerous passages from the old Testament, the word *Rock* is applied to the *Divine nature*,† and is never appropriated, in a spiritual sense, to any mortal. On the other hand the word *Stone*, (*Petros, Peter*,) is frequently employed to signify the *faithful believers* in Christ, &c. Thus in 1 Cor. iii. 12, "If any man build on this foundation precious *stones*;" again, 1 Pet. ii. 5, "Ye also as lively *stones* are built up a spiritual house"; again, Rev. xxi. 19, "The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with precious *stones*;" and the learned translators of our Bible have thus rendered the decisive passage in John i. 42, where our Lord said to the same Simon, "Thou shalt be called *Cephas*, which is by interpretation, a *Stone*."

Let us now read the whole passage, and we shall at once see the force and meaning of our Saviour's words.—"When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples,

\* It is worthy of note, that this address to Peter is not mentioned by any other of the Evangelists, whereas, if it was intended to convey the meaning which Rome attaches to it, we might certainly expect that it would, at least, be recorded by them all.

† The Hebrew word corresponding to *Petra* occurs in this sense about 40 times in the Old Test.