

Caesarea and the Mediterranean. See the geographical tables of Adrichomius. This verse belongs to the following chapter, hence many began chapter 16 with it; for at *Magedan* occurred the scribes' request for a sign from heaven, which follows.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

*First, the Pharisees ask Christ for a sign from heaven; He gives them the sign of Jonas. Second (v. 6), He warns the disciples to beware of the leaven, that is, the bad doctrine of the Pharisees. Third (v. 13), He asks them who they think that He is. Peter answers: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God; therefore, Christ establishes him the rock of the Church and gives him the keys of heaven. Fourth (v. 21), He predicts His passion and resurrection and calls His followers to the cross.*

**A**nd there came to him the Pharisees and Sadducees tempting: and they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.

2 But he answered and said to them: When it is evening, you say, It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.

3 And in the morning: To day there will be a storm, for the sky is red and lowering. You know then how to discern the face of the sky: and can you not know the signs of the times?

4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. And he left them, and went away.

5 And when his disciples were come over the water, they had forgotten to take bread.

6 Who said to them: Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

7 But they thought within themselves, saying: Because we have taken no bread.

8 And Jesus knowing it, said: Why do you think within yourselves, O ye of little faith, for that you have no bread?

9 Do you not yet understand, neither do you remember the five loaves among five thousand men, and how many baskets you took up?

10 Nor the seven loaves among four thousand men, and how many baskets you took up?

11 Why do you not understand that it was not concerning the bread I said to you: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?

12 Then they understood that he said not that they should beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

13 And Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi: and he asked his disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of man is?

14 But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am?

16 Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

18 And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.

20 Then he commanded his disciples, that they should tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ.

21 From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples, that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again.

22 And Peter taking him, began to rebuke him, saying: Lord, be it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee.

23 Who turning, said to Peter: Go behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto me: because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For he that will save his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for

my sake, shall find it.

26 For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels: and then will he render to every man according to his works.

28 Amen I say to you, there are some of them that stand here, that shall not taste death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Verse 1. *And there came to Him* (in Magedan, 15:39) *the Pharisees and Sadducees* (about whom I spoke at 3:7) *tempting: and they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.* They had previously asked for a sign (12:38). But here again they asked for one because of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves which Christ had just worked. For when they perceived that this miracle was celebrated by the multitudes who had been partakers of the bread, they called it an earthly sign, that could be done by the devil (who rules on the earth). And so they insinuated that Christ was a magician, and by the help of the devil had multiplied the loaves, and performed His other miracles. This may be gathered from chapter 12, verse 24. They ask of Christ, therefore, a sign from heaven—that God, who reigns on high, would thereby attest that Christ was sent by Him, and that His doctrine was heavenly. And that if He did it, they would believe Christ to be the Messiah and would train the people in that same faith. But the Sadducees, who were atheists, thought no sign could be given from heaven by God, who in their opinion had no existence. The Pharisees thought that such a sign could be given, but that Christ would not give it, not being the Messiah, or, if He was, not wishing to grant their request, as He had been unwilling in chapter 12, verse 38, which is why they thought that they should persuade the people that Christ could not give a sign from heaven, and consequently was not sent by God, but by the devil. (See the other explanations at 12:38.) Lyra explains otherwise. He is of the opinion, that the Jews were given to judicial astrology, and asked a sign of Christ, whereby He should show from the stars that He was the Messiah. They thought that God had pointed out, and as it were written in the stars, all His providence about human affairs, and the whole order of the universe. But Matthew here intimates nothing of the kind. The Pharisees really seem to have alluded to the manna, as may be gathered from John 6:30-31. As though they said, “O Jesus, Thou hast indeed multiplied

bread upon earth, but give a sign from heaven. Rain down manna from the sky, as Moses did; so shalt Thou show Thyself like unto Moses, and the new Law-giver of Thy Gospel sent by God.” So Remigius, Bede, and Abulensis.

Verse 2. *But he answered and said to them: When it is evening, you say, It will be fair weather (tomorrow morning), for the sky is red.* The physical reason of this is, that the redness of the sky or the atmosphere indicates that the clouds are not dense, and, therefore, will be spent or dissipated during the night, and consequently the following day will be serene or free from clouds. For red is an intermediate color between black and white. The blackness of the clouds signifies that they are thick and dense, so that the rays of the sun cannot pierce through them, and, therefore, opaque and difficult to dissolve. Their whiteness shows that they are of very great rarity, so that the sun’s rays shine through them. The redness of the clouds indicates that they are not altogether dense, or rarified, but are becoming thin, and, therefore, part of the sunlight appears through them and part is excluded; for redness has something of blackness and something of whiteness, since it is a mixture of both. To the degree that it tends to blackness, it excludes the sun’s rays; to the degree that it tends to whiteness, it admits and transmits them.

Verse 3. *And in the morning: Today there will be a storm (there will be rains and winds), for the sky is red and lowering.* The Greek word is the same as in the preceding verse [although the Vulgate translates it with the expressions *rubicundum est* and *rutilat*]: *πυρράζει*, *i.e.*, “is ruddy”; *στρυγνάζων*, *i.e.*, “a sky bringing sorrow”. *Rutilat*, then, means *rubet* [becomes red], as the Syriac and Arabic translate it. For *rutilus* [golden-red] is red, because a ruby *rutilat*, that is, glows red. Thus Ovid (5 *Metamorph.*): *Cruor rutilus*, “red blood,” and *capilli rutili*, “red hair” (2 *Metam.*). The expression *Mars rutilus*, that is, “red and bloody Mars,” is found in Cicero (*in Somnio Scipionis*); as well as *flamma rutila*, “glowing red flame” (2 *Fast.*). The physical reason is that if the sky be red in the evening, it indicates that the clouds are rarefied, and so will be consumed in the course of the night; for the sun setting and going away cannot liquefy them. On the other hand, when the sky is red in the morning, it also indicates that the clouds are rarefied, but nevertheless so dense that they cannot be consumed by the rising sun, but resist it; that is why, with the increasing sunlight and heat, they will soon be dissolved into rain or wind. Because they have been rarefied by the penetration of the sun’s rays, they

are able to be closer [to the sun], so that they are dissolved by the sun into rain or wind instead of being driven elsewhere by it. Hear what Pliny says about the signs of the weather (*lib. 18, c. 35*). “If the sun set clear, it is a sign of fine weather. If he set with a clear sky, and rise in the same way, it is a certain sign of fine weather. If the sun appear larger at sunrise than usual, if he rise with a bluish tinge, or set in the same way, it is a sign of rain; if of a fiery color, it betokens east wind. When the clouds are red before sunrise, there will be wind. When they are grey, or dark intermingled with red, it is a sign of rain.” Note these similar forecasts from the moon: “If it rises resplendent and shines with a pure brilliance, it is thought to foretell calm weather; if reddish, winds; if black, rains.” So say our fellow citizens of Namur (*in Meteor. tract. 7 cap. 3*). Abulensis (*in loco quaest. 8*) gives another simpler reason, different from these two, why a red sky at night is a sign of clear weather, while in the morning it is a sign of a storm. He says the reason is, first, because the redness which appears in the evening atmosphere signifies a drying of the air, and, therefore, the gross matter of the vapors, which can be changed into water, has already dried, so as to become inflamed, that is, reddened; and thus it is not so nearly disposed to produce rain; and so it is a sign that clear weather is near. The second reason is, because when the sky is red in the morning, this is thickened material; and it is not dry, because it is not red in the same manner as the red clouds that appear at sunset; rather it is material to some extent opaque and to some extent red, and thus is irregular matter, which, dissolved by the sun’s heat, distills in rains, as to its opaque, grosser part, or dissolves into winds, as to the part which is somewhat dried and reddish. Or else because of moist surrounding matter, it is all turned into rains at once, and thus becomes a tempest, because a tempest means not only rains, but also strong winds with water; and this is implied by our Vulgate version when it wisely translates the Greek word as *rutilat*.

*Symbolically*, Abulensis says (*quaest. 9*): In Christ’s first coming there was the serenity of grace: in His second coming there shall be the storm of vengeance and of hell, which Christ the Judge shall cause to thunder against the reprobate. So, too, S. Augustine on this verse (*in quaest. Evang.*).

*You know then how to discern the face (external form and appearance) of the sky: and can you not know the signs of the times? The signs of the times.* These are the signs of the time of the Messiah’s coming, or *of the times, i.e.*, of the seventy weeks of Daniel, of the prophecy of the patriarch, Jacob

(Genesis 49:10), and of other prophets. For these prophecies, together with the miracles which Christ was working every day, plainly proved that the Messiah was already come, and that He was the Messiah. This verse must be read as an interrogation, not as Lyra reads as a negative assertion. He explains thus, as though to say, “ye Jews are given to astrology, and ye wish by means of the stars to discern the time of the Messiah’ advent. But ye are in error. For by the stars may be derived presages of fine weather, or of storm, but not of the advent of the Messiah.” But this is beside the point. The argument in this place is from a minor to a major, thus, “If from the signs of heaven ye know how to discern coming fine weather, or a coming tempest, much more can ye and ought ye from the oracles of the prophets and My miracles to recognize Me to be the Messiah. For these things are more clear and certain than those.” So S. Hilary, S. Jerome, and Euthymius. It is also plain enough from Luke 12:56, where Christ says, *You hypocrites, you know how to discern the face of the heaven and of the earth: but how is it that you do not discern this time?* (of My advent, since I am the Messiah). Thus in like manner there are many in the present day who are lynx-eyed in earthly things, moles in things divine; prudent in the world, foolish for heaven; of piercing sight in heaping up money [*nummis*], most ignorant in the worship of God [*numine*]. Their wisdom is in their purse, they are very dull in matters of conscience. S. Chrysostom gives another explanation (*hom. 54*): “There are signs of the present time, and there are other signs of what is to come. The signs of healing which I show are of time present: but the signs of the future shall be the signs in heaven for which ye are now asking, O ye scribes. For then there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars (Luke 21:25). Ye, therefore, act like Thales, who gazing at heaven whilst he was walking, fell into a ditch. Thus also ye gazing at the future, and neglecting the present time of grace, are going headlong into Gehenna.”

Verse 4. *A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.* Christ repeats this verse, which we have already heard at chapter 12, verse 39, where I explained it.

*And he left them, and went away.* From Magedan He boarded a boat and passed over the Sea of Galilee, and returned to its hither bank, as appears from the following verse. Hence Mark 8:13 says, *And leaving them, He went up again into the ship, and passed to the other side of the water.* Again and again did Christ sail over this sea, passing back and forth, that He

might teach the Galileans who dwelt on either side of it, according to the prophesy of Isaias 9:1, quoted in Matthew 4:14.

Verse 5. *And when his disciples were come over the water, they had forgotten to take bread. Were come,* Greek ἐλθόντες, *i.e.*, “when they had gone”, meaning when they had boarded the ship to cross over; for it is plain from the circumstances that this happened in the ship. For in the ship, and in sailing a distance they would require bread and food, of which they would find abundance in the harbor. This is clear from Mark 8:16 ff. The expression is a Hebraism. For the Hebrew verbs often denote an action not completed, but begun, or intended, as I said in the canons. So here, *when they were come, i.e.*, when they had begun to come, when they were going *they had forgotten*, because the need of bodily refreshment had escaped their notice, through dwelling upon the company of the Lord, and the sweetness of the true Bread, which was with them, that is, Christ. So says Anselm.

*Over the water.* Across the Sea of Galilee, namely to Bethsaida (*cf.* Mark 8:22).

Verse 6. *Who said to them: Take heed and beware* (Greek ὁρᾶτε, Vulgate *videte*, as the Vulgate also translates it in Mark, “see, watch”) *of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Of the leaven*, that is, of the doctrine, as He explains in verse 12. Of this leaven He bids them beware, not inasmuch as the Pharisees taught and expounded the Law of Moses: for in that respect He says (23:2) they ought to be heard and obeyed; rather insofar as they corrupted it with their own vain traditions, contrary to the law of God, and which were like sour leaven. By these traditions they infected and spoiled the minds of their hearers. Luke 12.1 calls it hypocrisy, *Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.* For the Pharisees had regard only to outward ceremonies and apparent sanctity, and neglected purity of the heart, says Bede. Hear Jerome: “This is the leaven of which the Apostle speaks. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.* By every means also we should avoid that leaven which Marcion, Valentinus, and all the heretics had. For the nature of leaven is such, that when mixed with flour, that which seemed a little increases to a large quantity, and brings the whole mixture to its own flavor. Thus heretical doctrine, if it once cast the least spark into thy breast, will in a short time grow into a mighty flame, and take possession of the whole man.”

