

## THE ROCK ON WHICH THE CHURCH WAS BUILT.

MATTH. xvi. 18.

JESUS had asked his disciples, for the opinion of men concerning himself. "And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias (Elijah); and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say *ye* that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say *also* unto thee, That thou *art* Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church," etc.

The doctrine or confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; is the rock on which the Church is built: *i. e.*, Jesus, the Christ, is that rock.

There is a distinction between *petra* and *petros*. The former signifies a rock, whether peaked or ridged: the latter, a piece of rock, a stone. *Liddell & Scott*. In his *Crit. Sac.* Leigh says, "*petros* doth always signify a stone; never, a rock." To which Dr. Parkhurst replies, "*Longinus*, however, *De Sublim.*, § 35, uses *petrous* for the large stones or rocks (scopulos, as *Virgil* calls them, *Æn.* iii. lin. '575), thrown up by Mount *Ætna*." But, an examination of the passage in *Virgil*, does not sustain Dr. P.

Interdum scopulos avolsaque viscera montis  
Erigit eructans, liquefactaque saxa sub auras  
Cum gemitu glomerat, fundoque excestuat imo.

"Sometimes rocks and the torn bowels of the mountain  
It casts up belching, and the melted stones high in air  
With a groan it heaps up, and boils from its lowest deep."

A sublime picture of the amazing force of Ætna, hurling up those tremendous masses of rock, split, shivered, by the fearful energy of the volcano. To measure with the vast conception, the poet uses *scopuli* for *saxa*; *rocks* for *stones*: as in the fabled battle of the giants against the gods, the former handle mountains, as men of ordinary strength handle huge stones; piling up mountains, to make approach to heaven. Homer, too, exhibits the vast force of his heroes, by their using stones in combat, which men of common strength could not employ. Thus in the skirmish between Hector and Ajax, the former seizes with his robust hand, a black, rough, huge stone, that was lying in the plain, a boulder, and hurls it against the shield of Ajax; but, the latter, a man of amazing force, lifting a stone (*laan*), of much greater size, sent it whirling against, and crashing into his foeman's shield. This stone, which in line 268, Homer calls *laan* (a stone), in line 270, he calls *muloeidei petrooi*: "He breaks through his shield, striking it as with a mill stone." The boulder used by Hector is designated *lithon*, which is equal to *petros*; *lithos*, *laas*, *petros* being interchangeable terms: while *petra* is not interchangeable with either of them. The same author furnishes other instances of maintaining an equilibrium between the deeds and ascribed force of his heroes: as in *Il. xx. 285*, when Æneas has a stone (*chermadion*) in his hand of great weight (*mega ergon*), which exceeded the ability of two men to carry, such as men now are (*hoioi nun brotoi eisi*); but which he, Æneas, alone and easily brandished (*ho de min rhea palle kai oios*). Then, continues the poet, would Æneas have hurled against the on-rushing one (Achilles), the stone, etc. \* \* \* *epessumenon bale PETROOI*, where we see *chermadion*, in common with *lithos* and *laas*, interchangeable with *petros*; all, each, signifying a stone of less size than the vast mass indicated by *petra*; which,

*petra*, is not interchangeable with *chermadion*, *lithos*, *laas*, or *petros*.

Turning now to our passage, we see that the Evangelist uses both *petros* and *petra*: both are figuratively employed: have they the same subject? We decide negatively; believing *petros* to refer to Simon Peter, and *petra* to refer to Jesus as being the Christ, through the confession of Peter, as stated in the 16th verse.

If *petros* and *petra* are the same, except the former is masculine, the latter feminine; then, why make the change? Especially is this remarkable, as *petros* is mentioned first. Had *petra* preceded, and had it been necessary to use a masculine form of it when applied to Simon, the change would have been very significant. But if the words are identical in their meaning, then as *petros* had been used first, why not write *epi touton ton petron* I will build my Church? If indeed the words are identical in meaning, does not the change indicate that the Evangelist apprehended that we might mistake our Lord as representing His Church to be built upon Peter? Certainly there could be no other advantage from the change. If our Lord meant that His Church was to be built upon Peter, *epi touton ton petron* would have exhibited that meaning unmistakably.

