

**Is William Webster Correct in his**  
**1) Critique of *Upon this Rock* by Stephen Ray; and his**  
**2) Understanding of the Papacy in the Early Church?**

Outline (How I Approach William Webster's "Rebuttal"):

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## **Introduction**

My mother tells me I was pretty spunky as a kid. A challenge never scared me off; no, I'd get a gleam in my little blue eyes. When I wrote a book defending the Papacy (*Upon this Rock*), I expected some challenges from detractors of the Catholic Church sooner or later. I guess the gleam is still in these now middle-age blue eyes—at least that's what my wife says.

As I was growing up in the country we had a mini-farm with lots of animals. My job was to remove large piles of animal feed “re-cycled” into what we called manure. Our rough neighbor kids called it something else which I was forbidden to say as a good Baptist boy. Early in the morning I would go to the barn and stand in front of a huge pile and say to myself “There is so much here; where should I begin”. That's kind of how I feel today as I look down on William Webster's “rebuttal” to my book *Upon this Rock*. But whereas my younger brothers shied away from the shoveling, I always grabbed the shovel and jumped right in to take care of the mess.

Don't get me wrong—I have nothing against Mr. Webster and I beg his indulgence to refer to him as Bill throughout this response. Throughout his “rebuttal” he refers to me as *Mr. Ray*, but I don't think of myself as *Mr. Ray*—that's my dad's name. When someone calls me Mr. Ray I always turn around to see if my dad is standing behind me. I hope if Mr. Webster and I ever meet personally he will call me Steve and allow me to call him Bill. I hope he doesn't think I'm too forward by using his first name through the rest of this response (plus, Bill is easier for my clumsy fingers to type).

Bill is probably a good guy. His neighbors and members of his local congregation are, I would suppose, very pleased with him. I expect he is sincere in his belief—at least I hope so—and I would hold the same expectation regarding his intent with the “rebuttal”. I have no reason to suspect ill-will, probably only self-preservation since he mainly addresses the footnotes where his name appears. There's nothing wrong with that. Sometimes people just see things differently and unfortunately, when this happens, the two in question often talk *past* each other instead of *to* each other. I hope to agree with Bill where I can, correct some things as needed, and to overall, maybe, help bridge the gap between our very different positions.

I hope to avoid the “he said—she said” kind of argument, though I'm afraid it won't be altogether possible. Maybe we can help bridge the gap or narrow the divide between us—Lord knows that divided Christendom can certainly use some of that. If worse comes to worse we can agree to disagree on some matters. Let's face it, greater minds than ours have debated these issues for many centuries. There is no hostility or anger in my fingertips, but passion for the truth burns the keys and will sometimes manifest itself. Hopefully I'll get down to some good straight talk with a fellow believer in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why do I want to tackle such a project? There are several reasons. First, I have a short hiatus this month with no pressure. Second, since this is the first critique of my new book, I felt it was appropriate to respond. Third, I really enjoy a good challenge and diving deeper into history, the Church, and theology. Fourth, I hope to help people discern the errors in much current “anti-Catholic efforts based mainly on Protestant bias. Fifth, for my edification and the edification of my fellow-Catholics who have come into port in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Lastly, because such things have become family projects and everyone gets involved in the fun.

How *does* one approach a forty-page “rebuttal” with only a little spare time? Should I write a general overview and correct the major flaws or take the whole “rebuttal” tit-for-tat and respond sentence-by-sentence? Probably a bit of both, right? Here’s my problem: when you write a book it gets published, a lot of people may read it, and you may make a little bit of money (very little I’ve discovered), but the kind of writing I embark upon this evening takes a lot of time, is read by very few, and makes absolutely *no* money. It just sits on a web page for a few years while the book marches on. But, like the barnyard chores and the well-worn shovel, it’s a tough job, and someone’s got to do it. So, let’s get going.

### **Preliminary Comments**

Before I jump into Bill’s actual text, there are a few preliminary issues I would like to touch on.

Many of the statements and assumptions Bill makes about the early Church and the Fathers have been dealt with in detail in my book. For example, he habitually incorporates the practice of mixing metaphors (*Upon this Rock*, pps. 15–17 and elsewhere); he insists on the false dilemma of *either-or* instead of *both-and*, and he provides quotes that allegedly support his position while ignoring others, and ignoring the historical *practice* of the early Christians. He also, as we will see toward the end of this paper, uses a translation of the phrase “bishop of bishops” which is not the best translation to give backbone to this otherwise spineless assertion. It seems he uses a translation that suits his purpose while setting aside more standard works, works he uses pretty consistently elsewhere. I’m pretty sure he never read my book, since as well will see, in many places he ignores my book completely and simply “cuts and paste” whole sections of his book into the “rebuttal” as a guise for interaction with the material. I also question whether he read the book because things I clearly explain in my book he seems to overlooks or ignores in his “rebuttal”, and he spends a fair amount of time criticizing me for not admitting or revealing certain “evidence” which I have clearly stipulated or freely included in my book. I did not limit myself to exclusively passages that seemed “Catholic-friendly” by any means. We’ll get to all that in due time.

## Am I Guilty of Mangling History? How do we Read and Write Church History?

In our discussion about the Fathers and how they understood Peter and the primacy of Rome, it is very important to understand how to read and write history. This is the study of “historiography”. Bill and I have very different perspectives on this matter and it is my conclusion that it is one of the major reasons we may never be able to see eye-to-eye on this matter. I will begin with Bill’s comments and then move to discuss the proper methods of historical research—specifically about the Church. I will also explain why I think Bill is in bed with Enlightenment thinking and the secularists.

Bill’s comment about my violation of the rules of “historiography” “historiography” is very poorly worded, surely the result of trying to write so much in so little time, something I can appreciate. But when I read these free sentences casually, as did others I asked, it appears initially that Bill completely misunderstands the work “historiography”. Read his comments for yourself: *“Stephen Ray, and Roman apologists in general, are guilty of a major error of historiography. This is the error of importing the theological understanding of terms developed in a later age and to then impose these concepts on the same terms of the writings of an earlier age, assuming that because they use the same word you do, that they mean the same thing by it.”*

When I first read this, it appeared that Bill was *defining* historiography as the reading back into history of current ideas. This would be a serious embarrassment for historiography, properly defined means actually the opposite! But I knew Bill was too intelligent to make such a blunder so I decided he must mean that I am guilty, not of historiography, but of violating basic rules of historiography.

I asked a best friend of mine with his Ph.D. in English, Dennis Walters, what he thought Bill meant, and if his “rebuttal” was just worded poorly at this point (I am not criticizing Bill here, I get typing fast too, and know there are probably plenty of grammatical errors on my part as well). He responded: “His charge against you is fairly murky. As nearly as I can make it out, it is that you are violating the rules of historical interpretation of ideas (a kind of fallacy in logic) by ‘importing the theological understanding of terms developed in a later age’ and assuming that the era before the term was invented, and about which you are writing, understood the *concept* the same way that you understand it today. But that isn’t exactly what he *said*. I think he got mixed up in his own grammar (which contains a couple of errors, by the way).”

For those who don’t know, historiography is defined as **1 a:** the writing of history; *especially:* the writing of history based on the critical examination of sources, the selection of particulars from the authentic materials, and the synthesis of particulars into a narrative that will stand the test of critical methods; **b:** the principles, theory, and history

of historical writing (a course in *historiography*) **2:** the product of historical writing; a body of historical literature” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*).

The allegedly violations of historiography are commonly referred to “anachronistic” or “prolepsis”. “**Anachronism**” is defined by *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* as “**1** : an error in chronology; *especially*: a chronological misplacing of persons, events, objects, or customs in regard to each other **2:** a person or a thing that is chronologically out of place; *especially*: one from a former age that is incongruous in the present.” “**Proleptic**” is defined as “a: The anachronistic representation of something as existing before its proper or historical time or b: The assignment of something, such as an event or a name, to a time that precedes it.”

