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WAS SIMON PETER THE CHURCH'S ROCK?

I

WE SHOULD be more certain to address ourselves to the deciding of this question discerningly and fairly, the further we keep our subject out of the atmosphere of Papal claims, be the same valid or otherwise. This we can readily do, inasmuch as the main substance of our evidential data appertains to pre-Reformation days and indeed far behind.

In Matt. xvi. 18 our Lord expresses Himself either direct in the Greek language which we have before us, or in the local Aramaic, which we have not extant today and from which Matthew later, in recording the incident, translated the words into Greek. The latter view is eagerly adopted by those who answer the above question affirmatively, and no one, whatever his answer may be, need hesitate to indulge them in that preference, whether Christ spoke normally in Aramaic rather than in Greek, or else was, with His Galilean contemporaries, indefinitely bilingual. The trend and diction of this first of the Gospels would encourage us to be thus partial. "Matthew primarily addresses his Gospel to Palestinian readers" (Edersheim); it has been "ever recognised as the Hebrew Gospel, showing how the New grew out of the Old Testament" (Bampton Lecture, 1864). Turning then to the Old Testament in the parent Hebrew, let us take stock of a particular figure of speech, a playing with or upon personal names, which it fairly plentifully exhibits, and see whether this bifurcated phrase in the Gospel may not be adjudged to come under its heading. The word-play takes this form: the meaning somebody's name bears is, expressly or obliquely, made to match some publicly manifested entity that has come somehow to be concomitant with him. There seem to be at least nine examples of this.

(1) "Nabal is his name and folly (*nēbālāh*) is with him," dogging his movements and acts (1 Sam. xxv. 25). This is the most perspicuous sample of the lot. Abigail declares that her husband's mentality or disposition tallies with his name. The masculine name is lined up over against its cognate feminine form (which, here anyway, is an abstraction), as in our Matthew text, with its *Petros . . . petra*. She does not say that all folly

is integrated in him. (2) "His name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace (*shālôm*) in his days" (1 Chron. xxii. 9). His royal career will correspond to his name. It is not that all peace was somehow to be incarnated in him. Be it noted that in these two instances the "and" bespeaks no identity at all, but correspondence. (3) Again, Levi (in his tribe) is to be linked up (*lāvāh*) with the Tabernacle staff (Num. xviii. 2). His name and his tribal status are to correspond. (4) And Japhet is to be granted a territorial expansion (*jpth*) in harmony with his name (Gen. ix. 27). (5, 6, 7) In correspondence with their progenitors' names, the tribes of Judah, Dan, and Gad are to have Divinely assigned to them a political destiny—inter-tribal prestige (*jdh*), administration (*dn*), marauding vicissitude (*gd*) respectively (Gen. xlix). (8) The Kenites' forebear made for himself a cliff domicile like an eagle's nest (*ken*), which was in harmony with his name Kain (Num. xxiv. 21). (9) And Jabez prays that his earthly career may not be troublous, in keeping with his name (1 Chron. iv. 10).¹

This Hebraic figure of speech has percolated to the New Testament. And, significant to say, Matthew has hardly opened when he treats us to a sample. In ii. 23, having noted that the child Jesus, with Joseph and Mary, "turned aside" (a verb from which comes "anchorite") with incipient humbleness into the inconspicuous Galilean town of Nazareth, he recalls the term *netser* (*nezzer*) applied to Messiah by the prophet Isaiah (xi. 1), and declares that His home-location chimed in with that designation. Melchizedek's name is harmonised with his Divine Antitype's justifying office (Heb. vii. 2). "Hebrew of the Hebrews" that he was, Paul assures Philemon that he may now look for service tallying with his name from the reformed Onesimus ("profitable"). And in Phil. iv. 3 may scholars discover in "yokefellow" a proper name: Synzygus is asked to reconcile two Gospel co-workers who are at variance and so perform a good office corresponding to his name.