To be sure, it is claimed that our Lord did use the same word, in each member of the sentence: KIPHA, a stone or rock; from which may be derived the *keephas* of the New Testament. But, admitting this hypothesis, of which there is no proof; nothing being urged but probability; it remains to be inquired, Why did Matthew make the change, except that he considered himself superior to our Lord, in the choice of words, wherewith to express his meaning? Or, possibly, it was to prevent us from supposing that our Lord referred to Peter, as being THE ROCK. Certainly, the change promised no help to us, in case we were expected to un-

derstand, that Peter was to support the Church of Christ.

We observe, also, that *petros* is used indefinitely ; "thou art *petros*." And turning to *John* i. 42, we have Simon's first interview with our Lord, who, of course, through all the defects of the man standing before Him, saw his true character and worth, which He expressed in giving him the surname *keephas* ; which, John tells us, is by interpretation, A stone (*petros*) : signifying durability, firmness, etc., perhaps. Well, now, after some years of trial, Simon, amid the discordant opinions around him, adheres to the belief, that his Master, "Jesus, is the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said with great significance "thou ART *petros* !" He had been surnamed *petros*, and here the propriety of the act was illustrated ; the phrase being a passing reference to the preceding fact ; limiting Simon's personality in the affair ; while our Lord proceeds with His statement of the basis truth of Christianity, JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. Upon this truth, all Christianity rests. If Jesus be not the Christ, the Christ has not yet come. The Jews are right, in still looking for the coming Messiah.

But, if Peter was the rock on which the Church was to be built, where is the proof of it in the Sacred History ? By what fact can it be demonstrated, that Simon Peter was more important to the Church, than others of the Apostles ? In the Acts of the Apostles, he is seen to be inferior to James and Paul, and there is an entire absence of any appearance of primacy. While in Revelation, the last written of the Sacred Books, any special importance of Peter is looked for in vain : the City had twelve foundations ; and these were not twelve times Peter, but the *twelve Apostles of THE LAMB*.

There is also another distinction in the text: Simon bar Jona (Simon son of Jonas), and the Son of the living God. It would seem that the Omniscient Saviour, foreseeing the errors of men, sought to guard his words, against the perversion of them, urged in after years. This appellation appears nowhere else in the New Testament. Its equivalent is seen in *John* i. 42: xxi. 15, 16, 17: and not elsewhere. Is it not remarkable, that our Lord did not say Simon Peter blessed art thou, but Simon bar Jona? He had not asked of Simon Peter only, as to what men said of him, the Son of man; but, "He asked His disciples," asked them all; and Peter spoke for all; as no one dissented from his statement: it not being added that "others said," etc.: but by their silence, they indicated their agreement with the spokesman. It is quite possible, that they might have taken part in the preceding replies of "some say that Thou art John the Baptist;" "some, Elijah;" "some, Jeremiah;" "some, one of the prophets." For, after these answers, our Lord inquires, as if they all had participated in the conversation, "But whom say YE that I am?" Upon the hypothesis, that Simon Peter alone had made the replies, we should have expected, "But whom sayest THOU that I am?"

So, we are to suppose, that they were all participating, and when the question was put to them all, as they needed not that all should answer in words; as Peter in his promptness uttered the words; so, they by their silence were pledged to the answer. The Lord commended the promptness of Peter, accepted the statement of "his disciples," and informed them that the future of his Church, ecclesia, assembly, congregation, should collect around, or upon the statement, the truth, the fact, that HE, JESUS, IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

## THE LABORERS AND THEIR WAGES.

MATTH. xx. 1-16.

AT verse 16, we read, “\* \* \* for many be called, but few chosen.” Is this a deduction from the parable? And are we to understand, that many will be called by the Gospel, but that few will be saved by it? In that case, we must examine the parable, in search of the warrant for such a deduction. Does the parable teach, that but few will be saved, of the many called by the Gospel? Let us see.

A householder went out early in the morning, to hire laborers into his vineyard. He found some, agreed with them for a penny a day, and sent them into his vineyard. About the third hour, 9 A. M., he went out, saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right (*i. e.*, in proportion to the time employed), I will give you: and they went. About the sixth hour, noon, and the ninth hour, 3 P. M., he did the same. And about the eleventh hour, 5 P. M., he went out, and found others standing idle, and said unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They replied, No man hath hired us. He said to them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, ye shall receive.

