

it will not follow as a consequence, that Peter was the *Bishop of Rome*, much less that the popes derived from him the supreme authority, to which they afterwards laid claim.

To a bishop is committed the care of *one particular flock*. The commission, on the contrary, with which our Lord intrusted his disciples was "Go throughout all the world," "Convert all nations," "Preach the gospel to every creature." If any, therefore, to whom this command was addressed, should undertake a fixed charge he would, by the act, forfeit the character and office of an apostle. "To suppose that one who had received this express commission, as the last orders from the mouth of his master, should be confined to the charge of a particular flock, is to suppose him either voluntarily to resign his important commission, or to be deprived of it, and thus to undergo a real degradation. For besides the difference in respect of extent between the two commissions, the department of an apostle is chiefly among *infidels*, whom he is commanded "to convert," *matheteuetein* the department of a bishop is chiefly among believers, whom he is appointed *diakonein*, "to teach."

133. That Peter could not be bishop of Rome, may be evinced from the Epistle to the Galatians,† in which he is termed "the Apostle of the circumcision," in contradistinction to Paul, who was pre-eminently intrusted with the conversion of the Gentiles. It is inconceivable, therefore, that, appointed to endeavour the salvation of "his brethren according to the flesh," Peter should undertake the fixed superintendence of a church, composed almost entirely of converts from heathenism.

134. Irenæus in the second century, Rufinus, Epiphanius, Eusebius, in the fourth, and the apostolic constitutions, referred to the beginning of the fifth century, concur in stating that *both Peter and Paul* were founders of the Roman church, and that Linus was ordained by them as first bishop. At the end of the fourth century, therefore, though both the above mentioned apostles were regarded as *founders* of the church at Rome, neither was believed to have been its bishop.

135. The argument founded on the application of the epithet, "apostolic," to the see, and of "pope" to the bishop of Rome, is confuted by the fact, that during the first three centuries, these terms were unappropriated. All the churches planted by the apostles were, for that reason, denominated "*apostolical*;" and *papa* or *father*, was common, perhaps to all bishops, certainly to all metropolitans and patriarchs. The titles as well as the power, which had originally been vested in many, were, by successive encroachments, finally engrossed by the Pontiffs.

136. The opinion which we are endeavouring to refute, seems to have arisen from an inaccurate application of the word "bishop." The same historians, among others Epiphanius and Eusebius, who assert, that "Linus first exercised at Rome the episcopal office," with which he was intrusted during their life-time by Peter and Paul, term these apostles also "bishops of the church of Rome." Recourse must be had, therefore, to one of the two following suppositions; either there was a *plurality* of bishops in the Romish church, or though Linus was the *fixed overseer*, the apostles Peter and Paul exercised, while in the city, a general inspection over those who by their means had been brought to a knowledge of the Gospel.

This supposition is confirmed by the New Testament, and is consistent with the office of an apostle.

The advocates of the hierarchy will feel equally disinclined to admit either alternative. The former would subvert their whole system. By the latter it appears, that the apostles took the same interest in the spiritual prosperity of the church of Rome, as their letters testify they entertained for all the Christian societies which they planted.

137. The same arguments, it may be added, by which it is attempted to be shown that Peter was *bishop of Rome*, would prove him to have been bishop of other churches, particularly of that of Antioch.

138. "But," it will be objected, "if James was bishop of Jerusalem why might not Peter be bishop of Rome?" If the premises were certain, the *possibility* of the fact for which Papists contend, and not the *certainly* of it would be established. But that *James the Just*, bishop of Jerusalem, was an apostle, is by no means ascertained. The contrary was held by Eusebius, Hegesippus, Epiphanius, Jerome, Gregory of Nyse, Chrysostom and others, all of whom considered the individual in question to be one of the seventy disciples. When the premises are determined, we shall, without hesitation, admit the conclusion, which, however, will be found altogether insufficient for determining the question at issue.

139. We have endeavoured to show that Peter was neither a *bishop*, nor the *bishop of Rome*; but even conceding these points, it were not difficult to refute the claims which the popes have founded upon their supposed succession to that apostle.

That Peter was honoured to be the president of the apostolic college, appears evidently from the epithet—*protos*, applied to him by Matthew.

That this title did not refer to the time of his conversion is rendered certain by the fact, that Andrew was called before him, and that it has no reference to the *order* in which the names are enumerated, appears from the word itself, which is not *protos*, but *protos*, an epithet, "the first."

The same is also apparent from the language employed by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles. "Peter and the eleven," "Peter and the rest of the apostles," "Peter with the rest," are expressions which appear to indicate that, on some ground or other, this apostle was considered the *first of his order*. This honour was doubtless conferred as a reward for the important confession first made by him.

140. The observations formerly applied to the relative dignity of bishop and presbyter in the early church, may, without impropriety, be transferred to the case now before us. Peter was "*the first*" of the apostles; but neither in dignity nor authority superior to them; though the first he was *one* of the order.

To prove that no power was possessed by Peter, with which the other apostles were not equally invested, it may not be improper to instance the very words from which the popes, by a species of reasoning, the singularity of which has been equalled only by its success—have deduced their possession of all power, in heaven and on earth. "Thou art Peter," said our Lord, "and upon this rock I will build my church," &c. But Paul informs the saints at Ephesus, that they were "built on the foundation of the apostles"† in general.

141. The power of *binding* and *loosing*, whatever meaning we attach to these words, was first conferred on Peter; but our Lord shortly after addressed the following language to *all* the disciples:—"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in

* Campb. Lect. xii.

† Ch. ii. 7. & seq.

* Math. xvi. 18.

† Eph. ii. 20.