

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

In a recent issue the Examiner (Baptist) presents to its readers a sermon, preached at a pulpit, by the Rev. Frank M. Goodchild, D. D., on the text: And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matt. xvi, 19)

This is rather a dangerous text for a Protestant to read or meditate upon, if he would remain a Protestant, and for a preacher to make it the subject of discourse, is venturing on thin ice. Of this the Rev. Dr. Goodchild is well aware, for he concedes that "while the Roman Catholic makes everything of this verse, the Protestant ignores it. In our public reading of it, we make no comment upon it, but read it because it is there in the chapter, though more than half wishing it were not there."

This candid avowal is the more surprising because it carries the implication that Protestants are afraid of the obvious meaning of the text, and that Catholics have good reason for being partial to it.

Yet why should any lover of the Bible, or any honest inquirer after truth, who believes the Bible is the word of God, fear anything it contains, and how do those Protestants who face the words explain them? If we believe the Rev. Dr. Goodchild, they are dishonest; for he declares that "in our [Protestant] commentaries little is said in explanation, and what is said usually gives too evident a twist to the words to serve as a satisfactory explanation. And much too often, allusion to Peter and the Keys, just as to Jonah and the whale, are made simply as a joke."

We should be very sorry to believe that the zeal of Bible Christians in distributing millions of copies of the Bible among the heathens is not incompatible with frivolous references to any portion of the sacred text, and particularly to the story of the prophet of Nineveh. Our Saviour Himself has a very pointed allusion to the story of Jonah and the whale, which He singles out from among all the types of old as foreshadowing best His own Resurrection. If the type may serve as a joke, why may not the great fact of His Resurrection itself be treated in like manner? Dr. Goodchild himself reminds his hearers that "every word of Our Lord is precious to us," and here we have some of the words of Jesus Christ: "He who spoke as never man spoke; His words are never to pass away; He who said that the words He spoke were spirit and life, uttered these words that have been so bandied about for hundreds and hundreds of years."

And how does the Rev. Dr. Goodchild interpret the text? In part, most admirably. What finer elucidation could one desire than the following? "Beyond any possibility of mistake Christ was speaking of Peter here. He calls him by name. The binding and loosing was in answer to Peter's confession. All the pronouns are in the singular number, showing that only one of the twelve was addressed. There can be no doubt that some sort of authority was being conferred. The key was a symbol of authority through the East. The rabbi sometimes wore a key about their necks as a badge of office. The English housekeeper wears her keys dangling from her waist. The key is a convenience in using, but as a sign that things are in her custody. Among us also the possession of a key betokens our right of entrance to a house and the right to exclude others also. When we lease a house the sign that we are in possession is the delivery of the key to us by the owner. That gives us authority over the premises. We can let ourselves in and admit or exclude others, as we wish."

"This is the thought in Isaiah where God says of His servant Eliakim: 'The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so that he shall open and none shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open.' Dr. Goodchild thought in the Book of Revelation, where we are told that Christ is the One that hath the key of David, and that when He openeth no man shall shut, and when He shutteth no man shall open. That was the thought that Christ expressed in the Book of Luke when He charged the lawyers with having taken away the key of knowledge, not entering in themselves and hindering others from entering. Where the word key is used in the Bible it carries with it this notion of the power to admit, or exclude, not only one's self, but others as well."

This interpretation is so luminous and so illuminating, that had the reverend preacher proceeded logically he would have forced his hearers to admit that the true Church of Christ to day is the Church which possesses the power of the keys, the authority in other words then given to Peter. From this would naturally follow the admission of the claims of Rome and papal supremacy.

But the Rev. Doctor will not proceed logically. After throwing a certain amount of light on the text, and proving conclusively that "some sort of authority" was conferred on Peter which was not conferred on the other Apostles, he jumps to another text two chapters further on in Matthew xviii, 18 and proves that "the same power" which was given to Peter "was conferred upon all the Twelve." "Matthew says, using the plural personal pronouns, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall also be loosed in heaven.'"

