

well nigh totally eclipsed the glorious light of truth that doubtless she once held in all its purity, nor of the vast power and influence which she has wielded, and still in a measure wields, over a large portion of the Christian world. But it may be well to state one or two facts connected with the matter before us, to show how she came to claim for her Popes, or rather how they came to claim for themselves, the chief supremacy. Romanists affirm that it has been derived from St. Peter, who was her first Bishop. I have shewn from Scripture that Peter himself never possessed or assumed it. But further, there is no evidence beyond that of a mere tradition, that St. Peter ever was at Rome, much less that he was the first to establish there an Episcopal See. It is clear that he could not have been there for many years subsequent to the date assigned to his arrival;* for St. Paul, at a much later period, wrote some of his Epistles in that very city, in which he frequently names those who were his "*only* fellow-workers", but does not once mention or allude to, the presence of St. Peter.† But it is further probable, that the latter never was at Rome at all, for St. Paul says (Gal. ii. 7) that while to him was committed, the "*gospel of the uncircumcision*", to Peter was committed the "*gospel of circumcision*", i. e. he was appointed to minister among the *Jews*, and it is most likely that he strictly carried out this arrangement till the time of his death.‡

The reason, however, that the Bishops of Rome, whoever was their predecessor, began at an early period to acquire a sort of *primacy*, or first place among their brethren, was simply this: *Rome* was at that time the Imperial, or chief city of an extensive empire, including within its limits the various localities where Christian Churches had been established. As a natural consequence, its Bishop, though possessing and claiming but equal power and authority with others, was allotted a somewhat higher

* Baronius and other R. C. writers assert that he arrived at Rome A. D. 42, and that he continued to exercise his episcopal functions for 25 years. S. Paul wrote his last Epis. (2 to Tim.) about A. D. 65. Within the above period also, he wrote his Epis. to the *Romans*, in which he gave them various directions.

† See Phil. 2. 20; Col. 4. 11; 2 Tim. 4. 11, 16; also salutations to the *Romans* Ch. 16.

‡ St. Paul particularly declared to the *Romans*, that he was the "*Apostle of the Gentiles*," Rom. 11. 13; 15. 16. See Acts 9. 15; 22. 21; Gal. 1. 16; 2. 2, 7-9; 2 Tim. 1. 11; also 2 Cor. 11. 28.