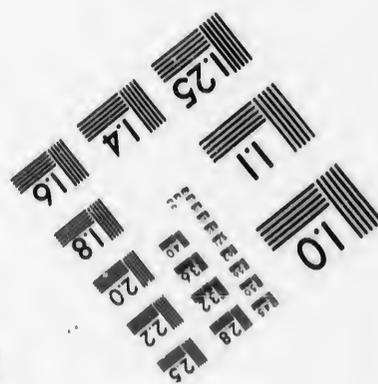
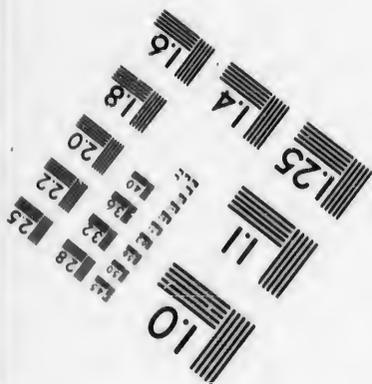
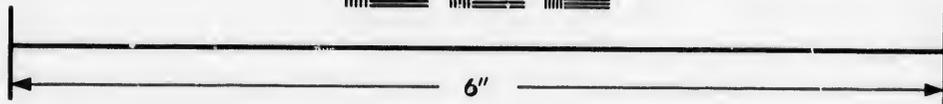
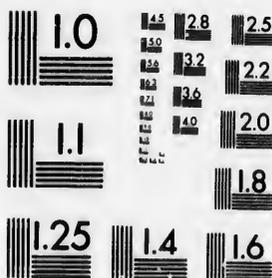


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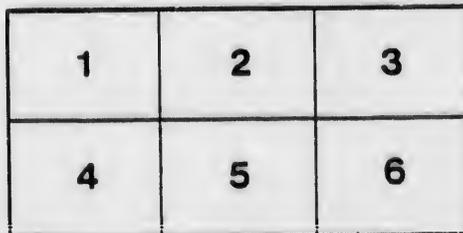
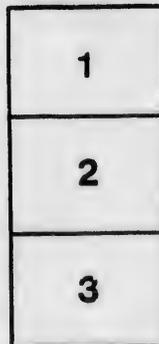
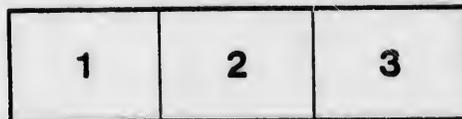
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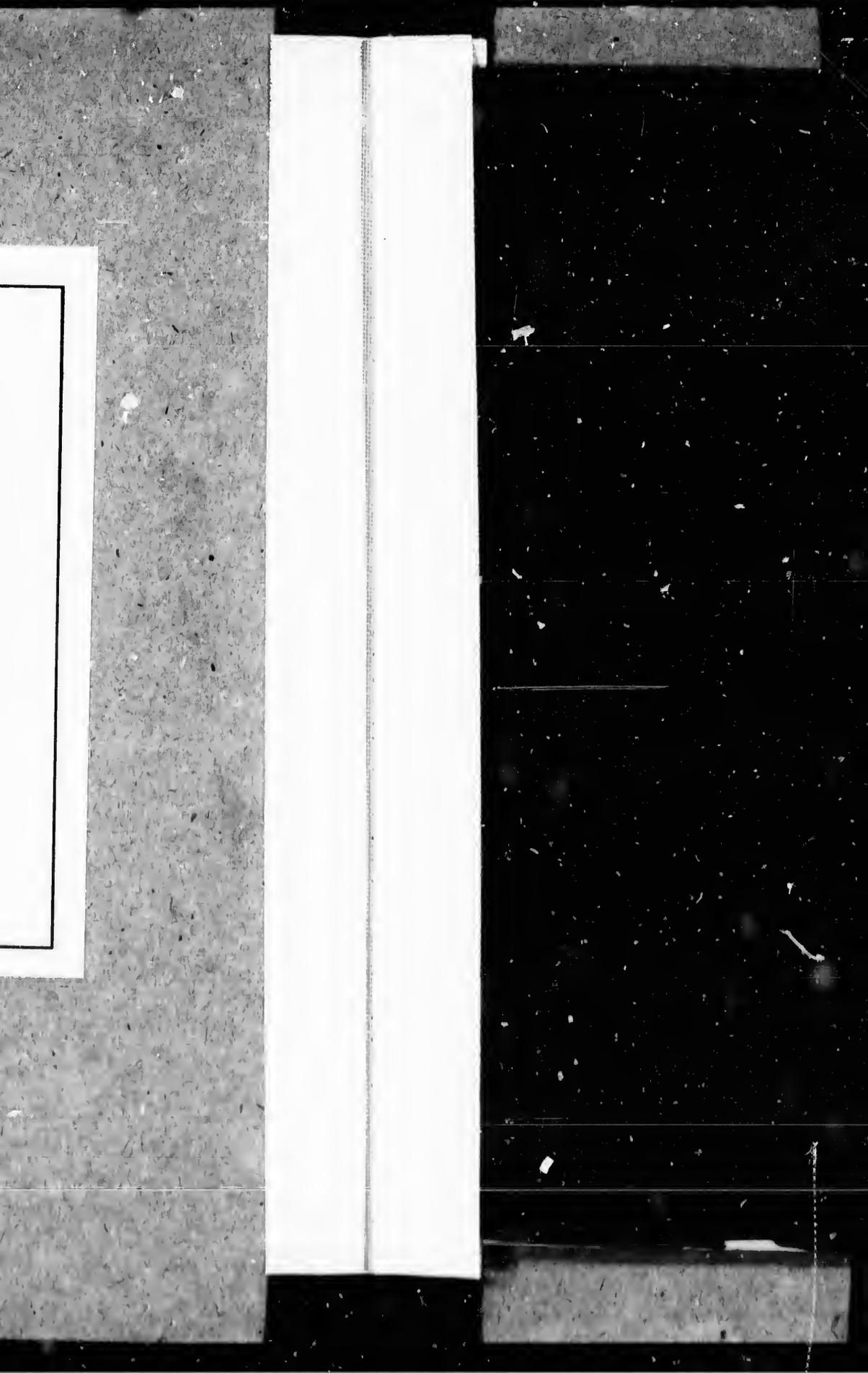
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IS PETER OR CHRIST THE ROCK ?



