

one of the characteristics which should mark the life of the Brotherhood is "Philadelphia", or "Brother-love". This term is almost completely a coinage of Christian thought. It may be compared with Agape, which is Christian love. And it is perhaps well to bear in mind the point made by Sanday and Headlam, commenting on Rom. xii. 10, that whilst Agape is universal, Philadelphia "represents affection for the brethren; that is, for all members of the Christian community".

It is for us to give due regard to this conception of the Christian Church as the Brotherhood which is in Christ. It has two important aspects which we cannot ignore. These are our individual union with Him through faith, and our corporate union one with another through our individual union with Him.

St. Peter and Papal Claims

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UNDoubtedly Simon Peter, the big fisherman, the impulsive, impetuous, and devoted disciple of Jesus Christ, was a real leader among the apostles, and their chief spokesman.

It was Peter, on behalf of the other apostles, who made the great confession: "We believe, and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (John vi. 69). But he was only voicing what was the belief of all the others. They too had the same belief regarding Jesus Christ as Peter had, as witness Matt. xiv. 33, where it is recorded that "Those who were in the ship, i.e., the Twelve, worshipped him, saying, Truly thou art the Son of God". See also John i. 49, where Nathanael said to Jesus, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel".

In the first twelve chapters of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles Peter is undoubtedly the outstanding figure, the chief spokesman, and the leader of the Church in Jerusalem. But after his release from prison (Acts xii), he disappears almost entirely from view; and except for his speech at the Council in Jerusalem, there is very little record of his later activities. We read that he travelled about with his wife (1 Cor. ix. 5) that he visited Antioch (Gal. ii. 11). There is a tradition that he acted as Bishop of Antioch for seven years; and he possibly worked in the provinces mentioned in 1 Peter i. 1. There is also a late tradition that he was Bishop of Rome, and died as a martyr there.

Turning to the four Gospels we find it recorded that our Lord said to Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19). But at a later date our Lord said the same thing to *all* the apostles, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18).

It is interesting to read what some of the Early Fathers wrote about this particular verse of Scripture. Jerome wrote that "All the

apostles received the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and the strength of the Church was built equally upon them all " (Hieron. Contr. Jovin. Lib. I. 14). Augustine states most plainly that it was the Church which received the power of the keys and not an individual apostle, as the following quotation shows : " When he said unto Peter, ' Unto thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven,' he signified thereby the whole Church, for unto this Church were given the keys of the kingdom, when they were given to Peter " (De Agone Christiano, Lib. I. Cap. XXX Tom. III and Johan. Tract. 124).

Origen, too, is equally clear. Commenting on the keys he wrote : " Were the keys of the kingdom of heaven given only to Peter ? and shall no holy men else receive the same ? Nay, all the things both that were said before, and also that follow after, as spoken to Peter, are common, and belong to *all* the apostles " (Orig. on Matt. Tract. I and Tom. XII. 2). Ambrose wrote, " What is said to Peter is said to *all* the apostles," and this is endorsed by Origen, Cyprian, Jerome, and Basil. In fact, Ambrose extends the power of the keys to the whole Episcopate : " *All* we Bishops," he writes, " have in Peter received the keys of the kingdom of heaven " (Ambr. de dign. Sac. I). Chrysostom goes still further ; he wrote : " The key-bearers are the priests, to whom is committed the word of teaching, and the expounding of the Scriptures ".

Referring again to the Gospel record, it is true that our Lord said to Peter, " Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep " (John xxi. 15 and 17). But that commission was also given to *all* the apostles, when Christ sent them forth to preach the Gospel, to baptize, and to teach (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). On these words of our Lord to Peter the Bishops of Rome, claiming to be the successors of Peter, base their claim to be the chief shepherds of the flock, and supreme rulers of the Church of God. They interpret these symbolical words in a literal way, and assert that the sheep are the bishops and priests of the Church of Rome, and the lambs are the laity.