Verse 7. *But they thought within themselves* (Mark 8:16 has διελογίζοντο πρὸς ἀλλήλους, *i.e.*, “disputed, debated with one another”),

saying: *Because we have taken no bread.* Hugo and Dionysius expound thus: Christ said, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, because we have not taken bread, and He does not wish us to accept bread from them. Others take it more simply, thus: When the disciples heard Christ speak of leaven, they remembered that they had not taken any bread into the ship; and being afraid lest Christ might sail as He was accustomed, to some desert place, they were anxious to procure some loaves, and were disputing about it among themselves, perchance one throwing the blame of forgetfulness upon another. In this they committed two faults. First, they were too anxious about the bread, and did not sufficiently trust in Christ, whose power and providence they had experienced but a little while before in the multiplication of the loaves. Second, they thought Christ was speaking of material leaven and bread, when He was speaking of what was spiritual. Hence they were rebuked and corrected on both counts by Christ, as follows.

Verse 8. *And Jesus knowing it, said: Why do you think within yourselves, O ye of little faith, for that (because) you have no bread?* Greek οὐκ ἐλάβετε, *i.e.*, “did not take”, so too the Syriac. *Knowing*, by the power of His Divinity; for He had not heard them speaking about this thing. *Of little faith*, “as if I were speaking of earthly bread, for which I would have you anxious;” or “as if I were unable or unwilling to provide bread for you, either on board the ship or in the desert.”

Verse 9. *Do you not yet understand (both My saying about the leaven, and My concern about providing bread for you), neither do you remember the (distribution of the) five loaves among five thousand men (in Greek: “Neither do you remember the five loaves of the five thousand”, that is, with which I fed the five thousand men), and how many baskets (of fragments) you took up?* There were twelve. As if to say: “I, who not only multiplied the loaves, but also replaced them in the fragments which I caused to be left over; and I can do the same now and at any other time.”

Verse 10. *Nor the seven loaves, among four thousand men (Greek τετρακισχιλίων, i.e., “of the four thousand,” that is, “with which I fed four thousand men”), and how many baskets (sportas) you took up?* There were seven, as many as there were loaves. Since both Matthew and Mark invariably call these baskets *sportae*, and the baskets of the former miracle *cophini*, it is clear that *sportae* were a different kind of vessel and measure from *cophini*.

Verse 11. *Why do you not understand that it was not concerning bread I said to you (when I said what follows): Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees*

*and Sadducees?* For from leaven common bread is usually made. “You ought to have known from My words and deeds that I was not speaking of earthly leaven and bread, worthless and meagre things, but of the spiritual sort, that is to say, of doctrine.”

Verse 12. *Then they understood that he said not that they should beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.* Christ’s reproof sharpened the disciples’ minds, and the annoyance produced understanding.

Verse 13. *And Jesus came (Greek ἐλθὼν, i.e., when He had come) into the quarters (Syriac: “into the localities”) of Cesarea Philippi: and he asked his disciples, saying: whom do men say that the Son of man is? Cesarea Philippi was a town of Phoenicia, situated at the foot of Lebanon. It was first called “Dan”, because the city had been captured by the Danites, i.e., by the tribe of Dan (Judges 18:29): and because two streams, named Jeor and Dan, there unite and form the river Jordan. Therefore, at that place the Jordan has its source. But because the name of Pan, the god of shepherds, was better known to the Gentiles than the Hebrew tribe Dan, the place was called by them *Paneas*. Afterward, Philip, the son of Herod of Ascalon, who was tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonites, enlarged it and made it the capital of his tetrarchy, and called it “Caesarea,” in honor of Tiberius Cæsar, thus imitating his father Herod of Ascalon, who named a city which he had built—in a place formerly called *Turris Stratonis* [“Tower of Strato”], between Dor and Joppa, beside the Mediterranean Sea—“Caesarea” in honor of Augustus Caesar. Being the older and more noble city, it is called “Caesarea of Palestine” absolutely in the Acts of the Apostles and by Josephus. Therefore, to distinguish the two, the other is called “Caesarea Philippi”. The latter was the boundary of Canaan, as promised by God to the Israelites towards the north, as Bersabee was its boundary on the south. Hence so often in scripture it says *From Dan* (that is, “Caesarea” Philippi) *to Bersabee*. Many of the neighboring Gentiles, especially the Phoenicians, flocked to this city, as is the usual practice within the confines of a region. Therefore, Christ retired to it upon this occasion, that He might teach the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and that He might speak with more freedom about the Messiah, whom the Jews awaited as their king. For in Judea it was perilous to speak upon this subject; since the scribes were ready to accuse Him to the Roman governors of aiming at royal power, and to find Him guilty of treason against Cæsar. Again this Caesarea, formerly called “Dan”, had been a seat of idolatry (Judges*

18:29 ff). Christ, therefore, wished to cleanse it from this stain, and to bring it to the worship of God, yea to be the beginning and the matrix of Gentile Christian nations. Hence one citizen of this town was the woman with the hemorrhage, whom Christ healed of her flow of blood. An image of this miracle, made famous by daily miracles, was set up by the woman there and remained standing until Julian the Apostate cast it down out of hatred for Christ, according to Eusebius (*lib. 5 c. 20*). Later this city was called *Neronia* or *Neronias* by Herod Agrippa, who was currying favor with Nero. It is now in the possession of the Turks, and is called Belima.

*Whom do men say that the Son of man is?* This reading of the Latin codices is preferable, without the personal pronoun which some Greek versions add; for that is understood in the expression *the Son of man*, that is, “I, who for humility’s sake usually call myself the Son of man, as I said in chapter 8 and especially as I call myself here, so as to examine your faith concerning Me, O ye Apostles!” Hence Luke 9:18 has: *whom do the people say that I am?* Nor should emphasis be placed upon the Greek article τὸν, as Beza claims, who translates the phrase, “that Son of man,” meaning the Messiah promised to the Jews. The Syriac less correctly divides the sentence, in this manner, as though it were a direct question: *What do men say concerning Me, that I am the Son of man?* For Christ does not here ask whether He be so called, but asserts that He is the Son of man, and goes on to ask what else men think about Him, that is, the common folk.

Verse 14. *But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one or the prophets.* The common people among the Jews were aware that for several hundred years, that is, since shortly after the Babylonian captivity (when the last prophets, Zacharias and Malachias had prophesied), prophesy and prophets had failed to be amongst them (together with the Ark of the Covenant and the oracles from the mercy seat). Thus they thought that Christ was not a new prophet, but one of the ancient prophets. For in Christ they beheld their virtues, their miracles and their doctrine. Few indeed were they who believed with certainty that He was the Messiah. By far the greater number did not believe, taking offense at His humility and His poverty. They thought the Messiah would come with regal pomp as the Son of Solomon; as the Jews still think and expect. Therefore, although some of the people had recently said, when they saw so many miracles done by Christ, *Is not this the Son of David?* (Matth. 12:23) and, *This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world* (John 6:14). Yet this was a sudden and transient cry, elicited by

beholding a miracle, not a firm and settled opinion. For the crowd is fickle and bends to every breeze. Thus Abulensis. They thought that the soul of one of the prophets had passed into Christ by metempsychosis (the Pythagorean belief that the soul of the deceased migrated into another body, better or worse according to its merits in the previous life). So Jansen, Cajetan and Baronius. Or more probably they thought one of the prophets had risen again, and Jesus was he; as though Jesus were really John the Baptist, Elias, or Jeremias. For the Pharisees and the Jews generally believed in the resurrection of the dead, as is evident in 2 Machabees 7, although the Sadducees denied it (Acts 23:8). This indeed is clear from what Herod said of Christ: *This is John the Baptist who is risen from the dead, and, therefore, mighty works (miracles) show forth themselves in Him* [Matth. 14:2]. For they supposed that the prophet’s soul after death would become more sublime, godly and powerful to work miracles. Therefore, they believed that one of the prophets had risen in Jesus, and so was working more powerfully than before; but they abhorred the Pythagorean belief in metempsychosis as a figment of the Gentiles. Some thought Jesus to be John the Baptist, because He appeared to be very like him in age, in sanctity and in His preaching. And since John shortly before had been put to death unjustly by Herod, he was fresh in their memory, and seemed to be worthy of rising again. Others thought Christ was Elias, on account of the like zeal in both; and because Elias was not yet dead, and was expected by all the Jews to return according to the prophecy of Malachias (4:5): *Behold, I will send you Elias the prophet.* They thought, therefore, that Elias had returned, and that Jesus was he. Others were of the opinion that Christ was Jeremias, because Jeremias was a most holy man, and a mirror of patience and charity; and because some thought Jeremias would return with Elias to preach to the Jews, being moved by those words, *I made thee a prophet unto the nations* (Jerem. 1:5). But the meaning of that passage is different, as I explained there.

Verse 15. *Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am?* From the words *but you*, S. Jerome gathers that Christ here tacitly, as it were, calls the Apostles “gods” in antithesis to *men*. “They indeed, because they are men have human ideas, but ye, who are gods, whom do ye think that I am?” But S. Chrysostom says with regard to the subject itself: “The Lord by His second question admonishes His disciples to think more loftily concerning Him. By the very manner of His interrogation, He shows that those common opinions fell far short of His dignity.” Therefore, He says,

“You, who have been always with Me, have seen Me work miracles, and who yourselves have done so many mighty works in My name, whom do you say that I am?”

Verse 16. *Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.* *Simon Peter*, who was named *Simon* when he was circumcised, by Christ is called *Cephas*, *i.e.*, *Peter*. Some think Peter, as it were the mouth of the Apostles, answered not for himself alone, but for all. So S. Jerome. “Peter,” he says, “professes in the name of all the Apostles: *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.*” So also S. Anselm, S. Thomas, the Gloss, Dionysius, Lyra, Jansen, and S. Augustine (*de Verbis Domini serm. 13*), and also S. Ambrose (*lib. de Incarn. c. 4*). With more probability S. Hilary, Abulensis, Maldonatus, Francis Lucas, Barradi, and others think Peter spoke for himself, of his own conviction. For the other Apostles being silent, and hesitating what reply to give, Peter being wiser than the rest (having been enlightened and taught by God), and being more fervent, lest any one should answer unworthily concerning Christ, dashed in with his answer, and replied on behalf of all: not because he knew the mind of all (for he had spoken with no one concerning the matter), but because he wished that his own conviction should be common to them all, so that he might demonstrate that all should think as he himself thought. This was what S. Jerome and the others who have been cited really meant, namely, that Peter—as the one already designated, and after the resurrection actually appointed the Prince of the Apostles and of the whole Church—being more deeply taught and inspired by God, recognized the Divinity of Christ, and answered concerning it what all the rest would have answered and which he himself thought, more fervently than truly, they were going to answer, as we can gather from John 6:69 ff. This is plain, because to Peter only, on account of this meritorious confession, Christ promised the most ample reward and prerogative. For he says to him by name above the rest of the Apostles, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

*Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.* Greek ὁ Χριστὸς with the article, “the,” namely *the* Messiah promised by God so many ages ago to Adam, Abraham, Moses and David, whom all the patriarchs and prophets awaited most fervently, and whom all await today. “Thou, I say, art the Christ, or Messiah, *i.e.*, anointed by God with the anointing of the grace

of the Hypostatic Union with the Word, and thereby consecrated the chief Teacher, High Priest, Prophet, and King of the world. “Teacher”, that Thou mayest teach men the will and law of God: “High Priest” [*Pontifex*], that by offering Thyself as a Sacrifice to God, Thou mayest reconcile the world to God; “Prophet”, that Thou mayest declare the secret things of God, and foretell things to come, and especially impress upon all the rewards stored up in heaven for the good and the punishments in hell for the wicked; “King” that Thou mayest rule over heaven and earth, and everything in them.

*Son of God.* Not by grace and adoption, as all the saints are sons of God, but by the Nature and Divinity communicated to Thee by God the Father by eternal generation. Hence the Greek emphasizes with the definite article, ὁ υἱὸς, *i.e.*, *the Son*, indeed the only natural Son, of one substance (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father. For otherwise John the Baptist also, and Elias and the prophets were adoptive sons of God, to whom, nevertheless, He opposes and prefers Christ here. *Living*, who thus, *formaliter* lives the divine, uncreated and beatific life, so that *causaliter* He breathes into all things created by Him, His own strength and vigor, and into living things, life and a soul. For from Him, as from a fountain and a vital sun, there floweth all the light and life of all angels, men, animals and plants. (See commentary on John 1:4, *In Him was life*.) Thus S. Leo (*serm. de Transfiguratione*): “The divine Peter, by the revelation of the heavenly Father, overcoming corporeal things, and transcending things human, beheld the Son of the living God, and confessed the glory of the Deity.” Thus, too, S. Chrysostom, S. Hilary, Theophylact, Euthymius, S. Augustine (*serm. 33 de Verbis Apostoli*), S. Athanasius (*serm. 3. contra Arianos*), and others, *passim*, who from this passage prove the Divinity of Christ. Therefore Erasmus incorrectly thinks that It cannot be proved clearly from this passage; indeed, he himself here and in other writings sows the seeds of Arianism, which have had their consequences.