So, when even was come, 6 P. M., the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire; beginning from the last unto (*heos*) the first. And, so, came first the eleventh hour squad; who, by agreement, were entitled to the one-twelfth part of a penny (a denarius, about fifteen cents in our money: low wages for our day; but then was liberal hire: and the parable represents the laborers agreeing to it; verse 2); and yet, to their astonishment and de-

light, each man received a penny, a full day's wages, twelve times as much as he had earned. According to the plan of payment, next came those who had commenced work at 3 P. M., and, consequently had earned one-fourth of a penny. They, too, receiving a penny, received four times as much as they had earned. So, those who had worked from noon, received twice as much as they were entitled to: and the third hour, 9 A. M. party, had an increase of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. upon their due. The men who wrought the entire day, having agreed for a penny, labored all day expecting a penny, received a penny, a full day's wages.

What generosity! Who ever settled with hired men, on the principle of giving them what was needed for their support, instead of what time they had made! As some of those men had earned only fractions of the day's hire, and yet all alike needed a full day's hire for their support; this generous man ordered his steward to pay all a full day's hire. So that every one received all he had earned; and the most of them, more. It was only after the toil was over, and the all-day men had seen that the eleventh hour, and the other parties, had received a full penny, that they expected more. All through "the burden and heat of the day," they had expected to receive a penny, as had been agreed upon, between them and their employer; and that wonderfully generous man had certainly not been hard with them, as to the amount of their pay. He had agreed with them for a penny a day. There is no intimation that they had asked for more.

Then, where are the *few* chosen; the many rejected? If any case of equal, delighted success, and happy result be extant, let it be produced. It would be a rare specimen, indeed. So, we see nothing in the parable, from which the deduction can be drawn, that many will be called, but a few only will be chosen. All that were

called in the parable, accepted the call, and were accepted of the householder; who complained of no one about his labor, paid every one at the close of the day all he had earned; and the most of them, more: some, twelve times as much; others, four times as much; others, twice as much; others,  $33\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. more; and none less than the full amount of a liberal day's wages. The first were last, and the last first, only in the fact, that they were all put upon the same footing, by giving to every one from his liberal purse, what the condition of a laboring man needed for his support. He did "what he would with his own," not by denying or withholding it from any, but by generously giving them what they needed, when they neither expected, nor asked for, more than they had earned.

Two chapters on in Matthew, xxii, the utterance reappears; "For many are called, but few are chosen:" and again at the end of a parable; thus. A king made a marriage for his son: sent his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and who refused: again he sent for them, stating inducements; but they made light of the matter, acting scandalously: then the king sent out and called from the highways all sorts of people that were to be found there, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests. Quite a multitude, as it seems, filling up the spacious palace. So, the king having come in to see, salute, honor his guests, "he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment." He had been found upon the highway, had been honored with an invitation to the royal wedding, and had insulted his king by neglecting the etiquette of his court, in not putting on one of the wedding garments, that had been provided for his guests. This man was ejected and punished: the great multitude of guests were approved.

Where now are the few chosen; the many disappointed, rejected? Of all that crowd, only one man



and he very properly, is put out of doors: the rest, the many, the multitude, are entertained, enjoying all the rich provision for the royal merry-making: "all things were ready;" it was a sumptuous affair; and they all enjoyed it, except ONE audacious man.

It cannot be, then, that our Lord intended to teach, that many would congregate at the sound of the Gospel trumpet; but only a few would be selected, for the enjoyment of the rich blessings, of the sumptuously provided feast: or that only a few laborers in His vineyard should receive their pay.

Yet perhaps we may find a clue to the meaning of "many are called, but few chosen;" in a fact of Jewish condition, that underlay our Lord's teaching: and which fact he sought to undermine. First remarking, that the reading is not "many are called, but few accept, listen, come, obey." There is nothing that implies any responsibility on the part of the called. Some one calls many, and from these chooses a few: or, "the called are many, the chosen, few:" it is all with the caller and chooser.

The most successful, because the most reasonable mode of studying a passage of Scripture, is to attempt it in prayerful dependence upon the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, and in conformity with the general statements and facts of the divine record. From these sources we learn, that the Jews had very perverted and narrow views of the Messianic plan. They overlooked the facts that the promise of the Messiah was made to man, fallen man, to the parents of man, that the gentile was man, the Jew not more than man: that it was with reference to that promise to man, that the principle of ELECTION was introduced (*Rom.* ix. 11), and Noah elected to preserve the race; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob to produce the Messiah, "in whom ALL THE NATIONS of the earth should be blessed."

