

Jesus said to his disciples. Whom do you say that I am?

Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ the Son of the living God

And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my father who is in heaven. And I say to thee that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I shall give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven. S. Matthew xvi. 15-19.



'Is the Church likened to a house? It is placed on the foundation of a rock, which is Peter. Will you represent it under the figure of a family? You behold our Redeemer paying the tribute as its master, and after him comes Peter as his representative. Is the Church a bark? Peter is its pilot; and it is our Redeemer who instructs him. Is the doctrine by which we are drawn from the gulph of Sin represented by a fisher's net? It is Peter who casts it, Peter who draws it; the other disciples lend their aid, but it is Peter that presents the fishes to our Redeemer. Is the Church represented by an embassy? Saint Peter is at its head. Do you prefer the figure of a Kingdom? Saint Peter carries its keys. In fine, will you have it shadowed under the symbol of flock and fold? Saint Peter is the Shepherd, and Universal Pastor under Jesus Christ.' S. Francis of Sales. Controv. Disc. 42.

CALENDAR.

FEBRUARY 20—Sunday—Septuagesima Sunday Semid
21—Monday—Office of the day Simp
22—Tuesday—Prayer of our La J. C.
23—Wednesday—St Peter Damian B. C. and Doct Doub com &c.
24—Thursday—(Vig) St. Peter's chair at Antioch, &c.
25—Friday—S. Matthias Apost Doub
26—Saturday—St Felix III P. and Conf Doub Sup.

THE CHURCH DIAL.

BY REV. FREDERICK FABER.

Beneath me was the misty sea,
O'er which a heaving summit hung,
And, half way up, a blasted tree
With creaking branches awning,
The yellow crow a foot blossomed there,
And juicy asphire to the bare
And lean rock cling

And sweetly to the very edge
The soft and thymy greenward crept,
And, hanging slightly o'er the ledge,
Perpetually wept
With drippings from a hidden spring,
Heard only when the murmuring
Of ocean slept.

There, almost stooping o'er the wave,
A rustic chapel stood: below,
The sea had hollowed out a cave
With labour long and slow;
And it was plain, that any shook
That church from off its brow of rock
Might overthrow.

And many a simple heart would grieve
At this rude sacrilege of time,
Who loved for prayer, at noon or eve,
The chalky downs to climb,
While to their litanies the wave,
With its eternal thunder, gave
Response sublime.

So plaintively the soft sea wailed,
So blue and breezy were the skies,
So tranquilly the white ships sailed
In pomp before my eyes,
The very sweetness of it all
Did there my willing spirit call
To morosize.

That dial on the chapel side
With ivy tendrils were entwined,
As though the flight of time to bide
Were office true and kind:
While, on the breath of ocean horns
The restless shouts in playful scores
Waved unconfin'd

This incident, the quiet hour,
The sanctity of that lone place,
Conspired to give this sight a power
Of true pathetic grace:
And as I gazed on it, methought
That somewhere of a sign was wrought
For me to trace

For I interpreted the gesture
To illustrate how holy faith
Was the pure soul's unflin'g restare,
The Saint's immortal wreath:
And, with significance sublime,
It taught how faith abolished time
By killing death

Mute preacher! pensive evergreen:
O may I learn this day, from thee,
The obscure sage of this lone scene
Hard by the mighty sea,
How faith may through Another's merit
For all the sons of time inherit
Eternity!

[From the New York Freeman's Journal.]

LETTERS

By the Right Rev. JOHN HUGHES, D. D., Bishop of New York, on the importance of being in Communion with Christ's One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolical Church.

LETTER III.