Moreover, S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom and others are of opinion that S. Peter first of all men confessed the Divinity of Christ. Others deny this, saying that Nathanael confessed it before Peter, when he said, *Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel* (John 1:49, about which I will comment there). Nevertheless, it is plain that before this confession of Peter, the Apostles acknowledged Christ to be God from His very words, and from the many and great miracles which He wrought to prove it. We see this from the words of Peter (John 6:69), *Lord to whom shall we go?*

*Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.* Also from the words of the Apostles themselves, *Indeed Thou art the Son of God* (Matth. 14:33). Also from Christ's ongoing debate with the Jews on this subject in the Apostles' hearing, as related by S. John, chapter 5 ff. But the Apostles, inasmuch as they were uninstructed, had formed a very confused and poor concept of this doctrine in their minds, and believed, after a sort, that Christ was truly the Son of God, above other prophets, yea that He was God. But in what manner this was so, whether by eternal generation, or through some other means or appellation, they did not know, nor could they conceive or explain it clearly. But Peter, being enlightened by God, recognized it distinctly, clearly, and sublimely, and first being asked concerning this thing, openly and constantly confessed the same and testified in this place, that verily, Christ was peculiarly the Son of God, that is begotten of God the Father by eternal generation, and, therefore, consubstantial with Him, and very and eternal God. Christ required this faith concerning Himself from Peter and the Apostles (for the Apostles tacitly approved Peter's confession, and tacitly confessed the same), both because that faith is the foundation of our justification, and also because the passion and death of Christ were at hand, in which it was necessary that the Apostles should be sustained by this faith in the Divinity of Christ; lest when He was dead, they should think faith and all other things were dead with Him. This is plain from verse 21 ff.

Verse 17. *And Jesus answering said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven.* That is to say, "Blessed and happy art thou, O Peter, on account of this new faith concerning Me; for this is a mighty gift and benefit, not of flesh and blood, that is, not of nature, but by the grace of God inspiring and revealing to thee this very thing. For this faith is the beginning and the foundation of all grace and glory, and, therefore, it shall lead thee, and many through thee and thy example and preaching, to eternal blessedness". For blessedness "in the journey" consists in the faith and love of Christ: but the blessedness "of the country" is the vision and fruition of the same, according to those words of John (17:2): *Now this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.* Hence the Synod of Ephesus (Act 3) says, "Thrice most blessed and worthy of all praise is the Apostle Peter, who is the rock and the base of the Catholic Church, and the foundation of the true faith." Hence also

has arisen the custom of the faithful of addressing the pontiff: "Most Blessed Father." Hence S. Jerome saith to Pope Damasus, "I am united to thy Blessedness, that is, to the Chair of Peter."

*Simon Bar-Jona, i.e., son of Jona.* For the father of Simon Peter was called *Johanna*, that is "John", as is plain from John 21:15, meaning "God hath given" or "God hath pitied" or "the gift of God," from HH *ia*, which is contracted from *Jehovah, i.e., "God"*, and HH *chanan*, that is, "He hath pitied, He hath given". Peter, then, was the son of "John", or the grace of God, because he was most pleasing to God, and full of His grace. So, too, the Gentiles called him, who was loaded with all gifts, "the son of graces." Moreover, by way of abbreviation *Johanna* is pronounced *Jona*, which actually means "dove." Similarly, *Emmanuel* is shortened to the forms *Manuel* and *Noel*. Thus *Jesaiahu, Jirmiahu, Eliahu* and similar Hebrew names are shortened to *Isaias, Jeremias, and Elias*. Thus for *Joannes* [Latin] the Germans use the short form *Hans*, the Belgians *Jan*, the Spanish *Juan*, the French *Jean*. Unless you prefer to view *Johannan* and *Jona* as two distinct names; for they differ both in pronunciation and in signification; yet in such a way that the name *Jona* alludes to *Johanna*, and occasionally the latter name is applied to Peter, so that Peter's father would have had two names, first being called *Johanna*, then for the sake of easier pronunciation he was called *Jona* as a second name or nickname. For in this way many names are altered and shortened, so that they seem to be other names entirely. S. Chrysostom observes, that Christ gave Simon the addition *Bar-Jona*, not only according to the Hebrew custom, which always adds the name of the father to the children, but with a special reference to Peter's answer, as though Christ confirmed it and said, "Thou hast spoken truly, O Peter, that I am the Son of God, for as thou art the son of Jona, a man from a man, according to natural generation, so am I the Son of God the Father, but begotten of Him by nature from eternity: God of God, of one substance and Godhead with Him."

Symbolically *Jona*, that is "a dove," is the emblem of the Holy Ghost, who in the form of a dove came down upon Christ (Matth. 3:16). In this place also He descended upon Peter, and revealed to him that Christ was truly and properly the Son of God. Thus S. Jerome: "Peter obtains a name from his confession, because he had a revelation from the Holy Ghost, whose son he was to be called. *Bar-Jona* in our language means 'the son of a dove.' Because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee," that is, "not earthly parents nor friends nor any man who consists of flesh and blood

has revealed unto thee that I am the Son of God, inasmuch as this knowledge far transcends all nature, and the natural knowledge of all men and angels, but My heavenly Father hath made it known to thee by the illumination of His grace.” “What flesh and blood could not reveal, has been revealed by the grace of the Holy Ghost,” saith S. Jerome. *Flesh* is used in this way for “the carnal man” by synecdoche in Galatians 1:16, John 1:13 and 1 Corinthians 15:50. By *flesh*, S. Hilary understands the bodily eyes of S. Peter, for they had told him that Christ was a man, but the revelation of the Father alone had made known to him that He was God. For although Peter had heard exteriorly the words of Christ saying that He was the Son of God, and confirming it by miracles, nevertheless to believe it required the internal illumination and grace of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 18. *And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church.* “And I,” in Greek, *ἀλλ’ ἐγώ*, *i.e.*, “but I”, or “now I”, “give back to thee as a reward, and I in turn say and promise,” for as S. Jerome saith, “Christ pays back the testimony of the Apostle concerning Himself. Peter had said, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*; this true confession received a reward,” namely, *Thou art Peter*. “I, therefore, who am the true Son of God as thou hast confessed, I the Son of God tell and assure thee, and by saying it, I make and constitute thee, Peter, so that after Me thou mayest become the rock of the Church.” Christ had promised this name to Simon (John 1:42), saying, *Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter*; but in this place He fulfils the promise, and gives him the name of *Peter* in fact. S. Leo (*serm. 3 Annivers. Assumptionis Suae*) thus expounds: “And I say unto thee, that even as My Father hath made known to thee My excellency, so do I also make known to thee thy excellency, that thou art Peter, *i.e.*, inasmuch as I am the inviolable Rock, etc., so likewise thou art a rock, because thou art strengthened by My strength, and the things which are Mine by My own power are thine by participation with Me.”

*Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.* The meaning is, “thou art Peter; that is, the rock of the Church: for upon thee as upon a most solid rock I will build My Church.” The word *and* gives the reason why he is *Peter*, as though He had said, “Thou art Peter, *because* I shall build My Church upon thee as upon a rock.” S. Augustine (*tract. 27 in Joannem; lib. 1 Retract. cap. 1*) says, “Upon this Rock, that is upon Myself, *because the rock was Christ*” (1 Cor. 10:4). Calvin (*lib. 4 Institut. c. 6 sec. 6*) and the heretics eagerly follow this interpretation, that they may over-

throw the authority and the primacy of Peter and the pope. But that Peter himself is here called the *rock*, the rest of the fathers almost universally agree. Maldonatus and Bellarmine (*libr. 1 de Romano Pontif. cap. 10*) quote them at length. The meaning then is this, “thou art *Kepha*, or *Cephas, i.e.*, a rock or a very hard and very firm stone (for this is the meaning of the Hebrew *HH keph* and of the Chaldee and Syriac *kepha*) designated and destined by Me, that after My death, and the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, having been entirely solidified and made strong, thou mayest become the foundation of the Church which I will build upon thee.” For before the coming of the Holy Ghost, Peter was not yet the rock of the Church; indeed, through fear he denied Christ in His passion. So then the word *Peter*, and *Petra*, denotes the firmness of S. Peter as the prince of the Church, and of his successors the pontiffs, and their constancy in the faith and religion of Christ. Thus among others, Angelus Caninius (*in nomin. Heb. Novi Testamenti, c. 13.1*).

Moreover, that Peter is here called the *rock*, is proved first, by the pronoun *this*, when it says *upon this rock*; for since this is demonstrative, it ought thus to be understood: “this rock of which I have spoken, and to whom I speak.” That is: “thou art Peter, the rock of the Church, and upon thee as upon a rock I will build My Church”. For there had been no mention made of any other rock to which the pronoun “this” could refer, except *Peter*. It is otherwise in 1 Corinthians 10, for there it is said *they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ*. Here the word *rock* precedes, which he explains by saying, that it was so, typically, that is to say, represented Christ: if Christ had spoken in French, He would have said, “*Tu es Pierre, et sur cette pierre je bastiray mon église.*”

You may say, Christ said not “thou art *Petra*”, but *Thou art Petrus*; therefore, the pronoun *this* cannot refer to *Peter*. I answer, that Christ is said to have spoken in Syriac: “Thou art *kepha*, and upon this *kepha* I will build”, etc. For *kepha* means a *rock*, and hence *Peter* in Syriac was called *Kepha*. But the Greek translators, who are followed by the Latin, gave the masculine form of the noun to him as a name—namely *Petrus* rather than *petra*, which is feminine. But in Greek both *πέτρος* and *πέτρα* signify a rock or a stone. *Peter*, therefore, is the same word as *petra*, but the translator made a variation for the sake of elegance, and rendered it *thou art Peter and upon this petra*, not “upon this *Petros*” (as in a true and proper sense he might have done), both because *petra* in Greek is more frequently used for a rock or a stone than *petros*, and because houses strictly speaking are



built upon stones, not upon men. Beza allows this when he says “the Lord speaking in Syriac did not make use of a surname, but said *Cepha* in both places, as in the vernacular the word *pierre* is used both as a proper and a common noun. In Greek, likewise, the words *petros* and *petra* differ only in their termination, not in their meaning.” Thus far he is correct, but mistakenly he adds, “Matthew, or whoever was his translator, seems by this difference of ending to have intended that Peter, who is a part of the building, should be distinguished from the rock itself on which the building stands, that is, from Christ Himself; likewise that Peter himself should be distinguished from the promise of the Faith which is common to the whole Church, as ancient writers also clearly prove, in order that Antichrist” (so the heretic calls the Roman pontiff) “may become most ridiculous when his followers endeavor to establish his tyranny from this passage.” How petulantly and falsely Beza writes may be seen and learnt from the original passages of the fathers which Bellarmine and Maldonatus cite, as I have already said. Besides, the text of scripture itself is to be preferred to the translator: nor had the Greek translator a meaning different from the Syriac text, as I have previously said. I omit many other proofs, which either from what has been said, or from what will be said, will show the falsity of Beza’s conclusion.

Secondly, the same thing is plain from this, that there would be a want of connection, to say, “thou art Peter and upon Myself the Rock I will build My Church”. In this, indeed, there would be a lessening of the speech, and an overthrow of the benefit bestowed. For Peter might say to Christ, “I am Peter, that is, the rock of the Church, how then dost thou build Thy Church not upon me but upon Thyself?”

Thirdly, because all that goes before and that follows refer to Peter alone: “and I,” He saith, “say to thee, O Peter”, that is, “I give and assign to thee as the reward and prerogative of thy great faith and confession, that after Myself, and after My death and resurrection, I will make thee the rock and foundation of the Church, for this is the meaning of *I will build my church*.”