A SERMON

PREACHED IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH,

HALIFAX,

ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH, 1859,

BY

THE CURATE.



PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARISHIONERS.



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“ I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church.” MAT. XVI. 18.

THERE is not, perhaps, in the whole volume of Inspiration, a passage, which has been so grossly perverted, and upon which men have attempted to base so many dangerous and delusive errors, as that from which I have selected the text. I need scarcely tell you, Brethren, that it is the principal, I might almost say, the only passage of Scripture adduced by the Church of Rome, in support of the false and presumptuous system, which she has devised and propagated under the name of Christianity. For, although she does occasionally select here and there from the written Word a text, or a portion of a text, and endeavor to apply it to some particular dogma which she has first invented ; yet upon her own confession, her fundamental doctrines—the Supremacy of the Pope, and the Infallibility of the Church, upon the truth or falsehood of which all her other doctrines, not found in the Scriptures, must be received or rejected—are mainly, if not entirely, based upon this solitary passage.

I am aware, Brethren, that many other subjects of a different nature and equally as edifying to us, might be taken up for our brief consideration on the Lord's day ; yet this has now been thrust upon our attention from a quarter which renders it painfully prominent, and, in a measure, compels us to notice it : and since we are assured in Holy Writ, that “ all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable for doctrine, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished* unto all good works,” it is expedient, I was going to say necessary, that we should in these days occasionally examine it with reference to some of the principal doctrines of that corrupt and delusive system, the Church of Rome.

I propose to day, with God's blessing, to take up the consideration of one of her fundamental dogmas, the Supremacy of St. Peter over the other Apostles ; upon which she founds the Supremacy of the Pope or Bishop of Rome over all other Bishops, Ministers and People in the Christian world. The doctrine of the Church of Rome is simply this :—That our Lord appointed Simon to be the centre of union and supreme head of His universal Church ; that He made him chief Pastor over the other Apostles, and gave him the keys of His heavenly kingdom ; that accordingly He changed his name into that of Peter or Rock, adding, " on this Rock I will build my Church" ; that thus dignified Peter established his See at Rome as its first Bishop, and here left his prerogative, as Vicar of Christ, to his successors ; and that hence all the Churches in the world are subject to them, so that if any do not submit to their jurisdiction, they cannot be Churches of Christ at all, nor possess His true faith and doctrine.—This is the position which the head of the Papacy has for ages assumed, and claimed to be recognized by the whole Christian world. Let us now endeavor to bring this claim to the test, not of *oral tradition*, for that, as a Rule of Doctrine, we know nothing about, but of the *only infallible guide* which the Spirit of truth has given us, *the written Word of God*. Let us then impartially examine the words before us, upon which, as I have before stated, the chief Scriptural proof of that doctrine, so essential to the Papal system, rests.

