

our minds we are prepared to dismiss suspicion, and to say of the gospel, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God; it is the divinely appointed antidote to man's depravity and wretchedness; it is the lever by which a redeemed world is to be raised from earth to heaven; it is a manifestation of the love and mercy of God which shall engage the thought and the love of the universe of intelligent beings for ever. Oh then! beware of permitting the objections of the caviller to prejudice you against its excellence, or check its moral influence upon your own heart. Study it more, and practise it more; and it will rise before your mind in a more glorious magnificence, and proclaim its Author as plainly to the eye of faith, as this material universe that surrounds us proclaims his Godhead to the eye of reason.

N.

M.

THE RISE OF THE PAPAL HIERARCHY, BY THE REV. ROBERT LEE, MINISTER OF CAMPSIE, SCOTLAND.
From the Church of Scotland Magazine.

(Continued from page 181.)

CHAP. IV

Pretexts of Succession from the Apostles.

125. The ambition of the clergy was doubtless the chief primary cause of the rise of the papal hierarchy. The history of the Popes presents one continued illustration of this great ruling principle, by which, since the first century, the Roman bishops have, almost without exception, been actuated.

In the political events with which a former chapter was occupied, the Popes appeared in general as secondary agents, as turning to their own advantage resolutions over which they had little or no control. In the transactions now to be enumerated, the pontiffs were under no constraint, and these, therefore, afford a less fallacious index to the motives by which they were influenced.

126. As their succession from the apostle Peter was very early a favourite topic with the pontiffs, which they advanced successively as the ground, first, of the *superiority*, then of the *supremacy*, and lastly, of the *infallibility* of their see, it will be necessary, before proceeding to the proper subject of this chapter, to examine the *validity* of an argument of which so much use has been made.

127. That St. Peter was at Rome, and that, together with St. Paul, he preached the gospel, and suffered martyrdom in the imperial city, are affirmed by *tradition alone*, unsupported by any historical evidence. Not only so, the story is loaded with circumstances manifestly fabulous,* which, notwithstanding are supported by the same *traditional* authority as the ministry of Peter in the capital.

128. To the silence of ancient writers may be added that of the New Testament. In the Acts of the

Apostles, Peter is said to have visited Samaria, Lydia, Joppa, Casaria, Antioch, Corinth, Babylon, but of his presence in Rome no mention is made. This is the *negative* evidence against the fact in question; what may be called the *positive*, arises from the silence of Paul on the subject, when occasions of introducing it presented themselves. From Rome, the apostle of the Gentiles addressed letters to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to Timothy, and to Philemon. In such a multiplicity of correspondence, it is inconceivable that, if Peter were at Rome no occasion should occur of mentioning a person so celebrated in the church; and particularly, that Paul should omit to send his salutation to those churches to which his own letters were addressed.

That Peter was *not* in Rome when the Epistle to the Colossians was written, appears *demonstrably*, from the following passage, in which, after the enumeration of "Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, and Justus," there follows this express declaration:—"These *alone* are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, who have been a comfort unto me."

129. The same tradition on which the ministry of Peter at Rome is founded, asserts that the two apostles already mentioned, were bound in the same prison, and together suffered the pains of martyrdom. In Paul's second Epistle to Timothy, however, written, as himself assures us, when "the time of his departure was at hand," it is stated that, "at his first answer *no man* stood by him," but that, "all men forsook him;" and, in the same chapter, he informs Timothy, that "*all* the brethren did salute him," namely, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia." The omission of Peter in a list containing *all* the principal Christians then at Rome, proves that that apostle was not there.

130. The only scriptural argument, which the Romanists have been able to offer in opposition to those now adduced, arises from a *conjecture* by some of the fathers, that "Babylon," in 1 Peter v. 13, is intended to denote the *Roman city*, other ancient writers, it may be objected, inferior to the former neither in number nor authority, suppose, that by Babylon the apostle meant *Jerusalem*, the scene of our Lord's sufferings and death.

But both of these opinions depend *wholly on conjecture*, there being not the least reason to imagine, that in a didactic letter, the apostle would confound his readers by employing the name of one city to signify another. The ancient Babylon, too, not only *existed* at the period in question, but was a place of considerable importance, and contained multitudes of Jews. In whatever degree, therefore, it is probable that Peter, to whom the apostleship of the circumcision was peculiarly entrusted, should resort to a city, in which the greatest number of his dispersed countrymen was to be found, in the same degree it is probable, that the letter under discussion was written from that place.

A considerable city of Egypt called also Babylon, existed at the time of which we are speaking, and from it the apostle might send his Second General Epistle.

131. If, finally, St. Peter were really in Rome, or suffered martyrdom there, these events must have happened posterior to the period embraced by the Book of Acts, and to the writing of St. Paul's epistles; and if so, Peter could neither be the founder, nor one of the founders of the Romish Church.

132. But should we concede the point in dispute,

* The story of the destruction of Simon Magus by Peter, is probably founded on a fact related by Suetonius, Vit. Ner. c. xli. of a person who was killed attempting to fly in presence of the emperor.

Colos. iv. 11.

2 Tim. iv. 6.