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## CEPHAS AND CHRIST.

THE single authority of the Gospel according to St Matthew is but lightly esteemed by modern critics. His insistence upon the correspondence of events which he records with the precedents of ancient history and prophecy is the mark of an alien. Some of the sayings of Jesus, again, which he alone reports, are uncongenial to those whose Christ is not Jewish but human—if not also human and not divine. And others are reckoned to be just figments, illustrative only of the writer's interest in current developements of ecclesiastical order.

To this latter class the saying, *Thou art Peter, and on this Petra I will build my Ecclesia*, has at last been relegated.

Once—and for long enough—it was a vantage-ground, for which rival systems of Christian ecclesiasticism contended. It was warrant and refutation by turns for the authority which they claimed. By turns it was buttress and petard for their strongholds.

But now, on the one side at any rate, there are some to say that their opponents are in the right of it—and no matter.

At cum incerta volant caeloque examina ludunt  
 Contemnuntque favos et frigida tecta relinquunt,  
 Instabiles animos ludo prohibebis inani.  
 Nec magnus prohibere labor . . .  
 Hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta  
 Pulveris exigui iactu compressa quiescunt.

It cannot be authentic, because it is 'impossible to maintain that Jesus founded any distinct religious community'.<sup>1</sup> And so the interpretation of *this Rock* is merely an academic question. 'The old Protestant interpretation that by the "rock" is meant not Peter's person but his faith'<sup>2</sup> is certainly false, and may be abandoned *with safety*.<sup>3</sup> And even if the Roman Rock be that on which the Ecclesia shall be built, St Matthew is no master to dictate words, in which men must swear fealty to the Pope of Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Schmiel in *Enc. Biblica* col. 3105.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Bengel *ad loc.* Tute haec omnia dicuntur: nam quid haec ad Romam?

But such a classification of this saying is by no means certain. The terms employed are Jewish rather than Christian. The combination alone is new; and that is a legitimate advance upon previous usage. Jesus came to *call* the Jews; and if ever—not necessarily in this case—He used the Greek language, Ecclesia was the natural designation of those who responded and followed Him. That He should discriminate between the real and the nominal Ecclesia was inevitable, whether He rested upon His own experience or upon that of His predecessors. Not now for the first time many of the people felt no need of conversion to God, and only the remnant returned.

It is, indeed, a real difficulty that Jesus should speak of ‘*my Church*’. For the present it must suffice to urge that as the convener of a true assembly of Jehovah He might choose His way of asserting His right in it and over it. The Lord’s ownership is not thereby impaired any more than in the case of the Sovranty, which is ‘mine’ as well as God’s.<sup>1</sup> As Rabbi Jesus had His disciples, as Master His slaves, and as House-lord His household.<sup>2</sup> Such partial parallels are apparently impotent to affect the conviction which assumes that the Church is always the later Christian Church; but they may serve as a plea for suspense of an adverse judgement in the matter of the authenticity of the saying.

And if it be possibly authentic, it seems worth while to consider whether a third interpretation is not at once safer and more certain than either of those already indicated.

Augustine, at any rate, has no doubt at all:—

Christ is the Rock (*Petra*): Peter the Christian people . . . ‘Thou, therefore, art Peter (he says); and upon this Rock which thou hast confessed—upon this Rock which thou hast recognized, saying Thou art Christ the Son of the living God—I will build my Church’: that is, ‘upon myself the Son of the living God I will build my Church.’<sup>3</sup>

#### I. THE PEOPLE’S OPINIONS OF JESUS.

And Jesus went forth with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he was enquiring of his

<sup>1</sup> John xviii 36 and iii 3, 5. Compare 1 Cor. xv 24, 25, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. x 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Sermo lxxvi* 1.

disciples saying, Whom say men that I am? They said to him, Some say, John Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, He is one of the prophets.—Mark viii. 27 f.

By his choice of tenses St Mark seems to indicate that this enquiry is intended merely to lead up to its successor; and that both the first with the response given to it and the second are just the occasion and the setting of St Peter's declaration. 'He was enquiring . . . they said . . . he was enquiring . . . Peter says.'

According to St Luke,<sup>1</sup> who does not give the name of the place, Jesus had withdrawn from all His followers—professed disciples and expectant beneficiaries alike—in order that He might pray. This is a natural interpretation of the primitive narrative of St Mark, in which, after the interrogation and instruction of the disciples, the crowds are summoned to hear what fate the followers of the Nazarene prophet must face. The time had come when they must choose between God's Messiah and their own, between the Son of David and the Son of Man. Their hope, that Jesus was one who might be made King by violence, that the hosts of heaven should be summoned to the aid of a Galilean insurrection, had been crushed by the flight, which followed His most convincing miracle.<sup>2</sup> But His evident authority had emboldened and encouraged them to follow still, if haply it might somewhere be turned against other than the spiritual forces of wickedness which ravaged the Holy Land. This lingering, flickering hope Jesus was about to extinguish by word and deed. At the time they paid little heed to His words, and were therefore overwhelmed with consternation when they were accomplished. They had thought that this was He who should deliver Israel.<sup>3</sup> Not until He had actually suffered on the cross did they realize that His kingdom was not one of the kingdoms of this world, that the sovereignty which He proclaimed was not His but God's. And even when He had risen from the dead, and had satisfied them by many signs—here a little and there a little—that He was Himself, but no longer, as before He seemed to be, a man among men, they asked Him, 'Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'<sup>4</sup> In their own

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix 18.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxiv 21.

<sup>2</sup> Mark vi 30-46, John vi 1-15.

<sup>4</sup> Acts i 6.

persons they must share the sufferings of the Messiah, before their hopes could be purified and purged of selfishness and selfish patriotism. Suffering, each testified to his fellows, that the servant was not above his master but must help to fill up the deficiencies of the Messianic sufferings.