It can be seen that in each of these cases the name had attached to the bearer before ever the counterpart-entity hove in sight—that the latter is always something of a detachable nature, a characteristic, a status or situation, a predestined experience; and that the personality named is never in a state of identity

¹ As to places also, Cheyne notes how Mic. i. 10f. presents a preordained correspondence between names and fortunes.

with it, but simply of verbal correspondence. So, in Matt. xvi, had John, say, or Matthew uttered the confession instead of Peter, doubtless there would have been no word about a "rock", though there might have been an advertence to God's "grace" or "bounty".

II

"Your name, Peter (rock), tallies finely with that revelation vouchsafed to and confessed by you, for I am going to make it the foundation rock, the doctrinal basis, of My Church." If Christ spoke, in effect, thus, the construction of His statement is on all fours with that of those foregoing statements: whereas, if He meant anything else, the construction remains without any previous parallel. This Gospel has already recorded an utterance of His that prepares us for this doctrinal "rock" metaphor: "He that heareth My words is like a wise man that built his house upon the rock" (vii. 24). Four Epistles later give recognition to a faith foundation (1 Cor. iii. 10; Col. i. 23; Heb. vi. 1; Jude 20). It is only in the faith-confession that Mark and Luke, the other Synoptics, interest themselves in the reports they also give of this interchange between Christ and Peter. The substance of the truth revealed to Peter in its dual items ("the Christ, the Son of the living God") equals John xx. 31 ("the Christ, the Son of God", belief in whom brings life), which the latter Apostle, writing later, sets forth as the epitome of his whole Gospel, according to Westcott—which, according to J. H. Bernard, embodies "the faith he aims at inspiring in his readers". It, the truth now specifically revealed to Peter, is "the main article" of our religion and "the distinguishing doctrine of the Christian Church" (Salmon).

It is entirely the same whether we say that the Faith or Christ Himself be the foundation rock, though exponents who wish to maintain that there is a multiplicity of interpretations here—instead of properly two only—distinguish these on their lists. In 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11, the Faith and Christ are interchangeable as the foundation. "Before the Faith came" (Gal. iii. 23) can only mean "before Christ came". This is true of "faith" subjectively understood, when it is God-given, as well as objectively. He and our faith alike "overcome the world" (John xvi. 33; 1 John v. 4). "To me to live is Christ" because "I live in faith in the Son" (Phil. i. 21; Gal. ii. 20). "Faith is

as comprehensive as Christ," says Denney, "it is just the other side of Christ alone"; hence Luther was so right in stressing faith alone. Similarly Christ is "our *hope*" (Col. i. 27; 1 Tim. i. 1), that is, the ground of it. Likewise Christ and *the Gospel* are the same. In "for My sake and the Gospel's" (Mark viii. 35; x. 29) who will essay a discrimination? Or, in "the fellowship of the Son" and "of the Gospel" (1 Cor. i. 9; Phil. i. 5), "the afflictions of Christ" and "of the Gospel" (Col. i. 24; 2 Tim. i. 8), "preach Christ" and "preach the Gospel" (through Acts)? It is the same with *the Word* (1 Peter. i. 25; Titus i. 3; Acts x. 37, R.V., and John, *passim*): "preach Christ" and "the Word" (Acts xiii. 5; xv. 36, *versus* xviii. 3, 23). Also, *the truth* (John xiv. 6; v. 32, 33; viii. 32, 36): "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" here, and "great is truth and it shall prevail" in 1 Esdras iv. 41 (Apoc.) are both probably traceable to some common adage, the Greek verb *ischuein* being common to both.