I’m not sure why William accuses me of an “error of historiography.” I suspect that he has been seduced by a positivist and secularist historiography which would certainly undermine his own understanding of salvation history. He seems to think it improper that I detect a child in an embryo. He seems to deny that the past points toward the future. No Christian who takes the Bible seriously can deny that history is directed towards increasing our understanding of God’s will. In short, doctrine develops. History is not just a series of discrete, undirected, random events unrelated to one another. Our fragmentary and incomplete past understandings grow into fullness through the superintendence of the Holy Spirit. Animal skins, the doctrine of atonement for Adam and Eve, was adequate but primitive when compared with the Mosaic sacrificial system.

Further, the Mosaic understanding of atonement cannot do full justice to Jesus’ sacrifice. I hear Bill saying, however, that it is a mistake to see Moses in Adam and Eve’s animal skins or to see Jesus’ in the sacrifice of animals. That would be anachronistic. To the contrary, it is the practice of the Hebrew historians, the mind of the Apostles, and the methodology of the Fathers. History is meaningful, under the providence of God and directed to a purpose. The Hebrew historians are often called the world’s first great historiographers. They read their current history in light of the received narrative of what God had accomplished in their past. The Apostles and the Fathers weren’t shy about interpreting their moment in light of the tradition they had received. Each expected that they were approaching a fuller understanding than their ancestors had. That is why we can read the fragmentary evidence of the past as pregnant with greater meaning than secularists and non-Christians can. We can see the oak in the acorn. I’m surprised that Bill has a hard time understanding this since he is so committed to the Puritans who themselves were not shy to read their present as the fulfillment of the past. He would do well not simply to accept the historical conclusions of the Puritans but to try and enter into their historical methodology.

The accuser is often blind to the fact that they practice themselves what they point out in others. Can any of us be 100% objective when studying history? Can we

completely avoid reading our experiences, historical and theological developments, and understandings back on earlier generations? Did the Apostle Paul ever do such a thing? Did he view Jewish history differently after Acts 9 than he did as a Pharisee? Did the Apostles in Jerusalem and the Gentiles in Asia view anything differently after the first church council in Acts 15? Will Bill agree that his presuppositions and accepted Baptist traditions have no effect on his research?

The new book *Reading Scriptures with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), written by Protestant author Christopher A. Hall, make the point, “Many conservative Protestant interpreters, though uncomfortable to find themselves slumbering with Enlightenment and postmodernist bedfellows, will fail to discern or acknowledge the necessity of studying the fathers” (pg. 31). I would suggest that even those who *do* begin to investigate and read the Fathers, still fail to understand or think *like* the Fathers, therefore misunderstanding Patristic thought and teaching.

I tried to be objective as I studied history and the papacy and I’m quite willing to admit that I view history as a Catholic. I understand the Catholic Church as a living organism, the Body of Christ. It is also an organization, even though this word has its unhelpful connotations. As any organization grows the need for a unifying factor is essential. As a business owner, I know this all too well. Countries know it, sports teams know it, families know it, and Protestant churches know it too. When the “guarantor” of unity is removed or non-existent, the unity is soon non-existent. How many Protestant denominations have blown apart through envy, contradictory opinions, differing theologies. This type of disunity proves the point. Catholics expect God to provide unity for his Church, and therefore a “principle” or head to represent and secure this unity since that is his desire and the prayer of our Lord (Jn 17:22–23). I would expect him to make provision to ensure and guarantee that visible unity. The Protestant doctrine of *sola Scriptura* does the exact opposite. Within less than four hundred years it has spawned over 30,000 competing and conflicting sects and groups.

Catholics believe, with good biblical and historical warrant, as well as just good old common sense, that Peter and popes are God’s answer to providing the needed and expected unity. Just as a CEO in a company, a captain in the army, a father in a family and a pastor in a Baptist church, there is a need for visible leadership to ensure unity. I deal with this in great detail along with the biblical reasons for the papacy, which Bill doesn’t really address in his “rebuttal”, or in his books. One of the embarrassing things of dealing with the biblical evidence, especially if one looks at modern scholarship, is that linguistic and textual biblical scholars almost unanimously have agreed that the Rock is Peter. This is the literal meaning of the text though many other applications can be drawn from the text. (Boy, I feel like I’m writing my book all over again!)

My friend Dennis Walters again commented on the definitions of the Church and her Ecumenical Councils and the defining of words and the meanings of earlier ages: “I grant that the language at large changes the meanings of words. In popular speech, the changes happen fairly quickly (600 years is a fairly slow rate of change; most meanings change far more quickly). But in philosophy and theology, which are sciences, the chances of meanings changing with no one noticing are remote at best. I agree with William that theological terms change in meaning. But one reason why the Church continually revisits the same topic century after century in its councils, encyclicals, and theological investigations is to ensure that the problem William is pointing to does not happen vis a vis Church teaching. So, when the Church says that, by ‘transubstantiation’ we actually mean something pretty close to what Justin meant by ‘transmutation,’ it is doing so after a great deal of scientific investigation and reflection. The historiographical problem--actually, a logical and a historical problem both--is actually what the Church is explicitly trying to avoid in making statements that attempt to clarify meaning.”

This issue of historiography really lies at much of the disagreement between Bill and I. I think it is probably an honest difference in methodology and how we see God working in history. As long as we differ on the basic premise of how to read Christian history, we will continue to come up with differing conclusions. I think this is a somewhat fair assessment. Can I criticize Bill for his conclusions? Yes and no. I will agree with him where I can, but disagree, kindly I hope, where we come up with very different results.

I am concluding this section on historiography with an extended quote from Fr. Stanley Jaki from his book *And on This Rock*. In it he discusses how one “reads” history and the development of ideas which can then be seen as we look back at the earlier era. He is criticizing many of the liberal Catholic theologians that have given away the store in the pursuit of ecumenism and “modern critical methods”. He has just mentioned that recent scholarship (“Kittel, Cullmann, and many lesser names have come around to admitting that Peter himself was meant by the words of Jesus at Caesarea Philippi.

Stanley Jaki writes, “Should we readily forget that around 1870 cultivators (mostly Protestant) of biblical criticism assured the world that Christ never spoke the words ‘And on this Rock,’ or if He did, he meant only faith, perhaps Peter’s faith, but certainly not Peter himself was meant by those words. Surely we can be most gratified by the fact that in more recent times, Kittel, Cullmann, and many lesser names have come around to admitting that Peter himself was meant by those words. Surely we can be gratified that it is no longer fashionable in biblical scholarship to doubt Peter’s leadership among the Twelve. But should we also believe that it was not rational, scholarly, and objective to believe in the primacy of Peter until the biblical criticism caught up with the idea in these last days? Would not such subservience to the shifting moods of biblical criticism be a catastrophic prospect for reason as well as



faith? After all, biblical criticism, or at least the ‘accepted’ or ‘in’ wing of it still denies us the continuity of Peter’s primacy and with it continued infallibility and indefectibility for the Church as well. No different is the case when one turns to the scholarly evaluation the record of the first two or three Christian centuries concerning the role of Peter’s successors in the Church. The venture may simply be misplaced if too much weight is given to a not-too-old and highly acclaimed book on ecclesiology according to which even a thousand years later, that is, during the High Middle Ages, papal infallibility can be found only in its germ in the record.’ According to another recent and major monograph, papal infallibility owes its origin to the excessive zeal of some early Franciscan theologians.’ Clearly, what is then the point of looking for any evidence for infallibility in the first three centuries?

“Let us therefore be more modest and go back only as far as the beginning of this century. Then the record in question appeared rather different to Catholic theologians not yet swayed by some Utopian vision of ecumenism or by the subtle strategy of Protestantizing the Church from within, a strategy which Pope Paul VI decried in an agonizing utterance. As to Protestant theologians, hardly any of them could at that time be suspect of an overweening sympathy for Roman Catholicism in their reading of the record. One of the most prominent of them, Harnack, was indeed too much of a liberal to have sympathy for even traditional Protestantism. Thus we may reasonably assume that only respect for the historical record prompted him to write in his famed *History of Dogma* that the first letter of Clement, bishop of Rome, written to the Corinthians, ‘proves that, by the end of the first century, the Roman Church had already drawn up fixed rules for her own guidance, that she watched with motherly care over outlying communities, and that she then knew how to use language that was at once an expression of duty, love, and authority’. Almost exactly a hundred years later there came the famous edict of Victor I, an edict declaring that any local church that failed to conform with Rome was excluded from the union of the one Church on the ground of heresy. Harnack wondered aloud:

“‘How would Victor have ventured on such an edict—though indeed he had not the power of enforcing it in every case—unless the special prerogative of Rome to determine the conditions of the ‘common unity’ in the vital questions of faith had been an acknowledged and well established fact? How could Victor have addressed such a demand to the independent churches, if he had not been recognized, in his capacity of bishop of Rome, as the special guardian of the ‘common unity’?”

