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### Thou Art Peter

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THOU ART PETER.  
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A thesis  
presented to the faculty of  
Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Mo.  
by

Reinold Waldemar Janetzke

in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of

Bachelor of Divinity.  
\*\*\*\*\*

1931

TU ES PETRUS ET SUPER HANC PETRAM AEDIFICABO ECCLESIAM MEAM, -  
 "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church". These words, written in gigantic letters of gold, appear around the beautiful dome of St. Peters in Rome which the genius of Michelangelo erected above the dust of a Galilaean fisherman. As the Church of St. Peter in Rome, the grandest and most eminent basilica in the world, triumphantly rises above the grave of this Galilaean fisherman, just so does the ecclesiastical system of Roman Catholicism find its foundation upon the confession of this Apostle and upon the special privileges which he received from his Master because of his recognition of the man Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God". Probably no other phrase has had so great an influence upon human history, both ecclesiastical and secular alike ( for we cannot study the one apart from the other), as these words spoken by Christ to Peter in caesarea Philippi, probably in view of that abrupt rock-wall on the top of which lay the ruins of an ancient castle. This scene may have supplied the material suggestion for Christ's words "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it".

Our whole civilization from the time of the last apostles down to the present day has been created by the Catholic Church and by the reactions against it. The Catholic Church correctly claims to have developed from the Church of the Apostles, - from that branch of the Apostolic Church which was founded by Paul and Peter at Rome (that is, if we accept the presence of Peter in Rome).<sup>1</sup> Whether or not the Catholic Church of the medieval era and of the modern

1. For an admirable treatise on Peter's presence in Rome see F.E.Kretzmann: "The Last Twenty-five Years of Peter's Life", Concordia Theological Monthly, Feb.1931, pg.105.

period adhered and still adheres to the doctrine promulgated by the Apostles is another question entirely; but the fact that the Catholic Church is a development, at least outwardly, of the Apostolic Church cannot be denied. For centuries she remained the mistress of the world and her word was final: Roma locuta est, causa finita.<sup>4</sup> The Renaissance, the revival of classical art and learning, questioned this authority thru such men as Wycliffe, Savonarola, Huss, Peter Waldo, et. al. This questioning of papal rights and privileges reached its zenith in the early part of the 16th century, when an unknown Augustinian monk dared to speak and write against the inner corruption of the church and the usurpation of power on the part of the papacy from beyond human realms. Luther himself did not effect the Reformation, for this great eruption of the social and religious orders was not the work of one man or even of one generation but of many men and of several generations. Unrest and dissatisfaction, the precursors of war, were already prevalent among the people and Martin Luther, the greatest living individual since St. Paul, had the courage and the conviction to issue ultimatum after ultimatum and finally to declare war. The canon was already loaded and what Luther did was to fire it. We are told that in the Alps Mountains an echo or a slight agitation of the air may at times set a sleeping avalanche into motion, the overwhelming power of which may spell disaster to entire villages. Luther's theses were this echo which gave motion to the avalanche: to the question regarding the origin and authority of the church. Did Christ establish the church? Is she His work? Does the spirit in which the church was instituted prevail in the church today?

1. A discussion on this phrase will be given later.

Is the Catholic Church of today in accord with Christ's wishes or did He have something entirely different in mind when He beatified Peter? In order to give answer to these questions it is necessary to examine the foundation of the Catholic Church, namely, that much mooted passage in the Gospel of St. Matthew spoken by the Messiah to His disciple Peter on that memorable occasion in Caesarea Philippi, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto 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 will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." If it can be proved that this passage does not mean what Roman Catholics say it does, then, as Fortescue agrees, it would be the refutation of their position and the downfall of their hierarchical absolutism. The answer to this question is the scope of this thesis. It is our aim to present the various interpretations of this passage and to discuss them in the light of Holy Scriptures and of the Church Fathers, paying special attention to the claims of the papists.

Before we can discuss the subject proper, there is yet a question<sup>-tion</sup> before us, which is really the first problem that confronts the student of biblical theology: He must make sure of the genuineness of the document upon which his work depends. In other words, we must answer the following questions: Are these words in Mt. 16, 18 genuine? Were they spoken by the Son of God? Are they from the pen of St. Matthew or are they perhaps the addition of some later editor or interpolator?<sup>-er?</sup>

And after we have discussed this question of textual authenticity, we shall digress for a moment and devote a chapter to a matter which may not be directly, but we feel, nevertheless somewhat indirectly connected with the subject at hand, and which, we think, will aid us in considering this passage more objectively than we might otherwise do. The contents of this chapter will be a comparative study between the rise of Christianity in the Catholic Church and the rise of Buddhism in the northern kingdoms of Japan and China.

MT. 16,18 IN THE LIGHT OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM.  
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The authenticity of this passage has been exposed to countless bombardments, suffering especially at the hands of Protestant critics. The textual critics ( here the Germans lead the field) consider the verses, Mt.16,17ff, as an interpolation. They say that as soon as the priority of Mark is established the presence of these words in the Gospel of St. Matthew, who, according to them, copied from Mark, cannot be explained: ' for how can Matthew relate more than his informer?' Although Mark describes the scene near Caesarea Philippi, (Mk.8,27ff.), where these words, (Mt.16,17ff.), were spoken, he fails to make mention of them, which fact is of greater weight when one considers that Peter, the person concerned, is said to have been his informer. The other evangelists also fail to mention these words. Moehlman says that the history of the primitive church cannot be explained with that statement in the background."It is unconceivable that a saying of Christ so central as the medieval theory of the papacy makes this should have been left unrecorded by three out of the four evangelists; that it should have been omitted by two ( one of them the Petrine evangelist, Mark) of the three who narrate the incident out of which it is said to have arisen; and that no reference should have been made to it by any other New Testament writers, in particular by Paul." <sup>1</sup>

Secondly, the critics say that these words are an interpolation because they destroy the sense of the context: The blessed words "Thou art Peter" in v.18 and the appellation "Satan" in v.23 stand in too great a contrast. It is difficult to conceive how Christ

1. Moehlman, Conrad H: "The Catholic-Protestant Mind" pg. 10.

could pronounce so singular a blessing upon Peter and in the same breath call him "Satan"; and instead of "upon thee I will build my church" the words, "thou art an offence unto me, for thou savorest <sup>not</sup> not the things that be of God, but those that be of men". Furthermore, it is not in harmony with the other narratives. Why should Christ have been so surprised when Peter confessed Him, that He gave him special powers, since Matthew himself records the instances where Christ was hailed as the Messiah long before Peter confessed Him as the Christ? In Mt.8,29 the two men possessed of the devil confessed Jesus; also the two blind men ( Mt.9,27); the disciples in Mt.14,33; the woman of Canaan (Mt.15,22). Another objection raised by the critics against the genuineness of this text is the presence of Pauline language. The word  $\xi\kappa\kappa\lambda\iota\sigma\iota\alpha$  occurs but twice in the Gospels, in Mt.16,28 and 18,17. The Jewish expression "flesh and blood" is not used by Christ anywhere else but here. Moreover, the Hebrew expressions for binding and loosing refer to the binding and loosing of a cord or chain but not to locking and unlocking effected by a key. And finally, the argument from the eschatological <sup>-cal</sup> discourses of the savior. The critics say that Christ would hardly have instituted a religious organization which would defy the storms of time, because He felt the kingdom of heaven was near at hand. Christ constantly told His disciples to be on the lookout and always prepared because the Son of Man would come as a thief in the night,<sup>1</sup> and as "the lightning that cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west".<sup>2</sup> So also Mk.13,30: "Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done." Again Mt.16,28: "Verily I say unto you, there be

1. Mt.24,43.
2. Mt.24,27.



2.

some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Joseph Schnitzer, who holds these words to be an interpolation, laying great stress on the argument from eschatology, concludes his essay "Hat Jesus Das Papsttum Gestiftet?" with these words: "Wir stehen am Ende unserer Untersuchung. Wir haben uns die Frage gestellt: H a t J e s u s d a s P a p s t t u m g e s t i f t e t? Aus tiefster Ueberzeugung koennen wir, muessen wir nun darauf antworten: N e i n e r h a t e s n i c h t g e s t i f t e t, e r h a t g a r n i c h t d a r a n g e d a c h t, e s z u s t i f t e n. Mit dem nahen Ende und mit der bevorstehenden Weltkatastrophe rechnete er, nicht mit ungezaehlten fernen Jahrhunderten. Er hat die Worte Mt.16,18ff. niemals gesprochen. Sie werden von den aeltesten Quellen unserer Kunde ueber Jesus nicht ueberliefert, und auch in der aeltesten Kirchengeschichte toent uns ihr Echo nicht entgegen. Den zwei ersten Jahrhunderten sind sie noch fremd und erst allmaehlich schleichen sie sich in den evangelischen Text ein. Sie bilden den Anfang jener ungeheuerlichen Faelschungen, mit welchen die nach und nach geradezu wahnwitzigen Ansprueche der mittelaelterlichen Paepste auf die Welt herrschaft sanktioniert werden sollten. Wir koennen nur dem Ergebnisse beipflichten, zu dem auch Hugo Koch gelangt ist: 'Das Dogma, dass Jesus Christus Mt.16,18f. das Papsttum eingesetzt, und dass es darum von Anfang an einen Rechtsprimat und Universalepiskopat in der Kirche gegeben habe, der von Petrus auf den Bischof von Rom uebergegangen sei, - dieses Dogma steht mit der Geschichte in unversoehnlichem Widerspruch'."

Although the critics question the authenticity of this passage, Catholics and most Protestants regard it as genuine. To

disregard the view of the critics would be an unscientific procedure; but it would be just as unscientific to adopt their view in the face of so little evidence. Since there is a wealth of controversy regarding the genuineness of the text it would be unfair to say that the papacy is an unbiblical institution because Mt.16,18 is reputed to be an interpolation. The fact that it is a matter of controversy necessitates an examination of the passage in order to see whether or not the content is in agreement with the rest of Scriptures. However, there are also arguments in favor of their authenticity. No Ms. or version has any important variation. Commentators as a rule just mention the fact that their genuineness is questioned and proceed with their exposition as if they were genuine. Furthermore, "the passage must have been of very early <sup>date,</sup> before there could be any reason to assert a primacy of Peter which he had not hitherto enjoyed." The critics say that since Mark, Luke and John do not record these words, they must be a later addition. But have we not just as much authority, and even more, if we consider the words in relation with the rest of Holy Scriptures, to say that the omission of Mt.16,17ff. by Mark, Luke and John plainly shows that they did not find in them the sense which the Papists ascribe to the passage? Finally, we feel as if no one had the right ( unless, of course, on the authority of good evidence ) to reject a passage of such central importance that stands in the Gospel and has been accepted as canonical for so many centuries. Had it not been for the interpretation which the Romanists placed upon it, we venture to say, the authenticity of this Logion of our Lord would never have been questioned.

1. Foakes-Jackson: "Peter, Prince of Apostles", pg.66.

II.

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY  
AND THE RISE OF BUDDHISM IN CHINA AND JAPAN.

Did Christ establish the Catholic Church? At first glance this question seems unnecessary because the governorship of this body can be traced back uninterruptedly to the time of the Apostles. Furthermore, the words and deeds of Christ form the central part of the worship and ritual of the Catholic Church. The repetition of the sacrifice on Calvary is a daily occurrence. Every year the Romanists accompany their Master in a series of impressive services from the manger at Bethlehem to the tomb in the garden, and from the Resurrection to the Ascension. From all appearances it seems as if this church has but one object, namely, the glorification of Christ. Even if this were true the matter would not be conclusively settled, as we shall now see.

