

words as denoting the charter of privilege which modern Romanists claim for him, is it not inconceivable that they could have been omitted in the Gospel, which was written, as they believe, under his supervision?

The power of the Keys was, no doubt, committed to Peter, and he used it in a very special manner, when on the day of Pentecost he opened the door of the Church to Jewish believers, and later on to Cornelius and the other Gentile converts. Thus we freely acknowledge that our Lord bestowed a signal honor upon St. Peter when He made him the first "steward of the mysteries of God" and of "His household the Church," but it was not to the exclusion of the rest, for we must remember that the other Apostles likewise held the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and were stewards, and notably St. Paul, who was the first Apostle as far as we know, to carry the Gospel of the kingdom into Europe, and who declares that he "was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostle" (2 Cor. xi. 5).

Now there are other ways of looking at this important subject, which we propose to consider, but we have said enough to prove how untenable when judged by the light of Scripture is the position of the Church of Rome in this matter. The text on which, of all others, that Church has been pleased to build her claim to an infallible sovereignty over the souls of men, gives way when fairly and dispassionately examined, and with it gives way her entire position. It is true that the words run, as we have said, in mighty characters round the dome of the imposing temple of St. Peter's at Rome, impressing the thoughtless traveller with an awful sense of the grandeur and power of that Church, but the words yield another and a different meaning to the man who does not suffer from the strange glamour, and who sees in them not ground for claiming, on behalf of one man and his alleged successors, a spiritual dictatorship and a world-wide empire, but rather a glorious revelation of the security of all those who build their everlasting hopes upon "the Rock of ages," upon Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, that "only Name" (as St. Peter tells us) "under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Christ has indeed built His Church upon a Rock, and it is because that Rock is His glorious Self—His Manhood and His Godhead united in one ineffable person, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. "Who-soever believeth in Him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. ix. 33).

PRAYER.

By THE BISHOP OF SPRINGFIELD.

Prayer is the converse of the soul with God, asking for things needed, or which we think we need, or pleading for the removal of things which distress us, or to be protected from things which we dread.

Obviously we may approach God either alone, or in the company of others; that is, we may either engage in *private* or in *public* prayer. But the condition imposed by the altered circumstances under which we pray in the two cases must be different. When we address God by ourselves, we are freed from all restraint, save the reverence begotten by the conviction expressed in Hagar's ejaculation, "Thou God seest me;" we may use words or dispense with them, and speak, as Hannah prayed, with our hearts alone, or we may employ a book as an outline, or directory, or we may follow it closely, reciting its prayers and thus making them our own. In private prayer we go to our Father in Heaven as untrammelled as a child would go to its earthly parent. Provided we are reverent and appreciate the solemnity and blessedness of coming into God's

presence, we may do absolutely as we choose in our mode of address.

But when we come to *public prayer*, the conditions are essentially altered. We are, as the word implies, in the company of others, at least two or three, present before God for the same purpose, to address Him in prayer. How shall we proceed? Shall each speak for himself at the same time? That would breed confusion and God hates confusion. Shall one presume to speak for the rest without consultation with them? That would be an exhibition of intolerable presumption, and would not be endured by reasonable and sensible people. Shall he who ventures to speak for the others consult his companions on every occasion of public prayer, if it be possible, and then trust to the moment to give audible expression to what he understands to be the common wish of the greater number of those whom he represents? That would not be reverent at all to God, nor loyal and fair to His constituents, since ill formed sentences and crudely digested speech, when listened to by others, are not respectful from an inferior as addressed to a superior; and in extemporaneous discourse there would be no security that the one who prayed would recall all that his associates, few or many, desired him to present to God, nor that he would rightly remember, nor correctly present what he did recall. Public prayer, therefore, necessarily involves agreement on the part of those who pray, and such agreement can only be secured by previous consultation. Extempore public prayer, in the strict sense of the term, would seem to us an impossibility unless the leader were directly inspired by the Holy Ghost. Extempore means on the spur of the moment, without previous meditation, but public prayer is the expression of desires and apprehensions common to a number of persons. How can any one person know these beforehand, and if he knows them and arranges them to present to God beforehand, how can his prayer be called extempore? O, it is answered, his words are uttered without premeditation. The only advantages, then, which can result from trusting to the moment to open our lips to the King of kings and the Lord of lords in public is that we are likely to treat our God as we would not, any of us, treat the Mayor of our city, or the President of the United States, in incoherent speech, or ungrammatical sentences, in language unsuited to the occasion. Is there any merit in such an exhibition either in the sight of God or man? Does God delight in bad English or vulgar slang? Do well bred people find profit in listening to their own wishes clothed in another's stammering speech? Were extempore prayer possible in the sense of gathering the desires of all who are present on every occasion of public worship and presenting them to God in unpremeditated language, it would be abhorrent to our sense of reverence and our own comfort as decently educated people. But extempore prayer in this sense is an impossibility, hence we are brought to face the fact that what is ordinarily called extempore prayer is not such in the true sense of the term. The subject matter is prepared beforehand by one man for his brethren, and he presumes to offer up in their behalf what he thinks they ought to ask for or deprecate, in such language as he can command, good, bad, or indifferent.