Fourthly, because the original Oriental versions agree together in this, that *petrus* is the very same word as *petra*, and *petra* as *Petrus*, whence they give the same name *Kepha* to *Petrus* and *Petra*. Christ, therefore, as angelus Caninius says (*in Nomin. Hebraicis Novi Testamenti, capite 13*), spoke thus in Syriac: HH *Ant kepha, Veal kepha hadden ebne iat tsibburi*; or as the Syriac Gospel has it, *Ant hu kipha, Veal hada kipha ebne leidti*, that is, “thou

art *Cepha*, *i.e.*, rock, “and upon this *Cepha*”, that is *petra* (meaning upon thee, who art Peter or a rock), “I will build my Church”. Moreover, the Hebrew Gospel, which Sebastian Munster has edited as though it were the authentic version written by S. Matthew himself, has in like manner HH *atta kepha, Veal kepha hazzot ebne eth macheli*. So also the Armenian Gospel: *Is bim*, he saith, *e vera ais bim*, that is, “thou art a rock [cliff], and upon this rock I will build, etc.” And the Arabic Gospel, *Ant alsachra val ala hada alsachra abni baiati*: “thou art a rock [large stone], and upon that rock I will build my Church. “The Æthiopic Gospel has *Anta quoqueh va dibazati, quogh annesa lebeita Christianei*, that is, “thou art a rock and upon this rock I will build the Christian house”, that is, the Church. The Coptic also has, “But I say unto thee that thou art this Peter, I will found my Church upon this rock”, which is none else than this Peter, otherwise there would be no connection, for he gives the reason, the “because”, why he will build the Church upon a rock, because indeed Peter will be a solid rock on which the whole Church being founded may rest securely as upon a strong foundation. The Persian is, “I say unto thee that thou art *sanac*,” *i.e.*, a rock, “and upon this *sanac*”, that is, rock, “I will build my Church”. Moreover, the Persian paraphrast explains *sanac* as a rock, adding, “thou art the rock, that is, foundation and judge.” (See Peter Victor, *in Annotat. ad Novum Testamentum, pp. 101, 102*, where he gives at length all these versions.)

To S. Augustine it is replied that he was misled by his ignorance of the Hebrew and Syriac languages, and, therefore, thought that *Petrus* was something different from *Petra*, and that Peter was, as it were, called appellatively from it “rock-like,” although it is clear from the Syriac that *Petrus* and *Petra* are the same. Again, S. Augustine admits as probable the explanation of those who say that Peter is the rock of the Church; and in this respect he is at issue with Calvin, who is of opinion that such an explanation is blasphemy against Christ. Listen to S. Augustine in his sermon on the Chair of Peter. “Lastly, for strengthening the devotion of the churches he is called the rock; as saith the Lord, *thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church*. For he is called the rock, because he first laid the foundations of the Faith for the nations, and like an immovable rock he holds the joints and the superstructure of the entire Christian edifice. Peter then is called a rock on account of devotion, and the Lord is called a rock on account of strength; as saith the Apostle, *they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ*. Rightly does

he deserve an association in name who had obtained an association in work. Peter lays the foundation, Peter plants; the Lord gives the increase, the Lord waters.” The same Augustine (*serm. 16 de Sanctis*) says, “Worthy was Peter to be a foundation for building up the people of God, to be a pillar for support, a key to the kingdom.”

In fine, even if that explanation of S. Augustine were allowed (that the rock signifies Christ), although it is not the true one, still it may thence be proved that Peter, after Christ, who is the rock and cornerstone of the Church, is still the next foundation, rock, or stone of the Church. For then the sense would be: “I am the Rock upon which I will build the Church. But thou, O Peter, art next unto Me, and the next rock of the Church, upon whom immediately after Myself I will build My Church, and therefore thee only I call *Peter*, who before wast called *Simon*.” By the same arguments the Magdeburg Centuriators (*lib. 1 Cent. 1 cap. 4*) are refuted, as well as the Genevan ministers who in their Bibles expound thus: “*Upon this rock*, that is, upon this confession or faith, to wit, that I am the Son of God.” For nowhere previously has this confession been called a rock, as Peter immediately before was called *Cephas*, that is, a rock.

You may say, some of the fathers, by the *rock*, understand the faith which Peter confessed and set forth. So S. Chrysostom, S. Hilary (*lib. 6 de Trinit.*), S. Cyril (*lib. 4 de Trinit.*), and S. Ambrose (*lib. 6 in Lucam c. 9*). I answer, these fathers do not mean the Faith taken abstractly, but the Faith as it was in Peter, and consequently they take Peter himself to be the rock of the Church, as they themselves afterward fully explain. They hold that Peter, for the merit of his faith received the dignity of a rock in the Church, as S. Hilary and S. Chrysostom say expressly. For on account of that faith he had deserved to be himself the foundation of the Church, and that his faith should never fail, but that he should confirm and strengthen others in the Faith (Luke 22:32). For the Church is made up and formed, not of faith, but of faithful men, who are as it were its parts (for the Church is nothing else than the company of the faithful). Therefore, likewise, in order that the head of the Church may be of the same nature as the body, that head must be a faithful man—that is to say, Peter and the pontiff. The faithful man [in general], then, is the reason of the founding, but the foundation is Peter himself. So S. Chrysostom, Cyril (*lib. 4 de Trinit.*) and S. Ambrose (*lib. 6 in Lucam c. 9*), Bellarmine (*lib. 1 de Pontif. c. 10*), where he refutes both Erasmus and Chytræus, who follow Origen, who allegorizes after his custom, and understands by the *rock* all the faithful. In this

way, indeed, the whole Church would be the rock, for the whole Church consists of none other than the faithful; but where then would be the walls, the floors, and the roof of the Church? Of what then shall these be built? See also Gretser (*in defensione Bellarmini, lib. 3 cap. 5*).

Lastly, Christ bestowed this gift upon Peter as the future pontiff of the Church; wherefore He gave the same gift to all the other pontiffs, his successors, and that for the good of the Church, so that it might be strengthened by them as by a rock, in the Christian Faith and religion. Therefore, S. Bernard (*lib. 2 de Consid.*) saith to Pope Eugenius, “who art thou? A great priest: the chief pontiff. Thou art the prince of bishops, thou art the heir of the Apostles, thou art Abel in primacy, Noe in government, Abraham in the patriarchate; in order, thou art Melchisedec, in dignity Aaron, in authority Moses, in judgship Samuel, in power Peter, in unction a Christ. Thou art he to whom the keys have been delivered and the sheep entrusted.”

*And upon this rock.* From hence it is plain that just as *Cephas* is derived from *cepha*, so is *Peter* from *petra*, indeed that he is the same as *petra*, as I have already shown. Therefore, when Optatus Milevit, (*lib. 2. contra Parmen.*) and others derive *Cephas* from the Greek κεφαλή, that is, “a head”, they do it by a congruous allusion, not by a real etymology of the noun. By a similar allusion, S. Gregory Nazianzen (*orat. 2 de Pascha*) derives *Phase* or *Pascha*, which is a Hebrew word, as everybody knows from Exodus 12, from the Greek πάσχειν, that is, “to suffer”. For in the Passover happened the passion of Christ, *and* His immolation as the Paschal Lamb. Moreover, Christ bestowed this name of *rock* upon Peter, rather than other names (such as pillar, tower, anchor, foundation, etc.), because this name of *rock* is given in scripture to Christ Himself (Isaias 28:16; Psalm 117:22; Matthew 21:42 and elsewhere). He communicated, therefore, His own Name, together with His dignity and office to Peter. Thus S. Jerome. And S. Gregory (*On the Seventh Penitential Psalm*) says: “Christ is the Rock, from which Rock Peter received his name, and upon which He said that He would build.” Listen to S. Leo (*serm. 3 On the Anniversary of His Accession*), where he introduces Christ as speaking thus to Peter: “Since I am the Rock, I the Cornerstone, who make of both one; I the Foundation, besides which no one can lay any other; nevertheless thou art a rock likewise, because thou art strengthened by My strength in order that what things are Mine by Mine own power, may be thine also through participation with Me: and upon this rock I will build My Church; upon this

strength He says, I will construct an eternal temple, etc.”

*I will build My Church.* That is to say, “I, therefore, call thee *Peter* and the *rock*, because as a house is built upon a rock that it may rest firm and immovable upon it against every blast of the winds, so will I build upon thee, O Peter, as upon a most solid rock, My Church; that resting upon thee, it may abide firm against all the attacks of heretics and wicked men, and that thou mayest keep and sustain it in the true Faith and worship of God, in like manner as a rocky foundation sustains and holds together the entire house which is built upon it. “Thus,” S. Ambrose (*serm. 4*) saith: “Peter is called the *rock*, because like an immovable rock he sustains the joints and the mass of the whole Christian edifice.”

You may say, all the Apostles are the foundation of the Church, as is plain from Ephesians 2:20, and Apocalypse 21:14; so then Peter only is not the rock of the Church. I answer, that Peter is the rock and the foundation of the whole Church and of the entire body of the faithful, and, therefore, of the Apostles themselves. For the office of Peter, who is primate and chief, was to retain, direct, and strengthen the Apostles in faith, religion, and duty, and if at any time they should err, to correct them. Hence S. Jerome (*lib. 1 contra Jovin.*) says: “Therefore, among twelve one is chosen, that by the appointment of a head, occasion of schism might be taken away.” And S. Cyprian (*tract. de Unitate Ecclesiae*) says, “the primacy is given to Peter that it might be shown there is one Church of Christ and one Chair.”

Note that Christ, in this passage, promises by two metaphors, as S. Jerome says, that after His death and resurrection He will give to Peter the principality of the Church (*cf.* John 21:16, when He said to him, *Feed my lambs*). The first metaphor is that of a foundation or foundation rock. For that thing, which in a building is the rock and foundation, in a body is the head, in a state the ruler, in a kingdom the king, in the Church the pontiff. The second metaphor is that of the keys: for keys are only given to kings and rulers.

Note, too: to build the Church upon this rock, signifies two things. First, that upon this rational stone—namely Peter, as the head of all the Apostles—the care and government of the whole Church devolve next after Christ. Thus S. Chrysostom (*hom. 55*), S. Ambrose (*serm. 57*), and S. Gregory (*libr. 4 epist. 32*). Secondly, that the Church rests upon Peter as a foundation, and is strengthened by him as the Vicar of Christ, so that it cannot err in matters of faith. Hence Peter, on account of his lofty confes-

sion of faith, obtained from Christ the grace of being made and appointed this foundation rock. And this is the meaning of SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, Cyril and Nyssen (at the end of his book *Contra Judaeos*) when they say that the Church was built by Christ upon the faith and confession of Peter, as I have explained above. Moreover, S. Chrysostom in this place lays stress upon the words *I will build*, and says that they are similar to those words, *God said* in the first chapter of Genesis, whereby all things were created and subsist. In like manner he says that the words *I will build*, have wrought all, even though tyrants oppose, soldiers fight, the people rage, custom struggles. For the Word of God coming like a vehement fire, hath burnt up the thorns, hath cleansed the fields, hath prepared the ground, hath raised the building on high, etc. S. Jerome also (*epist. 57*), consulting Pope Damasus whether we may say there are three hypostases in the Holy Trinity or only one, thus addresses him: “I am speaking with the successor of the fisherman, and the disciple of the cross. I, following none first, except Christ, am united to your beatitude; that is, in communion with the See of Peter. I know that upon that rock the Church is built. Whosoever eateth the Lamb outside of this house is profane; if any man be not in the ark of Noe, he shall perish in the swelling of the Deluge.”

*And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Namely, against the Church, because it has been founded upon Peter and his successors, as upon a most solid rock.

*The gates of hell, i.e.,* the infernal city, meaning all hell, with its entire army of demons, and with the whole power of Lucifer its king. For hell and the city of God, *i.e.,* the Church, are here put in opposition. Hence S. Augustine wrote his work *de Civitate Dei*, in the beginning of which he speaks of the two opposite cities; the one of God, which is the Church; the other of the devil, *i.e.,* of demons and wicked men. He takes *the gates of hell* to mean heresies, especially, and heresiarchs; for they openly fight against the Faith of Peter and the Church, and they proceed from hell and are stirred up by the devil. So S. Epiphanius (*in Ancorato*, not far from the beginning). There are here the two figures of speech, synecdoche and metonymy; for by the gates he means the whole city, both because the gate is the entrance into a city, and because the chief defenses and strength of a city are usually at the gates, because if they and the adjoining walls are safe, the city is safe, if they are taken, the city is taken.

*Shall not prevail.* Hebrew HH *lo juchelu la, i.e.,* “shall not be able to

stand against it" (the Church). So S. Hilary and Maldonatus. More simply, *shall not prevail, i.e.*, shall not conquer or overcome, or pull down the Church. For this is the meaning of the original Greek οὐ κατισχύουσιν αὐτῆς. We have here the figure of speech, *miosis*: for little is said but much is meant, not only that the Church shall not be conquered, but that she shall conquer and subdue under her all heretics, tyrants, and every other enemy, as she overcame Arians, Nestorians, Pelagians, Nero, Decius, Diocletian, etc. Therefore, by this word Christ first encourages His Church that she should not be faint-hearted when she sees herself attacked by all the power of Satan and wicked men. In the second place, He as it were sounds a trumpet for her, that she may always watch with her armor on against so many enemies, who attack her with extreme hatred. Thirdly, He promises to her, as well as to her head, Peter, *i.e.*, the pontiff, victory and triumph over them all. The reason is that Christ stands by her and fights for her. Again, Christ and the Holy Ghost assist with special guidance her head, the Roman pontiff, that he should not err in matters of faith, but that he may be firm and adamant, says S. Chrysostom, and that he may rightly administer and rule the Church, and guide it in the path of salvation, as Noe also directed the ark that it should not be overwhelmed in the Deluge. Therefore, S. Chrysostom (*hom. 4 de Verbis Isaiaie*) says: "It were more easy for the sun to be extinguished than for the Church to fail." And again (*tom. 5 in orat. de Non Contemnenda Ecclesia*), "What can be more powerful than the Church of God? The barbarians destroy fortifications, but not even the devils overcome the Church. When it is attacked openly, it conquers; when it is attacked by treachery, it overcomes." S. Augustine, commenting on the psalms, says against the Donatists: "Reckon up the bishops even from the very pontificate of Peter. That is the very rock which the proud gates of hell conquer not." This has been made especially plain in the conversion of all nations, especially of Rome and the Romans. For Rome being the head, both of the world and of idolatry, where the idols of all nations were worshiped, has been converted from them by S. Peter and his successors, and has bowed down her proud head to the cross of Christ, which thing is of all miracles the greatest.