Long enough He had been with them : now it was expedient for them that He depart. Their faith, to which their presence testified, had grown deeper and stronger. They had been with Him in His temptations, and had been tested and tried therein themselves. Surely they had come to know Him better than the crowds, who only hoped to be healed from bodily infirmities. To none had He avowed Himself to be the Messiah. Devils had recognized Him ; and He had bidden them hold their peace. By deed and not by word He revealed Himself to be at once the Saviour and the way of Salvation. 'Men believe their eyes more than their ears,' as Seneca said. Plato and Aristotle and all the divergent crowd of sages drew more from the manners than from the words of Socrates. *Magnos viros non schola Epicuri sed contubernium fecit.* But of the disciples of Jesus only Peter knew Him and proclaimed Him as the Messiah. The rest were disillusioned. Even Peter seems to expect that the Recognition will lead to a sudden reversal of fortune—that Jesus will throw away His disguise, will bend the bow of the Son of David and slay the suitors who vex and oppress His Bride. There was indeed a *Peripeteia* bound up with this Recognition—not such as Peter expected, but one conformable to Aristotle's definition, 'a change by which a train of action produces the opposite of the effect intended.'<sup>1</sup>

The account which the disciples give of the opinions current among the crowds who still attend Him, or among mankind generally, so far as it has taken cognizance of Jesus, seems to be a summary of an earlier and fuller report submitted to Herod :

And Herod the king heard (for the name of him became notorious) and he *was saying*, 'John Baptist has risen from the dead and there-

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle *Poetics* xi. The best form of Recognition is coincident with a reversal of fortune. . . . The Recognition of persons combined with a reversal of fortune will produce either pity or fear ; and actions producing these effects are those which tragedy represents. (Butcher's translation.) So Peter expostulates with Jesus as if pitying Him, and the disciples follow Him fearing even before the *Peripeteia* is actually accomplished.

fore the powers are active in him': others said 'It is Elias': others 'A prophet like one of the prophets'. But Herod when he heard *was saying*, 'John whom I beheaded arose.'<sup>1</sup>

It may be that the present summary has been added to serve as a foil for Peter's insight. But the rest presumably shared one or other of the popular ideas of Jesus. And perhaps they departed justified rather than Peter. In any case it is in the manner of Jesus to elicit men's opinions and to expose their self-contradictions. He did not always employ the method of teaching indicated by the formula 'It was said to them of old . . . but I say to you'. Rather He inclined to use the Socratic method, and therein to reduce men to perplexity, in order that they might be moved to think out afresh their traditional creed. For Socrates

did not come forward with any counter-theories: he declared expressly that he had none to propose and that he was ignorant. He put questions to those who on their side professed to know and he invited answers from them. His mission, as he himself described it, was to scrutinize and expose false pretensions to knowledge. Without such scrutiny he declared life itself to be not worth living. He impugned the common and traditional creed not in the name of any competing doctrine but by putting questions on the familiar terms in which it was confidently enunciated and by making its defenders contradict themselves and feel the shame of their contradictions.<sup>2</sup>

To this description of the teaching of Socrates it must suffice here to add that he also anticipated death and refused to evade it.

*He is John Baptist.*

The theory that Jesus was John Baptist is ascribed definitely to Herod by St Mark (Mark vi 16), and St Matthew is content to follow him. St Luke, however, corrects the ascription, which is probably the result of a misunderstanding on the part of some receiver of the tradition. With better knowledge of the original, or perhaps of the character of the Herods, he says, unambiguously, 'Herod the tetrarch . . . was puzzled because it was said by some, "John has been raised . . ." and he said, "John I beheaded: who

<sup>1</sup> Mark vi 14-16.

<sup>2</sup> Grote *Plato* vol. i pp. 256 f.

is this concerning whom I hear these things?"<sup>1</sup> Other popular conjectures are irrelevant here. Perhaps they were added for the sake of completeness by the narrator. If they were reported to Herod, he took his stand upon facts as he knew them, and passed over, as a Jewish fancy with which he had little sympathy, the possibility of any return from the dead.

Whoever believed that Jesus was John Baptist might be misled by the mystery which hid his fate,<sup>2</sup> or take refuge in the thought that Jesus had received a portion of his spirit. In any case the belief indicates a certain narrowness of outlook and a neglect of the facts of past history as they are recorded in scripture.

*He is Elias.*

Others held that He was Elias. And they at least did not forget the past, which must repeat itself. A Jew untainted by foreign superstition, whose conscience was free from remorse for unjustifiable homicide, might shrink from the thought that a slain man could be raised, before the general resurrection, though all things be possible with God. But to such an one the fact that Elias did not die at all but was translated or removed by God, proved beyond all doubt that in due course he must reappear on earth. The greatest prophet is not exempt from the common lot of death.

This reappearance of Elijah was foretold by Malachi. By the mouth of His messenger God had said :

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant . . . Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And he shall turn<sup>3</sup> the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a ban.<sup>4</sup>

From the last of the prophets the chief of the Sages, Jesus ben Sira, inherited this tradition and enriched it. In the Hymn of the Fathers he recites the wondrous deeds of Elijah, and assigns to him not merely the function of Conversion described by

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix 7, 9.

<sup>2</sup> The Synoptic tradition gives prominence to the account of John's death and presumably attached importance to it.

<sup>3</sup> וְהָשִׁיב לִפְנֵי ה' לְכָל בְּנֵי אֲדָמָה.

<sup>4</sup> Mal. iii 23 f (iv 4 f).

Malachi, but also that of Restoration which belongs to the Servant of Jehovah pourtrayed by Isaiah :

Who was recorded for reproofs in their seasons  
 To pacify anger, before it brake forth into wrath,  
 To turn the heart of the father unto the son  
 And to restore the tribes of Jacob.<sup>1</sup>

The 'fathers' and 'children' of Malachi are presumably the past and present Israelites. If these are to be reconciled with those, they must be obedient to the law; for the lapses of their ancestors are forgotten and their sanctity assured by their antiquity. Or it may be a question of teachers and pupils. But 'the father' and 'the son' of ben Sira can only be God and Israel. For the Sage, therefore, this Elias who is to come has a greater part to play. He shall mediate between Jehovah and His adopted son, and further he shall by his mediation achieve the Restoration of those offenders who were punished by exile. And this latter function belongs, as has been said, to the Suffering Servant. It is written :

And he said unto me, Thou art my servant ; Israel, in whom I will be glorified. But I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and vanity : yet surely my judgement is with the Lord, and my recompense with my God. And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him : (for I am honourable in the eyes of the Lord, and my God is become my strength :) yea, he said, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel : I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Thus the messenger or forerunner of Jehovah is also His Servant—and there is no Messiah to come.

After the prophet the sage. After the sage the scribes. Such of the Scribes as still looked for Messiah taught that *Elias cometh first and restoreth all things*. This teaching is based on the prophecy of Malachi as it is interpreted by the Greek translator, who says in effect 'Read not, He shall turn again this to that, but, He shall *restore*.' But the Restoration for which they looked was, the prophet foretold, universal, and not only

<sup>1</sup> Ecclus. xlviii 10, cf. Luke i 17.



national. After the vision of the transfigured Jesus accompanied by Moses—the first and typical prophet—and Elias, the disciples propounded to their Master this doctrine of the Scribes as a problem.

And they *were asking* him and *saying*, ‘The Scribes say, “Elijah cometh first.” He answered and said to them, Elijah cometh first, that he may restore everything. And how is it written of the Son of Man? Is it not that he should suffer much and be crucified? But I say to you [—whatever the Scribes may say—] Elijah hath come and they did with him all that they would, as it is written of him.’