If we look at the contemporary religions to Christianity at the beginning of our reckoning of time, we find a parallel example in Asia, where Buddhism, a heathen cult, was finding numerous adherents. At this time this oriental cult was finding entrance into the northern kingdoms of Japan and China. In a short time powerful church organizations arose which were in many instances similar to the Christian churches. If we study the rise of this heathen cult in these particular countries a little closer we shall see that the worship of Buddha in these northern kingdoms was not in harmony with the teachings of the historical Buddha. Gautama Sakya-muni, the founder of this cult, did not at all recognize the worship of any being characteristic of a god. Instead he was a philosopher who, because of the many sorrowful experiences he had made, had come to

the conclusion that life is sorrow and the earthly enjoyments are but vain and futile, amounting to naught. When convinced of this philosophy he preached it among the people telling them that the simplest way of freeing oneself from pain was self-abnegation, the abrogation of ones will to live. When his teachings were introduced into the northern countries, a church was organized which called itself after the founder and made him the object of their worship, calling upon him in their prayers and in their holy writings. We see here that this church, although it claims to be built upon Buddha, is essentially very different in principles and practices from those which Buddha advocated. This church made Buddha into a god and erected his pictures and statues in temples as objects of worship, although he himself had condemned every form of worship of any god-like being. Buddha had taught that man must deprive himself of all temporal desires and physical gratifications,

"Scrupulously avoiding all wicked actions;  
 Reverently performing all virtuous ones;  
 Purifying his intentions from all selfish ends" - <sup>-kwan,</sup> Siau-chi-kwan,

and gladly welcome

pain and death as ways leading to nirvana. His followers taught the direct opposite by making him into a god and calling upon him to fulfill their temporal desires and to save them from all bodily harm. An amulet inscribed with his name is worn by Chinese Buddhists as a preservative from sickness and evil spirits. Throughout these countries, especially in Japan, there are colossal statues of Buddha everywhere in which he is worshipped as a miracle-working god. These Buddhists also have a Madonna who had been a nun before she was canonized. What is more, a hierarchy has arisen with a high priest at the head who is characterized as an incarnation of Buddha.

7.

He is known as the Dalai Lama or the Grand Lama. His seat is in Tibet from where he plays an important role in the politics of Asia. On the death of the Dalai Lama another one is elected according<sup>-ing</sup> to the ancient ceremony of election in order that the succession might not be broken.

The development of Buddhism in the northern countries of Asia presents the following as a plausible conclusion: It is possible for people having the best intentions to honor a great leader or teacher, that by doing so, they act contrary to his teachings, and by worshipping him and calling upon his name they commit that which he forbade. And so when we consider the Catholic Church and see to what extent it honors Christ and the saints - the liturgy and many festivals that have been devoted to the honoring of the name of Christ and of the apostles and other leaders of the church,- the question arises: What if Christ had not wanted this? Perhaps Christ would not approve of this form of worship and of the papal hierarchy? What if Christ intended something entirely different from what the Church has been teaching and practicing?

Such then are the questions that arise in ones mind after noticing the differences between the teachings of the Buddhists in China and Japan and the doctrines originally taught by their founder.<sup>-er</sup> If the development of Buddhism gives rise to these questions then it<sup>it</sup> justifies the old question of Peter's primacy in Rome: Did the Church understand Christ correctly, and was it accord with His teaching, when she placed His words spoken to Peter, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church" in gigantic letters of gold around the dome of St. Peters? The Vatican Council declared

this as dogma stating that the Gospel narratives show that Christ directly promised and committed to the Apostle Peter a primacy of jurisdiction over the entire Church. The doctrine of infallibility found its basis in Lk. 22,31-32, where Christ speaks to Peter directly, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren". The Catholic Encyclopedia says regarding this passage: "This special prayer of Christ was for Peter alone in his capacity as head of the Church, as is clear from the text and context; and since we cannot doubt the efficacy of Christ's prayer, it follows that to St. Peter and his successors the office was personally committed of authoritatively confirming the brethren - other bishops, and believers generally, - in the faith; and this implies infallibility." " If this was the intention of Christ to establish a primacy with infallible authority regarding doctrines of faith and morals, then Protestantism from its very inception falls under the curse of the Savior. Then Luther sinned against Christ when he refused to bow before the throne of Peter. And as far as the Protestant faith is concerned, it is a matter of ROMA LOCUTA EST, CAUSA FINITA. The fate of Protestantism is very evident from the encyclical of Pope Pius XI issued not long ago on "The Promotion of True Religious Unity" in which he stated that the unity of Christians cannot be otherwise obtained than by securing the return of the Protestants "to the one true Church of Christ from which they once unhappily withdrew" and that in this Church no one is found and no one perseveres in it " unless he recognizes and accepts obediently the supreme authority of St. Peter and his legitimate successors.... " Then follow words which remind one of the

Savior's call to the laboring and heavy laden, - if only they were spoken with the same sincerity and self-sacrificing love. " Let them return to the common Father of all; He has forgotten the unjust wrongs inflicted against the Holy See and will receive them most lovingly, if, as they repeat, they desire to be united with Us and Ours, why do they not hasten to return to their Church, ' the mother and mistress of all the followers of Christ ' ? " Yes, why do we not hasten to return to the welcoming arms of this church? Why can we not return to her, to the homeland on which our forefathers were raised? Was Luther justified when he expressed the wish that God might fill His people with a hatred for the papacy? Without a doubt we are standing before one of the greatest religious questions of all times. We must answer this question not from prejudice and partisan feelings but objectively and in perfect equanimity.

1. Moehlman, Conrad H: "The Catholic-Protestant Mind", pg.9.

## III.

THE PAPAL CLAIMS AS BASED ON THIS PASSAGE -THEIR PRESENTATION AND REFUTATION.

The highest Roman tribunals, general councils and the pope have decreed that the Roman pontiff is the vicar of Christ, His viceregent, on earth and the visible head of the Christian Church. His official title gives one a fair idea of his claims. The following title is that of Pius XI: "His Holiness the Pope, Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the Temporal Dominions of the Holy Roman Church, Pius XI, Achille Ratti," Now Gloriously Reigning." The Roman pontiff bases these claims on the ground that he is the successor of St. Peter, on whom, so the church claims, Christ conferred the office of ruling the entire Christian Church. This is the real meaning of papal primacy.

The Roman Catholic Church finds a foundation for these claims in two scripture passages, both containing words of the Savior addressed to Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt.16,18), and "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep" (Jn.21,15). Both passages are inscribed on the base of the dome of St. Peters in large gilt letters so that one can read them from the pavement below. Of the two passages Mt.16,18 is the more important and has given rise to more discussion than any other passage in Scriptures. For the Romanists it is the magna charta of the papacy. The Romanists say that in this passage Christ solemnly promised to the

1. Achille Ratti was his name before he was elected.



apostle Peter the office of head of His church; that this promise was the reward for Peter's confession of the Master as "the Christ, the Son of the living God". In response to this noble confession Christ said: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The Catholics say that the prerogatives promised here are manifestly personal to Peter, because, as is evident from the words of Christ, his profession of faith was a personal confession and not made in the name of the other apostles. Their claim is: Christ pronounced on the Apostle, distinguishing him by his name Simon, son of John, a peculiar blessing, which was absolutely personal, declaring that his knowledge regarding the Divine Sonship sprang from a special revelation granted to him by the Father.<sup>4</sup> Christ proceeded to recompense this confession of His Divinity by bestowing on Peter a reward proper to himself: "Thou art Peter (Cepha, transliterated also Kīphā) and upon this rock (Cepha) I will build my Church." The word for Peter and for rock in the original Aramaic is one and the same, א'פ'ט . This fact, they say, renders it evident that the various attempts to explain the term "rock" as having reference not to Peter himself but to something else are misinterpretations; for it is Peter who is the rock of the Church. The Catholic Encyclopedia gives the following explanation of this exposition: "Peter is to be to the Church what the foundation is in regard to a house. He is to be the principle of unity, of stability, and of increase. He is the principle of unity, since

1. Mt.11,27.

what is not joined to that foundation is no part of the Church; of stability, since it is the firmness of this foundation in virtue of which the Church remains unshaken by the storms which buffet her; of increase, since, if she grows, it is because new stones are laid on this foundation. It is through her union with Peter, Christ continues, that the Church will prove the victor in her long contest with the Evil One: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." There can be but one explanation of this striking metaphor. The only manner in which a man can stand in such a relation to any corporate body is by possessing authority over it. The supreme head of a body, in dependence on whom all subordinate authorities hold their power, and he alone, can be said to be the principle of stability, unity, and increase. The promise acquires additional solemnity when we remember that both Old Testament prophecy (Is. 28<sup>16</sup>, 16), and Christ's own words (Mt. 7, 24), had attributed this office of foundation of the Church to Himself. He is therefore assigning to Peter, of course in a secondary degree, a prerogative which is His own, and thereby associating the Apostle with Himself in an altogether singular manner."

According to Catholic authorities this promise received its fulfillment after the Resurrection on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias, when the Lord, shortly before His departure from the earth, placed the whole flock - the sheep and the lambs alike - in the charge of Peter, (Jn. 21). Here, they say, Christ made him the shepherd of God's flock to take the place of Himself, the Good Shepherd. Joyce continues: "The position of St. Peter after the Ascension, as shown in the Acts of the Apostles, realizes to the full the great commission bestowed upon him. He is from the first

1. Catholic Encyclopedia: "Pope", written by George H. Joyce, S.J.

the chief of the Apostolic band - not "primus inter pares",- but the undisputed head of the Church. If then Christ, as we have seen, established His Church as a society subordinated to a single supreme head, it follows from the very nature of the case that this office is perpetual, and cannot have been a mere transitory feature of ecclesiastical life. For the Church must endure to the end the very same organization which Christ established. But in an organized society it is precisely the constitution which is the essential feature. A change in constitution transforms it into a society of a different kind. If then the Church should adopt a constitution other than Christ gave it, it would no longer be His handiwork. It would no longer be the Divine kingdom established by Him..... Hence throughout the centuries the office of Peter must be realized in the Church, in order that she may prevail in her age-long struggle. Thus an analysis of Christ's words show us that the perpetuity of the office of supreme head is to be reckoned among the truths revealed in Scriptures. His promise to Peter conveyed not merely a personal prerogative, but established a permanent office in the Church."

When the question is raised how such an interpretation can stand in the face of the scriptural testimony that Christ is the chief corner-stone of the Church and that all the apostles are known as foundation-stones (Eph.2,20ff: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone"), they consider this an easy matter offering no difficulties and find an analogous case in mundane organizations. Their argument, according to Petrus Lechner a Catholic

commentator, follows: Just as in the world there are all kinds of lords, each one a lord in his own particular sphere, so also are there various offices in the church, every office having its foundation-stones. Christ is the chief head and corner-stone of the Church but next to Him is Peter. The other apostles are all under this head, namely, the Apostle Peter. Every apostolic laborer who founds a congregation and every first bishop of a diocese, according to Lechner, could be called a foundation-stone, but all are subject to Peter who in turn is subject to Christ and as His representative cannot err.<sup>1</sup> To this we ask: if Peter is one of the foundation-stones upon which the church is built and the other apostles are also foundation-stones, then how can they as foundation-stones be less than Peter in importance? How can they be under him? This seems to be an error in architecture. However we will have more on this subject later.

This is in brief the claim of the Roman Church as based on Mt.16,18. It is accepted and believed by all good Catholics because it is a dogma of the Church. Upon those who do not accept this doctrine Rome pronounces an anathema. The position of a good Catholic can be seen in the following quotation from "Rome and the Papacy" by Gilbert Bagnani. In his chapter on the Roman primacy he boldly writes: "The Primacy of the See of Rome is based on certain dogmatic postulates which can only be stated, for they cannot be satisfactorily discussed. As Catholics we believe that our Lord gave a Primacy to St. Peter, that St. Peter became Bishop of Rome, that he transmitted this Primacy to all his successors. These principles are matters of faith, not of reason; we believe them on

1. This doctrine of papal infallibility was decreed by the Vatican Council in 1870.

the authority of the church, of which Christ is the head. Our belief is quite independent of historical evidence, which, however, such as it is, appears to us to support our belief. But should it seem to be opposed to the evidence, we would unhesitatingly reject the evidence rather than abandon the dogma. It is therefore impossible to discuss the dogma of the Roman Primacy from an historical standpoint. It is based on the famous promise to Peter which is to be found in Matthew's Gospel alone. Any discussion as to the composition and language of this Gospel, any enquiry as to why Christ's words have not been preserved by other evangelists or as to what they may mean, is entirely beside the point. We believe that the words were spoken on the authority of the Catholic Church, and we consequently accept the interpretation which the same authority has placed on them. 'We hold them to be true because they are inspired, and we hold them to be inspired, because the Church guarantees them as such'. No new discovery of history or criticism can shake our conviction on this point."

