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THE INFALLIBLE POPE.

"The historian is seen at his best
when he does not appear."

The Romanist Klee in his *Dogmatics*, vol. 1, p. 210, called it a Protestant slander that Catholics thought the Pope infallible. (Hase I, p. 277.) The Scotch Catholic Father Keenan in his *Controversial Catechism* says of the Pope's infallibility: "This is a Protestant invention; it is no article of the Catholic faith." Since 1870 this damaging statement has been quietly dropped, and no hint given that the text differs from the author's own editions of 1846 and 1853. (Sidney, p. 86.)

In the "Form of Oath and Declaration," taken in 1793 by all Irish Catholics, occur the words: "I also declare that it is not an article of the Catholic faith, neither am I thereby required to believe or profess that the Pope is infallible." And a Synod of Irish Bishops in 1810 declared this oath and declaration to be "a constituent part of the Roman Catholic religion." (Quirinus, p. 189.) Archbishop Murray, Bishop Doyle, and others in 1824 and 1825 before both houses of Parliament swore, "that it is not an article of the Catholic faith, neither are Catholics bound to believe, that popes are infallible." (B. W.-A., p. 270.)

On July 18, 1870, Pope Pius IX decreed: "We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed; that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks 'ex cathedra,' that is, when in discharge of the office of Pastor and Doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doc-

MATT. 16, 18 f. AND THE PRIMACY OF PETER.

Protestant commentators of Matthew very generally inscribe the section which begins at the thirteenth and terminates at the twentieth verse of the sixteenth chapter: "The Confession of Peter." This caption makes the action of Peter related in this section more prominent than the action of Christ. If considerations of the dignity of the speakers and of the weight and import of the remarks of the speakers on the occasion were allowed to determine the phrasing of the head under which a commentator sets out to discuss the record of the event in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, we might expect a chapter-head somewhat like this: "The Elevation of Peter." For as regards rank, authority, and personal worth, the Galilean fisherman is far inferior to the God-man, and while the testimony which Peter utters in behalf of his Master is cer-

tainly a magnificent encomium on the true character of the Master, still the acknowledgment which the Master makes to His disciple and, above all, the eminent and unusual distinction which He bestows upon him, might incline us to place the weight of the entire episode on vv. 17—19 rather than on v. 16. That the theologians of the Roman Church claim that this ought to be done, goes without saying. But whether, in an effort to briefly characterize the contents of this particular section in Matthew's account, we ought to place Peter's confession of Christ (σὺ εἶ χριστός, v. 16) or Christ's confession of Peter (σὺ εἶ πέτρος, v. 18) in the foreground, will be seen in the last analysis to be a very small matter. Both statements are remarkable, striking. The impartial Protestant will not hesitate to say that words were spoken to Peter on this occasion which distinguish him above the rest of the disciples. That is an impression which the most perfunctory as well as the most searching investigation of the text will yield. On the other hand, the Catholic will have to grant that the remark of the Lord to Peter requires as its logical *prius* the confession of Peter; that if Peter had not spoken as he did, it is not likely, and we have no ground for assuming, that the Lord would have spoken to Peter as He did. After all, the great question is not, Who spoke best? but, What did each say? In particular, it is the scope and the force of the remarks of the Lord to Peter that require to be pondered in the text and context, and if anything like the primacy of Peter as conceived by the Roman Church is found to be laid down here, Scripture in general will have to be appealed to, and history will have to be called upon for its witness, to substantiate the claim.

After four centuries of the most exacting toil upon this text in Matthew on the part of the best scholars on either side of the question, a writer at this late day must not only feel exceedingly timid, but he might almost be seized with a feeling of despair, when deciding for himself the question of the usefulness of saying another word upon the matter, after so much has been said and nothing of what has been said seems to

have made the least impression. Rome is to-day just as vociferous and just as determined in its asseverations that Matt. 16, 18, 19 is the Magna Charta of the papacy and the hierarchy, as it was in the days of the Reformation. Only recently her priests in our country boasted that this text establishes "the Holy Father" as the visible head of the Christian Church throughout the world; and there may be not a few Catholic laymen who sincerely believe that this text settles forever the question of the spiritual and secular supremacy of Rome, and that those who oppose the papacy are found to be fighting not against a device of men but against an ordinance of the Lord. On the other hand, the effect which the words of Christ had in determining the station and rank of Peter may be said to have been expressed by modern Protestantism in a style somewhat different from that in which Germany, Scandinavia, England, and Helvetia voiced their convictions after 1520; still modern Protestantism has not yielded one essential point to the champions of Peter's primacy, the successorship of the bishop of Rome to Peter, and his vicegerency to Christ. The positions assumed by theologians on either side have become rigid, impervious to argument; the combatants have passed the point where it is still possible to impress or sway an opponent. Modern Protestant effort, accordingly, can hope for little more than by reiterating the findings of its forbears to confirm its posterity in a protesting attitude over and against the exclusivism and intolerance of the Church of Rome which is being cloaked by this text; and once in a while it may hush an overconfident declaimer on the divinely ordained supremacy of the Pope.