“The forcefulness of Harnack’s words are undeniable, but are, therefore, the texts he reflected upon a support of papal infallibility? *They are, indeed, as long as one looks for things and not mere words.* A historian of the dogma of the Eucharist, who is satisfied with nothing short of the expression ‘Real Presence’, must wait until the Middle Ages, but then what is he going to do with the words of Saint Augustine, according to whom during the last supper “Christ carried that Body (of His) in His own hands”? *Much the same is true about the early record concerning infallibility. It clearly contains the thing, that is, the reality of the infallibility of the Bishop of Rome,*



*though not the expression of itself. But to perceive things beneath the words as far as history is concerned, one must have a notion of history such as the one formulated by Newman and in that very book of his which is the record of his agonizing search as to where “faithfulness to type” is preserved:*

“History is not a creed or catechism, it gives lessons rather than rules; . . . bold outlines and broad masses of color rise out of the records of the past. They may be dim, they may be incomplete; but they are definite . . . to be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant.’

“To such an approach to history it will be objected that it prejudices history, that it forces one in advance to decide what to look for in history, to the detriment of a critical scholarship by Newman, who had repeatedly endorsed papal infallibility as a theological tenet prior to its definition at Vatican I and, though he viewed that definition inopportune, accepted it unreservedly. Its latter-day Roman Catholic critics [and Protestant as well] would do well to ponder Newman’s penetrating observation about objectors to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception: ‘I have never heard of one Catholic having difficulty in receiving it, whose faith on other grounds was not already suspicious’” (Stanley Jaki, *And On this Rock* [Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1997], 113–116)

So, yes, I look at history from a Catholic perspective inherited from the Jews, the Apostles, and the Fathers, and a study of history, proper “historiography”, shows that this is the proper perspective of Church history and God’s involvement in redemption. Those who refuse to see God at work in history, and who fail to look back to the past with eyes to see the development of God’s truth and Church, have it seems to me, jumped into bed with the secularists who deny God’s continuing involvement in history and have abandoned the perspective of the Apostles, the Fathers and the Early Church in their methodology of reading and understanding history. These are the violators of a God-centered historiography.

#### **Unanimous Consent of the Fathers:**

It would certainly be helpful if we understand how Bill interprets the Fathers in light of history. How does Bill look at teaching of the Fathers and the Catholic principle of Unanimous Consent of the Fathers. I bring this up here because I think it Bill pursues the Fathers with two principles in mind. *First*, if the Fathers don’t use the same terminology and expressions as the Vatican Councils, then the Vatican Councils must misunderstand or misrepresent the early Church Fathers. I don’t know if Bill read this in my book or not, since he never mentions it though he accuses me of frequently of thinking the Fathers taught the same thing as Vatican I and in the same terms, but I make it clear in my book that the Fathers probably would not have stood up at Vatican I and said “We’ve always taught the Pope’s infallibility, and in those exact terms!” (p. 207). I won’t comment on Bill’s first principle here since it will come up later in our discussion.

*Second*, he uses the Unanimous Consent of the Fathers, a principle taught by the Catholic Church, to discredit the Catholic conclusions drawn from the Patristic period. Granted, Bill does not bring this principle up in his “rebuttal” but he makes it clear from his usage of the Fathers and the conclusions he draws. Also, and more importantly, he makes this one of the most important of his interpretive principles when reading the Fathers and critiquing the Catholic Church as described in *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History*.

He misunderstands and misrepresents (oh boy, here I go using Bill’s favorite word myself!) the Church’s teaching on the Unanimous Consent of the Fathers. With his wrong interpretation in hand, he wades through the Fathers like an elephant through a lily pond. Since this is such an important principle, I thought I should give a rather lengthy explanation of his view and the Church’s meaning of the phrase. You will see why this is so important as we progress in this study.

In Bill’s book *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* (which is a very attractive and nicely laid out book, I must say), he begins well by quoting the excellent words St. Vincent of Lerins and the Councils of Trent and Vatican I, but then misses the mark by misunderstanding and misapplying the Church’s stance.

The Unanimous Consent of the Fathers (*unanimem consensum Patrum*) refers to the morally unanimous teaching of the Church Fathers on certain doctrines, the interpretations of Scripture as received by the universal Church. The individual Fathers are not personally infallible, and a discrepancy by a few patristic witnesses does not harm the collective patristic testimony.

The word “unanimous” comes from two Latin words: *únus*, one + *animus*, mind. “Consent” in Latin means agreement, accord, and harmony; being of the same mind or opinion. Where the Fathers speak in harmony, with one mind overall—not necessarily each and every one agreeing on every detail but by consensus and general agreement—we have “unanimous consent”. The teachings of the Fathers provide us with an authentic witness to the apostolic tradition.

St. Irenaeus (AD c. 130–c. 200) writes of the “tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome’ (*Against Heresies*, III, 3, 2), and the “tradition which originates from the apostles [and] which is preserved by means of the successions of presbyters in the Churches” (Ibid., III, 2, 2) which “does thus exist in the Church, and is permanent among us” (Ibid., III, 5, 1). Unanimous consent develops from the understanding of apostolic teaching preserved in the Church with the Fathers as its authentic witness.

St. Vincent of Lerins, explains the Church's teaching: "In the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all. For that is truly and in the strictest sense "Catholic," which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally. This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity, consent. We shall follow universality if we confess that one faith to be true, which the whole Church throughout the world confesses; antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is manifest were notoriously held by our holy ancestors and fathers; consent, in like manner, if in antiquity itself we adhere to the consentient definitions and determinations of all, or at the least of almost all priests and doctors" (*Commonitory* 2). Notice that St. Vincent mentions "almost all priests and doctors".

The phrase Unanimous Consent of the Fathers had a specific application as used at the Council of Trent (Fourth Session), and reiterated at the First Vatican Council (*Dogmatic Decrees of the Vatican Council*, chap. 2). The Council Fathers specifically applied the phrase to the interpretation of Scripture. Biblical and theological confusion was rampant in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther stated "There are almost as many sects and beliefs as there are heads; this one will not admit Baptism; that one rejects the Sacrament of the altar; another places another world between the present one and the day of judgment; some teach that Jesus Christ is not God. There is not an individual, however clownish he may be, who does not claim to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, and who does not put forth as prophecies his ravings and dreams."

A fine definition of Unanimous Consent, based on the Church Councils, is provided in the *Maryknoll Catholic Dictionary*, "When the Fathers of the Church are morally unanimous in their teaching that a certain doctrine is a part of revelation, or is received by the universal Church, or that the opposite of a doctrine is heretical, then their united testimony is a certain criterion of divine tradition. As the Fathers are not personally infallible, the counter-testimony of one or two would not be destructive of the value of the collective testimony; so a moral unanimity only is required" (Wilkes-Barre, Penn.: Dimension Books, 1965), pg. 153).

The Council Fathers at Trent (1554–63) affirmed the ancient custom that the proper understanding of Scripture was that which was held by the Fathers of the Church to bring order out of the enveloping chaos. Opposition to the Church's teaching is exemplified by William Webster (*The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1995]) who misrepresents the Council Fathers by redefining and misapplying "unanimous consent". First in redefining, he implies that unanimous consent means each Father must have held the same fully developed traditions and taught them clearly in the same terms as used later in Vatican I. This is a false understanding of the phrase and even in American law unanimous consent "does not always mean that every one present voted for the proposition, but it may, and generally does, mean, when a

[verbal] vote is taken, that no one voted in the negative” (*Black’s Law Dictionary*). Second he misapplies the term, not to the interpretation of Scripture, as the Council Fathers intended, but to tradition. His assertions are not true, but using a skewed definition and application of “unanimous consent”, he uses selective patristic passages as proof-texts for his analysis of the Fathers.