Such bigotry! The unbelievable must be believed! These words would not cause any alarm had they been written a few hundred years ago; but when they come from the press in 1929, during an age when most people want to be shown before they accept anything as part of their credo, then one's faith in humanity begins to wane. However, Bagnani's words are but a reiteration of a very unscientific (unscientific in its narrower sense) statement made by Ignatius Loyola when he said that if the pope should say that 'white is black and that black is white then it would be so'. We utter the Ciceronian lament: O Tempora! O Mores!

For the expressions rock, foundation, and...

Some of the arguments from scripture against the Roman interpretation that Christ appointed Peter to be the foundation, the rock upon which the Church was to be built, are the following:

1. The parallel passages, Mk.8,29 and Luke 9,20. - Here Christ asked His disciples the same question as in Mt.16,15, "But whom say ye that I am?" The words in the Greek original are identical in all three places. According to Matthew, Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"; according to Mark, "Thou art the Christ "; and according to Luke, "The Christ of God". While Matthew proceeds with the blessing pronounced by Christ upon Peter, Mark and Luke bring the conversation to an abrupt stop, except that Christ "straightly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing". It seems queer that such a cardinal dogma as the primacy of Peter should be found in but one of the three gospel narratives, when it would have fitted very nicely into the other two also. The Bible student finds himself in a veritable labyrinth. He is tempted to join forces with the critics in claiming these words as unauthentic. Some Roman Catholic scholars say that Mark, who was Peter's understudy and mouth-piece, was moved by modesty to remain silent. On the other hand, it is hardly credible that Luke, an historian with such a careful eye and ear for detail, should glide over so notable a passage, the settlement of a monarch in God's church and a sovereign of the Apostolic School.

2. To ascertain the true meaning of any Scripture passage there is but one method to follow, namely, the apostolic rule that Scriptures interpret themselves, - "Scriptura Scripturam interpretatur." Now the expressions rock, foundation, and corner-stone

17.  
of the Church as found in the New Testament refer to Christ except in the passage in Matthew.

Hear the word of Paul in 1 Cor.3,10-11: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Again Paul says Eph.2,20-22: " And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

And now the great statement from the pen of Peter himself, 1 Pet.2,4-9: " To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed <sup>indeed</sup> indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

In the Old Testament also the term rock referred to God. It occurs some 35 times. In a beautiful Messianic prophecy Isaiah calls out: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."<sup>1</sup> Then also the words of the Psalmist, (Ps. 118, 22-23) which are quoted by the Savior Mt. 21, 42: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."

Surely an unbiased reader after comparing these texts will not find any room for the papal exegesis of Mt. 16, 18. In the light of God's Word the construction of the Romanists placed on these words becomes untenable and unreasonable. Cardinal Bellarmine sought to avoid the difficulty of these references by putting the case in this way: "other foundation no man can lay than Christ, but after Christ is Peter and except through Peter it is not possible to come to Christ." ( This argument from Scripture would hardly militate against the interpretation that the rock is Peter, not the personal Peter, the son of Jonas, not the 'flesh and blood' Peter who appointed successors as the Romanists claim, but Peter in view of his confession and faith, - Peter as the recipient and faithful utterer of the divine inspiration in his confession. )

3. All we know about Peter from the Acts of the Apostles is opposed to Roman claims. When the number of the disciples had increased and the Twelve saw that they could not minister to all of them properly, they, the Twelve, not Peter, called the multitude together to elect the seven deacons.<sup>2</sup> In Acts 8, 22 he did not

1. Is. 28, 16.  
2. Acts 6.



19.

undertake to forgive sins. He says to Simon, who had been a sorcerer, "repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." In Acts 10,25 he refused adoration when he said to Cornelius who had fallen down at his feet worshipping him, "stand up; I myself also am a man." (How different the pope of today who claims to be the successor of this humble fisherman!) In Acts 10,47 Peter asked the inferior attendants who were present in the home of Cornelius, whether they had any objections that these Gentiles should be baptized. In the 15th chapter of Acts we see Peter taking the first word at the synod of Jerusalem but James gives the judgment. The counsel of James was accepted by the apostles and elders together with the whole church. This Council at Jerusalem is the only Church Council on record as having taken place during Apostolic times. Now if Peter had been appointed head of the Church why did he not preside instead of James? Again, so far as appointing any one of the clergy to any special jurisdiction, we find that Peter was himself sent on missionary duty by the Apostles. "Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John." Peter did not send the other Apostles at any time to any place; they sent him. He was not the supreme governor. We find Peter pointing out a vacancy in the ~~apostolate~~<sup>2</sup>, but not filling it. We do not find him consecrating a single bishop or ordaining a single minister. On the other hand, we find St. Paul, without any reference to St. Peter, doing these very things. Paul ordains elders and consecrates Timothy for the office of the ministry. Luther argues that all the apostles were equal to Peter in all matters of authority, because Peter

1. Acts 8,14.

2. Acts 1, 15ff.

never selected an apostle, nor confirmed or ruled over one; " although if he had been their superior by divine appointment this would have had to be, or all of them would have been heretics. Moreover, all of the apostles together could not make St. Matthias and St. Paul apostles, but this must needs be done from heaven, as it is written in Acts 1 and 13. How then could St. Peter alone be lord over them all? This little nut no one has been able to crack as yet, and I trust they will be so gracious, even against their will, to leave it uncracked a while longer."<sup>1.</sup>

4. Likewise Peter's epistles are void of any consciousness of being the head of the church. In 1 Pet.5,1 he does not call himself the chief of the apostles but a fellow-elder. "The elders which are among you I exhort, w h o a m a l s o a n e l d e r."<sup>2.</sup> In the fifth verse of the second chapter he speaks of Christ as the "chief corner stone" and of the believers - without distinction - as " lively stones built upon a spiritual house." In 2 Pet.1,16 and 3,2 he speaks in the first person plural including thereby also the other apostles.

5. And the keys which were here given to Peter alone were shortly afterwards given to all the apostles<sup>3.</sup> Paul, who was not present on either occasion, exercised that power<sup>4.</sup> Likewise it is given to the Church wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus. Regarding the office of the keys Luther says

1. "Works of Martin Luther" vol.I,374, - A.J.Holman Co.  
 2. The Greek text clearly shows the position which Peter took.  
 Πρεσβυτερος ουν εν ιαυτην παρακληω ε συνπρεσβυτερος  
 He is their " fellow-elder "; he is one of them; he is an elder with, συνπρεσβυτερος, them.  
 3. Mt.18,17.  
 4. 2 Cor. 2,10.

that from all appearances the keys were given to Peter alone in Mt. 16,19, but that the same keys were given to all the disciples in Mt. 18,18 and in John 20,22. " The case cannot proceed any further than to establish a doubt, whether the one passage shall interpret the two, or the two the one, and I hold as tenaciously to the two, as they to the one."

6. The title "head of the church" is used by Paul a number of times but is invariably applied to Christ. The apostles are associated together as coequal in authority. We find no distinction made when Christ spoke His great missionary command<sup>2</sup>. According to Paul, 1 Cor. 12,28, " God hath set some in the Church, first apestles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..." Now if Peter had received a primacy from Christ this certainly would have been known to Paul and he would have said, ' God hath set some in the Church, first Peter, then the apostles'. What is more Paul would hardly have acted the way he did when he rebuked Peter at Antioch had Peter been the head of the church. Paul felt grieved at such unchristian conduct on the part of an apostle. The situation was a serious one. The whole liberty of the Gospel of Christ was at stake in this question. And so Paul comes to the rescue. The speech which he delivered is recorded in Gal.2,11ff. and as Bengel says, it contains "the very pith and marrow of Christianity". Paul felt it to be his duty to do what he could to arrest the growing evil. He decided to give Peter a public rebuke, "before them all". Now if Peter had been the head of the church, the Papa of all, Paul would hardly have made this rebuke public but would have drawn Peter aside and reprimanded him in private, in that way

1. "Works of Martin Luther" vol. I,376, - A.J.Holman Co.

2. Mt. 28,19.

preserving the " head of the church" from much embarrassment before his "subjects". The result was that Peter allowed himself to be corrected by his younger brother. What room is there here for the primacy of Peter? And what for papal infallibility?

Paul's position in the church does not allow room for any one above him save Christ alone. If Paul ever heard that Peter was selected by Christ to be the head of the church, he not only suppressed this knowledge, he contradicted it. And who is there to call Paul, whose inspired writings amount to one-half of the New Testament, a heretic or a religious upstart? Christians, he wrote, " are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone", ( Eph. 2,20 ).

7. And finally, the early church was a democratic institution and no limited monarchy. The relation between the various officers in the church is clearly indicated by a number of passages in Scriptures. The Word which is the sole norm of the church also regulates the relationship between its servants. Luther says, that according to divine right the pope is neither higher than the bishop, nor the bishop higher than the presbyters - " nec papa est episcopis, nec episcopus est superior presbyteris iure divino."<sup>1</sup> Scripture sees no distinction between bishops and presbyters because the same persons are in one place called bishops and in another, presbyters, as can be seen from Acts 20,17 with which compare v.28, " over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" - ἑπισκοποι - and Tit.1,5 with which compare v.7. Dean Alford comments on 1 Tim.3,1: " The ἐπίσκοποι of the New Testament have officially nothing in common with our Bishops. The identity of the

1. Pieper: "Christliche Dogmatik" vol.III, 525, note 1638.

ἡ πῖσκατος and πρεβύτης in apostolic times is evident from Tit.1,5-7." Pieper epitomizes aptly: " Dass die Roemischen und Episkopalen den apostolischen Character der Kirche in die bischoefliche Sukzession setzen, ist mit recht als eine Kinderei bezeichnet worden, da die Schrift erstlich keinen Unterschied zwischen Bischoefen und lehrenden Aeltesten oder Pastoren kennt ( Acts 20,17.28; Tit.1,5-7) und zum andern alle Lehrer meiden heisst, die eine andere als die apostolische Lehre lehren, einerlei ob sie Bischoefe, Aelteste, oder sonstwie heissen." ( See also Rom. 16,17; Gal.1,6-8).

Besides these there are other convincing reasons why Peter cannot be the rock, the head of the church. The scriptural doctrine is that the Church is built on the foundation of all the apostles. The Roman view is that eleven of these have disappeared and the Church now rests upon the successor of one. The heavenly Jerusalem is thus more like an inverted pyramid resting on its apex than rising four-square upon its twelve foundation-stones. This is contrary to the teaching of Holy Scriptures, as set forth in type, prophecy, and revelation. There were the twelve patriarchs, the twelve tribes, the twelve stones on the high priest's breastplate, the twelve apostles, the twelve sides and foundation-stones and the twelve gates of the celestial city. The Church is not an inverted pyramid but has twelve living foundations as its base,<sup>2</sup> and the ever-living Christ Jesus as its corner-stone.

1. Pieper: "Christliche Dogmatik" vol.III, 474.

2. Rev. 21,12ff.

PRESENTATION AND EXAMINATION OF THE ROMAN CLAIMS  
AS BASED ON THE WRITINGS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS.

CLEMENT OF ROME: EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. ( c. 95 ).

"Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife on account of the office of the episcopate. For this reason, therefore, inasmuch as they had obtained a perfect fore-knowledge of this, they appointed those ( ministers ) already mentioned, and afterwards gave instructions, that when these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed them in their ministry. We are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them, or afterwards by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole church - - - cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry" i.e. if they " have blamelessly served the flock of Christ."

These words are directed to the Corinthians because of sedition in the Corinthian congregation. Because of this sedition " the Church of God dwelling at Rome " wrote to " the Church of God dwelling at Corinth". The Roman Catholics consider this letter as a Providence of God who intended them to have what is perhaps the clearest example of the Pope's universal jurisdiction before the year 100'. They say that this " church of God at Rome " means the authority of that church, that is, its bishop, and that Clement throughout the letter does not advise but commands.

Against this we say that according to this citation the ministers were not appointed absolutely but " with the consent of the whole church". Moreover, Clement does not use the first person singular but the first person plural: not, ' I, Clement', but "we", that is, the church at Rome, the Roman Christians. This can also be seen from his salutation, "The Church of God which sojourns at

Rome, to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth." To say that the "Church of God at Rome" means its bishop is unwarranted, because that would be exalting himself, which would not agree with the passage where he says, " For Christ is of those who are humble-minded, and not of those who exalt themselves over His flock. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sceptre of the majesty of God, did not come in the pomp of pride or arrogance, although He might have done so, but in a lowly condition, as the Holy Spirit had declared regarding Him."