Verse 19. *And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* These who art one person, namely, Bar-Jona, or the son of Jona, as is plain from everything which precedes and follows. Not, therefore, in this place were the keys of heaven promised to Peter in the person of the Church, or primarily to the Church herself, as the heretics claim, but to Peter himself as

the head of the Church, and through him to the Church and her ministers. In the same way they were specially given and consigned to him by Christ after His resurrection, when He said, *Feed my sheep* (John 21). Thus the Greek and Latin fathers explain, *passim*, whose words Bellarmine recited (*lib. 1 de Pontifice cap. 12*), where in like manner he proves at length that this is the meaning of S. Augustine, when he says that Peter bore the figure of the Church, because Peter represented the Church as a king does a kingdom. For so indeed S. Augustine explains himself (*tract. ult. in Joannem*), where he says: "Of this Church the Apostle Peter, on account of the primacy of his apostleship, was a kind of general representative." And on Psalm 108, "Of which Church he is acknowledged to be the [personal] representative, on account of the primacy which was his among the disciples." Therefore, for the good of the Church, Peter, as her head, received the keys from Christ; from which it is also plain that Christ promised the keys to Peter as a future pontiff, and consequently promised the same keys to the other Roman pontiffs, successors of Peter. For Christ in this place foresaw a most necessary matter, of the greatest importance to His ever-abiding Church, that is to say, to its perpetual head; and He ordained the best and most abiding constitution for her, namely, the monarchical, that the one Church of Christ should be ruled by the one Roman pontiff, as S. Cyprian teaches on *the Unity of the Church*, S. Jerome (*lib. 1 contra Jovin.*), and others, *passim*. Our Gretzer, and after him Adam Contsen, ably expose and refute the cavils of Calvin and his followers about this passage.

*The keys.* You will ask what the keys here signify. Calvin (*lib. 4 Instit. sec. 3*) and his followers answer, that they signify both the power to preach the Gospel, as well as the forgiveness of sins to him who believes the Gospel which promises forgiveness. But this is a jejune and worthless explanation. For by keys doors are opened, not the mouths of preachers. Hence keys specially belong to kings and rulers, not to doctors, and teachers, or preachers. For this reason the keys here properly signify the right to rule, to which pertains not only power to preach the Gospel, but also absolve sins, to command, to ordain priests, to interpret sacred scripture, to excommunicate, and to do all other things which pertain to the good government of the Church.

I say, therefore, by *the keys* is here signified the chief power, both of order and jurisdiction, over the whole Church, promised and delivered to Peter here by Christ (cf. John 21:16). For with such an object in view the keys of the cities are delivered to kings and princes. And Christ thus

explains the keys in what follows, when He says: *Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven*, etc. For he who hath the keys of a house or of a city is its lord, to open or shut it at his pleasure: to admit into it, and to shut out of it whom he will. There is an allusion to Isaias 22, where God promising the principality of the synagogue to Eliakim, the pontiff of the Old Testament, says: *And I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder: and he shall open, and none shall shut: and he shall shut, and none shall open.* (See commentary.) Moreover, Eliakim was a type of Christ the Pontiff, of whom it is said (Apocolypse 21:2), *I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* The sense, therefore, is: “I, Christ, will give to thee, Peter, as a pontiff, and consequently to all the other popes who come after thee, the keys of the kingdom of heaven, by which I mean supreme authority to rule the universal Church dispersed throughout the whole world, that by the keys, *i.e.*, by thy power in opening or shutting the Church to men, thou mayest likewise open or shut heaven to them”. In this passage note that Christ did not say, “I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of earth,” lest this power be thought to be earthly and temporal, but “*of the kingdom of heaven,*” to signify that this power is to be exercised properly and directly in spiritual things, which are those that pertain, to the kingdom of heaven; but that it should be exercised only indirectly with reference to temporal things, insofar as they are necessary, or at least very useful to spiritual matters. Thus S. Chrysostom (*hom. 55*) teaches on this passage that by the delivery of these keys by Christ to Peter there was committed to him the care and government of the whole world, and that he was created pastor and head of the entire Church. Thus also S. Gregory (*lib. 4 epist. 32*) says: “It is plain to all who know the Gospel, that by the Lord’s word the care of the whole Church has been committed to S. Peter, the prince of all the Apostles.” And he immediately adds the reason, “for to him it is said, *I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*” Thus also S. Hilary on this passage, and S. Leo (*serm. 2 in Annivers. Assumpt.*), and others, *passim*. Listen also to S. Augustine (*serm. 28 de Sanctis*): “Peter alone among the Apostles merited to hear, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.* Worthy, indeed, was he to be a foundation stone for building up the people in the house of God; to be a pillar to support them, a key for the kingdom.” Hence S. Ambrose (*lib. 20 epist. 13*) to his sister Marcellina—when he records the contest which he had with the Arians, who demanded that the

keys of the Cathedral of Milan, over which he presided, should be delivered to them, and that by the command of Emperor Valentinian the Younger, who was ruled by his mother Justina, an Arian—said: “The order is given: ‘Deliver up the Cathedral’. I answer, ‘it is neither lawful for me to deliver it, nor is it fitting for thee, O Emperor, to receive it. Thou hast no right to intrude upon the house of a private person; dost thou think, that God’s house may be taken away?’ It is alleged, ‘all things are lawful to the emperor, for all things are his’. I answer, ‘Do not burden thyself, O Emperor, to think that thou hast any imperial right over those things which are divine. Do not lift up thyself, but if thou wouldst reign long, be subject to God, for it is written, *Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.* Palaces pertain to the emperor, but churches to the priesthood. To thee has been committed the power over the public fortifications, not of sacred buildings’.” Thus Hosius, bishop of Cordova, president of the Nicene Council, steadfastly replied to the Arian emperor, Constantius, when he made a similar demand; that to him belonged the keys of the cities, but the keys of the Church to the pontiff alone. “To thee,” he says, “God has committed the empire, to us he has entrusted what belongs to the Church.”

*Tropologically*, the keys denote the industry, skill and wisdom in ruling which ought to exist in a pontiff; for a key ought to be skillfully placed, fitted to, and turned in the lock, that the door may be opened; so “the art of arts is the government of souls,” says S. Gregory in his *Pastoral*.

*And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.* *Whatsoever* means “whomsoever,” but he says *whatsoever*, because the neuter gender is fuller and of more universal application than the masculine. For the pontiff binds and looses not only men, but sins, vows, oaths, etc. There is a transition from the metaphor of the keys to the kindred metaphor of binding and loosing; for to open and shut, to bind and loose, are akin. Hence, by it, he signifies the same thing: that by the keys and by the rock are meant the supreme authority of Peter and the pontiffs in ruling the Church. The power, therefore, of binding is a very ample one, and is exercised by Peter and the pontiff in various ways. First, by not absolving but retaining sins and offenses, and by refusing sacramental absolution in the sacrament of penance to such as are unworthy, and without the proper dispositions, so likewise by refusing the Eucharist and other sacraments (John 20:23). Second, by enjoining penance to the lapsed.

Third, by binding such as are guilty with excommunication and other ecclesiastical censures. Fourth, by enjoining laws and precepts with respect to feasts, fasts, tithes, etc. upon the faithful. Fifth, by binding Christians with definitions of faith, when the pontiff, *ex cathedra*, defines and declares what is to be believed, what is to be rejected as erroneous and heretical, what monastic orders are good, what are not, what estate of life is honorable and lawful, what is not, etc. Hence, from the contraries, it is plain what is meant by loosing; namely, to absolve and to release from the afore-said obligations.

Christ, therefore, here explains the power of the keys through the metaphor, not of opening and shutting (which are the two proper offices of keys), but by one more powerful, that is, of chains, by binding men with them, or loosing those that are bound; which power S. Peter and his successors, the Roman pontiffs, have received from Christ over all men whatsoever, throughout the whole world. The pontiff, nevertheless, to the extent that it pleases him, gives a share of this power to bishops and pastors and other ministers of the Church subordinate to them; and, therefore, Christ said to the other Apostles also (Matth. 18:18), *Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven*. By these words the same power is given to the Apostles by Christ over the whole world which is here given to Peter; but the same power is here given in an especial manner to Peter only, to signify that he has the primacy and the principality in this power, so that thereby he might be able to direct, constrain, and correct the other Apostles, as his subordinates, committed to his care, and hence that he might, if indeed it were needful, deprive them of it and take it away. Hence the Synod of Alexandria, over which S. Athanasius presided, agreeable to the Council of Nice, writes to Pope Felix that “the power of binding and loosing, by a special privilege, above others, has been granted to the Roman See by the Lord Himself.”

*On earth*. Note: the power of Peter and the pontiffs extends even to those who are under the earth in hell or purgatory, for instance when he excommunicates someone after death for a crime committed during his life, even though he has already departed from it, and so deprives that soul of the Church’s suffrages, as he excommunicates heretics; or when he absolves from excommunication, after death, someone who had been excommunicated while living (as S. Gregory absolved a monk who had fled with money, as John the Deacon relates in his *Life*, lib. 2 cap. 45). It

is the same when he gives indulgences for the deceased—whether it be by way of reparation only, whereby the punishments due to him are paid from the treasury of the Church, that is, from the merits of Christ and the saints, or by way of juridical absolution, absolving them from the punishments which they owe, as some claim was the case with Michael Medina.

You may say: in what sense, then, is *on earth* meant? For those who are in purgatory are under the earth, not on earth. I reply: First, the expression *on earth* should be referred to the phrases *shalt bind* and *shalt loose*, that is, to Peter, who binds and looses, and not to the things or people bound and loosed. As if to say: “Whatever thou, O Peter, shalt bind or loose while living upon earth, God will take as settled, and will consider it bound or loosed in heaven.” For He contrasts the judgment of Peter on earth with the judgment of God in heaven. Otherwise, there is nothing to be bound in heaven; therefore, the phrase *in heaven* should be referred to God, who binds or looses, not to the thing bound or loosed. So, too, the expression *on earth*, with which it is in contrast, should be referred to Peter binding or loosing, not to the thing bound or loosed. Lest anyone despise Peter’s judgment as something earthly, Christ asserts that God’s heavenly judgment is the same, and that, as S. Chrysostom says, “Although Peter is a mortal man, he nevertheless has celestial power,” so that what he judges on earth, God will judge in the same way in heaven. For God’s judgment follows Peter’s preliminary judgment; God does not revoke the sentence which he has previously judged, but approves and confirms it as His own. Hence S. Hilary exclaims: “O blessed Doorkeeper of heaven, to whose discretion are given the keys controlling access to eternity, so that your earthly judgment is an authoritative precedent in heaven.”

Second, the expression *on earth* can, nevertheless, be referred to the matter also, that is, to the men who are to be bound or loosed, so that Christ’s words might have a complete sense; but then the phrase *on earth* comprises also those who are “in the earth” or “under the earth”, for it is contrasted with the phrase *in heaven*. This is because the Greek ἐπὶ and Latin *super* and Hebrew HH *hat*, have a wide range of meaning, and so can be understood here to mean “in”. Hence the Syriac translates it as “in the earth”. Thus Peter’s absolving on earth is put in direct contrast with God’s absolving in heaven. In a similar way the Greeks say ἐπιξέτης εἶναι, that is, “to be on foreign soil / in a foreign land.” Salmeron gives a different reading. He says that the dead, with respect to something of themselves, namely with respect to their reputation and body, are *on earth*;

hence they can be punished therein by the pontiff on earth. Truly, not only their body but also their soul, which is under the earth, can be bound or loosed by the pontiff, as I showed above. Moreover, Gelasius (*Pontif. 24. q. 1 cap. 2. "Igitur"*) proves from these words of Christ that someone who dies excommunicated cannot be absolved by the Church, that is, by the pontiff. Hence he seems to understand the phrase *on earth* narrowly. Yet he speaks of the obstinate sinner, who dies in his contumacy; being impenitent, he cannot be absolved, because he is incapable of absolution. Such a one, therefore, cannot be absolved unless he repents while alive on earth and is converted. That is why in such a case the word *on* is to be understood narrowly when he says *on earth*. And thus it is universally true that the pontiff cannot bind or absolve anyone under the earth except someone who, while living upon earth, merited to be bound or loosed and thus had made himself worthy and capable of such binding or loosing.