As an example, individual Fathers may explain “the Rock” in Matthew 16 as Jesus, Peter, Peter’s confession, or Peter’s faith. Even the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* refers to the “Rock” of Matthew 16 as Peter in one place (CCC 552) and his faith (CCC 424) in another. Matthew 16 can be applied in many ways to refute false teachings and to instruct the faithful without emphasizing the literal, historical interpretation of Peter as the Rock upon which the Church has been built his Church. Please notice the quotation from *The See of Peter* in my book *Upon this Rock*, page 151. Webster and others emphasize various patristic applications as “proof” of non-unanimous consent.

Discussing certain variations in the interpretations of the Fathers, Pope Leo XIII (*The Study of Holy Scripture*, from the encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, Nov., 1893) writes, “Because the defense of Holy Scripture must be carried on vigorously, all the opinions which the individual Fathers or the recent interpreters have set forth in explaining it need not be maintained equally. For they, in interpreting passages where physical matters are concerned have made judgments according to the opinions of the age, and thus not always according to truth, so that they have made statements which today are not approved. Therefore, we must carefully discern what they hand down which really pertains to faith or is intimately connected with it, and what they hand down with unanimous consent; for ‘in those matters which are not under the obligation of faith, the saints were free to have different opinions, just as we are,’ according to the opinion of St. Thomas.”

(Works referred to while discussing Unanimous Consent: St. Irenaeus’ quote, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Roberts and Donaldson, Eerdmans, 1985, vol. 1, p. 415, 417. St. Vincent’s quote, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, Eerdmans, 1980, vol. 11, p. 132. Luther quote, Leslie Rumble, *Bible Quizzes to a Street Preacher* [Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 1976], 22. William Webster’s quote, 31. Black’s Law Dictionary, *Black’s Law Dictionary*, Henry Campbell Black, St. Paul, MN: West Publ. Co., 1979, p. 1366. Pope Leo XIII quote, Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma* [London: B. Herder Book Co., 1954], 491–492).

### **My Approach:**

Bill divides his “rebuttal” into six sections. “First Misrepresentation, Second Misrepresentation, etc. They can roughly be divided as follows with page numbers corresponding to my response:

#### 2. Misrepresentation One:

- d. Bill's e-mail
- e. St. Augustine
- f. St. Chrysostom
- 2. Misrepresentation Two: Tertullian
- 3. Misrepresentation Three: St. Cyprian
- 4. Misrepresentation Four: Origen, St. Ambrose, St. Jacob of Nisbis
- 5. Misrepresentation Five: St. Ambrose
- 6. Misrepresentation Six: Cyprian, Firmilian and the Council of Carthage

It should be noted that Bill does not critique my book per se, but zooms in on the footnotes where his name and books are mentioned. Whether I "misrepresent" Bill, whether he misunderstood or misrepresents me, or whether we just have a difference of opinion remains to be seen. So, let's grab the shovel and jump right in, taking a look at this "rebuttal" paragraph by paragraph. The normal text in black are my words. The paragraphs in blue sans serif text are the actual words of Bill's complete "rebuttal". Other items will be marked as necessary. Here we go.

**"Rebuttal One: Part A": Bill's E-mail:**

Stephen Ray is a Roman Catholic who has written a biblical and patristic defense of the papacy in a book entitled *Upon This Rock*. It was published in the Spring of 1999. In this book, Stephen Ray makes reference to *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock* and *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History*, both authored by William Webster. In these references Mr. Ray makes a number of charges against Mr. Webster and purposeful misrepresentations of his writings that need to be addressed.

Spelled my name right, got my religion right, got my book title right. So far so good. However, the word "purposeful" seems problematic in that it is a value judgment and not an objective fact. Was I being honest in evaluating his book or was I "purposely" attempting to misrepresent him? Is it possible, Bill, that you and I just disagree and that I was pointing that out, not purposely trying to malign you? Do you know what was in my mind when I wrote?

The First Misrepresentation: The first misrepresentation occurs in the Introduction in which Mr. Ray makes the following statement:

(Here Bill quotes my book *Upon this Rock*): "Sometimes silence is more eloquent than words. This is especially true in Church history. We hear so much about what the Fathers say and so little about what they do not say. This is revealing and should play a significant role in our research. William Webster has written a book that we will refer to several times in our study. Webster is an ex-Catholic who decided to abandon the Church and cast his lot with the Fundamentalist Protestants. His book is entitled *Peter and the Rock* and asserts that, as the blurb on the back of the book says, "The contemporary Roman Catholic interpretation [of Peter and the rock] had no place in the biblical understanding of the early church doctors." To ascertain whether or not such an assertion is true is one of the main goals of this book. But along with what the Fathers say, we need to hear their silence as well. While reading

Webster's book, I noticed, along with his selective use of the Fathers in attempting to discredit the Catholic Church's teaching on the Papacy, that there are no citations "revealed" in his book in which a Christian, especially a Church Father, explicitly denies the Petrine primacy or the Petrine succession. Webster collects a large number of passages that are supposed to prove that the Fathers oppose Catholic teaching, yet never is there a flat-out denial of the Petrine primacy or the primacy of Rome. This is a silence that speaks volumes! We may find differing interpretations of Peter's primacy, which is what we should expect, according to John Henry Newman, yet we find no denial of that primacy.

"I wrote to William Webster and asked him if he knew of any Church Father who denied the primacy of Peter or of his successors. Mr. Webster's response was very telling, and I wish he had been forthright about this matter in his book. His return E-mail stated, "No father denies that Peter had a primacy or that there is a Petrine succession. The issue is how the fathers interpreted those concepts. They simply did not hold to the Roman Catholic view of later centuries that primacy and succession were 'exclusively' related to the bishops of Rome." What an extraordinary admission; what an extraordinary truth. Many of the Fathers were in theological or disciplinary disagreement with Rome (for example, Cyprian and Irenaeus), yet they never denied Rome's primacy. They may have debated what that primacy meant, or how it was to work out in the universal Church, but they never denied the primacy. The quickest way to achieve jurisdictional or doctrinal victory is to subvert or disarm the opponent. In this case it would have been as simple as proving from the Bible or from tradition that Peter, and subsequently his successors in Rome, had no primacy, no authority to rule in the Church. Yet, as even Webster freely admits, this refutation never occurred. Irenaeus may challenge the appropriateness of a decision made by Victor, but he never challenges Victor's authority to make the binding decision. Cyprian may at times disagree with a decree of Stephen's on baptism, but he never rejects the special place of the Roman See, which would have been the easiest means of winning the debate. The bishop of Rome was unique in assuming the authority and obligation to oversee the Churches. Clement and Ignatius make this clear from the first century and the beginning of the second. If the authority exercised had been illegitimate, or wrongly arrogated, it would have been an act of overzealousness at one end of the spectrum, of tyranny at the other. Yet no one ever stood up and said, "No, you have no authority. Who are you to order us, to teach us, to require obedience from us, to excommunicate us?" If the jurisdictional primacy of Rome had been a matter of self-aggrandizement, someone would have opposed it as they opposed other innovations and heresies in the Church. The silence is profound" (*Upon This Rock* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), p. 12-13).