Now these texts have undoubtedly a certain parallelism. Let us compare them, but before doing so let us give in full the first passage, part of which has been omitted by Dr. Goodchild. It was after Peter's solemn declaration of his belief in the divinity of Christ that "Jesus, answering, said to him: Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona. . . . and I say to thee: Thou art Peter (Kephias) and upon thee I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."

In these words Our Lord makes formal announcement concerning the constitution of the Church or of the Society He was to establish on earth, and confers on Peter an authority and an eminence greater than that given later to the other Apostles. For (1) Peter alone is made the foundation or Rock upon which the whole Church is to be built; (2) Peter alone receives absolutely and independently the power of the keys, and, besides the power of binding and loosing given to the others, (3) Peter alone receives that power of binding and loosing which is commensurate with the dignity of him who is the foundation and who possess the keys.

In Matthew xviii, 18, Our Saviour in addressing the apostles, uses only the words, "Whatsoever ye shall bind, etc." from which it is clear that as to Peter alone He had already given the dignity of being the foundation of the whole Church, and to him alone He had given the Keys of the Kingdom; these two prerogatives are not bestowed on the other apostles. There can be no misgivings then that the dignity and authority of Peter and the dignity and authority of the other apostles are not the same. From the words of Christ the Catholic logically concludes that since Our Lord established a Church which was to endure for all time, and since He gave the power of the Keys or the supreme authority to govern the Church in the beginning to Peter, that supreme authority must be found in the representative of Peter to-day.

Dr. Goodchild says that Christ gave the keys to the whole world. For example, to David Brainerd, G. Paton, John Wesley, Charles H. Spurgeon, Dwight L. Moody, Harlan Pace, Uncle John Vassar, and "upon all whose eyes are so opened that they can see that the Kingdom of God is at hand." And, addressing his audience, he concludes: "And in your inspired moods, when you see the greatness of Jesus Christ, when you see how real our need is, and how abundantly He is able to satisfy our needs, then the Keys are put into your hands, too, and henceforth you have the high privilege and the awful responsibility of ushering men into the Kingdom, or possibly shutting them out."

It is easily seen where the Rev. Dr. Goodchild and the Catholic part company. The doctor drops a link or two in his process of reasoning, and then takes a flying leap concludes after a superficial comparison of texts that these, "these words (Matt. xviii, 18) are spoken in such a way that, I think, no candid reader can escape conviction that the power is given to the Church and not simply to the official heads of it." To reach such a conviction the candid reader must confound preaching the gospel with universal jurisdiction over the Church, which Dr. Goodchild acknowledges to be the real power of the Keys; he must assume that the power of binding and loosing given in St. Matthew xviii, 18 is identical in its extension with that given to St. Peter; he must be guilty of the sophism that because the universal jurisdiction of the Keys includes all power of binding and loosing, therefore the power of binding and loosing includes the universal jurisdiction of the Keys. He must ignore the context of Matt. xviii, where the power of binding and loosing is given to judges in disputes, and therefore to the authorities only of the Church, and he must close his eyes to this, that whatever is given in Matt. xviii, to the Church is given in a more excellent manner to be the prerogative of Peter.

If men will thus juggle with the sacred words of Christ, and read into them their own meaning instead of the obvious, then all reliable interpretation is at an end, and what is written for our instruction becomes a stumbling block and a snare; and if the blind lead the blind, do they not both fall into the ditch? E. SPILLANE, S. J.

As to "the instance in point," related by "Ex-Attache," that of the burial with solemn ceremonies of the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria, at Vienna, with the consent of Leo XIII, the well informed are aware that the death of the Crown Prince was not self-inflicted, as at first reported. Permission was sought from Rome for the Christian burial of the Prince, and a special messenger was sent to Rome by the Emperor with proof which could not be gaisned that the Prince was murdered. Not until he had weighed these proofs and was convinced that the Prince was not a suicide did Leo XIII allow him to be entombed with the full rites of the Church.

As we have said before, we feel satisfied that "Ex-Attache" will be pleased to add these foot notes to the pages of his diary recording the "severities" of Pius X, and "the charitable view" of suicide taken by Leo XIII.—America.

