

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 to 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.

- MARCH 12—Sunday—1 Sunday of Lent, Quadragesima.
13—Monday—St Gregory the Great
14—Tuesday—Forty Martyrs Semid.
15—Wednesday—St Zachary P Conf
16—Thursday—Office of the Day Simp.
17—Friday—St Patrick Bishop and Conf and Apostle of Ireland, Doubtless, Holiday with obligation of hearing Mass (Ember Day.)
18—Saturday—St. Gabriel Archang.

[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 Apostolical Church.

LETTER V.

DEAR READER—

40. From what has been said, you perceive the difference between the condition of those who are within the Church, and that of the Private Reasoners, who are beyond the pale of her communion. On the one side, there is faith, on the other side, there are opinions. The Private Reasoners have destroyed the essential basis on which alone, faith could rest securely. They do not deny the revelation itself, but they reject the only testimony by which its contents may be identified, and discerned—and instead of appealing to competent witnesses, such as Christ had appointed, in the organization of His Church, they appeal to their own private speculations. You need not be surprised, therefore, at the errors and contradictions, respecting revelation, into which they have fallen. In those states in which the Sovereign espoused their principle, the civil government has taken into its own hands by sacrilegious usurpation, the power which lawfully belonged to the successors of the Apostles, and of Peter, by the appointment of our Saviour. Thus, in England, Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden, not to speak of other States, the secular authority determines and enforces what the Private Reasoners believe, or at least profess. The rule of the government in England was made less stringent, than in the other States, and accordingly, England has swarmed with all kinds of sects, schisms, and heresies.—The same is the case in this country, where there is no restraint at all. A large number, perhaps a majority, of those who have inherited the birthright of reasoning out their doctrines of Christ, by reading the Bible and judging for themselves, have no fixed ideas of Religion whatever. Those of them, on the other hand, who profess some formula of creeds and confessions of faith, either effervescence into fanaticism, so as to drive out sober-minded people, or else sink into indifference, so as to tolerate the most glaring contradictions, as the only way to escape disputes, which, as they have no certain method of determining truth from error, by the process of private reasoning, generally end in a split, producing two sects instead of one.

47. In the Catholic Church, the process is that which the Saviour appointed; that which the Apostles taught and practised; that which their successors through all ages, and in all nations, have never ceased to inculcate and employ. If you would desire to be instructed in the fullness of Christ's revelation—if you would desire to be made partaker of the riches of His grace, and of the merits of His redemption, you have but to seek admission, and to become a member in the discipleship of Christ by communion with his Church. She is spread throughout the world, and you have but to apply to the nearest of her

Priests or Bishops, to learn from him, what is her doctrine. He will not, in his reply, give you his opinion, but he will give you the attestation of her belief, as received from Christ and His Apostles, and as held during eighteen hundred years. You may consult other Priests, and other Bishops; and on these points of revelation, you will find no doubt, no discrepancy, but all will speak as with the same voice, and give you the same reply; so that, in the attestations of the individual Catholic pastor, you have the universal attestation of the whole Catholic Church: the same as if its two hundred millions of witnesses stood by, saying, "yes, that is the faith which we have all received, which we believe and teach."

48. If you had lived in the fifteenth, or in the seventeenth, or in the third century of the Christian Church, and desired to know what Christ had revealed, on similar inquiry you would have found a corresponding process and answer. I do not say that you would have found the Catholic faith in the seventh or in the third century, presented in the same written form of attestation which it received at the Council of Trent. I speak of it as to its substance, and not its form—I speak of it as the living consciousness which, at all periods, subsists most intimately and most intimately and most perfectly in the Church herself. But the reason of this formal difference is, that the form in which her doctrine is presented, from one age to another, is more or less determined by the nature of the peculiar errors, which the Private Reasoners have brought out at different times, to oppose, or vitiate the truths which she had received from her Divine Founder,—of which she was charged by Him, to be the guardian, the witness, and the channel of communication to the generations, and generations, of our fallen race, then, and still unborn. A revelation had been made by external means, and, so to express it, in a human manner best suited to the condition of our nature, as composed of a soul and a body. Our Divine Saviour employed the human voice as Man, to communicate through the sense of hearing, the knowledge of his Divine doctrine. His miracles, too, fell under the cognizance of the senses. The manner of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension, were not exceptions to this law. When He departed, those to whom His Apostles carried the message of His revelation, had to depend on the intermediate authority of these witnesses, appointed by Him. But as they were sent forth to represent their Divine Lord, in carrying on His work, He armed them with the credentials necessary to confirm their statement, by the power of miracles, which they, also, performed.

49. To the unconverted they had to preach a new doctrine, on the part of Christ and of God. The principal question, then, was whether God had sent them. This they proved, as their Divine Master had proved to them His mission by miracles. The witnesses of either were as competent to testify to their miracles, as they were to testify to any other public occurrence, depending on the evidence of the senses. It is remarkable that Christ gave an efficacy to the preaching of the Apostles, more striking than had ever been manifested in His own. When they, after having received the Holy Spirit, also through an outward and visible medium, preached in Jerusalem, we read of three thousand, at one time, and five thousand at another, who immediately renounced the fallen synagogue and joined their communion. They appointed and associated with themselves new Apostles. Matthias was designated in the place of the traitor Judas; Paul, after his miraculous conversion is appointed; Ti-

mothy and Titus and others are mentioned, as new links in the Apostolical chain. In the meantime, the faith is radiating and extending to larger, and larger circles, with the increase of new adherents to the new society; and the Church had already extended to the east and west—had penetrated many of the Roman Provinces, and became known in the Imperial Capital itself, before the Scriptures of the New Testament were written;—since they record several of the things of which we are speaking, and since such events must have preceded the writing in which they are recorded.