The controversy turns virtually on two points: 1. whether *ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρῃ* (v. 18) refers to the person of Peter; 2. whether *σοὶ* (v. 19) carries a sufficient emphasis to cause the grant made to Peter in this clause to be the sole and exclusive privilege of Peter.

As to the first point, the entire context in which the words occur favors an affirmative answer. Both in the preceding

clause and in the clause beginning with *δώσω*, which follows almost immediately, Christ addresses Peter: "Thou art Peter;" "I will give thee;" "thou shalt bind;" "thou shalt loose." It is not easy to conceive how the clause *ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρῃ οἰκοδομήσω κτλ.*, "upon this rock I will build my Church," could have been addressed intelligently to any other person than to Peter, to whom the entire statement is addressed. Moreover, there is undoubtedly a connection intended by the pronoun *ταύτῃ*; it points to something that has just been referred to; and it cannot point to anything else than to Peter, for to him the Lord had referred. The paronomasia *Πέτρος—πέτρα* plainly describes the same personage. "The demonstrative *ἐπὶ ταύτῃ κτλ.*, following as it does upon the statement *σὺ εἶ Πέτρος*, can only refer to the apostle, just as the clause following (*καὶ δώσω*) refers to him." (Meyer—Weiss.)

But if Christ meant to declare Peter the foundation of His Church, why did He not, after acknowledging the fitness of the name bestowed on this apostle at the time of his call (John 1, 42), proceed to say simply: *ἐπὶ σου οἰκοδομήσω*, "on thee I will build," etc.? The reference to the person of Peter would thus have been made much plainer. The apostle's personality is referred to in this context in two distinct ways: the apostle is Simon Barjonah and he is Peter. Simon Barjonah is no *πέτρα*, Peter is. If the terms "person," "personage," "personality" are understood merely in the sense of "human individual" and connoting existence and personal identity, the same as other members of Jonah's family and other citizens of Bethsaida possessed, we are justified in saying that *ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρῃ* does not refer to the person of the apostle. But if "person" points to the human being who had come under the regenerating influence of the teaching of Christ, the phrase does refer to the person of Peter. It is not the *ἄνθρωπος σαρκικός* but the *ἄνθρωπος πνευματικός* that Christ addresses in His apostle. Naturally the apostle was unfit for any such purpose or mission as the Lord connects him with; but he had been fitted for it supernaturally. The apostle was in one view the

product of Jonah, in another, the product of the Father in heaven. From Jonah he had *σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα*, and all that characterizes the natural condition of man in his relation to spiritual things, ignorance of, enmity toward, God and divine matters. From the Father in heaven he had knowledge to grasp, faith to embrace, courage and cheerfulness to own, the Redeemer-God, manifest in the flesh. The earthly father had produced a fisherman, the heavenly, a confessor. It is the latter individual that Christ addresses. He views the apostle not in his secular, cosmic, but in his spiritual capacity. "The name Simon Bar Jonas is doubtless used as indicating his fleshly state and extraction, and forming the greater contrast to his spiritual state, name, and blessing which follow. The name 'Simon, son of Jonas,' is uttered when he is reminded by the thrice repeated inquiry, 'Lovest thou me?' of his frailty in his previous denial of the Lord." (Alford.) "The statement *σὺ εἶ πτλ.* is not merely a repetition of the statement *σὺ κληθήσῃ Πέτρος*, 1 John 1, 43, but a sequel to it: it asserts that Peter is now become what was on the former occasion only anticipated for him, that he who according to his flesh and blood was only *Σιμῶν βάρ Ἰωνᾶ* is now become a new man, a *πέτρα*, on which Christ Himself promises to build His future Church." (Noesgen in Strack-Zoekler.)

The age in which Peter confessed Christ the Son of the living God was tossed with doubts, vacillating between various opinions as to who and what Christ was. Some thought this, others that (v. 14). Men of such uncertain views, of such unclarified judgments, of such undecided beliefs were no material suitable for the construction of the Church of Christ. The Church of Christ is the congregation of men who acknowledge the divinity, the perfect coequality with God, of the humble, lowly, serving Man who traversed Palestine proclaiming salvation by faith in His teaching and work. Christ holds to these people a relation that is variously described in Scripture: He is their Head, they are His body; He is their Shepherd, they are His sheep; He is the Vine, they are the