Therefore, the Jews did not look upon the Mosaic Dispensation as but a part of the divine plan, but as its whole. The patriarchal, the Mosaic, the present dispensation, each is one of three arches supporting a bridge, the Christ, the Way; each important in its place, and all the supports of the One Way, Christ.

Election is a term that should be well understood, at this day. Of necessity, it cannot embrace all: for where all are included there can be no election; no calling out; no selection. And the elect are always the *few*, in comparison with the *many*: and the elect are for the benefit of the many. So, with the president and congress; governors and legislatures; mayors and city councils; judges, etc. The few elected for the benefit of the many. The elect are the officials of the electors. In the great plan of salvation, God elects his own officials, his own instrumentality: not with a primary reference to the salvation of the officials, but of MAN, sinful man.

Therefore Noah was not elected to heaven, to eternal life; but to the ark, and the continuance of temporal life, for the preservation of man. Abraham was elected, not to heaven, to eternal life; but to Canaan, and continued temporal life, to produce a nation to be kept apart from other nations; and thus authenticate the Messiah, who was to bless all the nations of the earth. The same may be said of the prophets. But, especially must it be said of THE Elect: who of all of woman born was God's elect Messiah (*Isai.* xlii. 1): whom no one can suppose to have been elected to heaven and eternal life; or doubt that he was elected to office, the Messiahship; and for the benefit of man. There is no mention of election in Scripture, that does not fairly accord with this principle of interpretation. The elect had great advantages; as taught in *Rom.* iii. 1, "What advantage then hath the Jew? (If after all they are no better by nature, than the despised gentiles living outside the covenant of circumcision.) "Much every way," exclaims the Apostle: it

is a great honor to be the official nation, under the special care of God, and "chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." But their elect position, while occasioning advantage "much every way," did not assure their salvation; which, as the salvation of any other sinner, depended upon repentance and faith. Jesus, THE Elect, knew no sin, needed no salvation; his election conferring no advantage "much every way;" his only benefit consisting in the "joy that was set before him," gleaming across the dark valley of his deadly strife, from the countenance of the distant loving Father, who delighted in the success he was to achieve, in conquering sin, death, and the grave; delivering our sinful race. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." *I John* iv. 9. Not that the Elect, but *man* might live.

Our Lord, then, we may regard as endeavoring to insinuate into the Jewish mind, a more correct and comprehensive view of the election of the Jewish nation: it being unreasonable to suppose that a promise made to MAN, had been narrowed down and limited to ONE NATION of man: that the officials, the elect for carrying out God's purpose, were alone to reap the benefit; notwithstanding that the purpose was "to destroy the works of the devil," to bruise satan's head; and that the elect were but instruments, wherewith to accomplish that purpose: not the *end*, but the *means* of the purpose. How absurd, then, to limit God's love, mercy, aid, to *the few* instruments he employs; to the overlooking of the many, he purposed to aid, through the few elect! Especially, as he has grace enough, and a surplus. The kind lord of the vineyard would have made a different exhibit, if, by his previous bounty to several classes of the laborers, he had not had sufficient for the

payment of the all-day workmen. The king would not have acted kingly, if there had not been sufficient to supply the guests, thronging his royal halls. But the purse and the banquet were both sufficient: and the end of the plan of salvation, will not be a development of the astounding fact, that the proclaimed God and Father of all, will turn out to be merely the God and Father of the elect, the few, the instruments of his purpose. He would be a poor smith who purposing to make a ploughshare, grasps the iron material with his tongs, and thrusting them into the fire of the forge, saves only his tongs, his instruments. Instruments are the means, not the end, of a purpose. ALL THE NATIONS were to be blessed: the called are many; "to every one that thirsteth," "whosoever will:" the elect are few, and their business is to promote God's purpose, by obeying their official commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (*Mark* xvi. 15). Jesus Christ, by the grace of God tasted death for every man (*Heb.* ii. 9): tell it to every man; and if he believes he shall be saved. (*Rom.* v. 1.)

But good critics omit from the sacred text, the clause we have been discussing; allowing for verse 16, ch. xx, only the words, "So the last shall be first, and the first last." In which case, the fact of but *few* being chosen, or elected, need not be supposed even to be contained, or illustrated in the parable. If it be sought, it cannot be found: it is not in the parable: it is not a deduction, or inference from it. Our own opinion is, that the words are genuine, and should be retained.