In conclusion, it is more likely that the pope possesses judicial power to bind and loose those only who are living upon the earth, but not the dead. When, therefore, he gives indulgences applicable to the departed, it is not in the way of judicial absolution, because the dead are no longer under his jurisdiction, but "by way of suffrages," as he is accustomed fully to express in his bulls: namely, by expending for the dead so much of the treasure of the Church, of which he is the steward, as the departed may owe in penalties to God. For this treasure is upon earth, and is at the disposal of the pontiff. This is the opinion of S. Thomas, S. Bonaventura, Alensis, Gabriel, Major, Richardus, Cajetan, D. Soto, Navarre, and Bellarmine (*tract. de Indulgentiis*), whom Suarez cites and follows (*de Pœnitentia disputat. 53 sect. 2 numer. 4 et seq.*), who also adds, that properly and directly the pontiff can neither excommunicate the dead, nor absolve them from excommunication, but only indirectly, insofar as he may directly forbid the living to pray for the deceased, or permit them to pray for that soul, and by so doing may deprive the dead indirectly of the suffrages of the Church, as though they had been excommunicated; or, on the other hand, may give them a share in those suffrages, in the same manner as if he absolved them from excommunication. When, therefore, Christ saith here to Peter *Whatsoever thou shalt loose*, etc., by *loosing* is to be understood not only judicial absolution, but every dispensation, favor and grace as well, which, by the efficacy of that power, has been conferred upon him by Christ. Of this sort is that dispensing of the treasure of the Church which, by way of suffrages, the pontiff expends and applies for the

benefit of the faithful departed. This, then, is the meaning of the words *upon earth*.

Verse 20. *Then he commanded his disciples, that they should tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ.* Some Greek manuscripts and the Syriac omit the word *Jesus*. Then the sentence flows more clearly; for all men knew that He was called *Jesus*, but they did not know that He was the Messiah, or Christ, the true Son of God. Christ did not wish the Apostles to tell others or to preach this doctrine, for two reasons; first, because they themselves were not as yet sufficiently instructed and confirmed in it, for on other occasions Christ Himself had openly proclaimed that He was Christ, the Son of God, as we see in John chapter 5 and following, and for proclaiming this truth He was killed and died a Martyr (John 18:37). Secondly, because Christ was about to die, to be crucified, put to death by the Jews. Therefore, the Jews would have been scandalised if the Apostles had preached that He was the Messiah and God, and would have said to them, "Away with you, to hang on an infamous gibbet with your Christ, you who would make us Christ-killers and Deicides"—even as the Jews say to Christians now; wherefore, had they once cast away faith in Christ, they would not have hearkened to it any more, even though it had been attested afterward by miracles. Thus they were to wait for the death, the glory, and the resurrection of Christ; that then they might proclaim Him to be the Messiah and the Son of God, and confirm this doctrine by miracles, and persuade the people, as they did at Pentecost (Acts 2), according to the words: *For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth* (Philippians 2:9-10). Thus S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius. So, too, S. Jerome: "Preach Me when I shall have suffered those things, since it is not expedient that Christ should be publicly proclaimed, and His majesty made commonly known among the people, when they are shortly to behold Him scourged and crucified." S. Chrysostom adds, "For that which once was rooted but afterward has been torn up, if it is again planted, is with difficulty retained among the multitude; but that which, once rooted, has continued ever after unmoved, is easily brought on to a further growth."

Verse 21. *From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples, that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again. From that time,*

Greek ἀπὸ τότε, *i.e.*, from this time in which He had made known to them His Divinity, He began to teach them concerning His passion and death for two reasons. First, so as to instruct them completely in the Faith; for there are two principles of faith, namely, Christ's Divinity, and Christ's humanity, together with His passion and cross, by which He redeemed the world. The second reason was, lest when the Apostles beheld Christ put to death, they should doubt concerning His Divinity, says Theophylact; and He would show them that this was suitable 1. to God the Father, so as to make perfect satisfaction to His will and justice (which had been injured and offended by the sin of Adam and his posterity) *ex aequo*, through Christ's death; 2. to Christ, for whom it was fitting to enter into His glory through His passion (Luke 24:26); and 3. to men, for whom it was fitting to be redeemed by Christ's death and instructed to imitate Him and bear His cross.

Verse 22. *And Peter taking him, began to rebuke him. Taking him*, that is, taking Christ aside with him (as though more familiarly and secretly to chide Him out of vehement love, which he did not dare to do in front of the others). So S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius; and S. Jerome, who comments thus: "Peter did not wish that his confession should be brought to nought, as he had said, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*, for he did not think that it was possible that the Son of God should be put to death; and so he takes Him into connection with himself, or leads Him apart that he might not appear to reprove his Teacher in the presence of his fellow-disciples, and began to rebuke Him with loving affection, and to say to Him with desire, 'Be it far from Thee, O Lord'; or better, as it says in the Greek, 'Be propitious to Thyself, O Lord.'" "That shall not be," says S. Thomas, "as if He had [instead] a necessary propitiation [to carry out]. And Christ indeed accepted the [disciple's] affection, but reproveth the ignorance."

*Saying: Lord, be it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee.* So shameful a death shall not befall Thee. For who can endure that the Son of God should be crucified and put to death? The Greek is ἰλεώς σοι, *i.e.*, "propitious to thee", implying "mayest thou be", or "may God be propitious". So the Septuagint usually translates the Hebrew HH *hali-la-lach*, *i.e.*, "let there be prohibition to thee", as formerly people were wont to say "may the gods forbid" or "may the gods send better things." The Syriac is "spare Thyself". Peter speaks out of human prudence and affection, not by divine inspiration as when he said a little before, *Thou art Christ the Son of the*

*Living God.* Here, being left to himself, he fails, and, therefore, he is reproved by Christ.

Verse 23. *Who turning, said to Peter: Go behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto me* (Syriac, "thou art a stumbling-block unto Me"): *because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.* S. Hilary refers the *Get thee behind me* to Peter, but the words *Satan, thou art a scandal unto me* he refers not to Peter, but to the devil, who had suggested to Peter to say, *be it far from Thee, O Lord.* S. Hilary writes thus "For the Lord, knowing the suggestion of the Satanic craft, saith to Peter, 'Go thou backward after Me,' *i.e.*, that he should follow the example of His passion. But then, turning to him by whom this speech had been suggested, He adds, 'Thou art an offense unto Me, Satan': for we must not think that the name of Satan and the offense of the stumbling-block are to be attributed to Peter after such a proclamation of his blessedness and power had been granted to him." But all other writers join the word *Satan* with *Get thee behind Me*, and consider that the whole was spoken to Peter. Christ, therefore, saith unto Peter, *Get thee behind Me, i.e.*, "leave Me, depart hence, get out of My sight; for in this matter thou art not a friend unto Me, but Satan—that is, an adversary" (for this is the meaning of the Hebrew HH "Satan," and so the Vulgate has it; 2 Kings 19:22, and 3 Kings 5:4)—and a scandal, that is, a stumbling block and hindrance to Me. For thou wouldst hinder My passion, and consequently the redemption and salvation of mankind, which by My passion I am about to merit and obtain". So S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and S. Jerome, who says: "It is My own and My Father's good pleasure that I should die for the salvation of man, thou considerest only thine own will, and wouldst not that the Grain of wheat should fall into the earth so as to bring forth much fruit." "And, therefore," says S. Thomas, "because thou art contrary to My will thou oughtest to be called an adversary', for *Satan* is interpreted 'adversary', or 'contrary'; not, however, as many think, that Satan and Peter are condemned by the same sentence; for to Peter it is said, *Get thee behind Me, Satan, i.e.*, 'thou who art contrary to My will, follow thou Me'. But Satan hears [Him say], 'Get thee hence, Satan'; and it is not said to him *behind me*, that it may be understood: 'Go away into everlasting fire'."

Calvin and his followers object, that Christ here calls Peter *Satan*; therefore, He a little previously did not call him the *rock*, nor appoint him the head of the Church. S. Jerome answers that Peter was called *Satan* (that is, an adversary) only for the present time when he withstood Christ, who



was willing to suffer and be crucified, but that he was appointed a rock, not for the time then present, but for the future, namely, that after Christ's death and resurrection he should become the rock and head of the Church. Secondly, S. Augustine (*serm. 13 de Verbis Domini secundum Matthaeum*) and Theophylact reply, that Peter is called blessed, and constituted the rock of the Church, inasmuch as being enlightened by a revelation from God, he had confessed Christ the Son of the living God, and, therefore, had been by Him appointed the rock of the Church; but that he is here called *Satan* so far as he, departing from God and God's decree (of which he was ignorant), followed human affection: loving Him so much, he did not want Christ to die. Moreover, the fifth ecumenical council (Constantinople I), in a constitution of Pope Vigilius, pronounces an anathema against those who explain the words of Christ (*Get thee behind me, Satan*) to have been spoken to Peter, lest the mind of Christ, being perturbed by his dissuasion, should flee the passion, assuming that His passion would be to His own advantage, and who therefore do not believe that His death purchased the rewards of eternal life for us. In a similar way, Bl. Peter Damian (*lib. 1 epist. 16*, to Pope Alexander II) calls Cardinal Hildebrand, who afterward became Pope Gregory VII, "his holy Satan." "Satan", because he opposed him when he [Peter Damian] refused the cardinalate so as to return to his Camaldolese hermitage. "Holy", because he did it with a holy purpose, namely, because he saw that the work of Peter would be very useful to the Church.

*Because thou savorest not* (Arabic, "thou considerest not") *the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.* This is the source and reason for Peter's error and that of other men: *because thou savorest not.* Greek οὐ φρονεῖς, *i.e.*, "thou understandest not, thou dost not receive, nor approve with thine intellect and thine affections the things which are pleasing to God, but the things which human prudence, that is to say, flesh and blood, suggest to men. For thou wouldst take into consideration My body and My life, and thine own human consolation, contrary to God's decree, whereby He has most wisely appointed that I should die for the salvation of men. Thus men sin when they prefer the weak judgment of the flesh to the most wise and lofty judgment of God." For, *the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God. For it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand* (1 Cor. 2:14).

Verse 24. *Then Jesus said to his disciples: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* This medicine of

self-denial and the cross Christ opposes to the proper and natural love, which Peter had shown to Christ (v. 22) when he wanted to hinder His passion. Therefore, He spoke this not to Peter only, but to the other Apostles who were gathered, yea even to the multitude, as Mark says (8:34). This is a sort of axiom of Christ's school, *if any one will come after me*, etc. It means, says Chrysostom, "Thou, O Peter, suggestest unto Me, spare Thy life, be propitious to Thyself, but I say to thee that not only is it hurtful to thee to keep Me from My passion, but not even thyself canst be saved, unless thou shalt suffer and renounce thy life." Christ wishes to establish solemnly what He had said, that He must die by God's decree for the salvation of mankind, and, furthermore, that every one of the faithful should imitate this death and cross, if he wants to be considered His companion and disciple. Christ gives three commands, says Chrysostom: first, "let each one deny himself"; second, "let him take up the cross"; third, "let him follow Me."

*If any man will come after me.* Christ does not compel, nor use violence, says Chrysostom, but invites the willing, and thereby kindly and forcefully allures them and draws them. For who would not long and burn to follow Christ, the Son of God? But as God bids all follow Christ, so likewise He bids them freely choose and embrace self-denial, which He sanctions here. Again Christ attracts all men, when He says *come after me*. He means, "ye will not be the first in the cross, in death, in martyrdom. I, your Captain, will go before ye; therefore, just follow Me, because I will precede ye, not only by My example, but by My help, and I will make you certain of victory and the crown, if only ye will follow Me and earnestly cooperate with My grace". Thus Cato, going before his soldiers through the sands of Lybia, used to say, "Test your dangers ahead of time by mine. "For I will command nothing but what I first do myself. I will give no order unless I myself shall be your leader and guide [in carrying it out]". The previous example of a leader is a great stimulus to a soldier.