In the Old Testament the term "Rock", when figurative, is a synonym for God. Indeed in translating it in such places the Septuagint and Vulgate versions alter it to a Divine name. In the New Testament, *petra*, in whatever places it occurs additional to this, denotes the Son of God. But, exclaim Drs. Chase and Scroggie, Christ cannot be in the one passage both foundation and builder. Yet He can be both shepherd and door, in one passage: likewise David's (divine) Lord and (human) Son. He can be both author and object of faith in Acts iii. 16; the witness to the Truth and the Truth itself (John xviii. 37; xiv. 6). He can be both priest and sacrifice in Heb. vii. 27; He can both give and take his Church-bride in Eph. v. 27. He can be foundation-stone and corner-stone alike in Isaiah xxviii. 16 and ("if we can believe Peter himself," says Leighton) 1 Peter ii. 8, since stumbling suggests a ground location. Anyway, are we here in the region of metaphor or of bold literality? No trouble is made about Peter being foundation and door-keeper both.

III

In advocacy of the interpretation that the rock is Simon Peter, the first argument usually advanced is that, assuming our Lord spoke in Aramic, the words for "Peter" and "rock" would have been identical (*kēphā*) in that dialect, seeing that

they are found to be so in the sister dialect, the Syriac (*kīphō*), and so the two entities in the mutually facing clauses must equally be completely identical. But (1) we have seen that this is quite contrary to the analogy of the Classical Hebrew (Kain cannot be identical with his nest). (2) In Aramaic, even if the noun-forms were the same, distinction could still have been made in the pronoun "this", which had variant masculine and feminine (covering also neuter) forms—*dēn*, *dēk*, versus *dā*, *dāk*. (3) This is precisely what takes place in the Syriac, the younger sister, the New Testament version of which is extant, and naturally contains Christ's statement. The eminent textual specialist, Mrs. A. S. Lewis, dealt with the point in *The Expository Times* of 1913 (p. 383). "Where Peter is furnished with a verb or pronoun these are always masculine: where a stone is meant these adjuncts are feminine—as in French *ce Pierre* or *cette pierre*. The old Syriac version represented by the Cureton MS., along with the 'Authorised Version' of the Syriac Church, leaves us in no manner of doubt: they simply and strongly support the view held by the ancient Orthodox Church of the East and also by the Reformed Churches of the West." Her statement met with no answer. And doubtless she herself was not aware that, ever 200 years before, the same argument had been put forward by Bishop Beveridge (*Works*, in 1845 ed., p. 582) who pointed out that the use of the masculine "this" (*hōnō*), instead of the feminine (*hōde*) which had been used, could have made "rock" identical with Peter. The Syriac liturgies, which followed later, accordantly maintain the "faith" view, as may be seen from Renaudot's Collection—those of St. Peter and of St. James (so called), of Clement and of Gregory (ii. 33, 149, 194, 257, 461). (4) As to the New Testament Greek, Lightfoot with reason can see no explanation for the non-use of the simple "on thee", if the foundation was meant to be Peter. Certainly, following "Thou art Peter (by name)" the repeated noun was uncalled-for and tautologous, and, as all the subsequent history shows, contributed nothing to clarity or decisiveness. And (5), assuming that God, the Holy Spirit, had anything to do with the writing of the Matthew Gospel, why, if the relationship be that of identity, was the grammatical variation, *Petros*, *petra*, introduced? If the entity in both clauses was identical, and if *petros* may mean either rock or stone (R.V., John i. 42), why was it not kept in both, and the reader saved trouble as to exercise or

otherwise of discrimination? It was not, as Plummer alleges, at that time, limited in its use to the proper name, for it was already to be found twice in 2 Maccabees and in compound form in Job xli (Sept.), if in its smaller sense. If he and others urge that the variation proceeded from *petra* to *petros* because the personal name required that form, there is equal ground for urging that it proceeded from *petros* to *petra* because an abstractness (like faith) prefers feminine forms. There are, of course, many who, accepting the former course of variation, believe, with Augustine (who knew no Hebrew), that *petros* was meant to differ from *petra* as part from whole, and that accordingly Peter was to regard himself as a stone on the Christ bedrock. The view, however, does not do justice to the Hebraism behind the author's pen, and hardly manifests a due sense of proportion or of essentiality to the subject in hand, though it is perfectly correct in the way of corollary, and in fullest harmony with Peter's own statement in his first Epistle (ii. 4, 5).