DEAR READER—

21. In the preceding letters your attention has been called to the Church of Christ, to the outward form which she received from her Divine Founder; and to those marks or features in the

organization, which will enable you to distinguish her from all other religious societies. Enough has been said on that subject. From the day of her foundation to the present hour she has never been without opponents who have denied her doctrines, and wielded all the powers of the human mind for the accomplishment of her overthrow. These opponents have been called by different names in the different ages through which she has passed. They were always loud in their denunciations, subtle in their modes of assault, oftentimes formidable in their handed assumptions. Many of them have long since passed away, but as error is inexhaustible in its variety, others, with new pretensions, have never failed to rise as successors in the work of opposition. If you would learn the various names by which these combinations of error have been known, you have but to read the list of the sects and heresies which are found in the annals of Ecclesiastical History. This opposition began in the days of Christ himself, when some were offended at His language, and exclaimed among themselves,—"This is a hard saying and who can hear it?" They walked no more with His disciples, and placing these seceders at the head of the list, you may trace the succession downwards from century to century, until it may close with those last victims of a common delusion, who a little while ago began to doubt the truth of the Bible, because the world did not come to an end in the year 1840, as, according to their notions it should have done.

26. As I have already mentioned, there are but two principles of guidance for the direction of the human mind in determining the doctrines of Revelation, and the true meaning of each tenet. These are authority and reason. The word authority is, as you know, connected with the word author. Christ is the Author of revelation. We believe the fact of His having revealed it, because of the authority of the Church, as a living, perpetual witness, reaching from the individual believer in all ages back to Christ Himself. This authority, in its human form, does not exclude whatever is excellent in human reason, but represents it in its aggregate, functions, and character. But the Divine element which raises it above all other orders of human testimony, is the fact that the Author of revelation identified Himself with His appointed witness the Church, in such a manner that the authority of the one is essentially implied and exercised in the authority of the other. Hence the Catholic belief on all matters of revelation or of doctrine, is firm and unwavering, as in the work of God Himself, on which it is built. It is therefore not mere human persuasion of the truth of a proposition, but it is Divine faith resting on the veracity of God

27. The principle which takes the place of this authority among sects out of the Church, is the principle of private reason. Thus the seceders in the days of our Lord rejected His authority and followed their own private opinion, in determining to walk no more with Him. Thus Ebon and Cerinthus rejected the authority of the Apostles, and sought from their own individual judgement a Christian religion which, in their minds, should rest on the approval of their private reason. So with Arius and his followers. So, in fine, with all heresies and all opponents of the Church of God, from the beginning until this hour.

It is important then, to elucidate this principle; and, to avoid the use of any term which may give offence, I shall designate those who are now, or have been at any time out of the communion of the Catholic Church, as Private Reasoners, advocates of the only principle which is common to

them all. It matters not what was the specific nature of the errors by which they were distinguished; whether they denied the Divinity of the Son of God with Arius, or the validity of infant baptism with some modern sect, or whether they denied the Trinity of persons in the Godhead with Swedenburg, and asserted in opposition to Arius, that Christ is the "alone Jehovah," no matter what may have been these differences, they all agree in one principle, viz. that of private reason, so that, without using any other terms of distinction, I shall designate as Private Reasoners all those who are out of the communion of the Church, and opposed to her authority, as the only living competent witness of the truth and meaning of Christ's revelation, appointed between God and man, regarded in his individual capacity.

27. I may here remark that so far as the teachings of Christ are evidence there is no promise of truth, Divine guidance, the means of Salvation, or Eternal life, except through the doctrines, sacraments, and sanctifying grace for the convenience of which His Church is the organ and appointed channel. There is not a single expression of Holy Writ that can warrant the opponents of the Church—the Private Reasoners of any age, whether past or present, to say that they can be saved so long as they willfully reject her commission, and trust to their own individual opinions for the attainment of truth, and the means of spiritual life and participation in Christ. It is in vain for them to say that they belong to the Church, if that association which they call Church be a fabric of their own construction, based on the principle of private reason. There is but one Church if there be but one God, for the same Deity could not be the author of two. And if they do not belong to the communion of that one Church which He established, then are they necessarily out of the way that leads to eternal life. How far their dispositions to embrace the truth, if they knew it, may plead for them in another life, it is not by any means within my province to determine.