*Let him deny himself: i.e.*, Let him put away from him his own judgment, and human affection. For this is the dearest to a man of all things, by which man is delighted and fed, so that he thinks it is man himself. For man is that which flourishes and lives in man. He bids, therefore, that every one should subdue, mortify, and cut off his natural affections and sensual desires, so far as they are repugnant to the law of God and His will, and instead take up and put on God's law and His will, and follow them in everything. (See commentary at 10:38-39.) For on this occasion Peter,

by a natural affection for Christ, wanted to prevent His death; Christ says to him, in order to reprove that natural affection in him and in other men: “If thou wilt come after me and follow me, O Peter, deny and renounce this judgment of thine about Me and too-human affection, so that thou mayest follow and embrace the decree and will of God, who wills that I suffer and die. Be thou willing to act in all thy judgments, desires, affections, and notably in the death of the cross as God hath appointed for thee, that thou mayest embrace that will, although nature and natural affection would dread it, and flee from it according to the words, *Amen, amen, I say to thee, When thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands (on the cross), and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not* (John 21:18). “Hence Origen explains *let him deny himself*, to mean”, let him deny his life by undergoing death for My sake and for the Faith, even as I undergo the death of the Cross for God’s sake. “In a similar way, let every believer *deny himself*, *i.e.*, his own desires, his own imaginations, his own prurient urges, his own human reasoning, his own will; and let him direct it and conform it in all things to the will of God. For example, if your senses of sight, hearing and taste suggest to you that you should look at, listen to, or taste curious, delightful things that lead one astray, so that you indulge and inebriate the senses, then deny them these desires of theirs, forbidden by God, and keep saying to them:” I will not see, or hear, or taste those things, because I wish to follow the law of God, and to please God, and not to give satisfaction to my senses and carnal appetites. Thus a wise mother denies her child who asks for harmful things (for concupiscence is like a child, who is led by sense and not reason, says Aristotle in the *Ethics*), for example a knife, with which he might injure himself, because in his weakness he does not know how to handle it.

S. Gregory notes (*hom. 32 in Evang.*), Christ does not say, ‘let him deny his riches’, but *let him deny himself*, so that a man should go away from himself, and become a stranger to himself, yea that he should leave off to be what he was and begin to be what he was not, and become as it were a new and another man. “It is less,” he says, “to deny what a man has; but it is far more to deny what he is. It is not enough to relinquish what is ours unless we leave ourselves, as well.” S. Gregory then raises the objection, “Whither shall we go out of ourselves?” And he answers, “We have become something different through our fall into sin from that which we

were framed to be by nature. What we have done is not in keeping with what we were made to be. Let us leave, therefore, ourselves, as we have made ourselves by sinning; and let us remain ourselves such as we have been made by grace. Behold, he who was proud, if he has been converted to Christ, has been made humble; he has left himself. If a lustful man has changed his life and become continent, he likewise has denied what he was. If an avaricious man has already stopped being acquisitive and has learned to be generous with his belongings—he, who formerly grasped at what belonged to others—beyond all doubt he has left himself. Of course he is himself according to his nature, but he is not himself according to his malice.” He shows us the same thing by the example of Paul, “Let us consider how Paul had denied himself, when he said, *I live, yet not I* forasmuch as that cruel persecutor had died and the pious preacher had begun to live, Christ indeed liveth in [him].” It is as though he said plainly, “I indeed have died to myself, because I live not according to the flesh. Nevertheless, I am not dead essentially, because I live in Christ spiritually. Therefore, let the Truth say, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself*; because except a man cease from himself, he cannot draw nigh to Him who is above himself; nor is he able to apprehend that which is beyond himself, if he knows not how to slay that which he is.”

S. Chrysostom (*hom. 56*) illustrates the same principle by a similitude. “If thou understandest what it is to deny another, then wilt thou rightly perceive what it is to deny thyself. He who has denied another, if he see him beaten with rods, if cast into chains, or suffering any other evil, he does not hasten to him or assist him, he is altogether unmoved, as one who is wholly apart from him. Thus, too, He wills us not to spare our own body by any means, not to spare it even though it be beaten, or struck, or burnt, or suffer any other thing.” Victor of Antioch adds (*in Marci cap. 8*), “He hath not said, a man must not be too self indulgent; or that he should not spare his own flesh too much; but rising to a very lofty height, *let him deny himself*; He says, or abjure himself, that is, let him have no commerce with himself, or with his own flesh, but let him so conduct himself, as though it were not he himself who bears the cross but some other person.” Note this word “abjure”. For as in baptism we renounce Satan, and as it were abjure him, so ought we fully to deny, and as it were abjure ourselves, that is our lusts. For these are more inimical to us and our salvation than the devils themselves. For we dread the devil himself, but our lusts deceive us by their flattery, and profess to be our friends. For there is greater danger

from one who secretly lies in wait than from an open enemy.

Moreover, Christ tells and commands, not only Apostles, religious, clerics and priests, but every believer, to deny himself, that is, his sensual and excessive love for his flesh, his honor, his wife, his children, his relations, etc., and to subject it to the love of God, to His law and His will. Yet beyond this, religious must renounce all secular business, their own will, ownership and property and other things by their vows and their religious profession, as well as anything opposed to a life of perfection, so that they conform themselves not only to Christ's law, but also to the counsels of his Gospel. This renunciation must extend to life itself, and death, even the most ignominious death on a cross, says S. Chrysostom, so that we would rather undergo it than to turn away from God's will even in a single point. Hence He adds, *And take up his cross*. On this subject S. Basil, in the *Long Rules (ad interrog. 6)* defines renunciation thus: "Self-denial is nothing else than the utter forgetfulness of all things from one's former life (spent in vice) and the relinquishing of one's own will" and the acceptance of God's will. The same author says (*ad interrog. 8*), "Herein lies perfect self-denial, if someone has reached the point where he is not concerned in the least about his life, no matter how much talk there may be about death. . . . Self-denial is nothing other than the loosing of the chains of these dealings with earthly and temporal things, a loosing which withdraws us from the anxious business that accompanies human life and renders us more prompt and more capable of entering upon a life devoted to contemplating God."

In the *Lives of the Fathers (lib. 5, libello 1 de Profectu Patrum, num. 7)*, the abbot, John, gives the following proofs of self-denial and a holy life: "Be patient under injuries, and not soon angry: be a peacemaker, and not rendering evil for evil: not looking at the faults of others, nor exalting thyself; but be subject with humility unto every one: renouncing all material things, and whatever is fleshly, in torments and in battle, in humility of spirit, in fasting, in patience, in weeping, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and in labors, shutting thyself up in a sepulcher, as though thou wast already dead, that death may every day seem to be very nigh unto thee." S. Egidius, a companion of S. Francis, a very holy man, and enlightened by God, used to recite these paradoxes about denying the senses:

If you want to see clearly, pluck out your eyes, and become blind.

If you want to hear well, be deaf.

If you want to speak well, become dumb.

If you want to walk well, cut off your feet.

If you want to work well, cut off your hands.

If you want to love well, hate yourself.

If you want to live well, mortify yourself.

If you want to gain, learn to lose.

If you want to be rich, become poor.

If you want to live in pleasure, afflict yourself

If you want to be secure, always be in fear.

If you want to be exalted, humble yourself.

If you want to be honored, despise yourself, and honor those who despise you.

If you want to have what is good, bear evil.

If you want to be at rest, work.

If you want to be blessed, desire to be slandered.

"Oh how great," says the same S. Egidius, "is this wisdom, to know how to do these things! And because they are great, they are not given to all men. No one should listen to or say anything, unless it is useful, nor can one make progress in any other way." He goes on to describe this way of salvation, and perfection through self denial:

If you want be saved, do not ask of any human creature the reason why anything befalls you.

If you want to be saved, make it your business to rise superior to every consolation and honor which a creature can give you.

Woe to those who desire to be honored for their wickedness.

If any one contends with you and you want to overcome, lose; for when you think you have won, you have lost.

If you love, you shall be loved.

If you fear, you shall be feared.

If you serve, you shall be served.

If you act well toward others, others shall behave well toward you.

Blessed is he who loves, and does not desire to be loved in return.

Blessed is he who serves, and does not desire to be served. And because these are great things, fools cannot attain to them.

There are three things which ought more especially to cleave to thy mind. The first is, to bear willingly every tribulation that arises. The second, to be more and more humble on account of everything which thou doest, or receivest. The third, faithfully to love those goods which cannot

be seen with bodily eyes.” Thus the *Historia Seraphicae rel.* ( *lib. 1 p. 65*). For more maxims, see the works of Climacus, Dorotheus and Cassian. The last-mentioned, among other things, narrates (*de Instit. renunt. c. 28*) how Abbot John, about to die, gave this perfect example and testament of self-denial to his brethren: “I have never done my own will,” he said, “nor commanded anything that I myself had not done first.”

And [let him] *take up his cross*. “That just as I have borne Mine—I, Christ, as it were the first Cross-bearer and the Standard-bearer and Captain of the cross bearers, I who, suffering and groaning, bore the Cross on which I was to be crucified on My shoulders to Mount Calvary—the Christian cross-bearer may courageously, willingly and constantly follow Me, even to death on the cross, and hence to the glory of paradise.” Luke [9:23] adds the word *daily*, to signify that every day, and sometimes every hour, some trouble will occur to every one, which should be borne bravely and patiently; and that throughout his whole life; and thus must every one live upon the cross, and die upon the cross with Christ. “He takes up his cross,” says S. Jerome, “who is crucified to the world; he also, to whom the world is crucified, follows his crucified Lord.” This cross is, 1. persecution and martyrdom; 2. any affliction or tribulation sent by God; 3. temptation of the devil, permitted by God as a test, for the sake of our humility and virtue, and to increase our reward; 4. self-denial and the mortification of our lusts. Thus S. Jerome.

His *cross, i.e.*, first, his own. Every one has his particular cross; for one it is from wife, or children, or relations; for another from character; for a third from rivals; for a fourth from misfortunes; for a fifth from poverty; for a sixth from exile, bonds, and so on.

2. His *cross, i.e.*, commensurate with his strength and his desires. For God *will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able*, says S. Paul (1 Cor. 10:13). He gives to every one a cross as a sort of medicine suitable to the vice from which he suffers. Thus God allows someone who is inclined to pride, or who excels in some matter, to suffer contempt or temptation of the flesh, such as He permitted to come upon S. Paul (2 Cor. 12:7). The cross He gives to the covetous is loss of goods and riches. To the learned, a fall into some mistake, or bad repute, lest he should be puffed up, and think too highly of himself.

3. His *cross, i.e.*, decreed by God from eternity for his good. When, therefore, thou feelest the cross, or often a new one, think of God, and say, “O Lord, I willingly accept this cross from thy Fatherly hand, for this cross

has been appointed to me from eternity, and decreed by Thee to file off the rust of my vices; wherefore, I render unto Thee boundless thanks. For I know and believe that it was ordained for me by Thy paternal love, to make me like unto thy dearly beloved, crucified Son, here in patience, and hereafter in glory. *For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated, to be made conformable to the image of his Son: that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren, etc.*” (Romans 8:29).

4. His *cross*, that is, the one which someone has within him by suffering, or imposes upon himself by self-denial, or makes his own by compassion. As S. Gregory says (*hom. 32 in Evang.*), “The cross is taken up in two ways, when either by abstinence the body is affected, or by compassion for our neighbor the mind is afflicted. Let us consider how in both ways Paul bore his cross. For he said, *I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway*. Thus in his bodily affliction we have heard of the cross of the flesh. Next let us hear of his mind’s cross through compassion for his neighbor. For he says, *who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?* Behold how the perfect preacher carried the cross in his body, to give an example of abstinence. And forasmuch as he took upon himself the failings of other men’s infirmity, he carried the cross in his heart.”

And [let him] *follow me*. Through the cross to death, and through death to blessed immortality. For we must persevere in the cross with Christ throughout our lives, until death and our reward. *But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved*. Hear S. Chrysostom (*hom. 56 in c. 16. Matth.*), “Malefactors often suffer such grievous things; lest you suppose, therefore, that simply to suffer evil is enough, He adds the reason for suffering. And what is it? So that by doing or suffering all those things mentioned, you might follow Him, so that you might bear them all for His sake, that you might have the fullness of virtue. That man follows Christ who does not demonstrate only fortitude in danger, but also modesty and humility, and who has mastered all philosophy of the more sublime sort. For to follow the Lord aright means to suffer all things for His sake and to be diligent in the practice of virtues. Many who follow the devil suffer many things and lose their lives for his sake; let us lose our lives for Christ, or indeed, for our own sake.”