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HOLY WEEK IN LONDON

The different services during Holy Week at St. Peter's Cathedral, London, were attended by congregations which completely filled the vast edifice. It seemed as if the people were determined to evince the greatest ardor in entering into the spirit of the week's devotions. On Wednesday evening, when the Mass of the Tenebrae was recited, it was a beautiful sight to witness our beloved Bishop, accompanied by Mgrs. Meunier and Aylward, and practically all the priests from every section of the diocese, numbering nearly sixty, march into the sanctuary. Bishop, priests and people were imbued with that intensity of devotion so becoming the close of the Lenten season.

On Easter Sunday the three Masses were attended by congregations which show that there is a steady growth not only in the piety of the faithful but as well in membership. At the Pontifical High Mass, of which His Lordship was the celebrant, the Papal Benediction was imparted to the people. The Bishop, at the end of Mass, addressed the congregation, expressions of love, sincere and warm, coming from his lips, to his beloved people. He prayed that the God may bring to them all the blessings of the Easter time. On this day our Lord has triumphed over the powers of man. This is the day that the Lord hath made. Let us rejoice and be glad therein.

What we have said of the exercises at the cathedral may also apply to the devotions in St. Mary's Church. Father McKoon and his energetic assistant, Father Dolan, have built up in the east end of the city a congregation which they have just reason to be proud, not a few of whom are converts who have been brought into the one true Church by the ceaseless zeal of these devoted priests.

The priests working in the new mission territory recently established in the South, are making interesting reports of the number of Catholics found in that district. Writing to the Church Extension Society, one of the Vincentian Fathers said: "Our territory contains 5,300 square miles; and in the five months of our labor in five countries, we have unearthed 152 Catholics. Three of these are catechumens. The average collection to date has been about ten cents per week. From this it will be seen that, although we have not one chapel in the whole 5,300 square miles, we cannot build any without outside help.

"The Catholics are few, but they will grow. The Protestants seem well disposed. Some different ones of them come to our house every Sunday to attend Mass; but the many stay away on account of the embarrassment they feel in entering the private house of a priest. The harvest indeed is ready; the laborers, if few, are willing, but there is not yet built one granary.

"There is no exaggeration to say that in the past generations the faith has here followed those he loved and revered most on earth into the City of Peace, they give no clue, save, as we have reiterated, that Mr. Gladstone was profoundly human; and we can only leave him, to quote his own words, 'in the never-dying hope of what lies beyond the veil.'"

The interior beauty which is inalienable from Catholic piety lends a distinctive charm to Catholic countries. The shrines of Spain and Italy, the saint-guarded bridges of Austria, the crumbling stone carvings of Brittany, these are among the attractions which Baedeker gravely points out for the guidance and edification of tourists. Whole villages in Bavaria are so decorated that they look like illustrated bibles. Painted on the walls of one house is the stable of Bethlehem with the adoring shepherds; on the next, a muscular Judith hacks away the head of a weakly protesting Holofernes; and a third displays the sacrifice of Isaac, with an angel tumbling headlong from an upper story to his rescue. . . . Although picturesque is not and never will be

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C. M. B. A. Branch No. 4, London Meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month at eight o'clock, at their Rooms, St. Peter's Parish Hall, Richmond street. P. H. KAWANAN, President, JAMES S. McDONNELL, Secretary.

MISSIONS IN THE SOUTH The priests working in the new mission territory recently established in the South, are making interesting reports of the number of Catholics found in that district. Writing to the Church Extension Society, one of the Vincentian Fathers said: "Our territory contains 5,300 square miles; and in the five months of our labor in five countries, we have unearthed 152 Catholics. Three of these are catechumens. The average collection to date has been about ten cents per week. From this it will be seen that, although we have not one chapel in the whole 5,300 square miles, we cannot build any without outside help.

TEACHERS WANTED TEACHER WANTED FOR UNION S. No. 1 Logan and Ellice for the remainder of the year 1911. Duties to commence after Easter. Apply stating qualifications and salary expected to John Dwyer, Jr. Sec. Trustee, Berlinville, Ont. 1911-12.

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