IV

The second argument employed by supporters of the "Simon" view is broached to us at the outset in a most speciously philosophic fashion. Faith must be linked with Personality: else we have only dogma. We at once concur, calling to mind the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. "Each in his own order": we contemplate the Father who thought, and the Son who bought, and the Spirit who inwrought—God Triune, who is both far off and also most near (Jer. xxiii. 23). But the personality meant is quite other. Is it an awakened sinner's own? That was a fine Gospel statement: "Justifying faith is not purely dogmatic, because it is trust in a Person, though neither is it purely undogmatic, since it includes and rests upon the knowledge of something which that Person has done." No, it is the personality of each co-sinner that bears witness of Christ's salvation. Of these Simon Peter was the first, and therefore was the Church's rock-foundation. "The man holding his confession is the rock" (Newman Smyth). "On thee and on this confession of thine I will build My church" (Salmon). The faith is seemingly secondary to this witnessing personality. And that day was the Church's birthday, it is frequently claimed—"I will build" from now on. To say that it was built on the Gospel Faith here revealed, instead of on Peter, is to say that

Christ's Church was built on a dogma, Dr. Scroggie tell us (*The Christian*, 1.11.45). From so helpful a teacher, through so valued a medium, the writer must gratefully remark, one would not expect to be thus invited, except very indeliberately, to contemplate our heavenly Father revealing dogmas, and the Son of God felicitating those put into possession of dogmas, in view of the notoriously invidious sense which that term bears in common parlance.

Turn we to John iv. 28-42, which the harmonists date nearly two years earlier than Matt. xvi. 18. "Many", and "many more", Samaritans have come to believe in Christ as "the Saviour of the world", after He has conversed with the woman at Jacob's well. Who constituted the rock-foundation here? Christ cannot have been such, the Simon advocates have already told us, in the Matthew case; and He equally cannot have been such, reason and reverence would tell us, of mere parts of a church, and therefore not of this Samaritan body—though "witness" is the slogan word of those advocates, and these had heard Him too, as well as the woman, and He in His human capacity is abundantly described as "witness" (John iii. 11, 32; viii. 18; xviii. 37; 1 Tim. vi. 13). If the woman as "first" witness qualified for the honour, her fellow-citizens do not seem to recognise the claim. And Peter does not figure here at all. How does this Samaritan section of Christians at this stage stand relative to "My Church" of Matt. xvi? "I will build" it is taken to mean that it only began at and from that moment. But we have plenty of New Testament futures that carry a retrospective reference also, in varying degree: see the Beatitudes; 2 John 2; Rev. xxi. 6, etc. He could have been building for two years past on the rock of faith. Several other cases of "believing" antedate this Matt. xvi episode, which ordinarily are brushed aside as amounting to no more than "miracle" faith, but the Samaritan case fairly calls for a re-consideration as to whether these also were not of a deeper nature, as it likewise "illustrates for us our fragmentary knowledge of the Lord's whole work" (Westcott), and should caution us against a too exclusive concentration on certain single statements.

V

In Matthew's 17th verse Christ heralds a truth-revelation on the score of its being Divinely granted, and, for the moment anyway, relatively discounts humankind. And then, in the very next breath, forsooth, He bolts off from that truth-revelation, never for the time being to return, and proceeds to aggrandise a human person, and that one whom presently He will have to rebuke as a Satan!