There is no dispute, however, as to their genuineness in ch. xxii. 14: and we have looked through the parable there, for the few chosen from the many called, in vain. The servants were sent to call them that were bidden (*kalesai tous kekleemenous*) to the wedding:

they had been called (to call the called); being, perhaps, the nobility, the aristocracy; but even now they would not (*ouk eethelon*) come: so the king sent other servants (as though, the bad conduct of the nobles, might have been occasioned by some fault or blunder on the part of the previous officers, servants; and though the king reminds them of the splendid provision he has made, they behave yet more scandalously; even dishonoring and murdering his servants). "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden (*kekleemenoi*, called) were not worthy." He had not only called them, but had manifested a great desire, and taken great pains, to have them come; and in despite of it all they had not come. "Go ye therefore into the highways, (places of resort at the meetings of streets, the squares, or confluence of ways: *Alford*), and as *many as ye shall find*, bid (*kalesate*, call) to the marriage. So those servants went out into the public places, and gathered together *all as many as they found*, both BAD and GOOD: and the wedding was furnished (*epleesthee*, filled, satiated) with guests."

It is certainly evident, that the king made most exertion in the case of the first called: they had been already invited (*kekleemenous*, called), and the invitation was twice renewed. But of the last invited, there is no intimation of any previous expectation on the part of the king, or the highwaymen, that any one of these latter should ever be seen at this feast. It must have been a prodigious surprise to such people, to be invited to a royal feast at the palace, and on such an occasion as the marriage of the king's son! And the servants made no exceptions, they "gathered together ALL as many as they found;" just as it happened; BAD and GOOD; every one they found. Nothing could be more unlike an election: there was no choice: quality made

no difference; "both bad and good:" and the bad are mentioned first, as perhaps their number was the greater, or, possibly to indicate that the quality of any one was disregarded; the only essential being the *finding*.

And when the king went in to see his strange guests, they were many, quite many, the wedding, the wedding hall was filled, satiated (*epleesthee*), many had been called, and they all had come: there they were, a crowd indeed: but now from these, where are *the few chosen*; the few elect; those who were accepted to realize the grandest, ultimate blessing, beyond the portion of the MANY? In vain we look for anything of that sort. There is a difference made: a line is drawn; but the *many* are found on the happy, and not on the miserable side. There is a kind of an election made; but it is in the case of but ONE, who was not elected to any special advantage over the others; but to "bonds, the outer darkness, the gnashing of teeth:" all which he might have avoided by a decent compliance with a point of etiquette, of a pleasant nature, and very easy to be complied with.

The words CALLED and CHOSEN should have some consideration. They are *kleetoi* and *eklekttoi*: the former from *kaleoo*, to call; the latter from *eklegomai*, to choose, to elect. Certain persons are called; others elected, chosen out. But the point is, that the high class, and the common class, in the parable, are both called. If the king, by calling the high class first, can be supposed to have made a kind of choice, an election; then the elect were miserably destroyed by the king's own order.

As to the common class, the king commanded them to be CALLED (*kalesate*), but specially forbids any choice, any election, by ordering his servants to call "as many as they should FIND," to the marriage: and the phrase is repeated in the following verse, "all as

many as they found," as if to exclude all idea of choice, utterly. To be found, was the grand point; indicating accident, chance, perhaps, but certainly not choice, election, or fore-ordering that those particular men, should be there, at those particular public places, on that particular day. He who can find such a feature as that in the parable, can find anything in it that may suit his fancy. There is plenty of *calling* (*kaleoo*), in the parable: twice in verse 3; once in verse 4; once in verse 8; once in verse 9; but no *election* (*eklegomai*): it is not seen at all, except once in the 14th verse; showing that that verse is not a *deduction* from the parable, but an axiom in the plan of salvation, which phariseism had overlooked; an error that our Lord was endeavoring in all kind prudence to correct.

You Jews, have been God's elect, that his great purpose might proceed through you as his instruments; and as his elect, you are highly honored, but you should understand that he does not value his instruments, agents, more than his purposed result, the fulfillment of his promise to MAN, the bruising of satan's head, the blessing of ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH. God cares for and calls the MANY; and elects a *few* agents as the human instrumentality, that he chooses to employ, in securing the resultant blessing to the many.

It might be admitted, that there was a choice or election by the king, as to the servants; for he sent some at one time, others at another time; all the elect were elected to carry out the king's purpose toward the many: the crowd of guests at the marriage was the purpose; the election, a mere incident; a principle of no mean value, but yet wholly incidental to the main purpose of the monarch.

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