

that I am?" *Simon Peter* answered, and there is nothing in the *matter* or form of the reply to indicate that he was replying for others. That his confession was made for himself and not for others appears farther from the fact that our Saviour in replying addresses him specially and in the second person singular. There were other occasions on which the twelve did profess their faith in their Master, and almost in the same words, but the narrative shows it clearly. Thus when Simon was saved from sinking in the waves, "they that were in the ship came and worshipped him (Jesus) saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

An example still more to the point may be found in John vi. 67-69.—Then said Jesus to the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. In the first of these passages the disciples speak for themselves, in the second Peter speaks for them, but the construction clearly shews both facts, while the construction of the text shews with equal clearness that Peter speaks for himself and under the impulse of his own ardent faith and feelings.

A farther inquiry here presents itself as connected with the point now under discussion. Was our Lord's reply addressed to Peter personally or to all the disciples? The question has been answered in different ways, according as writers have looked upon the address to Peter as personal or the reverse. Doubtless he was answered in the same character in which he spoke, and for the reasons given, we believe the confession to have been his own personally and that the reply was made to himself specially.

In proof of this let us carefully mark how the reply of our Saviour is expressed. And I say also unto *thee*—*thou* art Peter—I will give unto *thee*—all addressed to the individual.

Here we are called upon to notice the connection, "And I say also unto thee," words which clearly connect the address of Jesus with the confession of Peter already made. Peter said, "Thou art the Christ." "Jesus replies, "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter"—I assent to thy confession—I accept, I reaffirm it—I am the Christ, the Son of the living God, "and I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church."

This name Peter was by our Saviour given to Simon in the beginning of his discipleship, as related in the first chapter of St John, "And when Jesus beheld him he said unto him, Thou art Simon, the Son of Jonah, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a stone" (or Peter). The name may have been given to indicate the general strength and firmness of his character.

The word *Petros*, or Peter, signifies a stone. It is very questionable whether it ever signifies a rock. The word which in the next sentence is translated rock is indeed a closely related, yet a different word. *Petros* denotes the stone, *Petra*, different in gender, denotes the firm, immovable rock.—Some argue strongly from this difference of meaning, that they cannot here refer to the same thing, and that Peter, or *Petros*, cannot be the *Petra* on which the Church is built. But other and more decisive reasons will be given.

When our Redeemer said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church," did he refer to Peter himself or to the confession which he had just made of Christ as the Son of the living God? The following reasons appear decisive in favour of the latter view:—