branches. In all these figurative delineations of the connection between Christ and His believers there is a common element: Christians cannot be conceived of apart from Christ. They are what they are only through Him. In the text before us Christ claims a share in bringing about the great spiritual metamorphosis which made out of Simon Barjonah a Peter; for He quietly reminds Peter that the Father, to whom Peter was indebted for his knowledge of the Son of Man and for his alacrity in confessing Him, is His Father, *ὁ πατήρ μου*. The faith which Peter held rested on this very Christ whom he professed. And here we think of another manner in which Scripture exhibits the relation between the Lord and the believer, that between a building and its foundation. The believers are the temple of God, Christ is the foundation of the temple. This foundation is the general and universal foundation of the faith of every believer, and it is impossible to lay any other, 1 Cor. 3, 11. It is not the act of believing but the object which a believer appropriates, embodies, so to speak, in his new spiritual individuality, that imparts strength, solidity to him, and makes him fit material to be entered into that holy, invisible temple of God, constructed out of living stones (1 Pet. 2, 5), of which Peter speaks to the Christians who had learned from him to believe in Christ. *Ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρῃ*, then, refers indeed to Peter, but only as he was firmly grounded upon the fundamentum fundamenti, the nethermost Rock that bears up Peter and all whom Peter is to evangelize and disciple, the Lord Christ Himself. While it must be acknowledged that there is an element of equality between *Πέτρος* and *πέτρα*, it must be granted just as well that there is an element of inequality. *Πέτρος* and *πέτρα* are not absolutely identical. Not the mere, bare human individual Peter, but the characteristic quality in the individual Peter which deserves to be designated as *πέτρα* is the subject of the remark *ἐπὶ ταύτῃ κτλ.* "Jesus says: *Ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρῃ*, plainly referring to the name of Peter. But by using the feminine *πέτρα* for the masculine *πέτρος* and by placing *ταύτῃ* alongside of it, Matthew effects

a distinction between the person of the apostle and that which makes the apostle a rock, and the latter element is credited to that knowledge which he had received by revelation. It was because this distinction had to be made that the Lord did not simply say *ἐπί σου*. Besides, the express statement that his knowledge had not sprung from his *σῶρξ καὶ αἷμα* declares that it was not his personality that made Peter a rock-man (a fact which the history of his life clearly corroborates), but something that had been implanted in him by God." (Noesgen in Strack-Zoekler, who thus declines contrary views of Weiss, Holtzmann, Weizsaecker, Schanz, Knabenhauer.) "By his profession Peter had uttered the fundamental confession of the Church, hence had laid its foundation. (?) Upon *this* confession, accordingly, Jesus proposes to build His Church. The declaration of Peter, 'Thou art,' etc., is answered by Jesus in a similar declaration to Peter, 'Thou art,' etc. Hence, not the man Peter, Jonas' son, is the foundation, but Peter the confessor, Peter in or by his confession." (Tholuck.) The remark of Tholuck, "Peter had laid the foundation," is explained by the context of this author's remarks. It cannot mean anything else than that Peter, being established himself upon the foundation that had been laid, was now qualified by his testimony to bear up the faith of future members of the Church, was now, and whenever he would repeat his witness for Christ in the future, a part of the *θεμέλιος ἀποστόλων*, Eph. 2, 20, on which the entire Church rests, with Jesus Christ Himself the chief corner-stone. The sole distinction of Peter is that which priority in confessing Christ before others secures. It was shared later by the other apostles.

It has been suggested that Christ accompanied the words *ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ* with a gesture: some would have the Lord, while uttering these words, point His finger at Peter, others at Himself. It is not probable that the Lord did either, but in a popular representation the latter view has many things to commend it as a means to facilitate the understanding of the passage. Christ certainly is the Rock on which the Church

has been built, and Peter and the apostles and other men may become the foundation of the faith of their fellowmen only in so far as they proclaim Christ and lead men to faith in Christ. "All Christians are Peters by reason of the same profession which Peter makes. This profession is the rock on which Peter and all Peters are built up." (Luther.)

2. The claim of the Roman Church in behalf of Peter's primacy cannot be established from v. 18. But does not v. 19 prove it? That the personal pronoun *σοι* carries no emphasis, even a person of rudimentary knowledge of Greek rhetoric is able to see. To express emphasis it would have had to be given a different place in the clause, or be accompanied by qualifiers having exclusive force. As it stands in the text it is colorless. But even if one should grant that a certain stress goes with this pronoun, that could easily be accounted for by the circumstances of the occasion. The grant of power, however, conveyed in the clause beginning with *δῶσω* cannot be construed into an exclusive Petrine authority, because exactly the same grant is made to all the apostles Matt. 18, 17—19 and John 20, 22 ff. The contents of this power are part and parcel of the apostolic qualification for the evangelization of the world; the bestowal of this authority creates a person not a bishop of any one particular church, but a householder, a steward of the Church of God in general, an apostle.

