

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 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. 42.

CALENDAR.

- APRIL 16—Sunday—Palm Sunday Semid.
- 17—Monday—Monday in Holy Week.
- 18—Tuesday—Tuesday in Holy Week.
- 19—Wednesday—Spy Wednesday.
- 20—Thursday—Holy Thursday Doubt class
- 21—Friday—Good Friday Doubt class.
- 22—Saturday—Holy Saturday Doubt class.

[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.

LETTER VIII.

DEAR READER—

73. It does not fall within the purpose of these letters to enter into any extended minuteness of detail on the question involved between the Church, and those who are separated from her communion. Accordingly you must have perceived that certain topics have been rather stated than proved—rather glanced at, than discussed and exhausted. Nevertheless, you will find that, without the encumbrance of multiplied and learned quotations, the path of the matter has been brought out, on the subjects treated of, in the preceding letters. That the facts and reasonings contained in them, will be called in question, and denied, by some of the Private Reasoners, is quite probable. The individuals who will stand forth from their broken ranks for this purpose, will trust less to their success in refuting either, than in their appeals to your anti-Catholic prejudices of education. When this comes to pass, do not be troubled—or if you be troubled, pray. Appeal from both sides to God and to His Holy Spirit. Ask for light—ask for direction—ask for interior guidance from the Divine Source of all truth. Ask in that spirit of high Charity disinterestedness which puts this world aside, in such important questions—and then follow the light which God will shed upon your soul, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left from worldly considerations.

This you are bound to do, and I ask no more.

74. The explanation of this warfare between the Church and those separated from her Communion, is this. At the birth of the several denominations of Private Reasoners, those who brought them forth, not in the Lord, attempted to justify their proceedings. Scripture was perverted by bringing it down to the tribunal of private judgment,—and learned men, now fallen from the faith, worked out ingenious, plausible, and pride-flattering opinions, from the inspired text. Viewed in the abstract, there was no reason why these opinions might not be as true as the doctrines of the church which they expressly contradicted and opposed,—and the system of the Private Reasoners required that they should be viewed exclusively in the abstract. To this was exhibited, in reply, the practical teachings of the Church, during all ages preceding the dispute. But the Private Reasoners were not to be out-done so easily. They, too, appealed to the history of the Church, with the same privilege of making the tribunal of individual opinion (the incense of flattery offered to man's natural pride, with a view of seducing him) the arbiter of every dispute that had taken place between the Church and the Schismatics who violated her unity, or the heretics who denied her doctrine from the beginning. Now the events of many centuries would furnish, naturally, a vast deal of matter to spin out discussion, and multi-

ply words withal, against the Church, against the Lord and against His Christ. This they have done; and this they will do again, even in pretending to refute these letters. But I think it proper to observe at the same time, that there is not a single scriptural or historical objection which they can bring against what I have said, or shall say, that has not been already urged, and refuted. If I, then, were to multiply proofs, on one side; state and refute objections on the other.—I should do two things, make this work too unwieldy for your perusal—and on the other hand, not reach the author of the objections; for although his pretended facts should prove to be false, and his pretended reasoning from them should prove to be not only illogical, but absurd:—yet, being a Private Reasoner by system, or personal interest, he could still take refuge in his individual opinion, and say, "You have not convinced me, I am a Private Reasoner still." Thus he could repeat the same refuted allegations as often as he pleased.

He admits no judge—but himself. But besides all this there is not a single topic of difference between the Catholic Church and those who in modern times have strayed away, or being cut off, from her communion, that is not discussed and cleared up to the satisfaction of unprejudiced minds,—and to enter into such a discussion in these letters, would be only to give out a new edition of what has already been said. Hence it is that I content myself with placing before you a general view of the whole question—reserving special proof, and refutation, for special objections, when they shall have been brought to a close.

75. From what has already been said, you must begin to have some idea of the Catholic Church, as she is conceived of and understood by her own children. You have seen that in her those who are now teachers, were but lately learners—that they are not authorised to preach what they had not been taught. That the interior call to the ministry could not be availing, unless outwardly sanctioned, recognized, and approved by the authority pre-existing in the Church. That by virtue of this authority alone could they preach—for how could they preach unless they were sent?—and that the commission conferred by this authority, was universally revoked, whenever any of them undertook what they had not learnt. So it has been ever in the Church of God,—and this for the obvious and fundamental reason to which I have more than once alluded, that the sum of Christian teaching is a body of facts revealed, or confirmed, by our Saviour, of which the Church is the witness, and of which her ministers are appointed to bear testimony. But among the Private Reasoners all this order has been reversed. There are no learners—there are no teachers. There is no mission, except of a modern and purely human character.—there are no Orders for the work of the ministry, except such as mere human authority could give.—there is no standard of orthodoxy except a human symbol, imposed through a direct violation of their first principle, which proclaims the "Bible alone," as their rule of faith;—there is no independence in their ministry, for if they do not please those whom it should have been their duty to instruct and teach, they are dismissed like other public servants;—there is no responsibility, except to whatever may happen to range, for the time being, as the majority, or at least the average agreement, of opinion in the congregations they address. See what a chasm of difference all this makes between them and Catholics!