Mr. Ray has charged that my response in my email was somehow different from that which was expressed in my book. He charges me with failure to be forthright insinuating that I have purposefully misled people. First of all, Mr. Ray failed to give my full response to his request in my email. The full text of my answer is as follows:

"Thanks for your e-mail, As to your questions let me make this brief comment. No father denies that Peter had a primacy or that there is a Petrine succession. The issue is how the Fathers interpreted those concepts. They simply did not hold to the Roman Catholic view of later centuries that primacy and succession were "exclusively" related to the bishops of Rome. They do not apply the special titles they attribute to Peter to the bishops of Rome and what is more they often attribute the same titles to the other

apostles. The most explicit denial of a Petrine primacy in the Roman Catholic sense comes from Augustine which I have documented in the book where he states in exegeting the rock of Matthew 16:18 that Christ did not build his Church on a man but on Peter's confession. He specifically separates Peter's faith from Peter's person and if the Church is not built upon the person of Peter there is no papal office. This is not to say that the Rome did not have authority in the eyes of the fathers. But Rome did not have exclusive authority. The ecclesiology of the early Church was one of conciliarity which was shared by all the major patriarchal sees. Rome was the only patriarchal see in the West and therefore held authority in the West, though in the beginning this was not universal but regional, as Rufinus' translation of the Nicene Council makes clear. I would strongly urge you to read the historical works that I have referenced from the various Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant historians. John Meyendorff is especially good. Hope this is helpful." (Personal e-mail from William Webster to Stephen Ray).

As a side note, Bill had not saved this e-mail and contacted me by e-mail after the publication of my book around Easter of 1999 and asked for the full text of his e-mail to me. I freely sent the copy to him. Had I wanted to malign him, misrepresent him, or be dishonest with his words, I could have refused to give it to him. I had no such intention as is proved by the fact that I freely sent him the e-mail he had not saved.

Regarding Bill's e-mail claim that the primacy of Rome was established because Rome was the political capital. Not always, which is precisely a main point in my book. Webster is disingenuous in his use of the evidence. When the Fathers cite political reasons for the Roman primacy, he "agrees" with them (although he does not really agree with them, he just uses that as a weapon against the Catholics). When they cite spiritual/biblical/theological reasons for the primacy, Bill conveniently ignores them or dismisses them with a wave and a sniff about it not being a "Vatican I" style position. There is much more to debate in the text above, but most of it will be covered as we progress through this response.

Just a side note here. I have the Meyendorff's writings that Bill recommended. Another friend made this comment on Bill's e-mail: " 'John Meyendorff is especially good' but when I read Meyendorff's Primacy of Peter I see much in there that contradicts the sweeping statements that Webster often makes, and much that supports the Catholic position (i.e. universal visible Church requires a universal visible Head, etc). Plus, Webster himself repudiates 90% of Orthodox theology (theology that generally agrees with the Catholic) so he is terribly inconsistent. If Webster is intending to convert to Orthodoxy in the near future and embrace seven sacraments, devotion to the Mother of God, the priesthood, the authority of Bishops, apostolic succession and the primacy of Rome (at least one of honor, etc) that might make him appear more credible and honest to me."

Mr. Ray has purposefully misrepresented me in his statements. He is very aware of the fact that I deal extensively with the question he raises in a very forthright manner in my book. Mr. Ray's main argument rests on an argument from silence, the fact that the Fathers never



denied the primacy of Peter or Petrine succession. Of course they didn't. As I mentioned in my email they explicitly affirm it. However, in affirming it they do not interpret it in the same way Rome does today. That is the point.

I'm not sure if I'm missing something here but it sounds like Bill is saying the same thing I said in my book. I certainly did not misrepresent him. Where does he tell his readers that no early Christian ever denied the primacy of Peter or that it was successive? In his "rebuttal" he wrote, "*Of course they didn't. As I mentioned in my email they explicitly affirm it.*" My point was simply, why not admit that clearly and straight forward in his book—simple as that. If Bill states that in his book he merely has to show me where it is explicitly stated and my argument is empty. I thought it would be helpful for his readers to have this information. I clearly stated Bill's direct words, as seen above, that he considers them to have varying interpretations and that they did not agree with later definitions of Rome. I didn't exclude those clarifications. It was not necessary or prudent (considering the space limitations posed by the editors) to add the whole e-mail. Many times my quotes were cut short or even eliminated to cut down the size of the book. (We'll see later where an important footnote was removed by the publisher which would have eliminated one of Bill's problems with my book.) The sentences following those provided added nothing significantly new and were merely amplifying what I had included of his e-mail. Is this purposefully deceptive? I don't think so. Maybe I could have worded it differently to saying his e mail "contained" the words instead of "his e mail said", but that was certainly not an attempt to mislead, it was simply an attempt to relay the heart of the e mail which I thought was the significant part.

I told a friend that Bill said my "main argument rests on an argument from silence". He responded, "Horsepucky! There are *loads* of positive evidence in your book." I'm not sure what Bill is trying to do here, but to say my *main argument* is one of silence is not only silly but damages Bill's integrity. This is one of those things that make me wonder if he really read the book or only zoomed in on his own name in the index.

Do I use the argument of silence? Of course I do. Do I base most of my argument on silence? Ridiculous. Thumbing through the book will make one giggle at such a silly statement. Silence is a very credible argument, though it is only substantial as a subsidiary of substantial positive proof. To deny the often-resounding silence is to ignore important evidence. A good example is this: Jewish families circumcised their infant sons on the eighth day. The New Testament frequently implies that adults and children were included in the rite of Baptism. For example, when the head of a household converted and was baptized, his entire household was also baptized with him (Ac 16:15, 33; 1 Co 1:16). The inference of course, especially based on Jewish understanding of the family and covenants, would include the aged, the adults, the servants, and the infants. If the practice of Infant Baptism had been illicit or prohibited it would surely have been explicitly forbidden, especially to restrain the Jews from applying Baptism to their infants as they did circumcision. But we find no such prohibition in the New Testament nor in

the writings of the Fathers—a silence that seems quite profound. Should we ignore this evidence? No, not as long as it is used in conjunction with good, positive evidence.

When Roman apologists use the term ‘primacy’ they mean universal jurisdiction to rule the Church universal. When they speak of Petrine succession they mean this in an exclusive sense as applied to the bishops of Rome. But when the Fathers speak of a Petrine primacy and succession and the primacy of Rome they mean something quite different.

This is the argument, isn’t it Bill? To imply that the Fathers, all of them, *always* mean something different than jurisdiction is certainly not proved and simply incorrect. My book shows that even in the first century, with Clement dictating directives to the Corinthians, that we have what Lightfoot calls “the first step toward Papal domination” (*Upon this Rock*, 128). The Fathers had a much more holistic approach to Peter and the primacy than Bill gives them credit for.

They are not silent on the issue. They never denied that Rome had a primacy, but it was interpreted as a primacy of honor since the Church was located in the capital of the Empire and was the site of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul. It was not a primacy of universal jurisdiction.

This is simply a denial of the evidence (though the second part of Bill’s statement contributes to the historical reality). It was seen as holding the primacy because Peter was bishop there and the successive bishops continued in the authoritative office. It was also considered primary because of its freedom from perfidy as Tertullian says. My book has much more on this for those who want to research it further. The argument that Rome only held a primacy of honor is simply a case of *prolepsis* on Bill’s part. Remember that word? This terminology is not from the first centuries but a distinction made by the Orthodox churches.

They never denied that the Church of Rome had a right to exercise authority. But that authority was limited in its jurisdiction.

Bill seems to be whistling a different tone now. I don’t think the readers of his book will come away with this impression! Remember that he says this as you continue to read.

But when the meaning of primacy and rule is couched in the language of Vatican I we find a vigorous opposition to such claims by the Church Fathers. There is not silence. The Fathers do speak, and they make it clear what they mean by the terms they use. They also speak by repudiating the unlawful claims of Rome as they began to be expressed in the third century and in all the subsequent centuries of the Church.

My book addresses this quite adequately. The fact that authority is spurned and challenged as it begins to impose itself.

Stephen Ray, and Roman apologists in general, are guilty of a major error of historiography. This is the error of importing the theological understanding of terms developed in a later age and to then impose these concepts on the same terms of the writings of an earlier age, assuming that because they use the same word you do, that they mean the same thing by it. The heretic, Pelagius, used the term grace. He did not deny its necessity. But the issue is not whether he used the word but what he meant by his use of it. And when we examine his use of the word we find that his understanding was definitely heretical. In like manner, when we examine the way the Church Fathers employed the terms they used with respect to Peter and the meaning of primacy we discover that their understanding of those terms is very different from Vatican I and present day Roman Catholic concepts.