Reserving the subsequent portion of the passage for a future consideration, the chief matter that we shall now endeavor to ascertain is, who or what is the Rock, upon which Christ here declared He would build His Church. The Romanists say it is Peter. But here we may observe, how very doubtful, according to their own creed, the proof of this must be. They are solemnly bound, not to receive the interpretation of any passage of Scripture " otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the *Fathers*",* as the learned Divines, who lived and wrote in the early ages of the Church, are called ; and yet, even on this very passage, so important to this essential doctrine of Romanism, the Fathers themselves are at variance with each other, and give differ-

* The 14th Art. of the Creed of Pope Pius IV.

ent interpretations. Thus many of them, as Ambrose, Hilary, Chrysostom, and others, consider the Rock to mean, not *Peter himself*, but the *Faith* which he had manifested in declaring of Jesus, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God": while Jerome and the eminent Augustine taught, that it signified *Christ Himself*, whom Peter had just confessed.*

Those who maintain that *Peter* is the Rock to which Christ alludes, go upon the supposition, that the Greek name *Peter* and the word translated *Rock* are one and the same, or at least, of the same meaning. But a slight knowledge of the original language affords sufficient means of knowing that such is not the case. The word *Petra* signifies, as it is rightly translated, a Rock, *large, firm, unmoveable, fit for a foundation*; while the word *Petros, Peter*, signifies a *STONE, a fragment of a rock, small, moveable, fit to be used in building*. This different meaning of the two words might be amply proved and illustrated from Scripture. Thus in 1 Cor. x. 4, "For they drank of that spiritual *Rock* which followed them, and that *Rock* was Christ." In this and numerous passages from the old Testament, the word *Rock* is applied to the *Divine nature*,† and is never appropriated, in a spiritual sense, to any mortal. On the other hand the word *Stone, (Petros, Peter,)* is frequently employed to signify the *faithful believers* in Christ, &c. Thus in 1 Cor. III. 12, "If any man build on this foundation precious *stones*;" again, 1 Pet. II. 5, "Ye also as lively *stones* are built up a spiritual house"; again, Rev. XXI. 19, "The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with precious *stones*;" and the learned translators of our Bible have thus rendered the decisive passage in John I. 42, where our Lord said to the same Simon, "Thou shalt be called *Cephas*, which is by interpretation, a *Stone*."

Let us now read the whole passage, and we shall at once see the force and meaning of our Saviour's words.—"When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples,

* It is worthy of note, that this address to Peter is not mentioned by any other of the Evangelists, whereas, if it was intended to convey the meaning which Rome attaches to it, we might certainly expect that it would, at least, be recorded by them all.

† The Hebrew word corresponding to *Petra* occurs in this sense about 40 times in the Old Test.

saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, &c. Ho saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And 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"—v. 13—18. The latter part may be paraphrased thus:—"Blessed art thou Simon the son of Jonah, for, *in the name of these others*, thou hast acknowledged in me the Divine, Almighty Rock of Israel.* Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is above. And I say also unto thee, that I have already given *thee* a name which signifies a *stone*; thou shalt be *one of the foundation stones* of my spiritual *Temple*, which shall be eternal; for on this Rock *which thou hast now confessed*, I will build my Church, and no power of men or devils shall destroy it.' That this is the true meaning of the passage, I think we shall further see, by referring to the Revelation of St. John. In the 21st. Chap. this inspired Apostle tells us, that he had a vision of the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem; the walls he saw garnished with precious stones, and supported by "*twelve foundations*," or twelve stones laid as the first tier of the building upon the foundation rock, and in these, he adds, were written "*the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb*." Here certainly the Romish notion that Peter was the one foundation, and that the other Apostles were built upon him, is utterly exploded, and his true position in Christ's spiritual Temple skewn, on the authority of an inspired writer. He was a *stone, a foundation stone*; being one of the first to preach the glorious gospel he occupied one of the nearest places to the Rock, but the other Apostles occupied a similar position as well as he.