Here is fresh cause of perplexity. The four disciples seem to have discarded that part of the tradition which spoke of the Restoration of all things; for of this<sup>1</sup> they see no sign. Jesus reaffirms it and adds that Elias has come. How then—they might well ask—must the Son of Man suffer—who is this Son of Man? If John Baptist is Elias, why must he suffer? It would seem that Jesus accepted the identification of Elias with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. For, according to the history, Elijah was not maltreated by his enemies. Though he despaired of his life and entreated God to take it away, he was preserved until he had appointed his own successor and anointed Hazael and Jehu.<sup>2</sup> Then he was taken up into heaven for that he was exceeding zealous for the law.<sup>3</sup>

It may be that Herod and Herodias correspond to Jezebel and Ahab, and succeed in fulfilling the intentions of their prototypes. It may also be that men in exercise of their freewill have frustrated God’s plan for the time, or at least have hidden the superficial evidence of its success.

The extant authorities, from whom the Messianic Hope of this generation must be reconstructed, are fragmentary and discrepant. The vague figures of their dreams are apt to dissolve into one another. God was pleased to sum up all things in Christ, and His people had attempted to piece together His earlier messengers—all the more readily, because some of them were anonymous and others did not die.

<sup>1</sup> Peter still regards it as future after the final ascension of Jesus: Acts iii 21.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xix.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Macc. ii 58; 2 Kings ii.

*He is one of the Prophets.*

The expectation of a prophet like one of the prophets is based upon the promise given to Moses: 'I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.'<sup>1</sup>

Such was the authority of Moses that men hoped for this prophet in the height of their prosperity no less than in the depth of their despair. When the Hasmonaeans triumphed, 'the Jews and the priests were well pleased that Simon should be their leader and high-priest for ever, *until there should arise a faithful prophet.*'<sup>2</sup>

The crowds, who only needed a leader to embark upon another futile and fatal revolt against Rome, said to Jesus, 'What sign then doest thou, that we may see and believe thee? What workest thou? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert, as it is written, "Bread from heaven he gave them to eat." Jesus said therefore to them, "Verily, verily, I say to you, not Moses gave you the bread from heaven . . ."'<sup>3</sup>

And Christians like Peter and Stephen appealed to the same promise, joining hands with the Galilean peasants, with the guerrillas of Simon and with Philo the Alexandrine Jew. The promise was yoked with a warning against disobedience and also with a sign by which the prophet should be known.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, which shall speak a word presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken: the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him.

They desiderated then a faithful prophet who should do what Moses did, and some believed that they had found him in Jesus. In his reference to this form of the Hope Philo says:

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xviii 18: cf. *ib.* 15.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Macc. xiv 41: cf. *ib.* iv 44-46.

<sup>3</sup> John vi 30 f.

Since in all men there is planted a passion for knowledge of the future and by reason of this passion they turn to sacrifices and all forms of divination in the hope of discovering certainty thereby—but these are full of uncertainty and are always self-detected—; such means therefore Moses strenuously forbids them to follow. But he says that, if they are truly pious, they shall not go wanting knowledge of the future. No, suddenly appearing a prophet divinely inspired shall give oracles and say nothing of his own—for not even if he says can he comprehend it, if he be really possessed and rapt—but all his teaching shall pass through him as if another were prompting him. For the prophets are God's interpreters: he uses their organs to signify his will.<sup>1</sup>

*He is Jeremiah.*

St Matthew inserts a fourth opinion, which is perhaps a closer definition or a particular form of the third: 'Others said, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' The view that Jeremiah was the promised prophet like Moses is expounded in the Midrash. In a document incorporated in the Second Book of Maccabees it is told on the authority of 'the records' or 'the writing' how Jeremiah bade the tabernacle and the ark follow him to the mountain, whence Moses beheld God's heritage, and hid them there, until God should gather the People's ingathering.<sup>2</sup> Later in the body of the same book Judas relates to his followers a vision which he had seen:

And the vision of that *dream* was this: *He saw* Onias, him that was high priest, a noble and good man, reverend in bearing, yet gentle in manner and well-spoken, and exercised from a child in all points of virtue, with outstretched hands invoking *blessings* on the whole body of the Jews: thereupon *he saw* a man appear, of venerable age and exceeding glory, and wonderful and most majestic was the dignity around him: and Onias answered and said, This is the lover of the brethren, he who prayeth much for the people and the holy city, Jeremiah the prophet of God: and Jeremiah stretching forth his right hand delivered to Judas a sword of gold, and in giving it addressed *him* thus, Take the holy sword, a gift from God, wherewith thou shalt smite down the adversaries.

Finally, in illustration of this idea of the present activity and future return of Jeremiah the congener of Moses, one may quote

<sup>1</sup> *de Monarchia* i 9 (ii p. 221 f M).

<sup>2</sup> 2 Macc. ii 1-8.

a passage of Philo in which he ranks Jeremiah almost on a level with Moses. In his revelation of the mystery contained in the mystic rite of marriage<sup>1</sup> he quotes Jeremiah :

For though I was initiated into the great Mysteries in the School of Moses, nevertheless when I saw Jeremiah the prophet and realized that he was not only a mystic but also a competent Adept I did not hesitate to frequent him.<sup>2</sup>

But, as will appear later, the whole scene recalls—fulfils—a scene in the life of Jeremiah, which in itself justifies, if it did not suggest, the identification of Jesus with Jeremiah.

These then are the categories in which men have placed Jesus. But with this reply from His disciples He is not content, and He probes their minds until He elicits from Simon a definition which is capable of containing and including all the rest—provided always that it be taken wiselier than the speaker meant, like all prophetic utterances. For John, Elias, and the Prophet were certainly not Messiahs in the sense which the word conveyed to their ears. And on the other hand, Jesus was surely not merely—if at all—the Messiah, Son of David, for whom Simon looked and was to look.<sup>3</sup>

## II. PETER'S CONFESSION OF HIM.

And he was enquiring of them, 'But ye—whom say ye that I am?' Peter answers and says to him, 'Thou art the Messiah.' And he rebuked them that to none they should say it of him.

Alone of all the Twelve, Simon confesses that this Jesus is the Messiah. In the Johannine account he is made to say, when the Twelve are asked if they also will depart, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of the life of the world to come. And *we* have believed and known that *thou art the Holy One of God.*'<sup>4</sup> But the disciple, whom Jesus loved, had seen the other Apostles rise to share the faith of Peter: his record anticipates the general enlightenment consequent either upon this declaration or upon the Resurrection. As yet only Peter can say, 'Thou art the Christ.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare Eph. v 32.

<sup>2</sup> Philo *de Cherub.* § 14 (i p. 147 f M).