Oh, oh! Here's that word "historiography" that I warned you about earlier. I think I will get tired of saying that I agree that the Fathers did not necessarily define the primacy in the exact words of Vatican I. Doctrines and offices develop over time as does terminology and definitions. The canon of the New Testament and the doctrines of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ are two excellent examples. More later.

With regard to Mr. Ray's charges that I have been less than honest with my readers on the Father's views of Peter and the primacy, the reader can judge for himself whether those charges are valid.

I did not use the word "honest" as in "less than honest", implying Bill was dishonest which implies moral fault. I simply used the word "forthright" (direct and without evasion) which is a whole different thing. I don't want to call Bill dishonest or be accused of calling him dishonest, but I won't hesitate to question his 'forthrightness' at times.

The following is the discussion from my book, *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock* dealing with the issue of how the Fathers interpret the primacy of Peter and Petrine succession when I deal with Augustine and Chrysostom:

**Continued: Misunderstanding One, Part 2: Augustine:**

According to Augustine the Apostles are equal in all respects. Each receives the authority of the keys, not Peter alone. But some object, doesn't Augustine accord a primacy to the apostle Peter? Does he not call Peter the first of the apostles, holding the chief place in the Apostleship? Don't such statements prove papal primacy? While it is true that Augustine has some very exalted things to say about Peter, as do many of the fathers, it does not follow that either he or they held to the Roman Catholic view of papal primacy. This is because their comments apply to Peter alone. They have absolutely nothing to do with the bishops of Rome. How do we know this? Because Augustine and the fathers do not make that application in their comments. They do not state that their descriptions of Peter apply to the bishops of Rome.

Who's arguing from silence now Bill? In fact, this is the only basis on which Bill admits he draws his conclusion. Because he doesn't find the terminology of Vatican I in

the writings of St. Augustine, he assumes there is no special place for Peter and no special place for the bishop of Rome. Didn't Bill just criticize *me* for arguing from silence? I, however, make my case from solid historical substance and only support it with the silence of the Fathers on some issues; Bill on the other hand, is starting out very poorly here, telling us *his* main argument is going to be the silence of the Fathers. Oh boy!

Listen to yourself: "How do we KNOW this? Because they are silent—I can't find it in their writings." Also, I think we have some prolepses here as well. You are reading our anti-Catholic (or, anti-Roman, as you would probably prefer) assumptions back on the early Church.

The common mistake made by Roman Catholic apologists is the assumption that because some of the fathers make certain comments about Peter—for example, that he is chief of the apostles or head of the apostolic choir—that they also have in mind the bishop of Rome in an exclusive sense.

No, I think you are mistaken. Maybe some apologist do this, but I don't think I fall into that category, even though there is merit to the argument. I think Protestant apologists make the common mistake of trying to separate Peter and the bishop of Rome into exclusive, water-tight compartments. They think far too analytical at times, whereas the Fathers tended to think analogically. This is a big difference in the methodology of Patristic thought and modern Evangelical Protestant thought. The Fathers, like the Apostles were quite lucid in their typological thinking—applying it freely to the interpretation of scripture and the understanding of spiritual realities and the Church. Just look at how the Apostles can use typological thinking to explain baptism for example (1 Peter 3:18–22) or Israel and Church (Gal 4:21–31). Protestants tend to be extremely uncomfortable with such analogical thinking.

As we do see the flow of history and the proper organic development of ideas, all I am guilty of is "seeing the oak in the acorn" which is viewed by many as an intellectual and historical virtue, not a violation of historiography. This same analogical thinking (see *Crossing the Tiber* for numerous examples of how the Fathers thought typologically), of the Apostles was inherited by the Fathers and the Church today. It is able to view history as the work of God in history, not as an ossified structure frozen in the first century, but the living God building his living Church. The acorn becomes a oak, the baby becomes an adult, the 120 in the Upper Room become the Church spread throughout the world as a beautiful tree, providing nesting for the everyone (Mt 13:31–32).

What Catholic apologist are guilty of is believing history is going somewhere, that God has a plan, that the tree is growing, that the Holy Spirit is still at work developing and giving substance and growth to the Body of Christ as it develops into a mature man, a completed Temple, the full tree. They don't believe that the Holy Spirit was withdrawn

back into heaven at the end of Acts 28. They believe Christians moved from worshipping in the Temple (Acts 5:12), to private homes (Col 4:15), to worshipping in church buildings (Bible citation ???). In looking back on the history of the Church, Catholic apologists try to read the end into the beginning, seeing the oak in the acorn. This is not a bad thing if understood properly in the whole course of Church history. We have the marvelous advantage of seeing the oak after it is a tree, whereas the Fathers saw only the sprout and the sapling.

The Apostles and the Fathers extended the reality of a spiritual event or even person into the future or viewed current situations as extensions of the past. How else could John the Baptist be referred to as Elijah? Or the Church as Sarah? Or Jesus as *the* seed, when we know that is not the literal meaning of the word *seed* as used in Genesis? This is not just thinking about what the Apostles wrote, but learning to think like the Apostles. Can it be abused? Certainly. Allegorical interpretation is an accepted method of interpretation (see the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 115–119). The Apostles and Fathers taught us how to do it, but it can be abused as we see in Origen (more on him later), just as the literal-only view of interpretation (held by most Fundamentalists) can be abused, but occasional abuse does not invalidate the method.

This can be seen among the Fathers and Councils as well by the very fact that a council could stand up in 451 AD and shout “Peter has spoken through [Pope] Leo”. This was the Council of Chalcedon, all of them bishops from the Eastern church, by the way, except two from Africa and two legates from Rome, and where Christ was declared one Person in two natures. They had no problem with the correspondence between Peter and the Bishop of Rome.

This does not prove that every time Peter is praised in patristic writings that we can immediately jump to the conclusion that the praise is equally apropos and applicable to the bishop of Rome, but neither can we force the strict analytical method of the Fundamentalist interpretation onto the Fathers, who would have rejected such a straight-jacket. Unfortunately, Bill is anachronistic at this point and violates rules of historiography because he tries to force the Fathers to think like he does when in reality they were much more analogical, allegorical, and free in their understanding of Scripture, history, and the actions of Jesus in his Church. I have been accused of being too patristic in my thinking. I took that as a marvelous compliment.

But they do not state this in their writings. This is a preconceived theology that is read into their writings. Did they view the bishops of Rome as being successors of Peter? Yes. Did they view the bishops of Rome as being the exclusive successors of Peter? No.

This needs to be examined a bit more closely. Successors, yes. Exclusive successors? Yes and no. Obviously, since the Fathers accepted Apostolic Succession (which Bill rejects) those that sat on Peter’s chair in Rome viewed themselves, and were

viewed by others, as the successor to Peter, in an exclusive sense. But, it is agreed that Peter as a symbol of apostolic authority and invested with the power to bind and loose, forgive or retain sins, was also a power of other bishops in the Church. As the flower of the Church opened (growth and development in both theology and polity) there were struggles and debates as to what this imposition of power from Rome meant and how it was to be applied, but it was always recognized as primary and special. So, yes it was exclusive and in other ways it was not. Again it is not an *either-or* proposition but a *both-and* reality.

In the view of Augustine and the early fathers all the bishops of the Church in the East and West were the successors of Peter. They all possess the chair of Peter. So when they speak in exalted terms about Peter they do not apply those terms to the bishops of Rome.

This statement is far too general. A short perusal of my book shows that such a limited statement cannot be accurately made about the Fathers. Bill wishes it were so, and reads his wishes back into the Fathers, but his statement as an exclusive statement just won't stand up.

Therefore, when a father refers to Peter as the rock, the 'coryphaeus,' the first of the disciples, or something similar, this does not mean that he is expressing agreement with the current Roman Catholic interpretation.

Agreed, it does not necessarily mean the same as modern Roman Catholic interpretation, but it must be read in context and often may very well mean the same thing as modern Catholic interpretation. Bill's statement is too general and exclusive. My book deals with many such cases and we'll touch on more as we go along here.

