

a simple method of arriving at the Truth had been intended, or had been possible, Christ would not have distinctly declared it and so have saved His Church from all heresies and schisms that have vexed her during these nineteen centuries? Such an infallible authority was as much needed, if not more so, in the early times of her history as it is now.

But, it is perfectly certain that Christ did not give any such simple method of ascertaining the truth to His Church.

The three texts that are relied upon as proving that Christ gave this authority to S. Peter are :

First, S. Luke xxii. 32, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted strengthen the brethren."

Second, S. Matt. xvi. 28, "Thou art Peter [a stone], and on this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Third, S. John xxi. 17—17, "Feed my lambs feed my sheep." The "lamb," it is affirmed by Romanists, are the lay people, and the "sheep," "the bishops or pastors (shepherds) of the Church."

It is almost inconceivable, especially when we remember the history of S. Peter, and the circumstances of his fall, that gave occasion to two at least of these words of our Lord, that a doctrine of such vast importance should have been raised on a foundation so utterly frail.

With regard to the most important of these passages, the second, it must be remembered.

1. That if the rock on which the Church was to be built was intended to be S. Peter, it could only have been a personal privilege, as it is absurd to suppose a succession of foundation stones to the end of the world; and it would have been amply satisfied in his having been permitted to admit into the Church the first converts on the day of Pentecost, and afterwards the first Gentile, Cornelius; but also

2. Two different though similar words were, probably, used* by our Lord in this passage, one for Peter's name, signifying "a stone," and the other for the foundation on which the Church was to be built, signifying "a rock," and the majority of the ancient Fathers of the Church interpret this latter as referring not to S. Peter, but to the faith just confessed by him. As the Roman Church obliges those who join her to declare, in the Creed of Pope Pius IV., "I will never take the Scriptures otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers;" this text at all events is a very frail support.

It is urged with reference to the other texts, that Christ specially prayed for S. Peter alone of all the Apostles, and "in him his successors are of necessity included," to show to the others that "they must adhere to him," and that as Christ's prayer must have been answered, his faith could never fail; and when the commission was given to him, "Feed my sheep"—that is the shepherds—"the care of the whole visible Church on earth was committed to him" [see *Faith of our Fathers*, by Cardinal Gibbons, and *Catholic Belief*, Di Breno]. To any one reading these passages without prejudice, and not to make them suit preconceived notions, it is evident that in accordance with the teaching of most early commentators, the former refers only to the terrible trial of faith through which our Lord knew that S. Peter was soon to have to pass, and the latter to his re-instatement in the Apostolic Office on an equality with the others as a "Pastor" of the Sheep and Lambs—the old and the young—of Christ's flock, from which his late denial of Christ might have reasonably been thought to have excluded him.

But, further, if the interpretation that modern Romanists put upon these texts is the true one, S. Peter himself, and the other Apostles, must have known that he was appointed to be supreme ruler over them and their infallible teacher, and their actions afterwards must have been regulat-

ed accordingly. But there is not the very smallest evidence in the subsequent history of the Apostles, as recorded in the book of their Acts, or in their writings, that they had any such conception of S. Peter's superiority and office. Indeed quite the contrary is the case.

For,

1. S. Paul not S. Peter, was eminently the greatest Teacher of the early Church.
2. S. Paul speaks of himself as (1) ordering for all the churches (1 Cor. vii. 17), (2) having the care of all the churches (2 Cor. xi. 20), (3) not being a whit behind the chiefest of the Apostles (2 Cor. xi. 5), and even (4) demands the obedience of the Church at Rome itself, which he claims as his foundation (Rom. xv. 15-20), and (5) rebukes S. Peter, because "he was to be blamed" (Gal. ii. 7-14).
3. S. James, not S. Peter, presides, and gives his authoritative ruling at the first Council at Jerusalem (Acts xx. 1).
4. S. Peter was reproved by some of the brethren at Jerusalem, for eating with the uncircumcised. He did not answer that his conduct must be right since he had been appointed to rule and to teach, but he gives reasons for his conduct, thereby owning his accountability to the Church (Acts xi. 1-5).
5. In S. Peter's Epistles there is an almost total absence of doctrinal teaching, as compared not only with the writings of S. Paul, but with those of John and James.
6. Finally, and chiefly, St. Peter decided wrongly on a point of faith and of morals, and was rebuked for it openly by S. Paul (Gal. ii. 7-14).

Very evidently our Lord did not give, nor did S. Peter himself, or the other Apostles, have the least conception that He had given any *supremacy in authority*, or any promise of *infallibility as a Teacher*, to S. Peter. And, if S. Peter did not possess such authority or infallibility it follows, as a necessary consequence, that he could not bequeath it to any others, and, therefore, that the Popes of Rome, who claim to have it, as his successors, cannot possess it, even if their title to be his successors can be made good.

