

It is not every voice that is worth training but it should be remembered that a weak voice may be so merely for want of development, and that with careful training and exercise it may become a really powerful one. The voice of some of our best singers gave little or no promise when first put under training. When a number of boys are tried for admission to a choir, if they have never learned to sing, it is a difficult matter to tell which really have voices and which have not. About a few of them there is no mistake, for they can sing at once and show what their voice is like. About others there is greater difficulty in deciding whether they have voices worth training or not. In their cases it is wise to let them attend the practices and listen for a while, and to exercise their voices daily, if possible. Eventually it may be found that some at least have both voice and ear, though at first there was no evidence to testify to this.

For the development of a voice, undoubtedly the greatest means available is daily scale practice; this will gradually strengthen it, and indeed make it, by drawing it out. A month or two of diligent work of this kind will, under ordinary circumstances, produce a very perceptible increase of volume of tone. To the vocalist himself, this difference is, of course, not so apparent as it would be to a stranger who had not heard the voice in the interim. Vocalists, therefore, who take stock of their progress must never forget this, for they are sometimes discouraged by their apparent want of progress, and think they improve but slowly, whereas they may be making steady but real headway.—*Standard of the Cross and the Church.*

THE CHAIR OF PETER OR THE CHAIR OF CHRIST.—II.

(Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette)

The importance of the words of our Lord Matt. xvi. 18) in the limit of the meaning sought to be attached to them by the Roman Church, must be our apology for considering them somewhat further.

And first it must strike most unprejudiced persons as peculiarly unfortunate that the Roman Church should have selected the most fallible of all the twelve Apostles to be its first Infallible Head.

Of course it was impossible it should be otherwise when once that Church had seized on this particular passage as the foundation for her extraordinary claims. She was then in a manner tied to Peter out of all the Apostles, and was forced to buttress up her position irrespective of Scripture and history.

Most candid persons will confess that it was peculiarly unfortunate to single out for this wonderful privilege the apostle of all others who denied our Blessed Lord three times, and who was so shortly after these words were spoken rebuked by Christ for his inconsistency. It was only the exigencies of the position she claimed, and to support which she invoked this text, that forced the Church of Rome into putting at the head of her system the apostle to whom our Lord addressed the terrible rebuke—"Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." *

There was only one disciple who afterwards fell into a greater depth of shame and humiliation, and that was the apostate Judas. If the one apostle is known for all time as the betrayer of our Lord, the other must be always remembered as the apostle who denied Him thrice with oaths and curses. Of course we are thankful to know that by the grace of God

Peter recovered himself from his awful fall, but not the less must that fall be dealt with, if we are to consider the nature of the Roman claim.

But it may be pleaded, perhaps, that our Lord anticipated the recovery of Peter, and further endowed him with a special grace of "light and leading," when He said to him, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren"; and again, when He gave him the threefold commission to feed His sheep. Unfortunately for the Roman argument, we do not see Peter endowed with any superior enlightenment or grace of infallibility in the after history of the Church. On the contrary, we find that he signally failed when a great principle was at stake, and was withstood to the face by Paul, "because he was to be blamed" (Gal. ii. 11). He erred in a very serious matter of Church doctrine and order, when he withdrew at Antioch from fellowship with the Gentiles, in consequence of the fear he had of the Jews, and that in the face of the independent revelation he had formerly received on the subject (Acts x). Irresoluteness and moral cowardice are not the characteristics of a great or infallible Leader.

But if it were true that after all Peter had been really placed in a position of superior jurisdiction over the rest of the Apostles, surely we should find some trace of this in the writings of the New Testament. So important a fact could scarcely have been left as a mere guess for future ages of the Church to make good. But what are the facts of the case? We find Peter sent by the other apostles on a mission to Samaria, and not the sender (Acts viii. 14.)* We find James, and not Peter, presiding over the important Council at Jerusalem which decided the vexed question of circumcision, and of eating of things offered to idols. The judgment on that occasion was delivered by James and not by Peter (Acts xv. 13) And when he has occasion to refer to his brother-apostle, the great name of Peter, on which so much stress is laid by Rome as the Rock of the Church, is not in the mind of James at all. He says, "Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." Again, it is to be observed that so far from obtaining jurisdiction over the Roman Church, which was essentially a Gentile Church, it was decided by the Apostolic Body that Peter's apostleship should be confined to the Jewish converts (Gal. ii. 7-9)

Then we have two Epistles acknowledged to be written by Peter, but in neither of them do we find the vaguest hint that the apostle laid claim to any superior authority. On the contrary, he speaks of himself in the most humble manner: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder" (he was only a fellow-elder or presbyter), and he earnestly entreats them not to show themselves to be "lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock" (1 Pet. v. 1-3).