<sup>3</sup> John xviii 10 f.

<sup>4</sup> John vi 68.

<sup>5</sup> This point is brought out very clearly in St Matthew's report of our Lord's response.

Of the four reports of this confession St Mark's is the shortest. St Luke has the normal phrase, 'The Christ of God,' that is, 'the Lord's Anointed'. It is natural to suppose that the discrepancy is due rather to abbreviation than to amplification of the original. The curt brevity of St Mark can hardly arise from a reverential avoidance of the Holy Name; for the other three evade successfully the technical offence of naming Jehovah. It is rather appropriate to a watchword or symbol, in which is retained all that is essential and nothing else.<sup>1</sup> Christ soon became a proper name.

But St Matthew gives a still fuller phrase: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Some support for this addition might be derived from the report of St John. But whether it be really part of the original utterance of St Peter or not, it recalls a Scripture which might well have been coupled with this inspired word.

By the mouth of the prophet Hosea God reaffirmed the promise, which He had made to Abraham, and said, 'It shall come to pass that, in the place where it was said to them, Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together and they shall appoint themselves one head and shall go up from the land'; and again, 'Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their king.'

Jesus and His disciples were travelling through the district of Caesarea Philippi. The town was built in honour of Tiberius Caesar by Philip, the son of Herod the Great, on the site of a village which had been named Paneas for the great god Pan. It was a place where everything cried aloud to the Jews, that they were not the people of Jehovah, that for their apostasy they had been delivered to other overlords. The living God had left them to the dead idols and to mortal kings.

And here Peter is enabled to designate the head of this company as the Messiah, whom the scribes called the Son of David, and whose presence is a pledge that God no longer averts His face from them. Great Pan is dead: Herod and Caesar are passing away. As in the ancient days the Living God, for whom the soul of the Pious

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Κύριος Ἰησοῦς* of St Paul.

thirsted, is among them. Twelve men out of the tribes of Israel have been taken—for every tribe a man.<sup>1</sup> And one of them is inspired to assert that he of whom the prophets had spoken is come. Doubtless his prophetic insight is as fitful as that of John Baptist; but it is real insight, and not a superficial, facile guess. In the homeless outcast, whose followers are deserting him for want of more loaves and fishes, Peter has found once more, and now more surely, the Christ, to whom his brother led him long ago. His fellows might acquiesce in Hillel's decision—Israel has no Messiah to look for, because they have already eaten him in the days of Hezekiah<sup>2</sup>—and take refuge in one or other of the popular theories with which they were familiar. Peter follows in the steps of John Baptist and plays the part which tradition assigned to Elias: he recognizes the Messiah as such, who else was unconscious of His own vocation. The reward of Peter and of those who followed his lead was that they should learn what Messiah must suffer.

The secret which was thus revealed through Peter must not be divulged as yet. His faith was not yet perfected by temptation, nor could it receive as yet its final corroboration. The seed must still be sown in weakness and in secrecy.

### III. THE REPLY OF JESUS TO SIMON'S CONFESION.

Jesus answering said to him, Blessed art thou, Simon bar Jona; for flesh and blood did not reveal to thee, but my father which is in heaven. Moreover I also say to thee, Thou art *Peter*, and on this *Petra* I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou loose upon earth shall be loosed in heaven.

The concluding promise that his binding and loosing shall be ratified by God is given elsewhere to others also.<sup>3</sup> In neither case does the present context of the saying affect the natural meaning of the words as spoken by a Jewish Rabbi. *To bind* is *to forbid*: *to loose* is *to permit*. Whoever performed these chief

<sup>1</sup> Jos. iii 10 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Sanhedrin* 99a.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xviii 18.

functions of the spiritual directors of the time in accordance with the Will as revealed in Scripture, or thence deduced, hoped with some show of reason that his decision would be valid. If it is valid it must be confirmed by God.

This promise then is merely a certificate that so-and-so is a competent scribe. Its fitness to the circumstances of Peter's declaration may be gauged by the fact that he proceeds to bind the Messiah from the suffering which God had ordained for Him.

The penultimate promise of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven need not necessarily imply more. The Kingdom of Heaven is, roughly speaking, equivalent to Eternal Life; and this from the human point of view is—or is attained by—Knowledge. The Scribes or Lawyers of the Jews had taken the key of Knowledge—how much more truly the Scribes of the Nazarenes.

But both this sentence and this promise would be far more fitly addressed to Jesus the Messiah by Jehovah.

Remains the impotent gates of Hell—my Church—building—this Rock and Rock—bar Jona and the rest.

#### A. *Bar Jona.*

It is a small point that Simon is here styled *son of Jona* and not *son of John*. But the difference is not necessarily insignificant. Simon's own name had been changed to Cephas or Peter by way of encouragement; and now his patronymic is changed by way of warning.

For the sake of orientation and the acquisition of the right view of such matters it will be well to heed what Philo says 'Concerning the Change of Names'. In the tract which bears this title he describes the fate of one who scoffed at such trivialities, and indicates his own adhesion to the scriptural theory of their importance.

Lately (he says) I heard of a godless and impious man mocking and making game of symbolism who dared to say, 'Great indeed and excessive are the boons which Moses says are offered by the Ruler of the Universe! The addition of an A or an R to the name!'

This scoffer soon afterwards came to be hanged for a slight and trivial cause—and so he deserved to die. When God changed Abram's name He said in effect, 'For what cause dost thou, Abram, *lofty father*, seek out the quires and circuits of the stars,

and hast thou leaped so far from earth up to aether?' Such nature-study is fruitless if it bring no gain of virtue. The change of name imports desertion of physiology for ethical philosophy: the meteorologist becomes Abraham, the *father of an elect sound*. Sara *my authority* becomes Sarra, *princess*. Jacob *supplanter* becomes Israel, *man seeing God*. But Jacob is still called Jacob and not Israel; for he is the practiser of virtue, and his new name comes not from God Himself but from God's Word. Isaac, the second of the three originators of the Race, retains his name intact. But Joseph is surnamed Psonthomphanèth by the king of the country: *Addition* becomes *Mouth-judging-in answer*. And his brother Benjamin *Son of Days* is called by his mother *Son of my pain*—as it is written, Rachel died in child-bed. But when God bestows a change of name it is really a symbolic reformation of character. Such things—letters, syllables, names—are tokens of powers, small of great, material of real, apparent of secret; and the powers in good dogmas, in true and pure thoughts, in betterments of soul, are tested and tried.

As is the mother so is the daughter. The sequel shews that Simon was ready to do what Jonah the prophet did, and is therefore fitly called the son of Jonah. It is written, 'The word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai saying, Arise go to Nineveh that great city, and cry against it. . . . But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.'

