

**THE KEYS OF THE
KINGDOM AND OTHER
SERMONS, PP. 1-117**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649543618

The Keys of the Kingdom and Other Sermons, pp. 1-117 by R. J. Campbell

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R. J. CAMPBELL

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The
Keys of the Kingdom
And Other Sermons

BY
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of The City Temple, London



NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY
(March)



New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 63 Washington Street
Toronto: 27 Richmond Street, W
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburg: 30 St. Mary Street

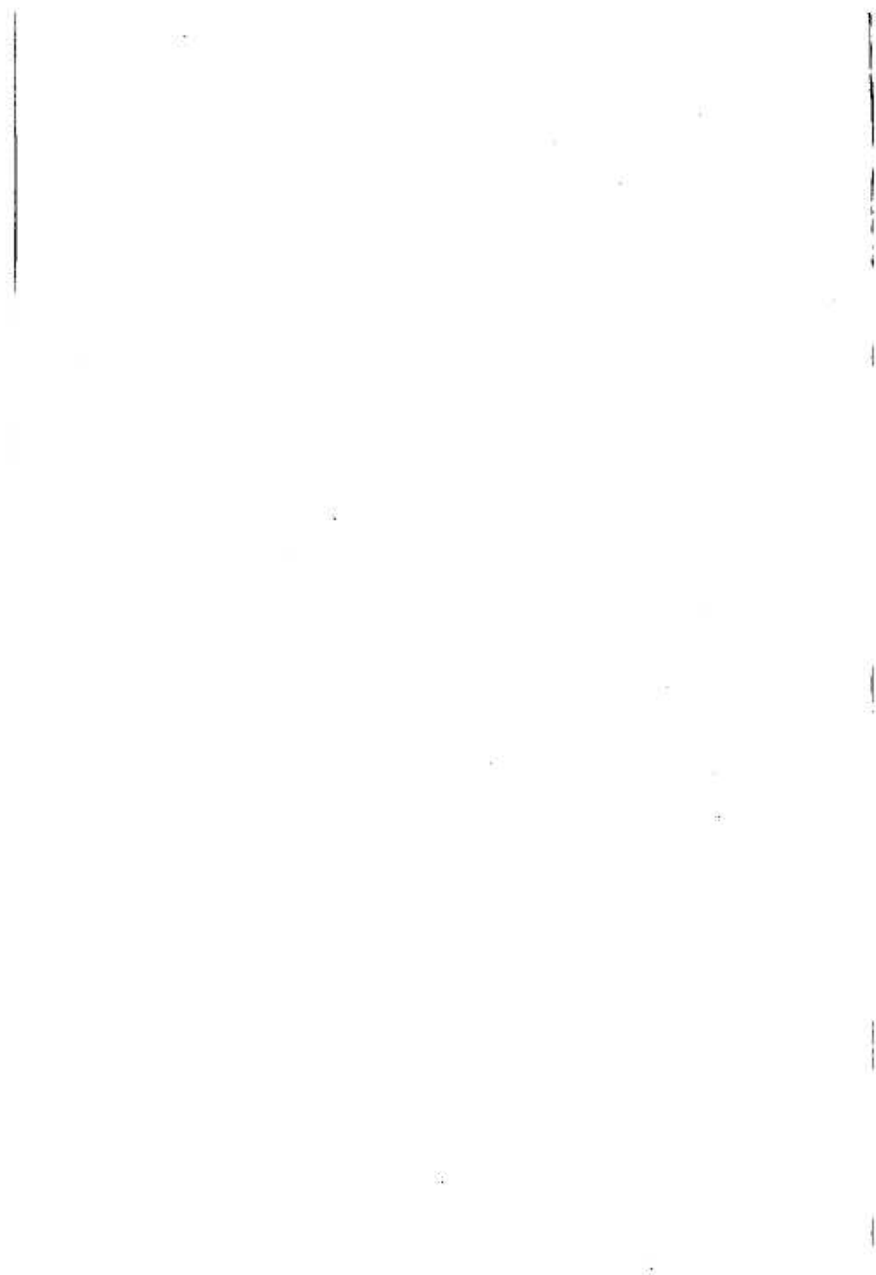
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Revised 10-25-44 N. T. T.

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THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven."
—Matt. xvi., 19.

THERE has been for ages now a very great difference of opinion as to the meaning of this remarkable utterance of our Lord. You will remember that it forms part of a special address to the Apostle Peter, and that it only occurs once in the whole of the New Testament. It is recorded by St. Matthew, and by St. Matthew alone. The utterance was called forth by Peter's response to a question of our Lord, the question being, "Whom say ye that I am?" And Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus then addressed him in a specially solemn way, singling him out, as it seemed, from the rest of the disciples. These were the terms of His address:

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"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven. I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Next come the words of our text:

"I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind in earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven."

You know, I suppose, how the Bishops of Rome interpret that particular text. The whole utterance they take to be the bestowal of a special commission on the Apostle Peter, and the giving to him of a certain primacy and a certain power of binding and loosing, in the life beyond as well as in this life. This special power they believe themselves to have inherited, as the successors of the Apostle in the bishopric of the Church of Rome. I pass by that particular interpretation, for our business now is not controversial, and it matters very little to us how this text is interpreted by the representatives of a great historic Church, to which, in one sense, at least, we cannot be said to belong. But I certainly think that it seems to give to Peter a certain primacy: a primacy, first, in the order of time. He was the first

who recognised, and, recognising, confessed that Christ was something more to him than an ordinary teacher could have been. In the expression, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," was contained the germ of all Peter's future experience. He knew God in a new way because he knew Christ. Peter, the Apostle, was *born* in the moment when he knew the Father in Christ. Further, I think it gives to Peter a special primacy in the order of leadership. Whatever we may say as to Peter's commission, we all agree that practically he did lead the Christian Church, for a certain period, at any rate. And he did it unwillingly, as we see from the last chapter of St. John's Gospel. He was more than willing that his brother Apostle, formerly his rival, now for ever his friend, John the Divine, should assume the leadership. But the words of Christ, addressed to him in his humility, admit of no misconception. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Tend My sheep: feed My lambs."

Now, agreeing as we all do, that in both these senses there is a certain significance to be attached to this commission, is there any other meaning to be read out of the text?

Our Lord's words are always full of spiritual