As soon as ever the Church's foundation has become thus humanly personalised to their mind's view, those who favour that spiritual situation fall away into two opposite camps, of minimisers and maximisers. The former for the most part cautiously aim at a curtailment of what the human foundation is to be regarded as amounting to. Some would whittle it down to a mere numerical assignment—"Churchman, No. 1". But more usually Simon Peter is viewed as having been "Witnessing Churchman, No. 1". He as such may be held to be the foundation of the whole Church (just as Paul could call himself his converts' "father") without infringing on Christ's honour (Salmon). As though it were as feasible to commit that infringement on the Deity absolute as on the incarnate Mediator, and as though it would not matter if we were to facilitate such infringement for others, provided we ourselves kept clear of it! The position then usually gets further eased by the super-addition to Peter of the other Apostles. Eph. ii. 20, "the foundation of Apostles and prophets", is deemed to justify this, but most older expositors have judged the genitive here to be that of agency rather than of opposition; and the similar symbolical Rev. xxi. 14 cannot by itself be pressed. There is an undue leaning on metaphor upon metaphor in the reasoning here. The Church of saved sinners is visualised as a temple—metaphor, no. 1; then, a foundation is bethought of, in the shape of Peter, or the apostles, or others still—metaphor, no. 2, and duly affixed or subjoined for use in argument. Eventually the foundation is made to comprise all witnessing Christians to the end of time, and none seem left to constitute any superstructure strictly, but those who will be most nearly contemporaneous with the hour of Advent!

We shall say little about the other, the maximising, section. With them the inch has long since become an ell. The human personality dominates the Faith. Peter's alleged successor

determines what the Faith is to be. We forbear also from quoting samples of the blasphemously deifying expressions that are applied to that person. Can the other supporters of the "Simon" view wholly exonerate themselves from responsibility relative thereto? Note one argument of that junta which claims empire over the Christian Church. A foundation must last as long as the superimposed edifice, or else the building will fall; the mortality of the Jewish high-priest, though he was never regarded as a foundation of the Old Testament Church, is accounted in Hebrews (vii. 22) an incurable drawback: and, since Peter died, who now occupies that indispensable place of his, if not he who claims to do so—the Pope? And our spokesmen for the human personality *plus* revealed faith theory of the Church's foundation, instead of preening themselves on their broad and philosophic judgment, should, by demonstrating their "Witness No. 1" explanation to be scripturally authentic and no wishfully thought and factitious one, provide their plain and less intellectual brethren with an answer they could digest and avail themselves of to this straight challenge.

VI

John i. 42 is constantly being adduced, in the interests of the human personality view, to establish that Christ at their first encounter penetratingly diagnosed in Simon Barjona an innate strength of character, and on the score of it promised that, at a future date, which eventually turned out to be the Matt. xvi day, he should be invested with the surname Peter, whatever that might precisely betoken and portend. The verb "behold" (*em-blepo*) there, however, in certainly seven of its ten occurrences, denotes no internal scrutiny at all, its prefix often just meaning "at" (Liddell and Scott). And on the whole issue the verdict of Bishop J. C. Ryle will take some confuting: "The new name was given with a special reference to the change which grace was to work in Simon's heart. Naturally unstable, he was at length to become a firm, solid stone in the Church and finally to testify his unshaken adherence to Christ by suffering martyrdom" (as John xxi. 19 predicts). H. A. Birks seems justified in asserting that to describe his "character" is quite impossible, that all written descriptions disappoint. He displays weakness as well as strength. If others deem him strong, Farrar would count him weak. Edersheim puts it that he had

courage to sally out, but not to hold out. One can be physically brave and spiritually timid and weak.