Jerusalem was as dangerous to Jesus and His followers as ever Nineveh was to Jonah. But in both the summons to repentance must be sounded, though death await God's herald. Nineveh was a great city of three days' journey; and on His way to Jerusalem Jesus said, 'To-day and to-morrow I journey and on the third day I am perfected.' Indeed, Jesus Himself draws out the parallel, saying, 'The Men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgement with this generation and condemn it; for they turned to the proclamation of Jonah, and behold more than Jonah here.' The daughter of Zion shall be summoned to God's judgement seat along with the types of wickedness which she contemned. So it is written in the book of the prophet Ezekiel, 'As I live, saith the Lord, Sodom thy sister hath not done . . . as thou hast done. Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins: but



thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters by all thine abominations, which thou hast done . . . they are more righteous than thou ; yea, be thou also confounded and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters.'

### B. *The Blessing of Simon.*

Son of Jonah, or son of John, Simon is declared blessed or happy, as being the recipient of a direct revelation from God. So of the disciples, as distinguished from those without, Jesus says, 'Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.'<sup>1</sup> And again, 'I give thanks to thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from wise and prudent and revealed them to babes.'<sup>2</sup> The Father alone knows, recognizes the Son. If Peter therefore says, Thou art the Christ, his recognition is not his own but inspired. So God's rule holds true that secrets are revealed to the humble.<sup>3</sup> Like them, like<sup>4</sup> the patriarchs,<sup>4</sup> and like Paul, Peter was pupil and disciple of none. Humanly speaking he was self-taught, which is to say that he was taught of God, had been schooled by the Sovranty of Heaven. He could say with Homer's bard :

Self-learned am I and in my heart God placed all ways of song.

No date is affixed to the revelation alleged to have been granted to Simon. The reference may well be to the time of his first acquaintance with Jesus. Andrew may have been mediator of it—for God works with human instruments as His instruments. 'Flesh and blood' intervened perhaps. It is written that Andrew brought him to Jesus, having said, 'We have found the Messiah.' But it is written again, 'No man can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him.'<sup>5</sup> *Qui facit per alium facit per se.*

### C. *And I moreover say to thee.*

God said to Simon by the mouth of Andrew or another, This Jesus is the Messiah. That is the revelation whenever

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii 16 = Luke x 23.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xi 25 = Luke x 21 ; compare Dan. ii 23.

<sup>3</sup> Ecclus. iii 19.

<sup>4</sup> Philo *de Abrahamo* ii p. 2 M.

<sup>5</sup> Contrast with this the saying, 'I, if I be lifted out of the earth, will draw all men unto me.'

and however made. To this revelation Jesus—if the record be trustworthy—appends a saying of his own—and *I moreover to thee say* . . .

The combination of particles *καὶ δέ* and *moreover* is not common in the historical books of the New Testament,<sup>1</sup> and is not above suspicion.<sup>2</sup> There is Latin and Syriac authority for the omission of *δέ*; and probably the combination is due to an untimely reminiscence of the familiar phrase *But I say to you* (*ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν*), which introduces our Lord's corrections of previous revelations. Otherwise *Κ* might have come from the preceding *Ι* *Κ*.

But even so, the phrase *and I to thee say that thou art* . . . is an unnatural one. It is fitting that if a change of speakers be intended, *ἐγὼ* should be inserted for emphasis. But it is strange that *σοι* should have so prominent a place, if the person addressed is still Simon the same as before. Perhaps *ΚΕΓΩ* *COI* has been evolved out of *ΛΕΓΩ* *CYEI*, and perhaps *ΛΕΓΩ* should be written *ΛΕΓΩ*. If this be so, the content of God's revelation to Simon has been disguised as a saying of Jesus; and, without appealing to any presumed Aramaic original, one may, with some show of reason, restore

Blessed art thou Simon son of Jona (though thou be); for not flesh and blood but my heavenly father revealed to thee, saying, 'Thou art Peter and on this *Petra* I will build my Church.'

#### D. *Thou art Peter.*

According to St John it was Jesus Himself who conferred the name Peter or Cephas upon Simon. But according to St John Jesus affirmed that He spoke only what He heard from the Father,<sup>3</sup> as became a faithful prophet. And further it is to be noted that in cases of change of name the formula *thou art* indicates rather that which is to be discarded than that which is conferred.<sup>4</sup> One almost expects an authoritative annulment of the earlier christening of Simon—'Thou art Peter: thou shalt be called bar Jona, or worse.' But as yet Peter is not degraded

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x 18, xvi 18; John vi 51, xv 27; Acts iii 24, xxii 29.

<sup>2</sup> In Matt. x 18 *καὶ ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνας δὲ καὶ βασιλεῖς ἀχθήσῃς, τε* seems to be an obvious emendation of *δέ*, if it be retained at all.

<sup>3</sup> John xvii 8.

<sup>4</sup> John i 42 *σὺ εἶ Σίμων ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου· σὺ κληθήσῃ Κηφᾶς.*

from the position, which his name attests. Only there is a note of sad irony—perhaps a despairing challenge—in the words *Thou art Peter*. Later, on the brink of his repudiation of Jesus, it is said :

Simon, Simon—Peter no more—behold Satan hath requisitioned you to sift you as wheat : but I prayed for thee that thy faith should not fail . . . and do thou—since fail it must for a season—turn some time and confirm thy brethren.<sup>1</sup>

St John's account of the gift of a new name to Simon shews that the word used then was not the Greek *Petros* but the Aramaic *Cephas*. So here the collocation of *shall prevail over* indicates an original Aramaic saying in which there was a play upon the senses of the root KPH.

The Hebrew has no word corresponding in sound and sense to *Cepha* ; but the cognate *Cephim* is found once in the prophecies of Jeremiah and once in the Book of Job.

Thus saith the Lord, The whole land shall be a desolation . . . The whole city fleeth for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen ; they go into the thickets and climb up *upon the rocks*<sup>2</sup> : every city is forsaken, and not a man dwelleth therein.<sup>3</sup>

And of the former estate of his triumphant enemies Job says :

They are driven forth from the midst . . . in the clefts of the valleys they must dwell in holes of the earth and *of the rocks*.<sup>4</sup>

The prophecy of Jeremiah is about to be accomplished, and soon must Jesus pass through the experience of Job :

Now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I disdained to set with the dogs of my flock<sup>5</sup> . . . And now I am become their song, yea, I am a byword unto them. They abhor me, and stand aloof from me, and spare not to spit in my face.<sup>6</sup>

The root, then, has appropriate associations, and is fitted to denote the proper foundation for a community, which must be called out from the people. *The rocks* are the antithesis of the city, the home of outcasts and the refuge of those who flee from

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii 31 f.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. iv 27, 29.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Mark vii 27.