76. In the organization of the Church, our Redeemer did not vary in principle from the order

established by Heaven for the social existence and well-being of the human race. The organic exercise of sovereign power and authority, whether in the family or in the civil state, is narrowed down, both by Divine and human institution, from its widest range and extent to smaller and yet smaller circles, until they reach a centre, in some one individual. Thus the father is the head and centre of the family, representing the unity of domestic government. Thus the mayor is the head and centre of municipal authority in the city. Thus the Governor in the State. Thus the President, at the head and centre of the United States, represents the concentrated power of the confederation in its essential form of unity. If this principle, as directly ordained in the family, by the appointment of God Himself, and as, indirectly at least, sanctioned in the civil state, be so necessary that society could not be held together without it, it would be strange, indeed, if our Blessed Saviour had left his Church exposed to the anarchy which the absence of it could not have failed to introduce. The grand idea of the Church, as proposed by her Divine Founder, was to unite all mankind in one brotherhood of a common faith, a common hope, and a common charity, mutually held together in the most intimate communion of those spiritual affections which religion creates in the soul. But such a society could not exist without some supreme individual head and centre, as the representative of its unity and power—and it is singular that the very name given to the Supreme visible Head of the Church expresses the proper relation to such Christian brotherhood;—since he is not called King, or Emperor, or President; but Pope, or Father.

77. As successor to one of the Apostles, he is simply Bishop of Rome. As, however, that Apostle was not merely one of the twelve, but Peter, the first and Chief of the Apostolic body, so the Bishop of Rome has ever exercised the prerogatives of the common Father, and the universal Primate of the Catholic Church. He is the visible centre of her Unity, the visible Head of her communion, her Supreme visible Ruler upon Earth. The other Bishops of the Church are no less of the Apostolic order than he—but, inasmuch as St. Peter alone was invested with power and commission which had not been given to any other Apostle, individually, or to them all collectively—inasmuch as to Peter alone, the care of the entire flock of Christ had been committed—inasmuch as Our Lord had prayed for him alone, that his faith should not fail, and commanded him alone, being once converted, to confirm his brethren—inasmuch as in language like this, Peter alone was Divinely ordained the Supreme Pastor, on earth, of the Christian fold—inasmuch as the unity and authority of the Church, extended throughout the world, required for its organization and exercise some individual supremacy, that function has always been claimed, and always been exercised, by the successors of St. Peter alone. This Supremacy of the Pope is as much an article of Christ's revelation, an article of Divine Faith in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, as the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity.

78. We see in this economy the wisdom and the goodness of Our Blessed Redeemer. For by it the Church is provided with a supreme authority, exercised under Divine appointment, and guaranteed by Divine and infallible promises.—Without it the Unity of the one sheepfold, under the one Shepherd could not be maintained.—Without it, the believing people of Christ's fold, could not be preserved from the doctrinal errors which apostate or heretical Bishops might intro-

duce and impose on them, as the very teachings of their Saviour. Without it, in the absence of responsibility the rite essential for the ordination of Priests, and the consecration of Bishops might be disregarded. Without it, as we see in England, a Prime Minister, even though he should be himself an infidel, (which we have no reason to suppose is the case at present,) would become the source, (necessarily the barren source) of spiritual power and jurisdiction to persons still calling themselves Bishops of the Church of God. Without it, the Episcopal body would be soon divided among themselves, and preach in opposition to one another, even as is the case among the Private Reasoners. Without it, an Arian would have triumphed over an Athanasius, and the great Confessor of Alexandria would have been crushed by the factions of heresy which his zeal for the truth had caused to rise against him. Without it the principle of local majorities would enable Bishops to tyrannise over minorities, and in the wantonness of irresponsible power, which that principle secures, in ecclesiastical matters, enable them to degrade and trample upon their weak and erring brethren—leaving him without appeal, without resource—or remedy; an object of scorn and of scoffing for the profane; an object of pity and commiseration for the virtuous. Without the Supremacy of the Pope, in short the doctrines of the Church would degenerate into mere human opinions; the government of the Church into every species of anarchy, tyranny, and confusion.

79. Our Blessed Lord, no doubt, could have organised His Church on different principles, and could have provided for its safety and perpetuation according to whatever principle he might have adopted. On the principle of the Private Reasoners, the idea of a Supreme Pastor, in the government of what they call the Church, would be a supreme absurdity—and as they are very wise in their own estimation, they, no doubt, look upon Catholics as singularly blind, in not regarding the Supremacy of the Pope as they do. The authority of the Pope, however, does not result from the advantages which the recognition of it secures to the Catholic Church, but it results from the authority delegated to St. Peter individually in the first instance, and through him to his legitimate successors in all ages. It is a portion of His divine revelations to man. It is His institution, as a part of an integral part of the Church which He founded, to which all the other institutions had an essential reference, and without which they would have been not only incomplete, but also ineffective. Now, as an historical fact, it is beyond all controversy that the Bishops of Rome have, in all ages of Christianity, been acknowledged by their contemporaries, as the certain and legitimate successors of St. Peter. Nor should it be overlooked by you as something, which attests to Catholics the especial protection of God to the line of that protection of God to the line of that succession; that the Episcopal Sees, founded by the Apostles have, in the revolutions of the world, disappeared, that all possibility of identifying the Episcopal succession as derived from any other one of the twelve in particular, has passed away, whilst that founded by St. Peter still remains, and the direct succession of the principality which Christ conferred upon him, in the government of the whole church, has descended from one to another, in the line of his successors, name by name, with as much regularity as is discoverable in the history of any temporal sovereignty in the world.—Neither is this order disturbed by the rivalry of different claimants which sometimes soandised the Church. All recognised, even then, the