At the outset, what does "Andrew brought him to Jesus" imply? Expositors never somehow pause over the verb *agein* here. The Lord Jesus never stood on ceremony or had any use for etiquette. Andrew in his own case had not provided for any conventional introducing, no more than, say, the "sinner" woman. *Agein*, simple or compounded, bespeaks either a prior subordination (to be put into effect), or disability (to be relieved), or involuntariness (to be conciliated, when not coerced) in the objective person, in all its occurrences of that kind (nearly 150) in the New Testament, and none of these except the last can have obtained in the relation between Andrew and Simon. What could have made Simon disinclined to come to Christ? What but a spiritual timorousness, a sense not only of utter demerit but of the peril and the likelihood of inconstancy on his part, were he to enlist as a disciple? On the fish-catch miracle, that took place soon after, Edersheim's remarks are worth reading—how Simon had been listening to all Christ spake from the boat-pulpit; how utterly miserable it must have made him! Could such as he ever make a proper man-fisher?—and then presently, "I am a sin-full man".

The Lord, however, knew what grace could make of such a man, and forthwith bestowed the promise: "Thou art Simon by name, hitherto a 'hearing', teachable soul: henceforward, despite thy misgivings, thou shalt begin to earn the name Peter, a helpfully rock-like, stable and staunch, disciple." How do so many make out that the promise remained a dead letter till the Caesarea day of Matt. xvi? Did any postponement attach to the announcements of "shall be called" in Gen. ii. 23; xvi. 11; xvii. 5, 19, etc.; or "He shall be called John", Luke i. 60? Was the use of the surname Boanerges postponed (Mark iii. 16, 17)? Since "Thou art Simon" means "art and *hast been* Simon", why should it not have been the same with "Thou art Peter" in Matt. xvi? Jacob's is a parallel case: his new name, Israel, promised at Peniel, was not deferred, and, though it did not herald any immediate maturity spiritually, he yet makes spiritual headway, and towards the close his sun shines out in a cloudless sky till it sets in a radiant glory. Peter likewise by grace "held on his way" and, notwithstanding his strangely recurring fits of alternating bravado and funk, proved a normally

beneficent and stabilising factor among his fellows, as much as or more than Andrew or John. The Resurrection put new life and confidence into him, as he states (1 Ep. i. 3); and Pentecost came with its ripening of Christian understanding and infusing of a godly courage. He learned for himself and he taught others that we are kept, not by self-resolve, but by the power of God through faith. Still, unless a foundation may possibly signify little more than nothing, so long as such words remain recorded as his "I never knew Him" and "Thou shalt never wash my feet"; and his Lord's "Satan, thy thinking is of human pattern and not God's", "O thou of little faith", and "Simon, sleepest thou?" and Paul's "he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel", it is too much to ask of us to see in Peter distinctively the Church's Rock. God can honour and reward His devoted imperfect servants in ways which will not be calculated to unbrace the confidence and reliance of His less established ones.

VII

Only once is Christ said to have addressed him with the name Peter, and that in a seemingly warning irony on the brink of his denial (Luke xxii. 34), a circumstance which would rather convey that the predicted name was destined to suggest itself to appreciative co-believers more than to enshrine a Divine verdict of express distinctiveness. In the reinstating charge of John xxi. 15-17 it is the original name Simon that is reiterated. The Apostle himself never gives a hint of this peculiar privilege having been conferred on him. Later in this Matthew Gospel he asks: "What are we to get who have left all to follow Thee?" A string of reminiscences of pre-Pentecost sayings and doings of the Lord could be culled from his Acts speeches and his Epistles, but no reference to this "rock" matter. Nay, where once he is led to speak of the living Rock, Christ (1 Ep. ii—*petra* is in v. 8), he makes no exception of himself from among the mass of believers who spiritually become living stones by emplacement thereon. And if Peter is extra-modest, how comes it that his Christian compeers are so reticent and oblivious on the point? Why should the "Simon" name ever be found needlessly lingering, with or without "Peter", on tongue or pen? How, in the naming in sequence of two or more Apostles, does Peter at times fail to be given first place (1 Cor. iii. 22; Gal. ii. 9;

John i. 44)? We advisedly pass over the numerous passages that preclude any "maximist" Petrine supremacy. As for the view or attitude of the Apostle Paul it is enough to adduce Gal. i and ii. His indeed would have been the human personality best suited to fill the rôle if such had been essential as a constituent element with objective Gospel faith, *ab initio* and *pari passu*. "No mere man, before or since, has filled so great a space in the scheme of Providence" (Arnot). Peter in due course gives way to him (if inexpressly), as Lightfoot notes. He, equally with Peter, had his Divine "revealing" independently of "flesh and blood" (Gal. i. 16). And he was the first in the early Acts period to herald Christ as "the Son of God" (ix. 20); his was "the Gospel of God's Son". But clearly, he like Peter, would have been the last to claim to be our foundation rock.