Verse 25. *For he that will save his life* [Greek and Vulgate, “his soul”], *shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it*. Since the cross is bitter and gives pain, Christ encourages believers to take it up, says

S. Chrysostom, by the great reward and the crown of glory which it brings. S. Gregory (*hom.* 32) says, it is as though one should tell a farmer: "If thou shouldst keep thy corn, thou lovest it; if thou sowest it, thou renewest it. For who does not know that the corn, which is scattered in sowing, is lost from sight and abandoned in the earth? Yet because it decays in the dust, it, therefore, springs up in a renewed form." Origen explains this verse in two ways. First thus: If any man (being a lover of the present life) spares his soul through fear of death, and thinking that his soul will perish by that death, he, wishing to save his soul in this way, shall lose it, withdrawing it from life eternal. But if any one (despising the present life) shall contend for the truth even until death, he shall lose indeed his soul so far as pertains to this life; but since he shall lose it for Christ's sake, he shall make it safe for the life eternal. The other explanation is as follows: If any one understands what true safety is, and wishes to gain it for the salvation of his soul, he, by denying himself, loses his soul (so far as carnal pleasures are concerned) for Christ's sake; and losing his soul in this way, he saves it through works of piety. For by saying *he that will*, He shows that there is one sense in what precedes and what follows. Therefore, if what He had said earlier, *let him deny himself*, was spoken about bodily death, consequently we must understand this saying to be about death only. If, moreover, to deny oneself means to reject carnal intercourse, then losing one's soul, also, means to put aside carnal pleasures. Thus far Origen. The former explanation seems to be the more correct, and may be amplified thus: "He who in this life, fleeing from the cross and self-denial, wishes to preserve his soul—that is, his life—and, therefore, denies Me and My faith in persecution; or wishes to save his soul—that is, the desires of his soul, wishing to satisfy his lusts—he shall lose his soul in the life to come, in hell." But he who shall lose his soul in this life for Christ's sake—either by dying for Him in persecution, or by denying his lusts for love of Him—he shall find his soul, which he lost in this life by dying or by mortifying himself, in the life to come. He shall find it saved in eternal glory, in the bosom of Christ, who shall raise and glorify the soul which was exposed to death for His sake. The antithesis between *lose* and *find* or *save* requires this meaning; likewise the following verse: *For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?*, that is, lose his soul in hell?

Verse 26. *For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul (i.e., of himself, as Luke 9:25 explains)? Or what*

*exchange shall a man give for his soul? Lose:* Greek ζημιωθῆ, *i.e.*, "make loss, be fined." The meaning is, what assistance shall it be to you (for this is the meaning of the Greek ὠφελεῖ) to have gained all the riches, honors, and pleasures of the whole world, if on account of them you destroy yourself, and be fined as to your irreplaceable, inmost soul with the eternal torments of hell? According to the words, "If you lose all things, remember to save your soul." For wealth, honors and pleasure you may recover! but the soul once lost, is lost for ever. Those things are extrinsic and only titillate the exterior senses; but the soul is an intrinsic and intimate part of you; hence, its sorrow or joy is likewise something intrinsic, intimate and of highest importance to you. "O foolish children of Adam, why then do ye so love these fleeting things, that for them ye lose your souls, and deliver them to everlasting burnings? O senseless creatures, who for a drop of pleasure or honor purchase eternal pains and the everlasting disgrace of hell! And for all too vile and worthless a price ye buy them, which will at last trouble ye in eternity." I do not buy at such great grief.

*Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?* Greek ἀντάλλαγμα, *i.e.*, "compensation, trade, price, ransom". Hence the Syriac translates, "trade for his soul". For thy soul is above all price, all compensation; because it has been purchased and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, the Lord our God. Therefore, the whole world is an insufficient price for the soul of one man, says Euthymius (*in Ps.* 48). For if once thou shalt lose it and consign it to hell, by no price canst thou redeem it, nor be able to buy back thy soul with any other soul, because thou hast but one. Even if thou hadst several, hell still would not release thy soul, which it already had in its grasp, in exchange for them. Here, indeed, the soul is able to redeem her falls by repentance, by tears, and by good works; but in the day of judgment there will be no more opportunity for repentance and redemption. Behold, therefore, the deceit of Satan and the folly of man. Satan buys the soul of a sinner from him at the cheapest rate, for the brief pleasure of gluttony, of luxury, and so on. "He offers an apple, and deprives him of paradise," says S. Bernard (*tract. de Gradu Humilit. c. de Curiositate*). Luke 9:26 adds, *For he that shall be ashamed of Me* (of Christ and of His law as though they were mean and poor, just as the Jews and many Gentiles were ashamed) *and of My words, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed, when He shall come in His majesty and that of His Father and of the holy angels.* On this subject Matthew has the following:

Verse 27. *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with*

*his angels: and then will he render to every man according to his works.* Arabic, “according to his working”, *i.e.*, according to what he hath wrought, not according to what he hath known, understood, believed.

*Shall come* (on Judgment Day, to judge men by their works) *in the glory* (*i.e.*, with glory and majesty, as Luke says) *of his Father*. This is both created glory, which He has received as man from the Father, infused in His body and soul, or which He shall receive externally on Judgment Day, poured forth in the company of all the angels; and also that glory which He has as God in common with the Father and His essence and Deity, and which He will manifest to the whole world. Thus S. Chrysostom and Euthymius. This is the sharp incentive with which Christ stirred up all to heroic acts of self-denial, of the cross, and of virtue (v. 24). As if to say, “O Apostles, and you who believe in Me, deny yourselves, take up your cross and follow Me, because for these difficult and heroic deeds of yours I shall praise you on Judgment Day before the whole world, and will share with you My happiness and glory in the kingdom of heaven. But those who have fled self-denial, the cross and the imitation of Me, and have followed their pleasures and desires, I shall rebuke and condemn to hell, and that for all eternity. You must choose one of these two fates; one or the other awaits you infallibly.” Hear what S. Jerome says (*epist. 1 ad Heliodorum*). Thus he invites Heliodorus to a solitary life, and to take up his cross: “Dost thou fear poverty? Yet Christ calls the poor blessed. Art thou terrified at labor? But no athlete is crowned without sweat. Dost thou think about food? But faith is not afraid of famine. Dost thou fear to wear out thy limbs, consumed by fasting, upon the bare ground? But the Lord lieth with thee. Does the bushy hair of the filthy body horrify thee? But Christ is thy Head. Does the infinite vastness of the desert affright thee? But do thou walk with paradise in thy mind. . . . Thou art delicate, brother, if thou wilt rejoice here with the world and reign afterward with Christ. That day will come, it will surely come, in which this corruptible and this mortal shall put on incorruption and immortality. Blessed is the servant whom the Lord shall find watching. Then when the earth with its inhabitants shall tremble at the sound of the trumpet, thou shalt rejoice. When the Lord shall come to judge, the world shall groan mournfully. All classes of people shall then strike their breasts. Then shall the most mighty kings tremble in their nakedness. Ignoble Jupiter will then be exposed in truth with his offspring. Plato, with his disciples, shall be found a fool. The arguments of Aristotle shall not profit. But then shalt thou, a rustic and poor,

exult. Thou shalt laugh, and say, ‘Behold my crucified God, behold the Judge, who, wrapped in swaddling clothes, cried in the manger, etc., so that by these things He might aim to interest those who now undergo hard labor.’” Thus S. Jerome, pathetically, but truly.

Verse 28. *Amen I say to you, there are some of them that stand here, that shall not taste death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* Syriac, “into His kingdom”; these two expressions are often confused in scripture, but they mean the same thing. Christ promised that a reward in the heavenly kingdom should be given for good works of self-denial and the cross. Now, lest any one should find fault that it was to be put off for many ages, He shows that it is coming and is in reality near; He shows that very kingdom in the transfiguration, after a few days, to some yet alive.

*Shall not taste death.* That is, shall not die. It is a metaphor taken from the deadly cup which was given to persons condemned to death, that they might die of poison. For this is not a pleasant draught, but a bitter-tasting, painful one.

*In His Kingdom.* You will ask what was this kingdom of Christ; and when some of the Apostles standing by Him beheld it? S. Gregory answers (*hom. 32 in Evang.*) and S. Bede, that this kingdom of Christ was the Church and its diffusion throughout all nations, which verily the Apostles beheld, yea, brought about. Christ says this, according to S. Gregory, so that from the spread of the Church’s kingdom, which they were about to behold, they might learn how great would be their future glory in the heavenly kingdom, which in this life is invisible. Otherwise men consider only visible things and do not desire invisible things, because they do not even suspect that they exist. Therefore, God, by the visible things which He sets forth, confirms the hope of the invisible promises. Also, 2. some think that it was to take place at the resurrection, and in the day of judgment, of which Christ spoke in the preceding verse. But I say it took place in the transfiguration of Christ. For in it they beheld Christ’s glorious kingdom as in a glass. Three of the Apostles, namely, Peter, James, and John, had a foretaste of this kingdom. This is plain from what follows. All the evangelists who relate the transfiguration, namely Matthew, Mark and Luke, place it immediately after this promise of Christ, as though it were the fulfilment of it, that is, after the sixth day. Thus S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, S. Ambrose, Theophylact, Euthymius and others, *passim*. Hence S. Leo says (*serm. de Transfigur.*), “In the Kingdom, that is, in royal splendor.” For in His transfiguration Christ gave to His Apostles

a specimen of the glory, the brilliance, the magnificence, the joy and the happiness which the saints shall obtain in the heavenly kingdom, that He might thereby inspire them to evangelical labors and sorrows, and that they might encourage others to the same. After the same manner S. Jerome encourages Eustochium (*epist. 18 de Custodia Virgin. in fine*): “Go forth,” he saith, “for a little space from thy prison, and picture to thine eyes the reward of thy present labors, which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man*. What sort of day will that be when Mary the mother of the Lord shall meet thee with choirs of virgins? When after Pharaoh with his host has been drowned in the Red Sea, she shall sing the antiphon to the responsive choirs, as she bears the timbrel. *Let us sing to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea*. Then shall Thecla joyfully fly to embrace thee. Then, too, the Spouse Himself shall meet thee, and shall say, *Arise and come, My kinswoman, and My fair one, for lo the winter is passed, the rain is over*. Then the angels shall wonder and say, *who is this that cometh forth as the morning, beautiful as the moon, chosen as the sun?* . . . Then the little ones, lifting up the palms of victory, shall sing with concordant voice, *Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest!* Then the hundred and forty and four thousand before the Throne, and before the Elders shall hold their harps, and shall chant the new song.”

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

*First, Christ is transfigured on the mountain and teaches that Elias in one sense has come, and in another sense is yet to come. Second (v. 14), He heals the lunatic and says that this requires prayer and fasting. Third (v. 21), He preaches that His passion and death are approaching. Fourth (v. 24), He pays the didrachma for Himself and Peter, although He shows that He is not bound to do so.*

**A**nd after six days Jesus taketh unto Him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart:

2 And he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun: and his garments became white as snow.

3 And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him.

4 And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three taber-

nacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5 And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him.

6 And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them: and said to them, Arise, and fear not.

8 And they lifting up their eyes saw no one but only Jesus.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead.

10 And his disciples asked him, saying: Why then do the scribes say that Elias must come first?

11 But he answering, said to them: Elias indeed shall come, and restore all things.

12 But I say to you, that Elias is already come, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they had a mind. So also the Son of man shall suffer from them.

13 Then the disciples understood, that he had spoken to them of John the Baptist.

14 And when he was come to the multitude, there came to him a man falling down on his knees before him, saying: Lord, have pity on my son, for he is a lunatic, and suffereth much: for he falleth often into the fire, and often into the water. (Mark 9:16; Luke 9:38)

15 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

16 Then Jesus answered and said: O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me.

17 And Jesus rebuked him, and the devil went out of him, and the child was cured from that hour.

18 Then came the disciples to Jesus

secretly, and said: Why could not we cast him out?

19 Jesus said to them: Because of your unbelief. For, amen I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you.

20 But this kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting.

21 And when they abode together in Galilee, Jesus said to them: The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:

22 And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall rise again. And they were troubled exceedingly.

23 And when they were come to Capharnaum, they that received the didrachmas, came to Peter and said to him: Doth not your master pay the didrachmas?

24 He said: Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying: What is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom? Of their own children, or of strangers?

25 And he said: Of strangers. Jesus said to him: Then the children are free.

26 But that we may not scandalize them, go to the sea, and cast in a hook: and that fish which shall first come up, take: and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater: take that, and give it to them for me and thee.

Verse 1. *And after six days Jesus taketh unto him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart.* There seems to be here a discrepancy with Luke 9:28, who says, *and it came to pass about eight days after these words*. S. Jerome answers, “The solution is simple, because in S. Matthew the intervening days are given; in S. Luke there is an addition of the first and the last day.” Matthew then and Mark do not count the first day, in which Christ spoke what we have heard, and gave the promise of His transfiguration, because it was not a full day; nor yet the last and eighth, because Christ was transfigured on the morning of it, but only the six intervening days. Luke, on the other hand, counts them all, both the full days and the partial ones, and, therefore, says, *about*. Thus S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact, and S. Augustine (*lib. 1 de Consensu Evang. cap. 56*). Christ put off His promised transfiguration for six days so that, as S. Chrysostom says, the rest of the disciples might not