In chapter 42 Clement writes: " And thus preaching ( the apostles ) through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits ( of their labors ), having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe. Nor was this any new thing, since indeed many ages before it was written concerning bishops and deacons. For thus saith the Scripture in a certain place, " I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith." It is quite evident that Clement connects the office of bishop and the deaconship with the offices in the Jewish Church. It is therefore noteworthy that in making this connection he does not find a parallel for the office of the high priest in the New Testament Church, which, if there had been room for such an analogy, could hardly have been avoided by Clement, especially since he was pope at that time. Franz von Baader in his article "Blitzstrahl wider Rom" says: " In dem ganzen Briefe ist nicht die blasse Spur einer Hindeutung auf einen obersten Bischof der christlichen Kirche und folglich auch darauf keine zu finden, dass er selbst dieser oberste Bischof sei."

1. Ch.xvi - Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. I, pg. 9. ( The quotations from the Ante- Nicene Fathers are all from the American Edition edited by A. Cleveland Coxe, D.D.  
 2. Is. 60,17.

~~Gilbert~~ Bagnani considers it a "waste of time to examine in detail the various and well-known passages of the Fathers, especially since they can usually be interpreted to suit the interpreter." But the famous Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians he considers in a class apart. " It is a direct evidence on our subject since it is an actual document of Roman jurisdiction..... It asserts that Christ speaks thru it..... and the general tone of the Epistle is hortatory and admonitory; it does not enter into questions of detail and does not advance any definite claims. This is one of its chief merits, since nearly all subsequent evidence is somewhat vitiated by the desire to prove a thesis. The early fathers in particular have nearly always their own axe to grind; they extol the position of the Roman See when they expect it to agree with them and depreciate it when it does not. On the other hand, the Clementine Epistle seems to me to prove beyond doubt that in the first century the apostolic Church of Corinth recognized the right of Rome to send what we should now call ' legates a latere ' to conduct an inquiry into its affairs and to pronounce judgment on them." We wonder of what value Mr. Bagnani considers the Pauline Epistles. Should he regard them of fair historical value we would be interested in his explanation of the lack of any allusion to Petrine jurisdiction in them, on the grounds that St. Paul was the most prolific writer of the very same first century in which Clement lived and what is more, the greatest leader in the church at that time.

IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH: (Died under Trajan 110-115, - c.107).

In his salutation to the Romans Ignatius speaks of ' the Church which presides in the place of the region of the Romans' and calls

1. ~~Gilbert~~ Bagnani: "Rome and the Papacy" pg.55.



this church ' the president of love', - Ἡτις καὶ προκάθεται  
ἐν τῷ χωρίῳ Ῥωμαίων..... Προκαθήμενη τῆς ἀγάπης.

This passage has furnished much debate. Funk and Harnack are in agreement with the Catholic view when they take προκάθεται absolutely and not with χωρίου : "the presiding church".

Harnack says regarding this passage: " However much one may tone down all excessive expressions in his letter to the Romans, this much is clear that Ignatius has admitted in fact a precedence of the Roman community in the circle of her sisters, and that he knows of an energetic and perpetual activity on the part of this community in supporting and teaching others..... Even the elaborate address shows that he honors and greets this community as the most distinguished in Christendom."

That it was the presiding church no one will deny, for which the reasons are obvious<sup>2</sup>. But how any one can find an argument in this salutation to the Romans we fail to see. His salutation in the epistle to the Philadelphians is very like that to the Romans, both in style and language. There is, moreover, a very interesting section in this salutation which seems to be an allusion to Mt.16,18. The words read: " through the Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His own will, has firmly established His church upon a rock, by a spiritual building, not made with hands, against which the winds and the floods have beaten, yet have not been able to overthrow it: yea, and may spiritual wickedness never be able to do so, but be thoroughly weakened by the power of Jesus Christ our Lord." It seems

- 1. Fortescue: "The Early Papacy", ch.iv.
- 2. Hobbes in his Leviathan says: "If a man consider the original of this great Ecclesiastical Dominion, he will easily perceive that the Papacy is no other than the Ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof. For so did the Papacy start up on a sudden out of the Ruines of that Heathen Power." Moehlman: "The Catholic-Protestant Mind", pg. 15.

queer that Ignatius should employ the picture of Mt.16,18 to the Church at Philadelphia and not to the Church at Rome. What is more surprising is that he does not even mention the Roman bishop and speaks only of the Roman Church. He grants the Roman Church a special honor for three specific reasons. First of all this church was situated in the capitol city of the empire which is shown by the phrase " which also presides in the place of the region of the Romans". Secondly because of her unique origin. She was founded by Peter the Apostle and Paul the Missionary. Finally because of the great love this church had shown to others. Therefore the words, " which presides over love". Her great love is later expressed by Dionysius of Corinth,(c.170), who speaks of her as having been kind to all the brethren and an everready support to the churches. Catholics translate the phrase προκαθήμενη τῆς ἀγάπης "the president of the bond of love". This is impossible since ἀγάπη nowhere has the meaning of "bond of love", i.e., according to Catholics, the church, but always the simple meaning of "love".

IRENÆUS, BISHOP OF LYON: ( c. 202 ).

In refuting the heretics from the fact that in the various churches a perpetual succession of bishops was kept up, Irenæus speaks of a "tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also ( by pointing out ) the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the succession of the bishops. For it is a

1. πᾶντας μὲν ἀδελφούς ποικίλως ἐνεργεῖσιν, Carl Mirbt: "Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums und des roemischen Katholizismus", Seite 14.

matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church on account of its preeminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolic tradition has been preserved continuously by those (faithful men) who exist everywhere." This passage is used by Roman Catholics as a support for their doctrine of the primacy of Peter. Both the text and the meaning of the last sentence of this quotation have given rise to much debate.

The Latin text which is fatal to the claims of the papacy, reads:

"ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potiore[m] principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam." The following translation rendered by a candid Roman Catholic is void of any support to the papal claims: "for to this Church, on account of more potent principality, it is necessary that every church ( that is, those who are on every side of the faithful) resort; in which Church ever, by those who are on every side, has been preserved that tradition which is from the apostles."<sup>2</sup>

The greatness of Rome as the capitol of the empire, imparts to the local church a premier position as compared with the other churches. Many people visit Rome, among them faithful witnesses from everywhere, that is, from all the churches; and it is their united testimony which preserves in Rome the pure apostolic traditions. The papal system is the reverse of this; for at the late Council, Pius IX informed his bishops that they were not called to bear their testimony, but to hear his infallible decree, reducing them, as the Archbishop of Paris said, " to a council of sacristans". The faith, according to Irenaeus, is not preserved by the bishop who presides in Rome but " by those who exist everywhere", that is, by those faithful ones who come to Rome.

1. Against Heresies, Book III, ch.iii,2. Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. I, pg. 415.  
 2. See footnote Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. I, pg. 415.

If we consider this passage together with the context, and so we should, then it amounts to this: "We must ask, not for local, but universal testimony. Now, in every church founded by the apostles has been handed down their traditions; but as it would be a tedious thing to collect them all, let this suffice. Take that Church (nearest at hand, and which is the only Apostolic Church of the <sup>west</sup> West), the great and glorious Church at Rome, which was there founded by <sup>the</sup> the two apostles Peter and Paul. In her have been preserved the traditions of all the churches, because everybody is forced to go to the seat of the empire: and therefore, by these representatives of the whole Catholic Church, the apostolic traditions have been all <sup>collected</sup> collected in Rome: and you have a synoptical view of all Churches in what is there preserved." Would Irenaeus have uttered these words had he but had the slightest apperception of the papacy? On the contrary, for he would very likely have said, ' it is no matter what may be gathered elsewhere; for the bishop of Rome is the infallible oracle of all Catholic truth, and you will always find it by his mouth'.

Irenaeus then states that the blessed apostles Paul and Peter, " having founded and built up the church, committed into the hands of Linus ( the one mentioned in 2 Tim.4,21) the office of the episcopate." Upon this follows a passage which is a commentary on that much discussed phrase quoted above: "In the time of this Clement, no small dissension having occurred among the brethren at Corinth, the Church in Rome dispatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which it had lately received from the <sup>apostles</sup> apostles." Irenaeus does not recognize the Bishop of Rome as the successor of

1. Elucidation, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. I, pg.461.

Peter for he places the emphasis on the Church in Rome and not on Bishop Clement. Furthermore, he does not say "which Bishop Clement had lately received from the apostles" but which "it", the church, the congregation, "had lately received from the apostles".

In studying the early church we will notice that up to the Nicene Council Latin Christianity had no place in Rome. Before this council the purely receptive character of the Roman see is quite apparent. Although the "mother and mistress" of the churches, she is yet voiceless, while Africa holds the mastery of Christian thought in her schools at Carthage and Alexandria. The instances before the Council of Nicea where the Church at Rome assumes the attitude of a teaching church are very rare. Aeneas Sylvius, who afterwards became Pope Pius II, testified to this when he said, "Verily, before the Council of Nice some regard there was unto the Bishops of Rome, although but small." Irenaeus has justly stated the case of the church at Rome: As the focus of the empire she was the natural center of exchange and social commerce among all nations. Thither all Christians converged, - representatives from all the churches. Hence from all these churches there came into Rome a Catholic testimony, which was thus preserved in the metropolis by the pressure from without.

TERTULLIAN, PRESBYTER IN CARTHAGE. ( died c. 220 ).

" If, because the Lord has said to Peter, "upon this rock I will build my church", "to thee I have given the keys of the kingdom of heaven", and 'whatever you shall have bound or loosed on earth, will be bound or loosed in heaven', you therefore presume that the power of binding and loosing has derived to you, that is, to every

1. Introductory note to Minucius Felix, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. IV, pg. 170, and Introductory note to Dionysius, Bishop of Rome, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. VII, pg. 363.

church associated with Peter, what sort of man are you, subverting and wholly changing the manifest intention of the Lord conferring <sup>this</sup> ~~this~~ personally upon Peter? "Upon you", he says, " I will build my church" and " I will give to you the keys", not to the church..."<sup>1</sup>

Catholics say that Tertullian's argument against the pope shows that the pope claimed the authority of St. Peter as prince of the apostles. It may be noted that at this time Pope Callistus (217-222) was the first Roman bishop who applied the words of our Lord to Peter, Mt.16,18, to himself. And there was a reason for this. Already at the time of Victor I ( 189-199) and Zephyrinus (199-217) the Roman Church was the center of the severest doctrinal controversies. Various sects arose as the result of these debates and among the leaders of these parties could be found dangerous competitors to the Roman bishop. In addition to this the church at Rome had ceased to be an assembly of God-fearing people. Adultery was a common occurrence. A moral and spiritual degradation had set in. As a rule these conditions were more prevalent among the richer classes who were also the influential party in the church. They had to be tolerated because the right of the church to pass judgment was questioned. A higher power was necessary. And what greater authority could Rome have claimed, than the authority of the prince of the apostles? And so we find that at this crisis Pope Callistus sees in Mt.16,18f. the basis for this authority. That Tertullian did not know of the personal prerogatives descending on the bishop of Rome before the claim of Callistus can be seen from his letter against Praxeas where he, the very founder of Latin Christianity, accuses the Bishop of Rome (Victor, 190 A.D.) of heresy and the patronage of heresy.

1. "On Modesty" ch.xxi, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. IV, pg. 99.

ORIGEN: (died 254).

Origen quotes Mt. 16,18 very frequently and what is more gives his interpretation of it in his commentary on Matthew. This interpretation is in every way a direct contradiction of the papal claims. He remarks: " And if we too have said like Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God", not as if flesh and blood had revealed it unto us, but by light from the Father in heaven having shone in our heart, we become a Peter, and to us there might be said by the Word, "Thou art Peter" etc. For a rock ( a Peter) is every disciple of Christ of whom those drank who drank of the spiritual rock which followed them,<sup>1</sup> and upon every such rock is built every word of the church, and the polity in accordance with it; for in each of the perfect, who have the combination of words and deeds and thoughts which fill up the blessedness, is the Church built by God.<sup>2</sup>"

" But if you suppose that upon that one Peter alone the whole church is built by God, what would you say about John, the son of thunder, or each one of the Apostles? Shall we otherwise dare to say, that against Peter in particular the gates of Hades shall not prevail, but that they shall prevail against the other Apostles and the perfect? Does not the saying previously made, "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it", hold in regard to all and in the case of each of them? And also the saying, " Upon this rock I will build my church"? Are the keys of the kingdom of heaven given by the Lord to Peter only, and will no other of the blessed receive them? But if this promise, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven", be common to the others, how shall not all the things previously spoken of, and the things which are subjoined as

1. 1 Cor.10,4:"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

2. Commentary on Matthew, ch.x, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol.IX, pg. 456.

having been addressed to Peter, be common to them? For in this place these words seem to be addressed as to Peter only, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven", etc; but in the Gospel of John the Savior having given the Holy Spirit unto the disciples said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" etc.