Such a claim simply ignores the many references made by the Early Fathers to this passage of Scripture. Augustine states quite definitely that no authority to teach and preach was given exclusively to Peter, and wrote, " When it is said to Peter, it is said to *all* the apostles, Feed my sheep " (August. de Agone Christiano, Cap. XXX). Cyprian endorses Augustine's statement in his Unity of the Church, " *All* of them were shepherds, the flock was one, which was fed by the apostles with unanimous agreement ". Writing to Pope Stephen he claims this authority for *all* bishops : " Certainly the other apostles also were what Peter was, endowed with an equal fellowship both of honour and of power. We being many shepherds do feed one flock, which is fed by *all* the apostles with one consent " (Epis. 67 and P. Steph.). One could quote other such references, but enough have been quoted to show that the Early Fathers were all agreed that there was equality among the apostles ; to none was given pre-eminence or jurisdiction over the others. Certainly the apostles did not consider that Christ had granted pre-eminence or jurisdiction to any one of them. You will remember that they often quarrelled amongst themselves as to who should be accounted the greatest. Mark records (ix. 33, 34) that

“ He came to Capernaum ; and being in the house he asked them, What was it that you disputed among yourselves by the way ? But they held their peace : for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.”

Even at the last Supper, after they had all partaken of the consecrated bread and wine, they began to quarrel among themselves about this, and the Lord promptly rebuked them, and said, “ The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them ; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But you shall not be so : but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve ” (Luke xxii. 24-26).

Peter was conspicuous by his zeal, boldness, and readiness of speech, but he was not granted by our Lord any powers or privileges which were not shared by the other apostles. The Roman writer, Cardinal Cusanus, acknowledged this when he wrote : “ We know that Peter did not receive more power from Christ than the other apostles ; for nothing was said to Peter which was not also said to the others ; therefore we rightly say that all the apostles were equal to Peter in power ” (Card. Cus. de Conc. Cath. II. 13).

It seems clear from the New Testament that Peter himself did not understand that the Lord had granted to him especially, particular powers and authority which he had not granted to the other apostles. There is no record of any act of authority or jurisdiction exercised by Peter over the other apostles, or over the Church. Rather the reverse ! In Antioch Paul had to rebuke him publicly for his conduct. Paul wrote about this as follows : “ I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned ” ; and this because Peter and the others “ walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel ” (Gal. ii. 11-14).

It was James, not Peter, who presided at the first Council of the Church in Jerusalem. Peter was only one of the many speakers ; it was James, not Peter, who summed up the discussion, and delivered the judgment of the Council. It was Peter and John who were sent by the apostles in Jerusalem to confirm the new converts in Samaria. If Peter had had jurisdiction in the Church he would have been the “ sender ”, but instead he was “ sent ”. He took his orders from James and the other apostles.

The Acts records fully the *leadership* of Peter in the Church, but nothing whatever of any *jurisdiction* exercised by him. Was Peter's commission universal ? So was that of the other apostles. Was he furnished with special gifts of grace and power ? So were they. Was he sent forth as an ambassador for Christ ? So were they. Was he told to feed the flock ? So were they. Was he empowered to remit and retain sins ? So were they. As Cyprian wrote : “ Christ granted an equal power to all the apostles ”. Christ had made no distinction among them. Peter realized this, and never once in his sermons or epistles alluded to any sort of supremacy granted to him by Christ. In his epistles he writes of the apostles as his equals (2 Peter iii. 2), and exhorts the elders of the Church as a “ fellow-elder ”. Peter may have strengthened and confirmed his brethren, the other apostles, but he most certainly did not *rule* over them. Whatever supremacy he had was spiritual, not juridical.

The Bishop of Rome claims jurisdiction over the whole of Christendom because he is the successor of Peter. But from the Scriptures and the writings of the Early Fathers it is quite clear that Peter never claimed jurisdiction over anyone! And even if he had been granted powers of jurisdiction, that is special spiritual powers and authority, could he bequeath those powers to a successor? Spiritual blessings, privileges and graces are the free gift of God, and are granted by him to whomsoever he wills; they cannot be inherited, they cannot be bought, they cannot be obtained by fraud. Whatever blessings were granted to Peter by God, they were granted to Peter, and to him alone, and were incommunicable; they could not be "bequeathed" by Peter; they could not be "inherited" by his successor.

This special authority, this jurisdiction over the whole Church, is claimed by the Bishops of Rome because they are the *successors* of Peter, who, they claim, was the first Bishop of Rome.