We have been speaking of prayer, and of the two kinds of prayer, private and public, and we have been guided in what we have set down by our Blessed Lord Himself. He makes the broad distinction, and prescribes, as of obligation resting upon us, both kinds of prayer, assigning to each a charter. He prescribes *private* prayer and gives it a constitution when He says: (S. Matt. vi. 6) "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

He prescribes *public* prayer and gives it a

constitution when he says: (S. Matt. xvii. 19-20.) "Again I say unto you that if two of you shall agree upon earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done of them of my Father, which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Here we have the two kinds of prayer separated by our Lord Himself, and each marked with its own distinct character, and each sheltered by its own specific law. The one in the privacy of the privacy of the closed chamber, personal, private, when one is alone with God; the other, in the presence of others, and the condition of acceptance resting upon their agreement as to what they ask for by those who pray. What is this but Common Prayer? Public Prayer must be Common Prayer in order to comply with Christ's law of public prayer, agreement; and how *extempore public prayer* can secure agreement from those who listen to it, except on conditions which are practically impossible, we cannot see. The congregation can not know beforehand what is going to be said, and when they hear, they may not approve, or some may assent and others dissent. Ere they have concluded whether they agree or not to the first sentiments expressed, the extempore leader in prayer has traveled far away from them, and they have lost much that has been said, and find themselves bewildered and utterly unable to follow and intelligently decide upon their relation to what is being poured forth, ostensibly on their behalf, as offered up to God in public prayer.—*The Living Church.*

PITY YOUR CHILDREN.

Here are a few simple statements of fact which we implore parents, by the love they have for their darling children, to consider and weigh carefully:

1. *"By Nature we are the Children of Wrath,"* Eph. ii, 3. Alienated from God through sin. That is, when we are born, we have a sinful nature derived from our parents, which keeps us apart from God; although as infants no actual sin may be committed.

2. *In Baptism God Adopts the Child into His Own Family*—His holy Church, and this stain of a sinful nature is put away.

3. *The Church of God is the Family of God*; all who are made Members of that Family are brought into *relationship* with God; they are His children, brethren in one family, Christ is their elder brother. We cannot understand why, or how this should be, but *there must be some good in being adopted by God as His child*. The Jewish children had this privilege when they were eight days old. Are Christian children to be worse off than they?

4. *Baptism is the Only Mode of Initiation into the Family of God*. No one is a member of that Family (a Christian) until he is baptized; as soon as he is baptized he is a member (a Christian); whether he be a *faithful* or *unfaithful* one is another thing. An infant unbaptized is no more a Christian than a Jew. This is not a matter of opinion but a *simple fact*. No one has a *Christian name* until he is baptized.

[For example:—A man is not a member of the Free Masons until he is initiated. His Father may have been a Mason; he himself may believe in Masonry, carry out its principles in his life and even earnestly advocate it, yet he is no Mason until he is initiated.]

Ought we not to hasten to put our children into the arms of God at Holy Baptism? Is it not unfair to the darling children—is it not cruel to them to neglect their baptism, when, to say the very least, it cannot possibly do them any harm. And if the Church is right, there is a *marvellously great blessing* in Holy Baptism, and loss in its neglect. The Saviour pleads for the children with outstretched arms,