The conclusion derived from this is evident: Origen does not allow a distinction of rank between Peter and the other disciples. The privileges which are granted to Peter in Mt. 16, 18f. are likewise given to the other apostles, and also to all believing Christians.

CYPRIAN, BISHOP OF CARTHAGE: (died 258).

Cyprian is invoked with equal persistence by both defenders and opponents of the Papacy. The Romanists explain this variance in his platform by saying that, on the one hand there are some of the plainest expressions of the Roman primacy in his writings, while on the other hand there are cases when he quarrelled with the pope and resisted his orders.

" The Lord speaks to Peter, saying, "I say unto 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 will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," etc. And again to the same He says after His resurrection, "Feed my sheep". And although to all the apostles, after his resurrection, He gives an equal power, and says, " As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you: Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto him; and whose soever sins ye retain, they shall be retained"; yet, that he might set forth unity, He arranged by His authority the

1. Commentary on Matthew, ch. 11, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. IX, pg. 456.



... was addressed to Peter, be common to all...  
... these words seem to be addressed to Peter only...  
... that shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven...  
... of John the Savior having given the Holy Spirit...  
... said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" etc.

THE BISHOP OF RAVENNA: (died 526)

... is intended with equal persistence by both...  
... of the legacy. The Romanists explain this variance...  
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... of the Roman primacy in his witness...  
... there are cases when he quarrelled with the pope...  
... his orders.

"The Lord speaks to Peter, saying, 'I say unto thee, that...  
... and upon this rock I will build my church, and the...  
... of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto...  
... the keys of the kingdom of heaven: etc. And again he said to...  
... after his resurrection, 'Feed my sheep'. And although, to all...  
... after his resurrection, he gives an equal power, and...  
... as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you: Receive ye...  
... Whosoever shall be bound on earth, they shall be bound in...  
... Whosoever shall be loosed on earth, they shall be loosed in...  
... He entrusted by His authority the

\* 3. *Episcopatus unus est, cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur*

origin of that unity, as beginning from one.<sup>1.</sup>"

According to the Roman Church this is an affirmation of the Roman primacy. It is true that in reading this passage one would gather from it that Cyprian ascribes a certain preeminence to Peter. But he immediately causes the reader to understand that this preeminence was not official or jurisdictional, as if he were on a higher plane than his colleagues, but purely transient. For he continues: "Assuredly the rest of the apostles were also the same as was Peter,<sup>2.</sup> endowed with a like partnership both of honor and power; but the beginning proceeds from unity." According to Cyprian Peter does not receive any special privileges other than his colleagues received except that for a time he is the only one and the first one of the Apostles who is armed with the power of binding and loosing. But this privilege, which Peter according to Mt.16,18 was the first to receive, was given to all the apostles later on as John 20, 21 shows. This also holds good with the office of the episcopate. Cyprian continues in ch. v: "The episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole."<sup>3.</sup> This phrase is explained in his epistle to Antonianus, 11,24, by the words, "and although there is one Church, divided by Christ throughout the whole world into many members, and also one episcopate diffrused through a harmonious multitude of many bishops." Furthermore, he shows in his epistle to Quintus<sup>70,3.</sup> that Peter did not claim the primacy nor assume the position of rulership. Cyprian writes: "For neither did Peter, whom first the Lord chose, and upon whom he built his church, when Paul disputed with him afterwards about circumcision, claim anything to himself insolently,

1. Treatise I, "On the Unity of the Church", ch. iv - Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. V, pg.422.

2. In some editions we find the phrase "sed primatus Petro datur" inserted here. According to good authorities these words are of post-Cyprian origin. 3. \*

nor arrogantly assume anything; so as to say that he held the primacy, and that he ought rather to be obeyed by novices and those lately come." A clearer passage than this one regarding Cyprian's idea of Peter can hardly be found.

AMBROSE, BISHOP OF MILAN: ( died 397 ).

The Synod of Aquileia in 381, of which St. Ambrose was the guiding spirit, though not president, told the emperors that the "Roman Church is the head of the whole Roman world", not merely of the West. This passage is used by Romanists to prove the supremacy of the Roman Church.

Another expression used by Catholics is Ambrose's remark about the locality of the Church, " where Peter is, there is the Church; where is the Church there is no death, but eternal life."<sup>1</sup>

In answer to the quotations presented by the papists we have other words of St. Ambrose which refute their position:

"The savior commanded that we should not regard any mortal as an infallible teacher in religious matters for there is but One who is a teacher of all - who is ever ready to enlighten our understanding", ( S. 8. in Ps. 118,c.8)<sup>2</sup>:

Regarding the office of the keys Ambrose says: " Woe unto us if we do not use the keys of the kingdom of heaven in order to open the hearts of the Christians and to drive out the darkness. Just as the apostles, especially Peter, James, and John, were pillars in the Church, just such a pillar is every Christian who has overcome the world, whom God himself raises up and sustains."<sup>3</sup>

" In the same manner do the words of Christ spoken to Peter

1. Fortescue: "The Early Papacy", pg. 51.
2. Baader: "Blitzstrahl wider Rom" Seite 26.
3. Serm. 5, Ps. 118, c.6.

apply: " I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven", -  
 " feed my sheep" etc., - they refer not only to Peter, but to all  
 the apostles, in fact to all those who teach and educate the  
 Christian congregations. Only for this reason is Peter called the  
 "rock": because he had the courage to be the first one to make an  
 open confession of Christ in Jerusalem. And not upon him as a single  
 human but upon his confession and his faith is the church founded.<sup>1</sup>"

AUGUSTINE, BISHOP OF HIPPO: ( died 430 ).

As we all know St. Augustine was at first in favor of the  
 Roman view of Mt. 16,18 but that in his later life he retracted his  
 earlier opinion as can be seen from his " Retractiones ". His  
 "Retractions" were written in 428, shortly before his death, wherein  
 he gives his final verdict upon his previous books, correcting  
 whatever his maturer judgment held to be misleading or wrong.  
 Nevertheless he is quoted by Romanists as upholding their view.  
 Fortescue uses the following selections to support his argument:

" In which ( the Roman Church ) the ruling authority of the  
 Apostolic See has always held firm.<sup>2</sup>"

St. Augustine explains the authority of Caecilian of Carthage  
 "because he saw himself joined by letters of communion to the  
 Roman church, in which the primacy of the Apostolic See has always  
 obtained, and with the other lands whence the Gospel had come to  
 Africa"<sup>3</sup>.

Regarding the Pelagian heresy Augustine says, "Already two  
 synods have sent to the Apostolic See concerning this affair. The  
 rescripts have come from there, the cause is finished. Would that  
 at last the error were finished, too."<sup>4</sup>

1. De. Incarn. Sacram. I.4,c.1.) - Baader:"Blitzstrahl wider Rom",  
 Seite 26 und 27.  
 2. Ep.43,7 - Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, edited by  
 Philip Schaff, vol. I, pg. 278.  
 3. Ep. 43,7 - Fortescue:"The Early Papacy" pg. 51.

The last passage containing the phrase "Roma locuta est, causa finita" has been the object of much textual criticism. Schaff has found this phrase to be a forgery, that the words "Roma locuta est" are of later origin. He writes: "The words of Augustine - "causa finita est", the case is settled, was changed to "Roma locuta est; causa finita est", Rome has spoken; the case is settled and is so quoted in the Manual of Pius X's catechism, pg.210. Augustine was speaking of a decision of two African synods on relagius which had been sent to "the apostolic see." His words had reference to the answer received and, while they show great respect for the Roman see, they do not state a principle, as the forgery is intended to make out as Augustine's. His full words are "causa finita est, utinam aliquando finiatur error!" The case is settled. Oh, that the error may come to an end!"<sup>1</sup>

Hear again the words of Augustine. "But whilst we are absent from the Lord, and walk by faith, not by sight, we ought to see the "back parts" of Christ, that is His flesh, by that very faith, that is, standing on the solid foundation of faith, which the rock signifies, and beholding it from such a safe watch-tower, namely in the Catholic Church, of which it is said, "And upon this rock I will build my church."<sup>2</sup> Augustine interprets "rock" to signify faith, "the solid foundation of faith, which the rock signifies". The Church is not built upon Peter but upon "the solid foundation of faith".

"But that after this sin (cutting off the ear of Malchus) Peter should become a pastor of the church was no more improper than that Moses, after smiting the Egyptian, should become the leader of

4. Serm.131,10 - Fortescue:"The Early Papacy" pg. 59.

1. David S.Schaff: "Our Fathers' Faith And Ours" ch.XIV, pg. 256.

2. Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, vol.III,pg.51,"On the Trinity", Book II, ch.17.

the congregation." Here Augustine refers to Peter as a pastor and not as the vicar of Christ on earth, which, if it had been the case, would surely have intensified the argument."

" For that church is founded on a rock, as the Lord says, "upon this rock I will build my church".... But that you may not suppose that the Church which upon a rock is in part only of the earth, and does not extent even to its furthest boundaries, hear her voice groaning from the psalm, amid the evils of her pilgrimage. For she says, "From the end of the earth have I cried unto thee; when my heart was distressed Thou didst lift me up upon the rock<sup>2</sup>." See how she cries from the end of the earth. She is not therefore in Africa alone; nor only among the Africans...."<sup>3</sup>

" Now this name of Peter was given him by the Lord, and that <sup>in</sup> a figure, that he should signify the church. For seeing that Christ is the rock (Petra), Peter is the Christian people. For the rock (Petra) is the original name. Therefore Peter is so called from the rock; not the rock from Peter; as Christ is not called Christ from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ. "Therefore", he saith, "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock" which thou hast confessed, upon this rock which thou hast acknowledged, saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God", will I build my church; that upon myself, the Son of the living God, "will I build my Church." I will build thee upon Myself, not Myself upon thee."<sup>4</sup> Augustine continues by showing that Peter in but a few moments was both blessed<sup>-ed</sup> and rebuked by the Lord: Peter the Strong, and Peter the Totterer. He concludes, "In that one Apostle then, that is, Peter, in the order of Apostles first and chiefest, in whom the church was figured, both sorts were to be represented, that is, both the strong and weak;

1. Reply to Faustus, Book XXII, 70 - First Series, vol. IV, pg. 299.
2. Ps. 61, 2-3.
3. To Petilian the Donatist, ch. 109, 247 - First Series, vol. IV, pg. 595.
4. Serm. XXVI, 1 - First Series, vol. VI, pg. 340.

1.

because the Church does not exist without them both."

ST. GREGORY, BISHOP OF ROME: (died 604).

The following quotations of Gregory are of special interest because they come from the pen of a 'successor of St. Peter'. Another point of interest is that they were written after the Council of Chalcedon, 451. This is significant because Roman Catholics, orthodox and Anglican, acknowledge the Church at least down to that year. To all of them this early period is the standard, for they all claim that their religion is that of the Catholic Church at least down to 451.

Gregory writes of Paul (Dial. 1. c. 12) that although he had persecuted the Christians before his conversion, nevertheless he became the first of the apostles because he worked more than all the other apostles; for which reason he received with Peter the first rank in the Church<sup>2</sup>.