But let us compare the Scriptures on this subject further, and let us ascertain from their records these two essential points. Do they ever speak of, or allude to Peter, as occupying that high

* Probably alluding to the well known predictions, Ps. 118. 22; Isa. 28. 16; &c. See also Isaiah 44. 8. literally "*there is no Rock*."

position which the Church of Rome has assigned him? Do we ever find Peter himself claiming, or any of the other Apostles or Christians acknowledging his prerogative, as the *Supreme Head of the Church*? The answer to both these questions is decidedly No! Surely if such an important trust had been reposed in him, if he had been honored with such high and unquestionable authority, we should find reference made to it in some part of the Inspired Writings. We have an account of many of the principal 'Acts of the Apostles' for the period of thirty years after our Lord's ascension; we have numerous Epistles written by Peter himself, as well as the others, to their Christian converts; but not one word is to be found in either, to sanction the bare probability, that Peter was endued with any more power or authority than his fellow Apostles: while abundant proof is manifested, that such a doctrine, in their days, was never thought of. We read in Mat. xx. 25, that, through their pride and worldly-mindedness, some of the disciples began to dispute among themselves who should be the greatest. And what did our Lord answer? that Peter was appointed to be their Prince and head? No! but administered to them a most seasonable rebuke, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be *great* among you, let him be your *minister*; And whosoever will be *chief* among you, let him be your *servant*." v. 25—27. We have a most remarkable passage, too, in this very chapter that is before us. As if to guard Peter himself against any misconception of our Lord's meaning in the text, a striking incident was shortly permitted to occur; and, as if to guard us against the same error, it is recorded in close connection with the circumstance we are considering. We read at the 21st. v. "Jesus began to shew unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, &c. Then Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him; saying, Be it far from Thee Lord: this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned, and said unto Peter, *Get thee behind me, Satan*: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

It is indeed remarkable that the Church of Rome should have

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.

afforded—one that of itself would be sufficient, could no others be adduced—to shew that Simon occupied but an ordinary place among the chosen twelve. At a general assembly of apostles and elders, where, as their acknowledged chief, he would undoubtedly have presided, we find him merely taking part with the others in the general discussion; and then at its close, it devolves, through local circumstances, upon *another*, to declare the determined judgment.* But again, we find from Gal. ii. 11, that on one occasion Paul, so far from receiving the decision of Peter in a matter wherein they differed, says that he “withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.” These instances, Brethren, and many others of like import which might be cited, prove anything but what Rome, in the face of all Scripture and reason would have us to believe, that her authority, based upon that of Peter, is paramount over the whole heritage of Christ.

We have referred to some of the ‘acts’ of the Apostles, let us now turn to some of their ‘precepts.’ Listen to St. Paul in his 1st. Epis. to the Corinthians iii. 11. “*Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.*” Again to the Ephesians ii. 20. “Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, *Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.*” And again to the Colossians i. 18. “*He is the head of the body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.*” It may be said that these passages refer to Christ as the *spiritual* Head of His Church in the sense which Rome admits, and that they do not argue against the *temporal* Supremacy with which St. Peter was invested by the words of the text.—But let us now listen to St. Peter himself. Surely if any one ought to know whether it was Christ’s design to appoint *him* the one foundation Rock and the chief Pastor of His Church, *he* ought, and would doubtless declare it. Let us hear his own testimony, for it settles the point once and for all, notwithstanding all the assertions of the Popes, the Councils or the Traditions of Rome to the contrary. Hear him when in his Epistles he speaks of *himself*,—no assumption of Supreme authority—no allusion to

* Other passages, which shew that an equality existed among the Apostles, abound, as Mat. 28. 19; 1 Cor. 12. 28; Gal. 1. 15, 16; 2. 9. &c.

his high dignity as "Vicar of Christ upon earth," but simply "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ," "an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ."* Hear him when speaking of those who like himself had "tasted that the Lord is gracious," "Ye also as *lively stones* are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. II. 5. Hear him again, when speaking of that glorious Rock upon whom he, as well as they, was builded. "To whom coming as unto a *living stone*, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a *chief corner stone*, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." v. 4, 6. Listen also to his faithful charge to the Presbyters of the Church, "*Feed the flock of God* which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being *lords over God's heritage*, but being ensamples to the flock." 1 Pet. v. 2. Listen again to his testimony respecting the *Head pastor*, "And when the *Chief Shepherd* shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." v. 4. Listen once more to that noble avowal before the persecuting Sanhedrim, "*This* (Jesus Christ of Nazareth) *is the stone* which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the *head of the corner*. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is *none other name* under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." How different, Brethren, is this language of Peter, from the assertions of those who profess to be Peter's followers. He could not take to himself the honor which they falsely claim for his pretended successors. He never thought of assuming that dignity and supremacy which they impiously attribute to man; but which the Word of God, the Apostles of Christ, yea Peter himself ascribes *only* to the Church's Divine, Almighty HEAD, the glorified Jesus.† Do any still question us whether the Rock upon which Christ's Church was founded was Peter? We point them to the testimony

* It is remarkable, that the Epistles of St. Peter do not contain nearly so many nor so strong allusions to Apostolical authority as those of St. John and St. Paul.

