

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: 16-19.



"Is the Church likened unto 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. 49.

CALENDAR.

- MARCH 19—Sunday—II of Lent. Semid
- 20—Monday—S. Joseph Conf. Spouse of B. V. M. from 10th doub II class
- 21—Tuesday—S. Benedict Abbot Doub
- 22—Wednesday—Feast of the Lance and Nails of our Lord J. C. Great Doub
- 23—Thursday—Office of the Day Simp
- 24—Friday—Holy Winding Sheet of our Lord J. C. Great Doub
- 25—Saturday—Annunciation of B. V. M. doub II class Holiday of obligation

[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 Apostolic Church.

DEAR READER—

66. The order, according to which our Divine Redeemer proceeded, in the establishment of His Church, is well worthy of your deepest consideration. He alone is, in His own right, the true Bishop and Pastor of our souls. Whatever spiritual powers have been exercised, by the prelates of His Church, are powers originating in themselves, not conferred by human authority but are delegated by Him, so that through them, as ministers of God, and dispensers of the divine mysteries, He is still propagating the knowledge—and dispensing the mysteries of man's redemption, through the merits of His Passion and Death. He first, as you have seen, brought over to belief in Him, those who are spoken of as His "disciples." For their sake He selected, from among themselves, some to be "Apostles." From among the Apostles He selected one, "Peter," to be their Chief, their supreme visible Head on Earth, the common Centre of their Union, and the great Key stone, so to speak, of the Apostolic Arch, which should bind all the parts of the Christian edifice together.

Thus, the order which he prescribed, and authorised by His own example, is, that all should be disciples, in the first instance;—and then, that the divine call given to some, by the Spirit, to higher states in the church, should be outwardly recognized and approved, by the pre-existing authority, with which He had invested himself. Otherwise there would be no protection for His fold from the inroads of wolves, presenting themselves in sheep's clothing.—Otherwise, any one might pretend that God had called him to the work of the Christian ministry, and laying hold of the Bible, might rush to the first pulpit he found vacant, there to give out, as the doctrines of Christ, the dreams of his own opinions. In fact, something very like this has taken place, and become general, among the private reasoners.

57. But Our Redeemer took precautions against this, both in the example of his own Ministry, and in his injunctions to His Apostles. He did not enter on His public life even on the strength of His miracles; for, the great object of His miracles was to prove that God had sent Him. He did not pretend to teach of Himself, but "whatsoever things He had heard of the Father," He made known to them; as if intending for their model, that His preparation for His public ministry was in the condition of a disciple—one who learns first, and is sent to teach afterwards. And, accordingly, when He delegates the office of teachers, in His stead, to the Apostles, He prescribes the order in which it is to be carried on—"As the father has sent me so also I send you." And again, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, that

you go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit may remain." It is in this way that the Apostles themselves, and their successors down to the present day, have ever proceeded in recruiting the Sanctuary, and continuing the Apostleship of the Church. The individual candidate for the holy ministry, even though inwardly called of God, required to be outwardly recognised and approved, by the proper authority pre-existing. Thus Mathias, Timothy, Barnabas, Titus, Clement, and others, were associated to supply in the order of the Ministry, the spiritual wants of the still increasing discipleship.

68. To the importance of this economy, I cannot too earnestly call your attention. It opens up the evidence of a great principle of Divine wisdom, in the establishment of the Church, and of great comfort and consolation to those who are in her sacred communion. By the light of this principle, and the facts of history, the learned of the Millenar Catholic, can trace his relation to that work of spiritual regeneration wrought by Our Redeemer, through an unbroken connection of unbroken historical evidence, back to the days in which the Saviour of the world preached the Gospel, and in His absence, now order of God's goodness, by the will of Jacob, or from the bark of Peter on the lake of Galilee. Such Catholic is under the pastoring of a clergyman who has been sent by his Bishop—that Bishop had been sent by other Bishops, pre-existing in the Church; and, under the approbation and confirmation of the successor of St. Peter in the see of Rome,—associated to the Apostolic body—each one of those Bishops, had been sent in like manner, and so on, in the ascending series, until you reach the apostolic age, whilst, by a singular, special, and most remarkable providence of Christ over his Church, the direct line of the successors of St. Peter, is as traceable, name by name, and from age to age, from the days of Christ, as the successive names of the English Sovereigns, since William the Conqueror, or of our Presidents, since the adoption of the American Constitution. In no case, from the Sovereign Pontiff in the See of Peter, down to the humblest grade in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, has any one ever been allowed to rise from the lower, to the higher grade, of ecclesiastical subordination, except by the approbation and confirmation of the pre-existing authority of the Church. So that by a Divine institution, our Pastors are sent by older Pastors who had been sent by others in perpetual succession, until you reach the Apostles, who had been sent by Christ, who had been sent by God.