Was Peter ever Bishop of Rome? What is the evidence for this? We do know from Scripture that Paul went to Rome as a prisoner. Of that there is no doubt. But what about Peter? Fr. Bruno, in his *Catholic Belief*, p. 307, states that in the eleventh year after the ascension of our Lord, Peter "was the first to preach the Gospel in Rome". He quotes various authorities for this statement, but they are all from writers of the fourth and fifth centuries, so that what they record is certainly not contemporary evidence. Hundreds, no, thousands of other Roman Catholic writers have made the same sort of statement; but let me quote from the Abbé Duchesne's *Early History of the Church*. He writes, p. 41, "Whose hands had sown the Divine seed in this ground, i.e. in Rome, we shall never know. Conjectures, built upon foundations *too insecure to be sanctioned by history*, take the Apostle Peter to Rome during the first years of Claudius (A.D. 42). On p. 45 the Abbé writes, "About the time when St. Paul regained his liberty, St. Peter came to Rome. He had, perhaps, been there before; this is possible, *but it cannot be proved. We have no information whatever as to his apostolic work in Rome.*"

That is the conclusion of one of the most reliable historians that the Roman Church has produced. There is no contemporary evidence for the statement that Peter was the first Bishop of Rome. Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, A.D. 170, wrote that "Peter and Paul unitedly established the Church". This is corroborated by Irenæus, A.D. 190, by Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 200, and by several later writers. But evidence brought forward one hundred years after the event took place would not be accepted in any court to-day.

But granted that Peter was at one time Bishop of Rome, who succeeded him? Tertullian, writing about A.D. 200, states that Peter ordained Clement as his successor, while Irenæus, writing about A.D. 181, records that "the blessed apostles, i.e., Paul and Peter, having founded and built up the Church, delivered the episcopal office into the hands of Linus". There are four lists of the first Bishops of Rome extant, and of these not one agrees with the others in the names and orders of the first seven Bishops. When there is such confusion and division of opinion among Roman Catholics as to who succeeded

Peter, how can there be any certainty as to who was the rightful heir of all Peter's supposed authority and powers?

The claim made by Roman Catholics for the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome is based on Matthew xvi. 18, where Christ is recorded as saying, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church". What is the *rock* on which the Church was founded? Surely it is the confession which Peter had made: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". There were different opinions as to what the *Rock* really meant among the Early Fathers. The French Father Launoy, historian and theologian, studied the writings of eighty-five of the Early Fathers on this point, with the following result:

Forty-four Fathers affirmed that the Rock was Peter's confession.
Sixteen Fathers claimed that Christ was the foundation on which the Church was built.

Eight Fathers believed that the Church was built on *all* the apostles, and only

Seventeen regarded Peter as the Rock.

Chrysostom, in one of his sermons, said, "Christ did not say 'upon Peter', for he did not found his Church upon a man, but upon faith. What, therefore, means Upon this Rock? It means upon the confession contained in his words. He did not build his Church upon a man, but upon his faith." The great Origen also wrote, "Upon this confession of Peter the Church is built. This faith is the foundation of the Church."

Doctor Kenrick, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of St. Louis, U.S.A., at the Vatican Council, A.D. 1870, made this statement. "If we are to follow the greater number of the Fathers in this matter, then we must understand the Rock to mean the Faith professed by Peter. It is impossible to deduce from the words, Thou art Peter, a peremptory argument in proof of the supremacy of the Pope."

Not till A.D. 378 was the Bishop of Rome regarded as having jurisdiction and authority over the other Bishops of the Church. In A.D. 378, the emperor Gratian, a weakling, and less than twenty years of age, granted jurisdiction to the Bishop of Rome over the Bishops of the Western Church. But this jurisdiction was granted by an emperor; not by any Council of the Church.

To-day, the Bishop of Rome claims jurisdiction and authority over the whole Church. That claim was rejected by our Reformers of the sixteenth century. They stated in Article XXXVII that the "Bishop of Rome has no jurisdiction in this realm of England".

Poor Peter, how grieved he must be in Paradise over these false claims that have been made on his behalf! How pained he must be over the dissensions and divisions in the Church to-day!