† See 1 Cor. 11. 3; Eph. 1. 10, 22; 4. 15; 5. 23; Mat. 28. 20. &c.

of his own words, and in the language of the chief priests and elders answer, "What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth." "*There never was a superstructure raised upon so slender a basis, as that upon which rests this figment of 'Papal Supremacy.'*"

We have thus, my Brethren, briefly examined this fundamental doctrine of Romanism, by the text before us, by the testimony of other portions of Scripture, by the acts and precepts of other Apostles, and by the words of Peter himself; and we find that they all refute and condemn it as unknown, impious and false. I have called it a *fundamental* doctrine, because it is one upon which the whole system of error is founded. If Peter was not made "Vicar of Jesus Christ," as they affirm, he certainly could not have left that prerogative to others.* But it is as the *Divinely authorized Head* of the Infallible Church that the Pope of Rome asserts his right, both to *temporal dominion* over the kingdoms of the earth, and also to *spiritual obedience* in matters of faith and doctrine.† If then his authority be a mere assumption, the whole fabric of *Romanism* is left without a foundation. This is the result of proving, as we have just proved, that the assertion—that the Redeemer, before He ascended to heaven, appointed a certain man to be the Supreme Head over His universal Church, and that he was empowered to transfer that authority to others, and they to their successors to the end of time—has no place or testimony in the Word of God, and must therefore be regarded as nothing but an ingenious invention of designing men, to prop up an unscriptural system wearing the outward garb of the religion of Christ.

Time will not permit me now, Brethren, to enter at length into the circumstances and causes, which have put the Church of Rome in possession, both of the innumerable errors which have

* Even if it were clear that Peter *was* entrusted with such dignity, we have not the slightest evidence to show, that he was authorized to convey it to his successors.

† He who reigns on high, delivered our holy Catholic and Apostolic Church to one only person on earth, viz., to the prince of the Apostles, to Peter, and to Peter's successor, the Roman Pontiff, to be governed in the plenitude of power. This one person he appointed prince over all nations and all kingdoms, to pluck up, to destroy, to scatter abroad, to disperse, &c.—*Bull of Pope Pius V., excommunicating Queen Elizabeth.*

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. St. 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.

and more distinguished place.* Just as in the Church of England at the present day, the Bishop of *London* takes the precedence of all other Bishops in the British Empire of the same rank. Their position in this respect was greatly enhanced when in the ivth. Century the Emperor Constantine became a convert to Christianity. It was an evil day for the Church when she began to partake of worldly honors. Being indulged by Emperors, her Bishops and Clergy grew by degrees unfaithful to their God; and giving way to their natural, depraved lust for worldly greatness, they made breaches in the walls, which in adversity had bounded and preserved the simple truth. In their desire to win over and influence the heathen, they gradually permitted the imposing rites and superstitions of paganism to take the place of the simple ordinances of Christ; and in their desire to acquire dominion and wealth, they took advantage of their position and favored circumstances, to impress men's minds with a sense of *their superior authority*, rather than the necessity of giving the heart to God. That this was the origin of the *Primacy*, which eventually led to the assumed *Supremacy* of the Bishops of Rome, is evident from the decrees of several of the early Councils, especially of that called the 4th General Council, held at Chalcedon A. D. 451, after the seat of the Eastern Empire had been established at Constantinople. In the 28th Canon of that Council, signed by 150 Bishops, and declared valid by an imperial decree, are words to this effect:—"We determine and decree concerning the privileges of the most holy Church of Constantinople, the New Rome. For the Fathers gave honor to the See of ancient Rome, *because that was the Imperial city*; and 150 Bishops, beloved of God, moved by the same consideration, have granted *equal honor to the See of New Rome*; rightly judging, that the city which is honored by the Empire and the Senate, should enjoy *equal privileges* with the ancient queen, in ecclesiastical matters also."†

* In the 2nd Cent. Polycarp, Bp. of Smyrna, and Polycrates, Bp. of Antioch, on behalf of the Asiatic Churches, were in open collision with Anicetus and Victor, Bps. of Rome. In the 3rd Cent. Cyprian and the other African Bishops, assembled in Council, condemned a decree of Stephen, Bp. of Rome.