Now that we have brought the parties to this controversy fairly out with their distinct and antagonistic principles, the Catholic Church on the one side, and the Private Reasoners on the other, (with the Bible lying open between them if you please), we shall begin to have a clearer view of the state of the question. The Church, you perceive, is united as one man in her decision of the points at issue. The Private Reasoners, on the other hand, agree among themselves in nothing, except on the principle from which their disagreements arise—viz. that every man on his side, from Simon Magus to Father Miller, has the right, and that it is his duty, to interpret the Scripture for himself. The Church, however, even when so exhibited, does not by any means recognize the dispute as between her and her equal. She does not forget her divine origin. She does not forget the responsibility of her office. She was originally the recipient, and was to be the preserver, the disseminator, and continuator of the work of Our Blessed Lord, in redeeming not only the generation in which He lived, but all generations. Her spiritual, invisible life is but the communication of His Holy Spirit, of which she never can lose the consciousness. She says to the unchristian world without—"Here is the message of your God—here are the proofs that it comes from Him, believe and be baptised for the remission of your sins." To those who have believed and been baptised she says—"here are the treasures of the merits of Christ's redemption, and here are the things you must do, in order that they be applied for the

communication of Divine grace, and the sanctification of your souls."

29. The Private Reasoners on the other hand say—"Here is the Bible, the written word of God—let every man forsake the communion of the Church—reject and despise her authority—take up the sacred volume, read its contents from his own opinion as to what they mean, and so judge for himself." Private reason is thus erected into a tribunal of higher authority with its advocates, than the Church of God.

30. Such has been the principle or rather the fountain of all principles—so called—among the Private Reasoners, from the beginning of the Christian Church. If we pass them in review, according to the order of their chronological succession, what a singular chaos of contradictions and confusions, do they exhibit! Some hundreds, perhaps thousands of sects, each of them possessing some truths, which they carried forth from the Church at the period of their separation, but no two of them agreeing between themselves on the errors which caused them to separate—so that a rigid analysis would exhibit them mutually refuting each other, and thus, without the interference of the Church, neutralising among themselves the reasons of their common hostility to her teaching. If you test the sects that now exist by the same standard of their mutual contradictions, they too will refute each other in the same manner. For instance, the Catholic Church maintains Episcopacy as a Divine institution of Ecclesiastical government. Now this institution is assailed and denied by many of the sects, but a majority of those separated from her communion, even in the capacity of Private Reasoners, decide that the Church is right. In like manner, as to infant Baptism. The Church maintains its validity. Some of the Private Reasoners oppose her on this subject, but the majority defend her decision, and pronounce her to be right. All these sects and denominations have the same Bible, but they so torture it, by decisions obtained at the tribunal of private reason, that practically, it has not the same meaning for any two of them.

31. In elucidating the cause of these contradictions, I shall have occasion to show the palpable fallacy of the principle on which they all depend. If writers among them wish to seduce persons from the safe anchorage of Catholic faith let them put away that style of clever sourcery, in which letters have been lately addressed to me and adopt the defence of the principle, which is the fountain of all their errors, and all their mutual contradictions. Let them furnish me with some basis of faith, in their system, on which to ground my belief of what they call Christian truth. Where I am, reason, that is rational motive, founded on the evidence of facts,—the words of Christ, attested by the Church and recorded in the Scriptures—the perpetuity and triumph of the Church—the constancy and identity of her teachings—the precision and positiveness of her teachings—the consistency and identity of her doctrines—the unity of her members—the order, subordination, and harmony of her ecclesiastical government, all unite in binding me to the Catholic Communion. But stronger than all these, or rather giving these efficacy in producing this conviction, must be reckoned what is promised to all the members of that communion—the supernatural gift of Divine faith. I can feel no sentiment but one of sorrow and pity for the inconceivable delusion, and in some cases, the exceeding impudence of some persons who call on me to forsake the Church of God, in order to turn Private reasoner on the meanings of the Holy Scriptures, and thus, perhaps, add another melancholy chapter to the religious wanderings of the human mind.