59. But it was not enough that they should have been sent, or approved, by the pre-existing authority of the Church—for, as Judas had fallen away, although called by Christ to the ministry, and as any individual Priest or Bishop was liable to fall away, it was necessary to provide for the safety of the flock in such contingency, and that provision was made in the very conditions on which the Church conferred pastoral powers, and recognised the official character in each of her ministers. The individual was supposed to have learned, as a disciple, what he was to teach, in his ministerial capacity—namely, all things whatsoever Christ had commanded his Apostles. The living and universal Church, at the period of such appointment, was in conscious possession of what had been commanded by our Lord. So that, the new minister was bound, not only by the conditions of his appointment, but also, by his most solemn oath and vow, to teach the doctrine of the Church, and to teach, as doctrine, nothing besides. Hence, if, as in the case of Nestorius and other fallen Bishops, any one of the Episcopal order should embrace

novel or heretical doctrines, the fact of his having been sent, in the first instance, by proper authority, could not avail him in an attempt to load the portion of the flock over which he had been placed, into poison and destructive passions. That flock had belonged to the Church, before his appointment; and the Spouse of Christ would have been left unable to protect her children, if a flock were thus exposed to be involved in the apostasy of the faithless shepherd, who had been placed over them, not for his sake, but for theirs. In all such contingencies, the Church revoked the mission, and withdrew the jurisdiction, of the hireling shepherd, "whose own the sheep were not." It remained for all such pastors, and their adherents, to renounce and denounce the Church, and to turn Private reasoners—both of which they seldom failed to do.

60. Now, dear Reader, if you were a Catholic, you would be filled with gratitude to the Divine Founder of Christianity, for having (in the organization of His Church) thus fenced and guarded round about the sacred deposit of His revelation, with such precautions, and such means of security. You have seen already, that the Church had issued His own voice with that of the successors, whom He commissioned to carry on His Ministry "He that heareth you, heareth Me." And what is recorded in the beginning of the tenth chapter of St. John, is as true to day in the Church, as it was when first declared by her Divine Founder—"Amen, amen, I say to you, that he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same as a thief and a robber, but he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out. And when he hath led out his sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. But a stranger they follow not, but fly from him, because they know not the voice of strangers."

61. It has perhaps, never struck you, that the Greek word *Apostle*, simply signifies *one sent*. So, also, the word *missionary*, derived from the Latin verb *mitto* signifies the same—*one sent*. Hence, as you have seen, our Divine Saviour taught on earth, as the *Apostle*, or *one sent* from God. This mission from the Father He conveyed to those whom He sent, and they, as being the depository of Divine Authority to send, conveyed it to others in proportion as the wants of the Church, and the succession of time, required. You perceive how intimate the relation between this economy, and the principle of *faith and doctrine*, as set forth in the preceding letters. God had appointed that men should receive and believe the doctrines of revelation, from the teaching of those who were thus commissioned to make them known. The ear, and not the eye, was to be the inlet of the soul,—and thus St. Paul eloquently and beautifully sets forth in the Epistle to the Romans. "How, then, shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they are sent? . . . Faith then, cometh by hearing, and hearing by the words of Christ." The opinions of the Private Reasoners is very different from this. According to them, faith cometh by seeing, and the true preacher is the "voiceless" Bible; and, accordingly, their Apostles are the *colporteurs*, who sow Bibles over the world in order to reap, not the harvest of *faith*, but the contradictory speculations of Private opinion. Still, the Bible had

its Divine use of unspeakable value,—this being only the abuse of it.

In the Epistle of the Hebrews the inspired writer lays down the rule for the assumption of the ministerial character, in the Christian Church. "Neither doth any man take the honour to himself but he that is called by God as Aaron was."—Now, Aaron was called by God through the pre-existing authority and outward appointment of Moses. In the eleventh chapter of the Apostles Acts, Barnabas is sent to Antioch, and there with Saul, he "taught a great multitude," so that at Antioch the disciples were first named Christians. After the dispute respecting Gentiles and the law had been settled, in the Council of Jerusalem, the disturbers are spoken of in the 24th verse of the fifteenth chapter, as "some going out from us" . . . to whom we gave no commandment, i. e. whom we had not sent.

62. In short, there is no instance on record in which the mission did not emanate from the pre-existing authority of the Church, conferred in an outward manner, except in the case of St. Paul. His mission was, in some sense, an exception to the established order. He had been miraculously enlightened with a knowledge of the faith and doctrine of the other Apostles, and received authority to teach and preach the same from Christ Himself. But yet, even this did not occur in an invisible manner. There were witnesses of the light and of the sounds which suddenly changed the persecutor into a vessel of election, and an Apostle of the Gentiles. Besides this, he confirmed his mission by miracles, the power to operate which, conferred on him in attestation of his having been sent. A similar power the Almighty never failed to confer on the Prophets or other extraordinary messengers, under the Jewish dispensation. But in the economy of the Christian Church the Apostleship of St. Paul is the only instance, and that is sustained by its own supernatural evidence. In all other instances the mission i. e. the ministerial character and office of teaching and preaching the revelations of Christ was derived from the authority pre-existing in the Church, and which had descended from God, through Christ and His Apostles, as we have already seen.

63. In this exposition, dear Reader, I have directed your attention especially to two points. The mission of those who are to teach the word of God;—and the revocation of powers when any of those sent cease to discharge the functions of his appointment. The mission, as the term is used here, implies, a pre-existing power and authority to send. It implies a person to be sent, and ministerial duties, which he might not lawfully undertake without such appointment and deputed authority. Besides, it supposes that before he is sent, he is inwardly called of God, and is instructed in the extent, and limitation, also, of the office which is conferred upon him.—In all this, however, I speak of the visible organization of the Church, effected by Divine wisdom and goodness to preserve to us the word of God, as such, and the spiritual means of grace which He has appointed for the progressive, and perpetual regeneration of mankind, as applying to them, individually, in communion with the Church, the merits of His sufferings and death. Those means have reference to the interior spiritual life, of which I shall treat hereafter. Compared with these precious institutions of our God, the outward organization of the Church is, one might say, but as the basket to the jewel within—valuable on account of what it preserves. The preservation of the jewel depends on that of the basket, and the Private Reasoners may perceive, if they are not too blinded by prejudice to recognize the fact, that in break