<sup>2</sup> LXX ἐν τὰς πέτρας ἀπέβησαν.

<sup>4</sup> Job xxx 5 f.

<sup>6</sup> Job xxx 1, 9 f ; compare Matt. xxvi 67.

doom—as it is said, ‘Then let them which are in Judaea flee unto the hills.’<sup>1</sup>

But—rightly or wrongly—primitive exegesis would not rest content with the associations of the cognate word, whose meaning is identical with that of the word actually employed. Puerile as the reasoning may seem to modern ears similarity of sound, despite dissimilarity of sense, justifies the adducing of extraneous helps to interpretation. In this particular case there is the verb *Caphaph* to bend or to be bent, and its pendant *Caph* hand, which naturally present themselves and offer their services for the elucidation of this mystery. *Cephas*, the Rock, may chance to become one of the *Cephoophim*, ‘them that are bowed down,’ whom God raises up.<sup>2</sup> And again *Cephas*, the Rock, may be delivered *b<sup>o</sup> Caph*, into the hand, of his enemies; as it is written:

I have forsaken mine house, I have cast off mine heritage, I have given the dearly beloved of my soul *into the hand of her enemies.*<sup>3</sup>

The actual word *Cepha* is not common in the oldest Targums in the sense of Rock. But the Targum of Onkelos employs it in a very prominent and important passage as the equivalent of the *Sēla<sup>o</sup>*, or Rock, from which Moses drew water for the children of Israel.<sup>4</sup> It is in reference to this Rock that St Paul says they drank of the spiritual rock following and the Rock was the Christ. Similarly, in the Jerusalem Targum of the Song of Moses, *Sela<sup>o</sup>*, the Rock whence God fed His people with honey,<sup>5</sup> is *Cepha*. And *Cepha* stands for *Sela<sup>o</sup>* in such passages as: ‘the *Rocks* are a refuge for the conies’<sup>6</sup>—‘I will place my foot upon *the rock*’<sup>7</sup>—‘a man shall be . . . as the shadow of a great *rock* in a weary land.’<sup>8</sup> But when *Sela<sup>o</sup>* is used figuratively of God, it is not represented by *Cepha* in the Targums; nor yet is its frequent companion *Šūr*, whether it be used literally or metaphorically.

On the other hand *Cepha* is used of a precious stone in the Targum of Proverbs<sup>9</sup>, and this sense of *stone* seems to predominate in Palestinian Aramaic.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mark xiii 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cxlv 14.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. xii 7.

<sup>4</sup> Num. xx 8, 10, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Deut. xxxii 13.

<sup>6</sup> Ps. civ 18.

<sup>7</sup> Ps. xl 3.

<sup>8</sup> Is. xxxii 2.

<sup>9</sup> Prov. xvii 8.

<sup>10</sup> So e.g. in the Palestinian Syriac Lectionary (edited by Dr A. S. Lewis), Gen. ii 12 אבן השדה = *ḥafra* = *ḥafra*, Deut. xiii 10 אבן = *ḥafra* = *ḥafra*. Schultess *Lexicon Syrio-Palaestinum* sub voc. *Lapis* (λίθος, perraro πέτρα).

In spite of this evidence it is reasonable to attach importance to the Greek rendering of St Matthew, and to be guided thereby in the search for a Scriptural antecedent to this *Petros—Petra*. Thus one arrives at the word *Şūr*, which satisfies all our requirements.

In the first place *Şūr* signifies *Rock* or *Hill*; as it is written :

From from the tops of *the rocks* I see him,  
And from the hills behold him.  
Lo! a people dwelling alone  
And not accounting itself as one of the nations.<sup>1</sup>

Here the congregation of Israel may fitly be described as an *Ecclesia*—a body called out from the nations of the world. Rabbinic exegesis connects *the rocks* with Israel rather than with the spectator. 'Under *rocks* the Fathers are to be understood: as it says, Hear ye, O mountains, the controversy of the Eternal.'<sup>2</sup> And a parable is added :

When God in the beginning wished to found the world he found no foundation until the Fathers came into being. Like a King that would build a city . . . who found at last a great Rock.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, *Şūr* is not only a name of God—as it is written, *the Rock his ways are perfect*,<sup>4</sup> and again, *who is a Rock except our God*<sup>5</sup>—but also the name of a prince of Midian,<sup>6</sup> and of a Gibeonite.<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, on the analogy of the Scripture, *Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful*, *Şūr* is transferred to Abraham, the putative father of Israel, as it is written :

Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the Rock whence ye were hewn . . . look unto Abraham your father . . . for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him, and made him many.<sup>8</sup>

Lastly, while *Şūr* is never rendered by *Cepha* in the Targums, its proper equivalent is the assonant *Tāqīph*, the Strong One, when it is used as a proper name of God.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Num. xxiii 9.

<sup>2</sup> Mic. vi 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Schemoth R. Par. xv* (Wünsche p. 107).

<sup>4</sup> Deut. xxxii 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. xviii 32.

<sup>6</sup> Num. xxv 15, &c.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Chron. viii 30, ix 36.

<sup>8</sup> Is. li 1 ff.

<sup>9</sup> See (e.g.) Targum of Onkelos Deut. xxxii. The Septuagint and Vulgate render *Şūr* in such cases by *God*.

E. *And on this Rock.*

The use of the demonstrative adjective *this* indicates that the Rock on which the Ecclesia shall be built is some present Rock. Only the eyewitnesses of the scene can ever have known certainly what it was, or have guessed with any degree of confidence at the speaker's meaning. For only they saw to whom or to what the finger of Jesus pointed at the time.

In accordance with the Parable of the Two Houses some firm foundation must be intended, which shall stand in the time of temptation and distress. Or, if the imagery of that Parable is to be adapted to suit its employment in other connexions, this Rock must be that on which the foundation rests. Indeed, it does not seem impossible that St Luke's modifications of it may have arisen from his knowledge of a current identification of the foundation with the Apostles,<sup>1</sup> and the rock with Christ himself.

There is always a tendency to assume that the same figures have always the same significance in Scripture.<sup>2</sup> And one may reasonably suppose that St Luke, if he held this view, and Augustine, who certainly held it, would have agreed that St Paul's dictum, *The Rock was Christ*, was ample warrant for it. But there is a certain simplicity about the Augustinian view, *I will build upon myself*, which may be partly responsible for its present neglect.