If any one was in a position to gather from the words of Christ that import which the Roman Church has gathered from them, it would have been Peter himself and his fellow-disciples. We should, accordingly, expect to see Peter asserting and exercising, the other apostles acknowledging and deferring to, his superior authority. There is no evidence in the entire New Testament that Peter was conscious of the fact that Christ had created him Primate of all the world. The controversy which unsanctified ambition caused to spring up among the disciples after Peter's confession, when they were wrangling for the first place in the kingdom of Christ, Matt. 18, 1. 4; Luke 22, 24, is conclusive evidence that the first place, as far

as they knew, had not been given away. The rebuke which Christ administered on that occasion had the force of a declaration that there would be no "first place" in the sense which they connected with that phrase. And that sense is the sense of the ambitious Roman Church. Throughout the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles we find the servants of Christ treating each other as on a perfect equality; they are called pillars of the Church, but they do not call Peter princeps apostolorum. The primacy of Peter is a later invention. It may cause us to smile when we hear the higher critics of our day declare that this text in Matthew must be a spurious interpolation of a late redactor, because it betrays hierarchical influence and represents the first definite indication of a papistic ambition. But we can understand how a critic who works mainly with hypotheses can adopt this one. Certainly, if the text means what Rome claims and what Wernle and Holtzmann seem ready to grant, we should have in this text something so utterly out of harmony with, yea, so contradictory to, the rest of the New Testament, that we might be tempted also to think of a Roman interpolation. But there is no fault to be found with the text; to set forth its plain import and scope is tantamount to upsetting every claim of the papacy, without even calling to our aid the formidable facts of history which antagonize a Roman episcopate of Peter as much as Scripture antagonizes his primacy.

"They cite against us certain passages, viz. (Matt. 16, 18 sq.): 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.' Also: 'I will give unto thee the keys.' Also (John 21, 15): 'Feed my sheep,' and some others. But since this entire controversy has been fully and accurately treated of elsewhere in the books of our theologians, and all things cannot be reviewed in this place, we refer to those writings, and wish them to be regarded as repeated. Yet we will briefly reply concerning the interpretation of the passages quoted. In all these passages Peter is the representative of the entire assembly of apostles, as appears from the text itself. For Christ asks not

Peter alone, but says: 'Whom do ye say that I am?' And what is here said in the singular number: 'I will give unto thee the keys; and whatsoever thou shalt bind,' etc., is elsewhere expressed in the plural (Matt. 18, 18): 'Whatsoever ye shall bind,' etc. And in John 20, 23: 'Whosoever sins ye remit,' etc. These words testify that the keys are given alike to all the apostles, and that all the apostles are alike sent forth. In addition to this, it is necessary to confess that the keys pertain not to the person of a particular man, but to the Church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify. For Christ, speaking concerning the keys (Matt. 18, 19), adds: 'If two of you shall agree on earth,' etc. Therefore He ascribes the keys to the Church principally and immediately; just as also for this reason the Church has principally the right of calling. [For just as the promise of the Gospel belongs certainly and immediately to the entire Church, so the keys belong immediately to the entire Church, because the keys are nothing else than the office whereby this promise is communicated to every one who desires it, just as it is actually manifest that the Church has the power to ordain ministers of the Church. And Christ speaks in these words: 'Whatsoever ye shall bind,' etc., and means that to which He has given the keys, namely, the Church: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name' (Matt. 18, 20). Likewise Christ gives supreme and final jurisdiction to the Church, when He says: 'Tell it to the Church.'] Therefore it is necessary in these passages that Peter be the representative of the entire assembly of the apostles, and for this reason they do not ascribe any prerogative, or superiority, or lordship to Peter. As to the declaration: 'Upon this rock I will build my Church,' certainly the Church has not been built upon the authority of man, but upon the ministry of the confession which Peter made, in which he proclaims that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He accordingly addresses him as a minister: 'Upon this rock,' *i. e.*, upon this ministry. [Therefore He addresses him as a minister of such an office as is to be pervaded by this confession and doctrine, and says:

‘Upon this rock,’ *i. e.*, this declaration and ministry.] Furthermore, the ministry of the New Testament is not bound to persons and places, as the Levitical ministry, but it is dispersed throughout the whole world, and is there where God gives His gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers; neither does this ministry avail on account of the authority of any person, but on account of the Word given by Christ. And in this way most of the holy Fathers, as Origen, Cyprian, Augustine, Hilary and Bede, interpret this passage (Upon this rock). Chrysostom says thus: “‘Upon this rock,” not upon Peter. For He built His Church not upon man, but upon the faith of Peter. But what was his faith? “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”” And Hilary says: “To Peter the Father revealed that he should say, “Thou art the Son of the living God.” Therefore the building of the Church is upon this rock of confession; this faith is the foundation of the Church,’ etc.” (Art. Smalcald. III, 22 ff., p. 342 f.)