One quick example of an Eastern father who disagrees with Bill is St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (c. 638): "Teaching us all orthodoxy and destroying all heresy and driving it away from the God-protected halls of our holy Catholic Church. And together with these inspired syllables and characters, I accept all his (the pope's) letters and teachings as proceeding from the mouth of *Peter the Coryphaeus*, and I kiss them and salute them and embrace them with all my soul ... I recognize the latter as definitions of Peter and the former as those of Mark, and besides, all the heaven-taught teachings of all the chosen mystagogues of our Catholic Church. (Sophronius, Mansi, xi. 461).

Along with Bill, we are now going to embark upon a list of quotes from St. Augustine that are supposed to prove that he did not believe as Catholics do today. It simply proves no such thing as George Salmon, the famous anti-Catholic will tell us later. Bill will tell us at the end of this list that because St. Augustine says the rock is Christ, or Peter's faith, or Peter's confession that it simply and forever excludes the possibility that St. Augustine could have thought of Peter as the rock, and that even if he was the rock, it has nothing to do with the bishop of Rome. (We'll discuss St. Augustine's reasons later on. Was there a method to his madness?) After these quotes we will take a look at a quote

from George Salmon, a darling of the anti-Catholics, which will explain why this list provided by Bill is really a red herring or smoke screen, whichever you prefer. And we will look at other things St. Augustine said *and practiced*. By the way, I use the *whole* Salmon quote in my book whereas Bill cuts off Salmon's damaging conclusion—the end of the quote in his book. Hey! wait a minute! Haven't I been accused of this somewhere? If the full quote is used, it leaves Bill's argument floundering like a one-legged man crossing a skating rink. Anyway, here we go:

This view is clearly validated from the following statements of Augustine:

This same Peter therefore who had been by the Rock pronounced 'blessed,' bearing the figure of the Church, holding the chief place in the Apostleship (*Sermon 26*).

The blessed Peter, the first of the apostles (*Sermon 295*).

Before his passion the Lord Jesus, as you know, chose those disciples of his, whom he called apostles. Among these it was only Peter who almost everywhere was given the privilege of representing the whole Church. It was in the person of the whole Church, which he alone represented, that he was privileged to hear, 'To you will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven' (Mt 16:19). After all, it isn't just one man that received these keys, but the Church in its unity. So this is the reason for Peter's acknowledged preeminence, that he stood for the Church's universality and unity, when he was told, 'To you I am entrusting,' what has in fact been entrusted to all (*Sermon 295*).

Previously, of course, he was called Simon; this name of Peter was bestowed on him by the Lord, and that with the symbolic intention of his representing the Church. Because Christ, you see, is the *petra* or rock; Peter, or Rocky, is the Christian people (*Sermon 76*).

So then, this self-same Peter, blessed by being surnamed Rocky from the rock, representing the person of the Church, holding chief place in the apostolic ranks (*Sermon 76*).

For as some things are said which seem peculiarly to apply to the Apostle Peter, and yet are not clear in their meaning, unless when referred to the Church, whom he is acknowledged to have figuratively represented, on account of the primacy which he bore among the Disciples; as it is written, 'I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,' and other passages of like purport: so Judas doth represent those Jews who were enemies of Christ (*Exposition on the Book of Psalms*, Psalm 119).

Bill wants us to believe that because St. Augustine explains that Peter “figuratively represented” that Church that it somehow absolutely eliminates the possibility of Peter also being the head of the Apostles, and the head of the Church. Notice that elsewhere St. Augustine explains that King Saul “figuratively represented” Israel, just as he says Peter “figuratively represented” the Church. St. Augustine states,



“But the Scripture has not what is read in most Latin copies, “The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel out of thine hand this day,” but just as we have set it down it is found in the Greek copies, “The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel out of thine hand this day,” but just as we have set it down it is found in the Greek copies, “The Lord hath rent the kingdom from Israel out of thine hand;” that the words “out of thine hand” may be understood to mean “from Israel.” *Therefore this man [King Saul] figuratively represented the people of Israel*, which was to lose the kingdom, Christ Jesus our Lord being about to reign, not carnally, but Spiritually” (*City of God*, 17, 7 *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series: Volume II*, [Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.] 1997). Does the fact that King Saul “figuratively represented” Israel that he was not really the king? Does it mean that the throne is only symbolic? Can we assume likewise, that St. Augustine, by saying that Peter “figuratively represented” the Church that he was not literally also the head or leader? Does it necessarily mean that the seat of Peter is only symbolic?

You will remember that the apostle Peter, the first of all the apostles, was thrown completely of balance during the Lord’s passion (*Sermon 147*).

Christ, you see, built his Church not on a man but on Peter’s confession. What is Peter’s confession? ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ There’s the rock for you, there’s the foundation, there’s where the Church has been built, which the gates of the underworld cannot conquer. (*Sermon 229*).

And this Church, symbolized in its generality, was personified in the Apostle Peter, on account of the primacy of his apostleship. For, as regards his proper personality, he was by nature one man, by grace one Christian, by still more abounding grace one, and yet also, the first apostle; but when it was said to him, I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven,’ he represented the universal Church, which in this world is shaken by divers temptations, that come upon it like torrents of rain, floods and tempests, and falleth not, because it is founded upon a rock (petra), from which Peter received his name. For petra (rock) is not derived from Peter, but Peter from petra; just as Christ is not called so from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ. For on this very account the Lord said, ‘On this rock will I build my Church,’ because Peter had said, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ On this rock, therefore, He said, which thou hast confessed, I will build my Church. For the Rock (Petra) was Christ; and on this foundation was Peter himself built. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus. The Church, therefore, which is founded in Christ received from Him the keys of the kingdom of heaven in the person of Peter, that is to say, the power of binding and loosing sins. For what the Church is essentially in Christ, such representatively is Peter in the rock (petra); and in this representation Christ is to be understood as the Rock, Peter as the Church (*Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Tractate 124.5).

It seems implied somehow that I am unaware of these passages or I have purposely hid them from my readers. Not so. I have been quite forthright in presenting such passages in my book as Bill is aware (e.g., St. Augustine's *Retractations*, pg. 231 in *Upon this Rock*). Also, I would warn the readers of Bill's "rebuttal", that he is really not interacting with my book at all, but is merely "cutting and pasting" whole pages from his book into the "rebuttal". I question whether he's even read my book for, like above, I am accused of things I've never written and chided for omitting things that are clearly stated in my book.

I do not take this as an honest attempt to address *Upon this Rock* but is rather a preacher preaching, certainly not an honest critic dealing honestly with the material at hand. The following words, for example are verbatim from pages 59ff. of his book. What Bill has done is "cut 'n' paste" text from *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock* into the "rebuttal". This kind of thing is really sad (I could use other adjectives as well), but for the purpose of honesty and the truth of history, I will continue to respond by interacting with the material and not just regurgitating something I've already written under the guise of an honest critique.

Augustine states that Peter is the first and head of the apostles and that he holds a primacy. However he does not interpret that primacy in a Roman Catholic sense. He believes that Peter's primacy is figurative in that he represents the universal Church. Again, he explicitly states that Christ did not build his Church upon a man but on Peter's confession of faith. Peter is built on Christ the rock and as a figurative representative of the Church he shows how each believer is built on Christ. In Augustine's view, Peter holds a primacy or preeminence, but none of this applies to him in a jurisdictional sense, because he says that 'Christ did not build his Church upon a man.' We can not get a clearer illustration that the fathers did indeed separate Peter's confession of faith from Peter's person.

What a minute! If Bill's assessment is correct, we would expect to find nothing in St. Augustine to contradict Bill's assesment. Are to assume then, that St. Augustine never expounded more than what Bill provides here for us? But that just 'ain't so. When the rubber meets the road for St. Augustine, in the heat of battle with heretics, to what does he turn? Did St. Augustine see Peter *only* as figurative or is there, in the writings and practice of St. Augustine that which shows a deeper understanding of Peter and the bishop of Rome than Bill admits. In my book *Upon this Rock* I provide a few of these passages. I hate to reproduce them here, but to demonstrate the fact I must provide a few.

