

selected as the imaginary "Prince of the Apostles and Head of the universal Church," the very man, whom, among all that were truly the disciples of Jesus, He had the most frequent reason to reprove. But failing in other Scriptural proof for their cherished dogma, they have been obliged to resort to some of those very instances for evidence to favor it. Thus one other passage which they advance in proof of Peter's high commission, is that where St. John records our Lord's first interview with that erring Apostle after his base denial. And from the fact, that the Saviour, in restoring him to his Apostleship, which he had forfeited, thrice repeated the question, "Lovest thou me?" adding the reinstating words, "Feed my sheep,"* they deduce, that Christ thereby confirmed Peter's Supremacy; whereas it is evident, that the thrice repeated appeal was intended to convey, what Peter himself painfully realized, a tender though piercing rebuke for his threefold denial. "Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, Lovest thou me?" John xxi. 15-17.

But let us further see what we can gather from the acts and writings of the Apostles themselves; and here the evidence is so abundant to shew the fallacy of the Romish doctrine, that an allusion to it must necessarily be brief. In Acts VIII. 14, we read, "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John," which certainly does not imply that any superior authority was vested in Peter. Again, on a most important occasion, when we find all the Apostles assembled in General Council, it was not Peter that announced the decision on the question discussed, but James, because, as is supposed, he was Bishop of Jerusalem, where the Council was held. "And after they (the other Apostles) had held their peace, James answered saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, &c. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God."† Here we have one of the clearest proofs that could possibly be

* That these particular words do not confer any supremacy of authority is manifest, for the same expression is used with respect to other teachers. Acts 20, 28, and by Peter himself, 1 Pet. 5, 2.

† Acts 15. 13, &c.