He writes to John, Bishop of Constantinople: "For what are all thy brethren, the bishops of the universal church, but stars of heaven, whose life and discourse shine together amid the sins and errors of men, as if amid the shades of night? And when thou desirest<sup>-est</sup> to put thyself above them by this proud title (Universal Bishop), and to tread down their name in comparison with thine, what else dost thou say but "I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven?"<sup>3</sup> Are not all the bishops together clouds, who both rain in the words of preaching, and glitter in the light of good works? And when your fraternity despises them, and you would fain press them down under yourself, what else say you but what is said by the ancient foe, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds?".... "Certainly Peter, the first of the apostles, himself a member of the holy and universal church, Paul, Andrew, John, -

1. Serm. XXVI, 1-4 - First Series, vol. VI, pgs. 340-341.

2. Baader: "Blitzstrahl wider Rom" Seite 35. 3. Is. 14, 13

what were they but heads of particular communities? And yet all were members under one Head.<sup>1</sup>"

"For to all who know the Gospel it is apparent that by the Lord's voice the care of the whole church was committed to the holy Apostle and Prince of all the Apostles, Peter.<sup>2</sup> Lo, he received the keys of the heavenly kingdom, and power to bind and loose is given him, the care and principality of the whole church is committed to him, and yet he is not called the universal apostle; while the most holy man, my fellow-priest John, attempts to be called the universal bishop. I am compelled to cry out and say, O tempora, O mores! "....." Certainly in honor of Peter, Prince of the apostles, it was offered by the venerable synod of Chalcedon to the Roman pontiff. But none of them has ever consented to use this name of singularity, lest by something being given peculiarly to one, priests in general should be deprived of the honor due to them."<sup>3</sup> Regarding Gregory's assertion that the title of 'universal bishop' was given to the roman pontiff by the Council of Chalcedon Gieseler says, " Gregory was mistaken in believing that at the Council of Chalcedon the name "Universalis Episcopus" was given to the bishop of Rome. He is styled οἰκουμενικὸς ἀρχιεπίσκοπος (Mansi VI, 1006, 1012) as other patriarchs also. But in another place the title was surreptitiously introduced into the Latin acts by the romish legates."<sup>4</sup>

At the Council of Chalcedon the doctrine that the pope is the successor of Peter as the supporter of the Church, was prominently announced for the first time by the representatives of Pope Leo the Great. Before this Pope Callistus had been the first to use the

1. Book V, Ep.18.Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series - edited by H.Wace and P.Schaff, vol.XII,pg.166.  
2. John 21,17; Lk.22,31; ?t.16,18.  
3. N.&Post-Nic.Fathers,Second Series,vol.XII,pg.170- Book V, Ep.20.  
4. N.& Post-Nic.Fathers,Sec. Series, vol. XII, pg.167, note 5.



"power of the Keys" given to St. Peter as a basis for an arbitrary decision. Leo was regarded with great enthusiasm because he had resisted Dioscoros, Bishop of Alexandria, who was very unpopular in the church. At the Council of Chalcedon, while every one was condemning Dioscoros and commending Leo, "his delegates declared Dioscoros deprived of his dignity by the authority of Leo, the most blessed and holy archbishop of the great and elder Rome, and in conjunction with: 'the twice blessed and all honored Peter, who is the rock and basis of the Catholic Church, and the foundation of the orthodox faith.' When these words were pronounced, they were not used to urge a claim to any precedence by the bishop of Rome; they were spoken to give force to the condemnation of Dioscoros. A little later, when the epistle of Leo was read, the bishops were so charmed with its doctrine that they exclaimed: ' This is the faith of the fathers; this is the faith of the apostles. Peter has uttered these words through Leo. Thus has Cyril taught, the teaching of Leo and Cyril is the same. Anathema to him who does not thus believe'."

From these words it has been inferred that the prelates at Chalcedon received Peter as the master of the Church; as its foundation, and as the owner of its keys; and that Leo was the successor of Peter's privileges. However it never occurred to the bishops that Peter was lord over the Church and that Leo's jurisdiction was universal. "All they meant by Peter speaking through Leo, was that the present Bishop of Rome wrote the same truths which Peter, the first bishop, published." This deduction is corroborated by the 28th canon of Chalcedon. This canon occupies the most important place in the entire transactions of the Council. It expressly states

that the honor given to the Bishop of Rome in ecclesiastical matters was not given him because Peter was the first Bishop of Rome, or the pontiff, the vicar of Christ, or Peter the rock, but because ROME WAS THE IMPERIAL CITY. The canon reads:<sup>1</sup>

"We, everywhere following the decrees of the holy fathers, and acknowledging the canon which has been just read of the 150 bishops, most dear to God, do also ourselves decree and vote the same things concerning the precedence of the most holy Church of Constantinople, -<sup>or else</sup>- New Rome; for the fathers, with reason, gave precedence to the throne of old Rome, because it was the imperial city; and the 150 bishops beloved of God, moved by the same consideration, awarded EQUAL PRECEDENCY TO THE MOST HOLY THRONE OF NEW ROME, reasonably judging that a city which is honored with the government and senate should enjoy equal rank with the ancient queen Rome; and, like her, be magnified in ecclesiastical matters, having the second place after her; but so that the metropolitans alone of the Pontic, Asiatic, and Thracian dioceses, and also the bishops among the barbarians in the said dioceses, should be ordained by the aforesaid most holy throne of the Holy Church of Constantinople, to wit: that each metropolitan of the said dioceses, with the bishops of the province, should ordain the bishops of the province, as it is stated in the divine canons; but that the metropolitans of the said dioceses, as has been said, be ordained by the Archbishop of Constantinople, where there has been an agreement in the election, according to custom, and a report been made to him."

The doctrine of the spiritual supremacy of the pontiffs was entirely unknown in the councils of the first seven centuries, when the Church was measurably pure. A certain amount of prestige was

1 Cathcart: The Papal System, pg. 47-48.

given to the Roman bishop, but merely by reason of locality: his seat was in the IMPERIAL CITY. Here was the place to recognize Peter as the rock and keyholder of the Church, and the pope as his successor; but the Council respected the pontiff only as the bishop of the old capitol of the world.

The study of the Church Fathers in reference to Mt.16,18 shows that patristic literature does not uphold the Roman claim. Most of the Fathers interpret the rock to be either Christ or the confession<sup>-ion</sup> of Peter of Christ's divinity. Then there are some who state that here an office and authority were given to Peter but none of them hold that it was to be transmitted to a successor. In a brave speech "prepared for speaking but not spoken in the Vatican Council of 1870", Archbishop Peter Richard Kenrick of St. Louis writes:<sup>1.</sup>

"Not on Peter only, but on all the apostles and their successors,<sup>-ors,</sup> is built the church of God..... In a remarkable pamphlet 'printed in fac-simile of manuscript' and presented to the fathers two months ago, we find five different interpretations of the word "rock" in the place cited; the first of which declares that the church was built on Peter; and this interpretation is followed by 17 fathers including Cyprian, Leo the Great, Jerome, Augustine..... The second interpretation understands these words, "On this rock I will build my church", that the church was built on all the apostles, whom Peter represented by virtue of the primacy. And this opinion is followed by eight fathers, among them Origen, Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine..... The third interpretation asserts that the words, "on this rock" etc., are to be understood of the faith which Peter had professed, that this faith, this profession of faith, by which we

1. Moehlman: "The Catholic-Protestant Mind", pg. 13. Also David S. Schaff: "Our Fathers Faith And Ours", pg. 248-249.

believe Christ to be the Son of the living God, is the everlasting and immovable foundation of the Church. This interpretation is the weightiest of all, since it is followed by 44 fathers and doctors including Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Theophylact and Leo the Great.... The fourth interpretation declares the words, "on this rock" etc., to be understood of that rock which Peter had confessed, that is, Christ, that the Church was built upon Christ. This interpretation is followed by 16 fathers and doctors including Augustine..... The fifth interpretation of the fathers understands by the name, the rock, the faithful themselves, who believing Christ to be the Son of God, are constituted living stones, out of which the church is built." Upon the basis of this list the archbishop proceeded to say: "If we follow the Fathers, an argument of slender probability is to be derived from the words of Mt.16,18, in support of the primacy of the Roman bishop." If we are bound to follow the majority of the Fathers in this thing, then we are bound to hold for certain that by the rock should be understood the faith professed by Peter, not Peter professing the faith." (This classification proves entirely false Bellarmine's statement that 'the consent of the entire church, both Greek and Latin Fathers', interpreted Mt.16,18, of Peter.) The archbishop then summarized his arguments as follows: "We have in the Holy Scriptures perfectly clear testimonies of a commission given to all the apostles and of the divine assistance promised to all. These passages are clear and admit no variation of meaning. We have not even one single passage of Scripture, the meaning of which is undisputed, in which anything of the kind is promised to Peter separately from the rest. And yet the authors of the scheme want us to assert that to the Roman pontiff as Peter's successor is given

that power which cannot be proved by any clear evidence of holy scripture to have been given to Peter himself except just so far as he received it in common with the other apostles."

... and have seen that the Roman exegesis of Mt. 16,18 is neither warranted by the words of the inspired writers nor by those of the Church Fathers. There yet remain the interpretations held by Protestant commentators. The Protestants are all agreed on this one point: that the claims of the papists are unscriptural; but in their interpretation of "petra" or "rock" a variety of opinions. Some critics say that the rock is Christ; others, that the confession which Peter made is to be taken as the foundation of the Church. We will first consider the view that by "petra" was meant Christ.

CHRIST - THE ROCK

The interpretation that Christ is the rock is supported by passages found in both the Old and New Testaments wherein Christ is expressly called a rock or stone. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." This passage refers to the New Testament Church and the stone spoken of is Christ. Also the words of David in the psalm of thanksgiving: "For who is God, save the Lord? and who is like him? He is our God." Near again the words of David: "The Lord is my rock and my salvation." In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God." The words of Paul: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink?"

- 1. Is. 28,16.
- 2. Ps. 118, 22.
- 3. Ps. 69, 1-3.

PETROS AND PETRA.

We are now nearing the end of our discussion. We have presented the claims of the Romanists, both from Scripture and the patristic literature, and have seen that the Roman exegesis of Mt. 16,18 is neither warranted by the words of the inspired writers nor by those of the Church Fathers. There yet remain the interpretations held by Protestant commentators. The Protestants are all agreed on this one point: that the claims of the papists are unscriptural; but in their interpretation of "petra" we find a variance of opinion. Some critics say that the rock is Christ; others, that the confession which Peter made is to be taken as the foundation of the church. We will first consider the view that by "petra" one must understand Christ.

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A. CHRIST - THE ROCK:

The interpretation that Christ is the Rock is supported by passages found in both the Old and New Testaments wherein Christ is expressly called a rock or stone. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation."<sup>1.</sup> This passage refers to the New Testament Church and the stone spoken of is Christ. Also the words of David in his psalm of thanksgiving: " For who is God, save the Lord? and who is a r o c k, save our God?"<sup>2.</sup> Hear again the words of David: " He only is my rock and my salvation..... In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God."<sup>3.</sup> And now the word of Paul: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they

1. Is. 28,16.  
 2. 2 Sam. 22, 32.  
 3. Ps. 62,6-7.

drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of such evidence the supporters of this view say the Rock must be Christ. Others argue this way:<sup>2</sup> The word Peter - "Petros"- means a part of a rock, that is a stone. When the Lord says upon what He is going to build His church, He no longer speaks of "petros", a stone, but He uses the word "petra", which means a rock out of which the "petros", the stone, is hewn. It is said that Christ uses here the figure a synecdoche in which a part of the person is used for the whole person. The word "petra", rock, is used by the Savior for the first time in Mt.7,24-25. The house there is built upon a petra, a rock, and cannot fall, and this rock is He Himself. This rock upon which the assembly is built is "Christ the Son of the living God" as confessed by Peter. The peculiar use of "petros" and "petra" - a part of a rock and the rock - brings out the precious truth that Peter and every true believer in possession of eternal life, this life imparted, is associated with Him, is a part of Him, for He is the Eternal Life.

Along similar lines we have another argument:<sup>3</sup> Peter cannot be the rock because the words "Peter" and "rock" have different significations. The difference is seen in the titles given to our Lord. As the Son of God He is the rock; as Son of Man He is the stone. He was the divine rock that followed Israel, and "that Rock was Christ". He was as the Son of Man the Virgin born, the Stone cut out without hands. His divinity was a r o c k of offence; His humanity a s t o n e of stumbling. Cephas is, by interpretation, a stone; but not necessarily a stone, for the word

1. 1 Cor.10,4. See also Ps.18,31; 1 Cor.3,11, etc.  
 2. See Gabelin: Gospel of Matthew.  
 3. Bishop Grafton: "Christian and Catholic", pg. 325.

signifies a kind or quality of material. Applied to the person of Peter it was to mark his spiritual transformation. By nature he was Simon, unstable and weak; by union with the Living Rock he became rocklike or petrified. Thus in contrast with the term "rock" in Scripture the word "stone" marks a difference not only in size but also in the quality of material. The "rock" denotes something or some one who is divine; "Peter" or "stone", something of like nature with the rock, but belonging to humanity. Consequently "Peter" and "this rock" are two different things, and the Church is not said to be founded on Peter a man, but on Christ, the Son of God.