50. Thus, the truths of revelation proven by the testimony of God Himself, in the miracles of Christ and His Apostles, became the foundation of the Church; the very life and consciousness of her being. The doctrines which they had received were facts, since they had been revealed. And these, once established by miracles, and once become a species of Divine Incarnation of the Word of God, in the consciousness of the Church, were to be sought and received, exclusively from her authorized testimony and teaching. In her alone they had existence.—She alone had received them from Christ. And although, composed of mortal beings her members and pastors were subject to the laws of our common morality—yet, as an external, visible society, organized on the plan of our Redeemer, her moral identity is instruction;—whilst the Spirit of truth, divinely given, constitutes her inward and immortal life. She is the same witness to day, and the same teacher, of the same truths, that she has been from the commencement. The only difference is that the formal mode of presenting her doctrines had been more or less determined from age to age, by the special character of the several heresies, which it was a part of her duty to condemn and repel. Thus, if the errors brought forth by the Private Reasoners of the 16th century, had been proclaimed by Arius and his adherents in the 4th, the form of her doctrines, suited to preserve and maintain the deposit of faith committed to her by Christ, would have been substantially the same, emanating from the Council of Nice, as from the Council of Trent.

51. Not it is manifest that, if Christ appointed a Church to preserve and communicate His revelation, that Church must be infallible. That He commanded His Church to teach all nations is undeniable. The precept is indeed addressed to the Apostleship of the Church—but out of the Communio of that primitive, united and universal society, which we call the Church there is not, and cannot be, any true Apostleship. Reasonable evidences for proving the Divine mission of those to whom the command of our Lord was addressed, being once furnished, the obligation, on the part of those to whom they were sent, of being instructed in the Christian faith, in other words of being taught by those who were appointed teachers for them, is a necessary consequence.—So that whoever would know all things, "whatsoever Christ hath commanded them," is bound by the acknowledged precept to seek the Apostleship, and learn the things of revelation from those whom Christ had appointed teachers thereof, in His own stead. He has commissioned her to go to all those who were not present when he spoke Himself, to carry and convey His teaching, declaring that he would be with them all days, even till the consummation of the world. Catholics, therefore, do but honor Christ in recognizing the infallibility of His Church. It is not for the exaltation of her ministry, but for the good of her members, for the security of all, that He created her with this essential of His own nature. In fact, it is the infallibility of Christ,

which constitutes the inerrancy of the Church. 52. This she herself has ever attested as a fact.

It is a portion of her doctrine. This she has never ceased to attest. It was but in the exercise of this prerogative, that she would have dared to condemn the heretics. At spring in the apostolic age, in any of the ages that have since intervened. The unity of her doctrine, its universal extension, the deep and religious reverence for the authority which she exercises are but consequences of it. It is attested by every decision of hers, determining the difference between the first deposit of revealed truth, and the human opinions which unfaithful men have from time to time, put forth in opposition to her teaching. It is attested by the advocates of all heresies that have ever opposed her—in the only way in which heretics could afford such testimony.—Whenever she condemned their errors,—then, they discovered that, she was not only a fallen Church—but not before. They infamously, as soon as they were numerous enough, arrogated to themselves her authority, and attempted to play the Church of God, by enacting and enforcing laws, of an ecclesiastical character, with a tyranny over their own members, unparalleled in her annals. They could not rise to her eminence, but they would drag her down to their own level;—by denying her that infallibility, which they might not dare claim for themselves. In every page of the early Christian writers which illustrates her doctrines, her infallibility is supposed as a matter of course, and beyond the reach of cavil. I would not be consistent with my purpose in these letters to multiply extracts from their writings, to prove the truth of what I have just stated. But I shall make it convenient to do so, if any one of our Private Reasoners professing to be acquainted with the early writings of Christian authors, shall deny what has just been said.

53. But in truth, dear Reader, there are some among these Private Reasoners so blindly prejudiced against the medium through which Our Saviour would have us to be instructed and sanctified, that they would sooner reject revelation itself, than receive it through the teaching of the Catholic Church. For them it would be of no use to quote the admirable testimony of the Augustines, the Ambroses, the Gregories, the Cyrils, the Basils and the Chrysostoms of the earlier ages of the Church. These illustrious and saintly writers attest the facts of religion in their time, and in reference to the Church their language is stronger than Catholics in our day, are accustomed to on the same subject. But our Private Reasoners do not wish facts, opinions are sufficient for them, and their own opinions especially, are highest in their estimation. Their opinions have decided that the Church is fallible. If anything could be found in the early writings going to corroborate this view, that would suit them; but facts such as found in the pages of those authors are fatal to their position.

Yet, it is surprising to me that professing belief in Christianity, they do not see the necessity of an unerring authority, even by the light of private reason; that they do not see the fact of its institution in the Holy Scriptures. What could our Saviour have meant when he said to his Apostles, "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark xvi. 15. What could he have meant when he said, "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." Luke x, 16. What could he have meant when he said, "And I will ask the Father, and he