In regard to the two interpretations which appear to hold the field, it would be difficult to add anything to the criticisms which the champions of either have heaped upon the other. But it does not seem unfair to say that a form of words is an inadequate base for the Ecclesia, and that the faith of Simon is even now more like a reed than a rock. On the other hand, the only solid piece of evidence which favours the Roman view is the fact that immediately afterwards Peter is described as a stumbling-block to Jesus. From this it is a fair inference that Peter is in some sort a *Petra*, if only a rock of offence. But this being so, the

<sup>1</sup> Eph. ii 20; Apoc. xxi 14.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Cyprian *Test.* ii 16 (Quod et idem lapis dictus est) 'Hic est lapis in Genesi quem ponit Iacob ad caput suum . . . lapis in Exodo super quem sedit Moyses . . . lapis quo David frontem Goliae percussit . . . lapis quem . . . statuit Samuel.' Before these *historiae* he cites Is. xxviii 16, Ps. cxvii 22 f, Zach. iii 8, Deut. xxvii 8, Jos. xxiv 26, to prove his thesis.

saying might more fitly be interpreted thus: And against this rock—this embodiment of Satan as it is soon seen to be—I will build my church as a man builds siegeworks against a rebel town.<sup>1</sup>

A fourth explanation may be hazarded. It is one which would be more acceptable in the first than in the twentieth century of this era. Six days' journey off there was the Mountain of the Transfiguration. For a caravan to reach it—and to reach the side whence it could be climbed—may well have called for devious wanderings, which would account for much of the distance implied. Perhaps it was not even the objective of the consequent march. In any case it does not seem to be incredible that *this Rock* was the peak of this mountain near and far enough to impress the spectator with a sense of obvious sanctity. Gerizim or Zion or Tabor—one of the everlasting hills—is the fit site for the worship of Jehovah. There on the summit, guarded on this side by spurs and scree and scars, the chosen witnesses of the transient Glory may well have thought that Jesus began to build or rebuild the immaterial Church.

But this Church, whose Service shall be rational and spiritual, can hardly be built upon a rock of this creation. If Jesus is speaking and speaking for Himself, *this rock* must be Jehovah: if Jehovah be speaking—though by His mouthpiece—Jesus, as the Christ, must be *this rock*. Augustine—a Daniel come to judgement—is able to identify builder and foundation. But his interpretation has merits which are independent of this confusion of thought (as moderns would reckon it). *This rock, my church*, and the introductory formula, *and I moreover to thee say*, unite to plead against the infallibility and impeccability of the received Greek text. *This rock* and *my church* suggest that the real speaker must be Jehovah, though Jesus be His interpreter.

After all this is only translation—Greek. *And* here may stand for *but* and connect contrasted things. In such a case the second thing is rightly placed—for the sake of the requisite emphasis—immediately after the conjunction. It is as if one should say: Thou art Petros (Art thou Petros). But on this Petra (on the true Petra) will I build my Church. Other foundation can no man lay save that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> To whom

<sup>1</sup> Compare (e. g.) Deut. xx 20 οἰκοδομήσεις χαρακώσιν ἐπὶ τῆν πόλιν = בניית מצור על-העיר.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iii 11.

approaching, a living Stone by men rejected, but with God elect; precious; ye also as living stones are being built, a spiritual house, into a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it is contained in Scripture:

Lo, I place in Zion a stone elect, head of the corner, precious, and he that believeth thereon shall not be ashamed.

To you, then, the preciousness who believe; but to unbelievers, Stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner, and stone of stumbling and Rock of offence: they stumble and disobey the word.

Of the rock, whence the ancient Ecclesia was nourished, Philo said:

Now these things—prudence, temperance and piety—are truly food of the soul capable of sucking, as the Lawgiver says, Honey from rock and oil from solid rock. He indicates God's wisdom as the solid and undivided rock, which is nurturer and fosterer and nursing-mother of them that aspire to immortal life. . . . Elsewhere he calls this rock Manna, the Divine Logos, eldest of things that are.<sup>2</sup>

St Paul's proposition, 'Now the Rock was the Messiah,' is rather an axiom accepted by Philosopher and Pharisee at Alexandria and in Palestine.

The difficulty is that, as the text stands, one is thus compelled to identify the Builder and the Rock.

### *I will build my Church.*

Confronted by the veil of the *Greek* text, the reader must grope blindly after the interpretation of these Sayings. We see the enigma dimly and darkly as in an ancient mirror. Already an emendation of the intermediary has been suggested which affects the prefatory formula and redeems this, else suspicious, phrase *my church*.

But the unusual combination of particles is perhaps less impressive; and an emendation of the latter suspect may prove a more attractive road to the same conclusion.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. ii 4-8.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xxxii 13 וינקחו רבש מסלע ושמן מחלמיש צור and he made him suck honey out of the crag and oil from the flint of rock. Philo *Quod det. pot.* xxxi I p. 213 M, LXX ἐθήλασαν μέλι ἐκ πέτρας καὶ ἔλαιον ἐκ στερεῆς πέτρας.



The order of words in the Origenian text, which is followed by modern editors, corresponds exactly to the English order: *I will build my church*—οικοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. This order is almost as natural in Hellenistic Greek as in English. The genitive of the possessive pronoun precedes the word upon which it depends, being the equivalent of a possessive adjective.<sup>1</sup> If this be the true form of the original Greek version of the saying, it might be suggested that the genitive ΜΟΥ was a corruption of the dative ΜΟΙ; but the pronoun could not be replaced by a noun.

But the Codex Bezae, which often receives support from pre-Origenian authorities, reads *the church of me*, τὴν ἐκκλησίαν μου. And if this reading be preferred, ΜΟΥ might well be derived from ΚΟΥ=κυρίου of the Lord. At any rate this is the proper place for ΜΟΥ in translation-Greek. In Aramaic the pronoun could not stand before its noun unless it were in the dative instead of the genitive case. And if one can recover tentatively the original language it is a reasonable conjecture that *my church*, ܘܠܗܐ or the like, is really a corruption of ܘܠܗܐ Church of Jehovah.

Read, then, either :

My father . . . revealed to thee saying ' . . . On this rock will I build my church ' ;

or :

And I say (but I say) 'On this rock will I build the Church of Jehovah'.

If, however, neither emendation be accepted, one may adduce the fact that the person or personality of a prophet who speaks in the name of Jehovah is apt to disappear, leaving God and His people face to face. The speech of St Stephen, which deals with the question of the temple, supplies an example: 'As the prophet says, Heaven is *my* throne and earth *my* feet's footstool.' Read in the light of this, the Greek text has the sense secured by the former of the proposed new readings: God is the builder of His own church, and Christ is this Rock.

