

but my Father, who is in heaven. And I say unto thee, thou art Peter;" and then, in direct and principal reference to the grand truth of his Messiahship, as the ground-work of the Gospel, and, probably with some allusion also to the name Peter, though certainly not as if Peter had any exclusive privilege, or was to be considered as a foundation in any other than that inferior sense in which all the apostles and prophets were a foundation—Jesus added, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And then He subjoined the following words, which, though by no means peculiar or personal to Peter, to the exclusion of the rest of the apostles, or furnishing any warrant to any pretended successors to lay claim to intallibility, are yet very honourable to Peter and the rest of his colleagues, as showing them to be possessed of power to announce the doctrine and manage the discipline of the church, and that, too, backed with the authoritative assurance, that, whatever they should thus do, should be ratified in God's courts above,—“I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Peter was obviously one of Christ's most intimate friends. It has been remarked that, even out of the twelve, Christ chose a triumvirate, or three men, who appear to have been peculiarly in his confidence, namely, Peter, James and John. Peter, along with those two, was honoured to witness our Lord's transfiguration on the Mount; and it was he who then said at once, with much good feeling, but with as much inconsideration: “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles: one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” To this occurrence Peter afterwards referred with much pleasure and confidence; “we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with Him in the holy Mount,” 2 Peter 1: 16. In like manner Peter was one of the three who went with our Lord when He raised Jairus' daughter; and who accompanied Him into the garden of Gethsemane, on the occasion of His agony, when He had to say to all the three:

“What! could ye not watch with me one hour?”

Among the circumstances which betokened his affection for the Saviour, but which, at the same time, betrayed much ignorance, and a very culpable want of respectful submission, is that when, in reference to our Lord's speaking of his own death, Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee;” and when our Lord addressed him in these sharp words, “Get thee behind me, Satan,” or adversary; “thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of man.” The greatest blot, however, in all his character is well known to be that, when, after having declared that though all men should deny Christ, yet would not he, but that he was ready to go with Him to prison and to death, and that though he should die with Him, yet would he not deny Him, he, notwithstanding all this, soon after repeatedly denied Him in the most solemn manner, and cursed and swore, saying: “I know not the man.” What a fall was here! How directly does it tend to do away with that idolatrous regard with which Peter is viewed by Romanists! What a lesson is it to Christians to beware of the causes which led to his disgrace,—self-confidence, false shame, cowardice, and evil company! But as his fall was great, so his repentance was deep, and the tokens of his complete restoration to the favour of his Lord were most satisfactory. Jesus, after His resurrection, seems to have studiously embraced opportunities of noticing him; “He was seen of Cephas and then of the twelve.” He thrice put the question to him, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?” And thrice Peter replied, if not in the same words, yet to the same purpose, “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee;” on which our Lord graciously said to him, “feed my Lambs, feed my sheep.” What an encouragement is here for the offending disciple to return, in the renewed exercise of penitence and faith, to his most compassionate and forgiving Lord!

To omit many other interesting particulars recorded in the gospels, let us glance at a few of the chief, which are stated in the Acts of the Apostles, for a single hint will be enough to bring much to the remembrance of those who are in any considerable degree conversant with Scripture. It was Peter, who stood up in the midst of the disciples in Jerusalem, and proposed the election of a new apostle in the room of Judas. It was Peter, who preached the