† It is evident from the early history of the Church, that for some Centuries the jurisdiction of the Bp. of Rome was confined to his own Diocese. Its first extension may be traced to an Edict of the Emp. Valentinian A. D. 458, which *ordered*, that the Bp. of Rome with his colleagues should examine the causes of the other Bishops.

It was not till the 6th Century that the title of *Universal Bishop* was ever assumed by any one, and then it was first claimed by the Bishop of Constantinople. And here let us observe how the Church of Rome testifies against herself; it is a remarkable fact, that on this very occasion two Bishops of Rome in succession protested against him, not on the ground that they themselves had the exclusive right to that dignified title, but because it was unwarranted and impious for any Bishop to arrogate to himself authority over others. Gregory 1st. of Rome protested in this memorable language. "My fellow Priest John, attempts to be called the Universal Bishop; I am compelled to exclaim,—O times! O manners! Priests seek to themselves names of vanity, and glory in new and profane appellations. Far from the very hearts of Christians be that very name of blasphemy." "To consent to the adoption of that wicked appellation, is nothing less than to apostatize from the faith." "I indeed confidently assert, that whoever calls himself, or desires to be called 'Universal priest,' that person, in his vain elation, is the *precursor of Antichrist*." Surely no Protestant could have spoken in stronger terms against the Supremacy of the Pope, than this Bishop of Rome himself; and yet his successor next but one accepted this same title at the hands of an ungodly Emperor, and the unscrupulous successors of the honest Gregory have ever since claimed it.*

Such, Brethren, are some of the many thoughts suggested by a consideration of one of the essential doctrines of Romanism, when compared with the testimony of God's Word. Many plausible arguments are adduced, many sophisms employed by those who are themselves deceived by the bold pretensions, or ensnared by the captivating allurements, the pomp and pageantry of the Church of Rome. They tell us, notwithstanding the obvious inconsistency, the utter variance between its whole system and requirements, and the pure and simple spirit of the religion of the Gospel;—notwithstanding its doctrines are unsparingly condemned, and not, even by themselves, attempted to be proved by the plain sense of Scripture:—notwithstanding this, that it is a Church over which the Apostle Peter, as 'Christ's Vicar upon earth,' and his equally

* Pope Boniface III. received the title of Universal Bishop from the Emp. Phocas, A. D. 666.

honored successors were divinely appointed to preside, to be her safeguard against error, and to be the sole dispensers of the infallible truth; but they are compelled to go for a proof of all this, not to the sure, unmistakable testimony of God through His Written Word, but to their pretended traditions, handed down, be it remembered, through successive generations of men, many of whom were notorious for ungodliness, profligacy and vice. Whether, Brethren, you will receive in this matter the testimony of men or the testimony of God, judge ye! *They* tell us that the Church is built upon *Peter*, and that we must implicitly receive all the monstrous, unscriptural, unnatural dogmas that have been invented and propagated by his so called infallible successors. But, blessed be God, "we have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we shall do well to take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." *We believe*, upon the testimony of Jehovah, that *no other foundation* is, or can be laid, than that which is there revealed, which is CHRIST JESUS; and we rejoice, that He has not left us to be perplexed by the changing, uncertain *traditions of men*, but that He has given us *His Word and His Spirit*, to teach us all things necessary for our present and eternal peace.

My Brethren, let us be jealous of the simple truth as it is in Jesus,—for our holy faith, not as polluted by human additions, but pure as it was once delivered to the saints. While we pity and pray for those who through ignorance or a deceitful heart are led "to believe a lie", let us beware of their "cunningly devised fables." Let us cling closely to our open Bible,—believe nothing, as an Article of Faith, that we do not find there. Let us live upon its precepts; let us carry out its teaching. Let us cling closely, too, to the only true foundation of our faith, not Peter, not the Pope, not the Virgin, not Saints, but the *Eternal Rock of ages*, the adorable Redeemer of our immortal souls. Let us be united closely by a living, abiding, comforting faith to Him. Let us drink in abundantly of His Spirit. Let us cherish a simple, earnest devotedness of heart and life to Him,—based upon a heartfelt gratitude for His unbounded love to us; and we shall realize all the blessedness—all the inestimable privileges of the Ephesian Christians, as depicted by St. Paul. "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and

with the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