"And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." "Simonite" expositors prudently discover for us no connection between this clause and what precedes. Hades, as a synonym of death, occurs three times in the New Testament, as well as in several Old Testament places (including the "Messianic Stone" passage of Isaiah xxviii), and affords a direct antithesis to the term "living" in Peter's confession. If "it" means the rock, as could be, and if that rock was Peter, the promise has lacked fulfilment, unless he has been perpetuated in successive popes. If, as seems to be the universal view, the Church be understood, then recollection becomes flooded with the numerous New Testament passages in which Christ is said to mean life to His Church and people: e.g. "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself"; and "the Son makes alive whom He will" eternally, so that "they shall never perish, nor shall any one pluck them out of His hand". Moreover, our Lord is here, as in a number of other places (though seldomer than Paul), using the *litotes* figure of speech, i.e. a modest understating of a situation being predicated. There is not going to be any such thing as a drawn battle with Hades. Our "and" is gloriously consequent, and not merely additive. Who then indeed can see in this clause the figure of Simon shining forth as conquering leader—our fellow-creature that, three verses on, out of fleshly sentiment would have stripped us of redemption—and does not rather recall the Apostolic paean: "O death, where is thy victory (since sin's sting has been nullified)? God giveth *us* the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Greek emphasis in reference to the pronoun "to thee" lends some help and presents no difficulty, in the Matthew utterance, by its assignment and its withholding in turn. Christ, after He has said: "To *thee*, with a singular appositeness, in view of thy name Peter, I can tell it, that this revealed and confessed faith will be the rock whereon I will build My Church," adds promptly: "And I will give to thee the keys", divesting the pronoun of emphasis and singularity, contrary to the rule of this Gospel in cases where such would be befitting (see iv. 9; xi. 23; xiii. 11; xiv. 7; xx. 14) and so permitting the inference that the custody of the keys was, as the Fathers mostly taught, no more restricted to Peter than was the binding and loosing (xviii. 18). The dictum of Ben Whichcote, the old Cambridge Platonist, fits into the situation: "A doctrine which hath but one text in its favour will be found to have not even that one."

VIII

The third claim made on behalf of the "Simon" view is that the other is largely the outcome of "revolt" from Papalism (Scroggie). Let us then see how matters stood and tended as to the interpretation of the passage prior to the Reformation, before we concede that our cherished Protestant faith was responsible to that extent for bedimming the light of God's Word.

Lightfoot states that the "faith" or "confession" view was "the universal interpretation of the Fathers for many centuries". Mrs. Lewis has, as we have seen, written that it was the view held by the ancient Orthodox Church of the East. The American Romanist Bishop Kenrick, at the time of the Vatican Council, published a statement that sixty Fathers stood for the "faith" or "Christ" view, as compared with seventeen for the "Simon" view. (Romanists generally extend the list of Fathers to Bernard, d. 1153, and non-Romanists to Gregory, d. 604; hence Kenrick's number of writers to cite from.) The latter view is in fact traceable back, as far as is known, to a heretical source, a writing called *Kerygma Petri*, emanating from the Ebionite sect (second or third cent.) which entertained and vented the most malignant hostility to the memory of the Apostle Paul, mainly on the score of his anti-legalist Evangelicalism (Lightfoot, *Galatians*, app.). If the other view had been rooted in such associations, how oft and loudly we should be hearing of it!