The word *Ecclesia* is, being anatomized, a *Calling-out*. And

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii 24 ὅστις ἀκούει μου τοὺς λόγους, 26 πᾶς ὁ ἀκούων μου τοὺς λόγους : viii 8 ἵνα μου ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην εἰσέλθῃς : xii 50 αὐτός μου ἀδελφός : xvii 15 ἐλέησόν μου τὸν υἱόν : xxiv 48 χρονίζει μου ὁ κύριος.

so it was not often used in the Septuagint to describe the Congregation of Israel. But it does occur as a rendering of *Qahal* in the Greek version of Deuteronomy, once in the context of the promise of the Prophet,<sup>1</sup> and once at the beginning of a list of persons proscribed from entering *the Assembly of Jehovah*.<sup>2</sup> So far as sound goes—and the seventy translators were not averse from preserving, if possible, that part of a word's virtue—it is the natural equivalent to adopt.<sup>3</sup> But it suggested the idea of a righteous remnant, called out from the general assembly, as the sheep from the fold in the parable.<sup>4</sup>

When the prophets had established the doctrine of Election and delivered it to the Pharisees the word came by its own, uniting as it did in itself the old and the new conceptions of God's People.

*Ecclesia*, then, is the *Qahal*, which consists of the Chosen People, and belongs to Jehovah.

Familiarity has dulled the edge of the collocation *build a church*. Apart from the appropriation of the word *church* to a material handmade structure (albeit of the new order) the metaphor of building is established and accepted. St Paul uses it as moderns speak of edification: 'He that prophesies builds the church.'<sup>5</sup> For this use there is ample precedent.

*Banah*, to build or to rebuild, is used figuratively of the establishment and continuance of a household in the Old Testament generally, and by Jeremiah in reference to the restoration of Israel after the exile. The latter use is more obviously a possible source of this present phrase. Thus it is written, 'Again will I build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel.'<sup>6</sup>

But the former use must also be taken into account, though it requires that the Assembly be regarded as, in some sort, a House or Temple.

It is an easy transition from the *Qahal* to the *Haikal*,

<sup>1</sup> xviii 16.

<sup>2</sup> xxiii 1.

<sup>3</sup> The Curetonian Syriac has ܩܗܠ here and in Matt. viii 17, where the Sinaitic has ܩܗܠܘܢ. If the later word correspond to בְּנֵי־הָעָם, it may be noted that this is equivalent to קהל by Gematria: 20 + 50 + 60 + 5 = 100 + 5 + 30 = 135. An ִיהוּ unlike a קהל can belong to a man such as Dathan, Abiram, and Job.

<sup>4</sup> John x 3 τὰ ἴδια πρόβατα φωνεῖ κατ' ὄνομα καὶ ἐξάγει αὐτά.

<sup>5</sup> I Cor. xiv 4.

<sup>6</sup> Jer. xxxi 4 οἰκοδομήσω σε καὶ οἰκοδομηθήσῃ.

from the Assembly to the Temple. The Hebrew words are not equivalent by the later Gematria, which adheres to the numerical value of letters. But the sound of the letter Qoph is not easily distinguished from that of Kaph; and the transposition might be the unconscious achievement of the most careful scribe. To build a Temple is the function of Messiah, if he be Son of David. And the new Temple, which shall surpass the Temple of Solomon, Son of David, is in no wise a temple made with hands, but such as is worthy of Jehovah.

The *Qahal* is the true *Haikal* of God. Is it only at Jerusalem that men may worship Him? Then, since no temple may be built elsewhere—save in Egypt, the Jews of the Dispersion must choose between substitutes and a suspension of the Worship. So the Pharisees taught that God was present in the Synagogue as in the Temple. And Paul the Pharisee wrote to those whom he had won over to the Judaism of the Nazarenes from the heatheness of Corinth, that they should not attempt a combination of the rival religions which they had embraced in succession. 'For we are the temple (NAOC) of the living God: as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk therein and I will be their God and they shall be my People (AAOC); and separate yourselves, saith Jehovah, and touch not that which is unclean and I will receive you".'

The Assembly is the rational Temple, and must therefore be built. If it is to endure, then according to the parable of the two houses, it must be built upon the rock, which either is or supports its foundation.

For the prophets and the Pharisees, with whom were the Nazarenes, the Temple at Jerusalem was superseded, before it was destroyed. Jesus saith to the woman of Samaria, Believe me that the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know: for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers.

The central sanctuary had served its purpose in the war waged against idolatry. But in Galilee and in the Dispersion the Synagogue was the necessary Tabernacle of Jehovah.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

It remains to ask how and of whom is it said, 'The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it'? The last word is ambiguous: it may refer either to the Rock or to the Ecclesia. If *this Rock* be distinguished from *Simon the Rock*, it becomes easier to regard it as the heir of this promise rather than the Ecclesia.

The gates of Hades or Sheol stand for the power of death. Readily they open to all comers; but none may go out.

Facilis descensus Averni:

Noctes atque dies patet atri ianua Ditis;

Sed revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras,

Hoc opus, hic labor est.

Hezekiah, whom some—long after—pronounced to have been Messiah, said, when he lay dying as he thought, 'In the tranquillity of my days I shall go into the gates of Sheol.'<sup>1</sup> For him there was little hope of any resurrection, general or particular. But the Sage who wrote in the name of Solomon found faith to say, 'Thou hast authority over life and death: and thou leadest down into the gates of Hades, and thou leadest up.'<sup>2</sup>

Though the Rock pass in through the inexorable portal, it is written, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.' To Jesus Christ the gates of Death opened in fear, and the warders of Hades saw Him and shuddered.<sup>3</sup> He then, who, according to Scripture, must suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, the crucified and risen Messiah, is the true Rock upon whom the Church of God shall be built, and against whom the gates of Hell shall not prevail.

'In parables'—Justin said in his controversy with Trypho—'the Christ was proclaimed Stone and Rock through the prophets.'<sup>4</sup> The word *Cepha* covers and contains both Rock and Stone. And there is an echo of *Cepha* in this promise, *the gates of Hades shall not conquer it*. For the Greek word *κατισχύουσιν*, *shall conquer*, is that which the Septuagint uses to

<sup>1</sup> Is. xxxviii 10.

<sup>3</sup> Job xxxviii 17 LXX.

<sup>2</sup> Sap. xvi 13.

<sup>4</sup> Justin *Dial. c. Tryph.* § 113.

render the Hebrew *ḥzq*.<sup>1</sup> And the Aramaic equivalent is furnished by Onkelos, who uses *Tqph*.

This echo would seem to require the identification of the ambiguous *αἰτῆς*, *it*, with *this Rock*; and to endorse the present connexion of the verses as original.

Or if the mechanical accumulation of evidence from the Septuagint and the Targum of Onkelos be unacceptable, there is *Caphah*, a still more faithful echo of *Cepha*, which might well have been used in the sense of *conquer* by one acquainted with the oral Targums or the language of the Rabbis.

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<sup>1</sup> The simple verb *λαχύειν* is more common because the conservation of the original sound is not obscured by the prefix.