

Anyone who makes claims should be able to prove them before he expects anyone to believe them. If upon the examination of one's claims, there is no evidence presented, or proof given to uphold the claims, he should expect his claims to be discredited.

If one were to teach that the apostle Peter was made the head of the church on earth, and that he has successors, he should either prove those claims by the word of God, or quit making them. The Book of Acts is an inspired history of the early church. This book mentions Peter many times, and relates many of his travel experiences. But this book does not mention or even infer that Peter went to Rome and there set up his office, the "Holy See." In fact the Book of Acts does not say anything about Peter being the head of the church, or that anyone except Christ was head of the church.

What would you think of a history of England that did not even mention its kings? What would you think of a history of the United States that did not mention its presidents? Such histories would not be accepted by many people, if any.

Can any man discover in the Book of Acts, or any part of God's word any organization of which Peter was head except his family? Is it possible that the inspired writers wholly overlooked Peter's headship over the church which,

if it were a fact, was one of the most important fact of the times?

It is also claimed that Christ built his church on Peter. This claim is based on a perversion of Matthew 16:18. The reason I know this passage has been perverted is because Paul plainly said that Christ is the foundation of the church and that no other can be laid (1 Cor. 3:11).

The Bible says that Christ is the head of the body, the church, and that he must have all preeminence (Col. 1:18). Peter had unusual ability, but he had the same authority that all the other apostles had. (Ability is not authority!) They were all guided into all truth as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance; the word which they gave us in the Bible is our standard of authority; it is inspired testimony. Through that word all men can believe and be one as Christ and God are one (John 7:21, 22). And through that word all the apostles in one sense "rule" or "judge" over God's spiritual Israel, the church (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; Gal. 6:16).

#### WAS PETER THE HEAD?

There are multitudes of people who believe and teach that the apostle Peter was appointed by Christ to be the head of the church on earth. They say that Christ conferred on Peter special honors, and jurisdiction, and authority in the government of his whole church,

and that the same authority has always resided in the popes, or bishops of Rome as being the successors of Peter. I am called upon to believe these claims. You, dear reader, are called upon to believe these matters concerning the apostle Peter. In the interest of human souls, I challenge any man to prove either, or all of the following claims:

- (1) That Jesus Christ established such an office as that of "Pope";
- (2) That Peter was the first incumbent of such an office even if Christ established it;
- (3) That Peter established himself in Rome, or that he was ever in Rome;
- (4) That Peter had successors, even if he were the first Pope;
- (5) That the Popes of Rome are those successors!

There is nothing harsh or unkind about the forgoing challenges. Neither of the forgoing claims can be proven by the Word of God, but they would have to all be proven before the claims concerning the supremacy of Peter could be maintained.

In his letter to the church at Rome, Paul mentioned several Christians that were at Rome, and he mentioned them

by name. But he did not mention Peter. According to the popish claims Peter was in Rome when Paul wrote this letter. Strange indeed that Paul did not mention Peter. Peter never claimed any relation to Rome.

Paul wrote several letters from Rome, but in none of them did he mention Peter even once! The book of Acts tells us about some of the travels of the apostle Peter, and mentions his going to small, relatively insignificant towns and villages, but it does not mention his going to Rome. There is no Bible evidence that Peter ever saw Rome. Indeed it teaches that he was in other places when the traditions of men say he was in Rome.

#### THE REAL HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Christ is the head of his church (Col. 1:18). The prophets said that Christ would have to be heeded if people were saved by him (Deut. 15:18; Acts 3:22). Christ rules over his church by the rules and regulations found in that which God has spoken through him (Heb. 1:1, 2). Christ spoke this message through inspired men, for he sent to the apostles the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit guided them into all truth (John 16:13).

Each congregation of the Lord's church must be governed by the word of Jesus; otherwise the church could not please the head.

When there are men qualified, Christ has authorized that there be a plurality of men to rule, or lead in each congregation of his church. Every congregation should work toward the development of such men. Such men are called in the New Testament by such terms as: "bishops," "elders," "pastors," "presbyters ... .. overseers," etc. These terms do not signify different offices in the church. A man who is an elder in the church of the living God is a pastor; he is a bishop; he is an overseer (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-7).

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# False Claims About Peter?

By

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