We can, then, have no security for infallibility of teaching from any supposed infallibility in the Pope, or from connection with that part of the Church which acknowledges him as its necessary Head on earth, by reason of the privileges and prerogatives said to have been given by Christ to S. Peter.

[To be continued.]

NOTE ON WORD "ROCK"

When it is said that two words were probably used by our Lord in speaking to S. Peter, the one signifying a "Stone," and the other a "Rock," what is meant is this: In the Greek of S. Matthew's Gospel, and in the old Latin Vulgate translation thereof which is accepted by the Roman Church as "holy and canonical," two words are undoubtedly used. The word used for the name (Petros) is masculine, while the word used for the foundation on which the Church would be built (petran), though akin to it, is feminine. The former signifies a "stone," the latter a "rock." It has been suggested, however, that our Lord spoke in Syriac or Aramaic, and that then the same word "Cepha" would have been used in both clauses. But it has been well answered, (1) For us, S. Matthew's Gospel is the original text, so that even if our Lord did speak in Syriac and used the same word, S. Matthew's variation must have been divinely inspired to mark a difference which the original failed to give. And also (2), the Syriac word (Kepha) meaning rock or stone is feminine, which the man's name (Kephas) cannot be.

Thus, "as the clauses actually stand, there is contrast as well as likeness implied, and the stone, although akin to the rock, is something different and apart from it, less in dimensions, stability, and importance." Moreover, "wherever in the Old Testament the word rock is used spiritually to denote either the basis and strength of the Hebrew Church, or the refuge and confidence of a single believer, it invariably means none save Almighty God Himself, in which sense it occurs no fewer than thirty-five times." Deut. xxii. 4, xxxii. 18; Ps. lxii. 1. 2; vide also I Cor. x. 4, iii. 2. "If the Infinite and Almighty God was the Rock of Israel, while Peter is the rock of Christendom, then the Gospel has sunk immeasurably below the law."—Littledale, *Petrine Claims*, pp. 46—49.

"HOME RULE" WHAT?

The *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette* in a late number had an article on The Canon Law of the Roman Church and its application in case of "Home Rule" so called being obtained for Ireland. The article was based largely upon statements of Dr. Reichel, Bishop of Meath, a strong opponent of the measure. The *Gazette* says:

"By virtue of Canon Law, Rome lays claim to every sod of Church property in this country, and to every stone of every ecclesiastical pre-Reformation building. How does this important fact bear on the present crisis? Let the Bishop (Dr. Reichel) speak. Home Rule once carried, "the first thing that would take place in this country without the need of any further Act would be the enforcement of the Canon Law. Supposing that Ireland got its own Parliament, and supposing that this Parliament were, as it undoubtedly would be, composed of a majority of Roman Catholics, and supposing that this Roman Catholic Parliament was called to establish the Roman Catholic Church, there would be no occasion whatever to lay any taxation on the people, as Mr. Gladstone seemed to have supposed. All that was necessary to be done was to introduce the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church, and then every episcopal estate that ever belonged to the Church of Rome before the Reformation would instantly revert to it, as a matter of course, and taxation might be easily avoided. That which obtained to land obtained to money also. Indeed, the brief of Pope Julius III expressly included both, and, then, whatever sales of land or alienation of tithe that had taken place was invalidated, and all the money of their Representative Body which they now had in their possession, in so far as it did not result from subsequent contributions, by the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church was its rightful property, and it would seize upon it to-morrow if it had the power, and whether it would spare what they (the Protestants) had contributed to it themselves was extremely doubtful. All their Cathedrals would go at a blow—Armagh, Christ Church, St. Patrick's, Kilkenny, Limerick, and Waterford—every one of these would go at once. That was what they had to expect, supposing that there was an Irish Parliament."

The Bishop of Meath is no foolish alarmist; he speaks words of common sense, and what he has stated above demands the serious attention of all who are interested in the peace and prosperity of this country—not to speak of the interests of our own Church. A vista is opened up of the possibilities of a religious war in Ireland, only to be equalled by the horrors of the Seven Years' war in Germany, and in which Protestantism would finally go down, or else Romanism be forced once more to feel—but at the cost of much bloodshed and misery—that in a revolutionary conflict with enlightenment and civilization, she is no equal combatant. It is the unexpressed conviction of the imminence of such a danger that is stirring the heart of Irish Protestantism in this present supreme crisis of our history. It is not the dread of Home Rule, but