To summarize this line of reasoning in the words of Wordsworth Christ would have said to Peter, "Thou hast confessed Me, and I will now confess thee; thou hast owned Me, I will now own thee; thou art Peter, that is, thou art a lively stone, hewn out of and built upon Me, the living Rock. Thou art a genuine Petros of Me, the divine Petra. And whosoever would be a lively stone, a Peter, must imitate thee in this thy true confession of Me, the living Rock; for upon this Rock, that is, on Myself, believed and confessed to be both God and Man, I will build My Church."<sup>1</sup>

Luther interprets the "rock" in two ways, as meaning Christ and also the faith of Peter. Basing his arguments on the phrase "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" he says: "The rock can mean neither St. Peter nor his authority on account of the words of Christ which follow," and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". Now it is clear as day that no one is edified in the Church, nor withstands the gates of hell by the mere fact

1. Lange: Commentary.



that he is under the external authority of the pope. For the majority of those who hold so strongly to the authority of the pope, and lean upon it, are themselves possessed by the powers of hell and are full of sins and rascality. Then, too, some of the popes were heretics themselves, and gave heretical laws; yet they remained in authority. Therefore, the rock does not signify authority, which can never withstand the gates of hell; but it signifies only Christ and the faith in Him, against which no power can ever prevail.<sup>1</sup> In his sermon on the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul he says: "Darum ist allein Christus der Fels; und wo man einen anderen Felsen legt, da mache das Kreuz vor dich, denn es ist gewiss der Teufel. Denn der Spruch kann von keinem andern verstanden werden denn allein von Christo, wie St. Paulus sagt..... Denn es ist aus St. Paulus und Jesaias klar, wie gehoeret, dass allein der Stein Christus sei."<sup>2</sup> Then again Luther said in reference to Mt. 16,18 that Paul and the Scriptures point this passage alone to Christ.<sup>3</sup>

If the "rock" is Christ then the reference to Peter becomes meaningless: 'Thou art Peter and upon myself I will build my Church'. The situation does not warrant such an interpretation because, if Christ meant the rock to be Himself, then the phrase "Thou art Peter" loses its significance, loses its place in the sentence. Such an interpretation is unnatural and destroys the rhetorical beauty and emphasis of the passage. Furthermore, according to Philip Schaff, the antanacclasis ( the rhetorical figure of repeating the same word in a different or punning sense) is conclusive against this explanation.

1. "Works of Martin Luther" vol. I, 380, - A.J.Holman Co.
2. St. Louis edition, vol. XI, 2299.
3. St. Louis edition, vol. XXII, 1674 - "Paulus und die heilige Schrift deutet sie allein auf Christum."

## B. CONFESSION AND FAITH OF PETER - THE ROCK:

The explanation which understands the rock to be the great confession of Peter has been widely adopted by both ancient and modern commentators. At the present time most Protestants hold this view. Launoy, Doctor of the Sorbonne, out of 77 sayings of the most famous Church Fathers and church writers, has found 44 who understand by the rock the faith which Peter professed; 16 hold the rock to be Christ and only 17 explain Peter himself as the rock. Some of the writers who hold the faith of Peter as the rock are, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Hilary, Cyril of Alexandria, Leo the Great, et. al. Thus Chrysostom: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, that is, on the faith of his confession."

This view is favored by the feminine form of the Greek word for rock - petra - and especially by the movement of the conversation as a whole which Christ had with His disciples. Peter had confessed Christ and in blessing Peter Christ pronounced this confession of His deity the foundation-stone of His church. This was in accord with his usual declaration, "Whoso confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father", and the declaration of the Apostles, as by John, "Whoso shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God<sup>2</sup>." Furthermore, petra not Petros (Peter) is the word translated rock. If the Savior meant Peter to be the rock upon which He was about to build His Church, then He would have said: "Thou art Petros and upon this Petros ( $\sigma\upsilon\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\ \Pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\rho\sigma, \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\ \epsilon\pi\acute{\iota}\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omega\ \tau\bar{\omega}\ \Pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\rho\omega$ ) I will build my Church." But instead of that He says: "Thou art Petros, and upon this petra ( $\epsilon\pi\acute{\iota}\ \tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\ \tau\bar{\alpha}\ \Pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\rho\alpha$ ) I will build my Church." Petra is

1. Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, vol. X, pg. 333.
2. 1 John 4, 15. Also Mt. 10, 22.

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a Greek noun in the feminine gender; the pronoun "this" is also in the feminine agreeing with its noun petra; but Petros, or Peter, is in the masculine gender. Petra then MUST refer to something different from Peter. Besides, Petros is a stone, a movable stone; petra is a rock, a mass of rocks, a cliff. The one, "such a stone as a maid-servant in the hall of judgment might upset; the other, the Rock of Ages - the confession that Peter made that Christ was the Son of the living God." When Peter confessed Christ he expressed <sup>-ed</sup> the fundamental confession of the Church and thereby laid the foundation. ( Similarly Keil and Luthardt.)

Again they say that the foundation cannot be any one living man, like Peter, but must be a spiritual and divine nature. The apostles and prophets have long since passed away but the doctrine which they promulgated and which was a veritable rock of refuge to the members of the New Testament Church, still remains. Therefore the foundation can only be the life-giving doctrine<sup>1</sup> which proceeds from, and which conducts to, a crucified Redeemer. This doctrine was the very pith and marrow of the apostolic teachings, namely: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Christ or Messiah. The rock can be nothing else than the fundamental doctrine that Christ came into the world to save sinners by the shedding of His blood<sup>3</sup>. Luther in his exchange of words with Eck at the Leipzig debate says that the rock signifies the faith<sup>2</sup>. Likewise in his sermon on the festival of St. Paul and Peter: " Auf diesen Felsen (verstehe), nicht der du bist; denn deine Person waere zu schwach zu einem solchen Grund: sondern auf das Bekenntnis und den Glauben, der dich zum Felsen macht, da will ich meine Kirche auf bauen. Das

1. John 6, 63.

2. St. Louis Edition, vol. XII, 931, - "es bedeutet den Glauben (was wahr ist)".

3. Lutheran Commentary.

Fundament kann halten und ist stark genug: der Teufel wirds nicht koennen umstoessen noch einreissen."

Against this view we have the following arguments:

As the opinion, that Christ is the rock, is untenable, so also is Peter's confession excluded from being the foundation of the Church. Dean Alford remarks very strikingly that according to the usage of the New Testament, it is not doctrines, confessions, characters, that are designated as pillars and columns of the building, but men, persons, referring us to 1 Pet. 2,5 where Peter speaks of the living stones, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a siritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." A confession implies a confessor; it was the person who made the confession that is meant, not the mere statement itself, however momentous and true. Meyer epitomizes the entire argument in one sentence:<sup>2.</sup> "The view that the rock signifies Peter's steadfast faith and the confession he made of it," is incorrect, because the demonstrative expression, <sup>2</sup>ἐπι ταύτη τῇ πέτρᾳ, coming immediately after the οὐ ἐστὶ πέτρος, can only point to the a p o s t l e h i m s e l f, as does also the καὶ ἰσῶω, etc., which follows, it being understood, of course, that it was i n c o n s i d e r a t i o n of Peter's f a i t h that the Lord declared him to be a foundation of rock."

And so we come to the conclusion that the rock is a person.

( It may be well to note here that there are other interpretations of the rock besides the three (inclusive of the Roman view) which

1. St. Louis Edition, vol. XIIIa, 1174.

2. Meyer: Commentary on the New Testament.

have been given and the one which is to follow, and, in our opinion, is the correct one;

- a. The rock is applied to Peter, inclusive of all the other Apostles, and, indeed, of all believers.
- b. It is applied to the faithfulness of confession ( die petrinische Bekenntnistreue) which is the Petrine characteristic of the Church. Hence it refers to Peter in so far as by this confession he identified himself with Christ, and was the first to upbuild the Church by his testimony. (Lange).
- c. It is held that the rock is that "glorious Divine Power" which was manifested by the "Fullness of the Holy Spirit in the disciples to the utter limit, as He came in Power at Pentecost."

It may be noted that all these interpretations are but sub-interpretations of the ones which we have taken for consideration, and are therefore not in need of special attention.)

C. PETER THE LIVING PETRA:

From the very form of expression in *καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ σοὶ λέγω* it is plain, that what is here said by Christ is meant to correspond to what had been just said by Peter. As he had declared to Jesus: *σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ὕψιστος*, so Jesus says to him: *καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ σοὶ λέγω*, the sense of which is, "moreover, I also say to thee". *καὶ γὰρ* is emphatic, signifying that something very important was to follow. In the next clause, *ὅτι, σὺ εἶ Πέτρος*, we must bear in mind that *Πέτρος* was not his original name but that it was a

1. Charles Harris Nash: "The Foundation and Superstructure of the Church of Jesus Christ" - The Review and Expositor, vol. XXVI, No.4, Oct.1929, pg.408.

surname given to him ( as was customary with the Jewish Rabbis at the baptism of proselytes) at his acceptance into the ranks of the Twelve. And as those names were often given with allusion to some peculiar quality or disposition, so, in the case of Simon, it had reference to that zeal and firmness which he displayed. So also did Christ surname James and John the sons of thunder. Moreover, Πέτρος or Cephas does not only mean a stone ( as some claim), but also a rock ( cf. Plat. Ax. p. 371 E: Σιρύφου πέτρος ; Soph. Phil. 272, O.C. 19, 1591; Pind. Nem. IV. 46, X. 126)!

The next phrase ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ offers a little more difficulty. The emphasis rests on ταύτῃ and depends upon the reference, which some, as we have seen, place on the confession and others on Christ himself and others again on Peter. That it cannot mean the confession nor Christ himself has already been shown. Consequently the phrase refers to Peter. It is a promise as a reward for his faith. It is as personal as the most zealous advocates of papal supremacy could desire. Yet the interpretation of the papists and the intention of Christ are as remote as zenith from nadir. Would Christ have fought to death against one form of spiritual despotism to put another, if possible worse, in its place? " Personal in form this famous ~~legend~~<sup>saying</sup> can be expressed in abstract terms with reference to Peter's personality. And that sense must be simple, elementary, suitable to the initial stage; withal religious and ethical rather than ecclesiastical." But how can one say that πέτρα, a feminine form, and Πέτρος, a masculine name, can refer to the same person? " The form is feminine because it is not so much a question of the name as of the thing which it indicates, i.e. of that rocky element in the apostle's <sup>life's</sup>

1. See Meyer's Commentary and Bloomfield: H KAINH DIATHHKH.

character which furnished so solid a foundation for the super-structure of the church that was to be built upon it.<sup>1</sup> So also Burger: "Der Wechsel des Genus im Grundtext: Petrus und nachher Petra, Fels, spricht nicht gegen diese Auslegung, wornach Petrus selbst der Fels ist, auf den der Herr baut. Die Form des Masculinum ist gewaehlt, wo sie als Name des Mannes dienen soll, die des Femininum um des Bildes vom Baue willen, bei welchem der Mann als Felsengrund erscheint. Ganz selbstverstaendlich ist aber, dass, wie er den Namen Petrus nur zu fuehren berechtigt ist wegen des von ihm bezeugten Glaubens, nicht seinem natuerlichen Menschen nach abgesehen von diesem Glauben: dass er eben so als Grundstein der Kirche dienet nur vermoege des Glaubens und Bekenntnisses zu Christo, dass in ihm lebendig sich erweist, nicht etwa schlechthin auch ohne diesen Glauben lediglich kraft seiner eignen so oder so gearteten Persoenlichkeit.<sup>2</sup>"