The following is a non-exhaustive list of theologians and divines of the distinctively medieval period who proclaimed the "faith" or "Christ" interpretation. To begin with, the learned W. Palmer (in his *The Church*, II. 484, a century ago) named ten Popes that held this view. We can add the Venerable Bede (d. 732); Sedulius, the Irish commentator; Bp. Haymo (d. 853), a Benedictine, whose judgment is all the more valuable that he slavishly reproduced Scriptural explanations which had secured prevalence in the early Fathers; Archbishop Rabanus Maurus (d. 855), "probably the most learned man of his time—in scriptural and patristic knowledge he had no equal" (*Catholic Encyclopaedia*); Archbishop Aelfric, York (d. 1051?); Cardinal P. Damien (1072); Abbot Rupert (d. 1135); St. Bruno "Astensus" (1123), called "the brilliant defender of the Church"; Cardinal Hugo (d. 1264); Blessed Albertus Magnus (d. 1280), guide and master to Aquinas; Thomas Aquinas himself (d. 1274) held explicitly that Christ was meant rather than Peter; Ludolph the Carthusian (d. 1270); Blessed Simon de Cascia (d. 1348) in his *Life of Christ*; Nicholas de Lyra (d. 1340), "among the foremost exegetes of all time" (*Catholic Encyclopaedia*); Tostatus (d. 1465), Spanish bishop, "the wonder of his age for knowledge" (*Catholic Encyclopaedia*), indignantly rejects the Simon view; Dionysius, the Carthusian (d. 1460); Cardinal Cusanus (d. 1464)—"nothing was said to Peter which was not said also to the others"; the Dominican Garranus of Merton College (early in the sixteenth century); Archbishop Thomas, Saint, of Villanova (d. 1555); Arboreus of the Sorbonne (d. 1550) protests that Peter would be a *debile fundamentum*; Friar Titelmann (1530), commended by Bellarmine for learning; Nyder, famous Dominican preacher, definitely rules out Peter; as also does John Ferus, notable Franciscan preacher. Gregory VII and R. Maurus expressly contrast Petra, the Rock (Christ), with Peter. The ancient Collect for SS. Peter and Paul's Vigil may be included; also Erasmus. It may be noted that nearly all the references to Peter (excluding him) emerge as the Reformation period approaches. The Reform tempest is brewing and a fresh anchor is being thrown out. There *has* come off a "revolt", but the direct reverse of what has above been alleged. Peter in the Church-rock capacity has hardly been heard of till now—and even now the Council of Trent holds on to the original view. Since then,

that revolt has been abetted by non-Roman teachers, so eager to display broadmindedness that they are ready to surrender all outworks, so sure are they of their citadel, forgetful that they have unstable co-members unduly ready to imagine, and open to be persuaded, that both may be untenable. They have gained some ground for their view with the help of question-begging adjectives—"obvious" and "natural"—and others more scornful: witness the language quoted from C. A. Briggs, and its cowering effect, in Plummer's Exposition. Yet, since that outburst (1907), several authorities have supported what E. A. Litton describes as "the older and better interpretation"—the International Critical Commentary, Peake's Commentary, McNeile's, Levertoff's, R. F. Horton's; Mrs. Lewis has written as above, and Scott Holland, to mention some noted by the writer without attempt at any research. Like Augustine and Jerome long before him, Farrar, subsequent to his *Life of Christ*, returned to the "faith" or "Christ" view in his 1 Corinthians commentary. Ridley, in face of the stake, maintained that view at some length, and we are happy to feel assured that the illustrious martyr was left labouring under no delusion, in that hour so solemn both to him and to us all. Even in that particular his candle, under God, will never go out. The commission of inquiry, constituted of Lord Justice Scripture, and Justices History, Philology, and Reason, whose judgment we have sought on the above question, return a decisive answer, No.

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