In Peter's Epistles we look in vain for trace of any consciousness of his having received a charter of supremacy in the Church of God. It is inconceivable that if he had received such a special privilege as that which is claimed for him, and for those who now call themselves his successors, he should not at least have given some indications of it in his Epistles. It is beyond human possibility that a man who had such an honor received from such a Source, and one of such transcendent importance to the whole Church, could have remained silent on the matter. We find Paul in very distinct terms (Rom. xi. 13) "magnifying his office": but Peter, who, according to the Roman theory had a great deal more cause for doing so, remains absolutely silent about this alleged gift.

*What would be thought in the present day of the College of Cardinals deputed L. o XII. to go on a mission to Spain? But this would be a parallel case supposing the Roman theory true.

Not one word is mentioned to give even a hint that any special privilege was conveyed to him by Christ, and if not by Christ, how by anyone else?

Then again if it were intended that Peter should have been the infallible head and instructor of the Church of God after our Lord's departure, surely we would expect to find in his writings those great fundamental truths on which the Church has built up her system of doctrine. On the contrary, it is to the writings of Paul rather than to those of Peter we have to look for this. The only original contribution to theology provided in the writings of Peter is the very difficult passage in his first epistle referring to our Lord going in the Spirit to preach to the spirits in prison—a passage on which there have been many contradictory interpretations, and which remains to this day a great difficulty for commentators. Paul's writings, on the other hand, are a storehouse of rich and ripe theology. They fashioned the theology of Augustine, which in a large and distinctive measure moulded that of the whole Roman Church. Looked at then from this point of view, the question of authority should be decided in favor of Paul and not in that of Peter. Indeed, Paul laid claim to a universal jurisdiction, of which Peter knew nothing, when he declared he had "the care of all the Churches" (2 Cor. xi. 28.)

PAROCHIALISM.

I bespeak special interest in this subject from our laymen, not merely in the way of giving, but in the way of intelligent interest; and my conception of intelligent interest includes something very much wider, nobler and grander than a mere ambition to extend what we call 'the Church,' or 'our Church,' as an institution having a certain genius, type of devotion and distinctiveness, as contrasted with other bodies of Christian people in this land. Those distinctive characteristics may be most admirable and necessary, and such we believe them to be. Nor would we for one moment suffer our estimate of them to be depressed, but surely there is something more in the Protestant Episcopal Church than protestant episcopalianism. Surely that article of the Creed, 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church,' rises into a sublimer atmosphere than that, and challenges us to beware of giving the lie to our profession of faith, by administering the Church as though it were Protestant Episcopalian only, not, over and above that, Catholic. Which is the nobler conception of a Church, I ask you? Which is more in harmony with the all inclusive unselfishness of our Lord's headship over the Church. And we must further ask ourselves how much longer this Church, with its Catholic organization and history, and with its possibilities of Catholic development, is to be fettered, cramped distorted, imprisoned, asphyxiated, by an idea foisted upon us from unfriendly sources, and fostered within us by influences that are as unfriendly, the idea that the *integer* of our system is the *local congregation*, and not the *diocese*. The spirit of parochial independency is to be distinguished from the spirit of faithful devotion to home interests; but how is the spirit of independency differentiated from the spirit of home fidelity? The former is inordinately careful of itself. It provides for itself on a basis of self-indulgence. Its pride in its own achievements swells out to proportions which admit no place for any pride in the success and prosperity of far-away brethren, or brethren near by, who can only live as they have help. This is the spirit of the Pharisee, who passes by on the other side, rather than of the good Samaritan (a type of Christ our Lord), who forgets himself and the business upon which he is engaged, and stops, and lets his heart control his time and his money, in order

*A modern Infallibilist has endeavoured to avoid the awkwardness of all this by saying that they were different persons.—Church Quarterly Review for April, 1878.