Such is the argument from grammar. However, there are just as eminent grammarians who consider this view ungrammatical as there are those who say it cannot refer to the confession. Under such conditions one can hardly settle the question on the basis of grammar. One method remains and that is, to look for an explanation from the context, and not only from the immediate context but from the entire New Testament; for in this passage one of the great truths of the New Testament is contained. We must examine these words in the light of the New Testament world of thought. In the second chapter of the first epistle of St. Peter, the apostle gives an exposition of these words showing that the divine Architect builds a spiritual house of "lively stones". This word of Peter really proceeds from the words of the Psalmist:<sup>3</sup> "The stone which the

1. Meyer's Commentary.

2. Burger, C.H.: "Die Evangelien". pg. 186.

3. Ps. 118, 22.

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builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." The story of mankind is one continual process of building. Man is always erecting buildings, domiciles, factories, amusement palaces, stores, etc. Kings and rulers erect fortresses, palaces and empires out of the blood and gold of their subjects. God also builds, but unlike human architects; for God has elected for the corner-stone of His edifice the Stone which the builders refused and whom Pilate, a governor of a province belonging to the greatest world-empire, condemned to die the death on the cross. The house which God builds is not like our palaces and castles but a "pneumatic structure", <sup>that</sup> that is, a building out of spirits, out of "lively stones", consisting of human persons who are consecrated to God. God's method of building this spiritual house is entirely foreign to man. The stones are placed on each other according to a divine building-plan. God is both architect and builder. His plan is described in Eph.2;19f: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." When a cathedral is to be erected the architect draws a plan of the rows of stones as they are to be placed on top of each other. First of all, there come the foundation or ground-stones; then the second and third layers, and so on, each layer being definitely planned. In this passage in Ephesians we have set before us the first layer of the foundation-stones of this divinely established building. On this foundation the rest of the structure is built. Christ is the corner-stone and the prophets and



apostles are the foundation-stones. In Revelation where the Eternaal City is portrayed we read: "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." According to this there are other personages besides Christ who hold a position of distinction in this congregation of spirits. These are the apostles who received special powers and privileges from Christ. They are the ground-stones upon whom the rest of the structure is built. When Paul received the commission to preach the Gospel to the gentiles he got in touch with the men at Jerusalem. When he relates this story to the Galatians he uses an expression which sheds added light on the word of the Lord to Peter. We read Gal.2,9: "James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars" - *οἱ στήριδες στῦλοι εἶναι*. These men were the supporting pillars of the Christian Church, not only founders of local congregations but men who were of special significance to the people. This special power they were to have till the end of time. To them was given a special position in the kingdom of heaven: they were to sit upon the twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

If we place the word of Jesus to Peter in this connection then the meaning becomes simple. Jesus says to Peter: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church", that is, I am making you a foundation-stone, a pillar upon which shall be built the entire house of living stones; I am giving you a special <sup>authority,</sup> authority; I am giving you the keys of the kingdom. According to this, Peter was first among the disciples as "primus inter pares". That Peter occupied this position can be seen from the references we have concerning his acts. He is the first one of the apostles to whom

1. Rev.21,14.  
 2. Mt.19,28 and Lk.22,30.

the risen Lord appeared. He it was who took the lead on the Day of Pentecost speaking in the name of all the apostles. The effect of his sermon was an increase of 3000 souls to the hundred and twenty disciples.<sup>1</sup> He it was who spoke before the court of the high priest.<sup>2</sup> He was the one who admitted the Gentiles into the Christian community.<sup>3</sup> He it was who in those early days stood forth as a master-builder, and was the first to open the kingdom of heaven to the Jews and Gentiles, the constituents of the *ἐκκλησία*.

In the light of this evidence Mt. 16,18 says just the opposite of what the papists claim. The evidence is as clear as we could wish it. As an apostle Peter receives a commission, an honor, which cannot be inherited, which cannot be transmitted to the coming generation. This position can in no way ever be repeated. This is brought out by the picture of the foundation-stone and the construction of the spiritual house. There can be but one layer of ground-stones. The role they play in any construction is an <sup>ant</sup> important one and occurs but once: in the beginning. This cannot recur and therefore excludes every succession. It is a particular bit of irony that just this word of our Savior was placed in gigantic letters of gold on the basilica of St. Peter, especially when understood in its original sense, it excludes every form of the papacy, because it gives to Peter a unique and not-to-be-repeated position<sup>?</sup> in the church. All the others, regardless of how great they may be or what brilliant qualities of leadership they may possess, can never be apostles, they can never possess the "sedes apostolica", they can never have the significance and power of the original apostles who were the *στῦλοι* of the Church. All others are placed as living stones in this pneumatic structure. They can only

1. Acts 2,41.
2. Acts 4,8.
3. Acts 10.

be placed on top of this layer of foundation-stones and can never become "apostolic stones". Compared with the apostles who have a special position (sui generis), they are ordinary brick but never ground-stones. Heim says: "Den Aposteln gegenueber sind sie alle Keigonen, einfache Werksteine, gewoehnliche Backsteine und niemals Fundamente."

If this word of Christ is understood in this sense then it forms the magna charta of the Protestant conception of church history. This declaration is based on the truth that the kingdom of heaven knows of no special power which can be handed down from one person to another. A prophetic commission or an apostolic charge can no more be handed down to a successor than the poetic genius of Goethe or the artistic ability of Michelangelo could be transmitted to another person. A spiritual authority cannot be inherited as a piece of property; it cannot be willed to another person as a house or other material possessions, or as the kingly crown can be handed down from father to son.

To corroborate this truth we have a beautiful illustration in the Old Testament. Elijah, who had received a call to the prophetic office from God, was instructed by the Lord shortly before he was taken up into heaven, to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his stead.<sup>1</sup> This Elijah did by casting his mantle upon Elisha.<sup>2</sup> Now the day when Elijah was to be taken up into heaven was at hand. They had just crossed over the bed of the Jordan which had been parted by Elijah's mantle. As they were standing on the other side of the Jordan watching the waters once more flow in a steady stream over their path of dry ground which they had just traversed, Elisha, filled with awe and reverence by this miracle, asks Elijah:<sup>3</sup> "I pray

1. 1 Kgs. 19, 16.  
 2. 1 Kgs. 19, 19.  
 3. 2 Kgs. 2, 9.

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thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." Elisha has asked more than Elijah can give him, he has "asked a hard thing." He has asked Elijah to hand down to him something spiritual, something which is not of men but of God: a double portion of his spirit. This Elijah is unable to do. Nor is there any human who could have complied with Elisha's wish. So Elijah replies: "Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so."<sup>1</sup> By these words Elijah says that only God can bestow such a gift, and if Elisha would see him taken up into heaven, this would be a sign from heaven that the Lord had granted his request.

We have a similar case in the New Testament with Paul and Timothy. In his last will and testament to Timothy Paul tells his faithful understudy to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, "and the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."<sup>2</sup> Paul instructs Timothy to transmit the doctrines which were taught him to faithful men, such as would be able to teach others also. Paul tells him to instruct others so that the Gospel of Christ might flourish, but he does not give him apostolic authority which Timothy also never assumes.

A divine commission concerns but that person by whom it is received. The whole idea of apostolic succession, "successio apostolica", is self-contradictory. It is an adaptation from human establishments which are but transitory and have been erected by human builders, by those builders who have refused the head stone of the corner. World power and world possessions can be transmitted from the king to the crown-prince and from the father to his

1. 2 Kgs. 2,10.  
2. 2 Tim.2,2.

descendants, but the "sedes apostolica" upon which Christ placed Peter on that important occasion in Caesarea Philippi, this throne in the spiritual kingdom excludes every form of succession. This position will be occupied by the apostles for all times. This is the throne from which he and the other apostles will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. It is one of the twelve foundations of the Eternal City on which is indelibly imprinted the name of 'SIMON, BAR-JONAH, WHO WAS CALLED CEPHAS'. To imagine that this throne will at one time be vacant and another will sit on it, or that the name of Peter will be erased and another one added to it (as a loving-cup bearing the names of the successive winners) is as preposterous as it is unbiblical.

It is self-evident that in the organization of the congregations<sup>-ions</sup> a necessity for certain offices arose which could be transmitted to successors. Such an instance we have in Acts 6 where "seven men of honest report" were chosen to take charge of the department of charity in the early church. However, none of these offices possessed apostolic authority. For as Acts 6 plainly shows these offices were clearly distinguished from the apostolate.

The question may be raised: If the apostolate was a special office and its powers and privileges a special grant of God which could not be transmitted to any other person or persons, from where, then, does the public ministry derive its authority? As we have seen the apostles exercised more power than their understudies. Paul, Peter, and the other apostles had authority over all the congregations, while Timothy, Titus, Mark, and the others, had only one special field: Timothy is pastor in Ephesus; Titus in Crete and Dalmatia; Epaphras at Colossae; Epaphroditus at Philippi. The power of the keys was not transmitted to them by the apostles and

so down to our time but it was given to them directly by God as also to all Christians. In Mt.16,18 this power was given to Peter alone but later it was given to all the apostles and to all believers<sup>as</sup> as can be seen from Mt.18,18 and John 20,23. An example where this power was exercised we have recorded in 1 Cor.5,4.

Out of such lively stones as Peter Christ will build his church, namely, the congregation of the faithful, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. The ἐκκλησία is to consist of men confessing Jesus to be the Christ. Peter-like faith in Jesus as the Christ admits into the Kingdom of Heaven. An assembly of men with such faith is the realization of this kingdom. If the spirit of Christ continues to predominate in this society then the πύλαι ᾧδου will not prevail against it, that is, neither the power of death nor the power of the devil shall be able to wreck the eternal building of which Christ was laying the foundation. "The ἐκκλησία will be strong, enduring, only so long as the <sup>faith</sup> in the Father and in Christ the Son, and the spirit of the Father and the Son, reign in it. When the Christ spirit is weak the Church will be weak, and neither creeds nor governments, nor keys, nor ecclesiastical dignities will be of much help to her."

We have now reached the end of our investigation. We had asked ourselves the question: What did Christ mean when He said to Peter, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church"? In regard to the view which the papists place upon this <sup>saying</sup> Logos we asked ourselves: Is the Roman Catholic Church of to-day an establishment of Christ? Is the secular-ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Romanists a product of the mind of Christ? We are of the opinion and, what is more, we are firmly convinced that we must answer these questions<sup>-ions</sup>

in an unconditional negative: NO, HE DID NOT ESTABLISH IT, NOR COULD HE HAVE THOUGHT OF ESTABLISHING SUCH A HIERARCHY BECAUSE HIS ENTIRE LIFE WAS A CONSTANT PROTEST AGAINST EVERY FORM OF SPIRITUAL DESPOTISM. Scripture speaks against such an interpretation; the patristic writings do not support it, for out of 77 sayings of the most famous Church fathers only 17 hold the rock to be Peter. Furthermore, the presence of Peter in Rome is not as yet a definitely established fact, although we may say, with a fair degree of certainty, that Peter spent his last days in the imperial city. But one thing is certain, namely, that the Roman assumption that Peter was Bishop of Rome for 25 years, is absolutely without historical grounds. "There is nothing to hinder the conclusion that Peter may well have been in Rome between 63 and 67..... Peter may well have come to Rome after the year 63, if only as a captive in the aftermath of the Neronian persecution, during which he also suffered death as a martyr of the faith." Then, too, the other interpretations that the rock is Christ or the confession of Peter, are not in harmony with the New Testament world of thought. Without a doubt our awe and reverence for the Word of our Lord prevents us from twisting and contorting its original meaning and compels us to avert the thought that a human being - should he be the ideal - has any authority to decide over the faith and lives of men. For just this majestic <sup>saying</sup> ~~Logion~~ of the Master to Peter, "upon this rock I will build my church", excludes the Church of God from all human organizations and compels us to abandon all man-made ecclesiastical organizations to return to the Church founded by Christ and His Apostles. This Church is the Congregation of the Saints in which the true believers do not

1. P.E.Kretzmann: "The Last Twenty-five Years of Peter's Life" - Concordia Theological Monthly, vol. II, Feb. 1931, pg. 114.

worship God in Jerusalem or on Mt. Garizim, neither in Constantinople nor in Rome, neither in London nor in New York, neither in this cathedral nor in that one, but who worship God " in spirit and in truth". In this Church there can be no strife as to which one is the greatest, for it is founded on the word, "one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren".

- 1. John 4, 24.
- 2. Mt. 23, 8.



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