Above, when St. Augustine speaks of Peter as representing the Church, as a figure so to speak, he is teaching about the authority of the Church— as representing the Church's authority to forgive sins (not only Peter could do that), and to teach authoritatively (not only Peter could do that), to exercise episcopal office (not only Peter could do that), and to confess Jesus as the Christ (not only Peter could do that). The

Church could do those things. But when the real world came knocking and the heretics were banging on the door, what did St. Augustine write—to what did he appeal? The following passage from St. Augustine’s Letter 53, 2:

“For if the lineal succession of bishops is to be taken into account, with how much more certainty and benefit to the Church do we reckon back till we reach Peter himself, to whom, as bearing in a figure the whole Church, the Lord said: ‘Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!’ The successor of Peter was Linus, and his successors in unbroken continuity were these: -Clement, Anacletus, Evaristus, Alexander, Sixtus, Telesphorus, Iginus, Anicetus, Pius, Soter, Eleutherius, Victor, Zephyrinus, Calixtus, Urbanus, Pontianus, Antherus, Fabianus, Cornelius, Lucius, Stephanus, Xystus, Dionysius, Felix, Eutychianus, Gaius, Marcellinus, Marcellus, Eusebius, Miltiades, Sylvester, Marcus, Julius, Liberius, Damasus, and Siricius, whose successor is the present Bishop Anastasius. In this order of succession no Donatist bishop is found” (*Letters of Augustine* 53, 2 in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 1<sup>st</sup> series, 1:298, page 227–8 in *Upon this Rock*).

If Peter is only figuratively the representative of the Church, why does St. Augustine then resort to this historical succession back to Peter himself in Rome. What made this list authoritative if not the linear and real succession of authority passed down from Peter through this line of ordained bishops? Bill doesn’t believe in episcopal succession. Bill doesn’t believe in episcopal ordination, authority, or the Church forgiving sins.

And if there is no place for a special authority in Rome, even if only viewed as the authority of a father with his children, why is it that St. Augustine, upon the ruling of Pope Melchiades against Donatus the heretic write with exclamations of joy? “And yet what a decision was finally pronounced by the blessed Melchiades himself: how fair, how complete, how prudent, and how fitted to make peace . . . O excellent man! O son of Christian peace, *father of the Christian people!* (Epistle 43 in Giles, E. *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority*: A.D. 96-454. Westport, CN: Hyperion Press, 1979, pg. 86. I did not use this quote in *Upon this Rock*). Would Bill join St. Augustine in cheering for the bishop of Rome with the joyful chant “Father of the Christian people”?

In commenting on one of Augustine’s references to Peter and the rock, John Rotelle, the editor of the Roman Catholic series on the Sermons of Augustine, makes these observations:

‘There was Peter, and he hadn’t yet been confirmed in the rock’: That is, in Christ, as participating in his ‘rockiness’ by faith. It does not mean confirmed as the rock, because *Augustine never thinks of Peter as the rock*. Jesus, after all, did not in fact call him the rock...but ‘Rocky.’ *The rock on which he would build his Church was, for Augustine, both Christ himself and Peter’s faith, representing the faith of the Church* (emphasis mine) (John Rotelle, Ed., *The Works of Saint Augustine* (New Rochelle: New City, 1993), *Sermons*, Sermon 265D.6, p. 258-259, n. 9.

May I please be allowed to disagree with Mr. Rotelle? Thanks. I think he states his case too strongly and I don't have his book at my fingertips to see the whole context of his statement which may contain several other illuminating observations.

Look at John 1:42 where St. John tells us the name is not "Rocky" but "Rock": "Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter)." The footnote to the NIV translation informs us, "Both *Cephas* Aramaic, and *Peter* Greek, mean *rock*."

Consider also, as I state in my book, the fact that St. Augustine teaches that Christ is the rock foundation of the Church (1 Cor 3:11), is taught today by John Paul II. In his recent book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994) John Paul II refers to the *rock* of Matthew 16 as Peter *and* as Christ. Well, which is it? It has to be *either-or*, right? No, listen to John Paul II: "He [Peter] became the 'rock,' even if as a man, perhaps, he was nothing more than shifting sand. *Christ Himself is the rock*, and Christ builds His Church on Peter—on Peter, Paul, and the apostles. *The Church is apostolic* in virtue of Christ. . . . In the Church—built on the rock that is Christ—Peter, the apostles, and their successors are witnesses of God crucified and risen in Christ" (9, 11).

Oh oh! Our Pope sounds an awful lot like St. Augustine here. Does that mean the Pope denies the literal meaning of Matthew 16? Should we all pack our bags and move back to schismatic Protestantism now that the Pope has made such an "Anti-Roman" and "anti-Petrine" statement? Does the Pope contradict himself, does he deny the Petrine foundation of the Church simply because he refers to the rock as Christ, and *all* the Apostles, not Peter alone, as the foundation upon which the Church is built (cp. Eph 2:20), not on Peter alone? Of course not! This is all in my book on page 202 for anyone who cares to read it!

And what about the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*? How does this authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church explain Peter and Matthew 16? Are we to conclude that *if* it affirms that anything but Peter is the rock foundation of the Church we should all throw in our towels? Again, this is in my book on page 202. Let's read paragraph 424: "Moved by the grace of the Holy Spirit and drawn by the Father, we believe in Jesus and confess: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' *On the rock of this faith confessed by St. Peter, Christ built his Church*" (CCC 424, emphasis mine).

But notice how the Church is confused and nonplussed (tongue in cheek) that she contradicts herself *in the very same book*! In paragraph 552 we read: "Simon Peter holds the first place in the college of the Twelve; Jesus entrusted a unique mission to him. Through a revelation from the Father, Peter had confessed: 'You are the Christ, the Son

of the living God.’ Our Lord then declared to him: ‘You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.’ Christ, the ‘living stone,’ thus assures *his Church, built on Peter*, of victory over the powers of death. Because of the faith he *confessed Peter will remain the unshakable rock of the Church*” (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994). This sounds amazingly Patristic and I wonder if we are reading St. Augustine into modern church teaching. No, can’t be. That would be anachronism in reverse, prolepsis going backwards.

St. Augustine describes the rock as Peter, as his confession, as his faith, and as Christ—all four! Which is it? Here is a comment by Giles, “It will be seen from the limited evidence, supplied in these pages that the fathers interpreted the famous “rock” text in various ways. An exhaustive study of the subject was made about 270 years ago by John de Launoy. As regards the period from Tertullian to Leo, he found thirteen writers who taught that the Church was built upon Peter, six who said it was built upon the apostles or their successors, twelve who said it was built upon the faith which Peter confessed (Matt. 16. 16), and three who interpreted the rock as Christ himself. *Augustine is in all four classes*” (Giles, *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority*, (London: SPCK, 1952), pg. 177–8.

[Augustine does not endorse the Roman Catholic interpretation. Again and again he states that the rock is Christ, not Peter. Augustine claims no exclusive Petrine succession in the Roman bishops and no papal office.](#)

Again, let’s remember Bill’s earlier bases for knowing that St. Augustine never claims a special prerogative for Rome. It is silence! Remember, go back a few pages and re-read that. He knows because of silence, not because St. Augustine ever explicitly denied it but because Bill doesn’t find it in the writings of St. Augustine. Silence, the very thing he chastised me for, though with me it was not a true charge as explained earlier!

A bit more about Bill’s argument from silence alone from which he concludes that the Fathers must have rejected the Catholic teaching on the succession of Petrine authority in the Roman see. This passage comes from F. Cayre’s *Manual of Patrology and History of Theology* (Paris: Desclee & Co., 1936):

“Besides this historical evidence, many doctrinal affirmations of the Fathers may be found in the fourth century. Some of the more outstanding of these will be quoted in the following pages. But it should be noticed, first of all, that these affirmations are variously expressed. Some are *complete*, in the sense that they clearly state the two elements of the teaching which concerns the Apostolic See: a) the Primacy of Saint Peter; b) the Primacy of the successor of Peter. Others are *incomplete* in the sense that the authors, according to the particular end they have in view, speak only of one or the other of these two points; thus it is that Saint John Chrysostom in his homilies only

speaks of the Primacy of Peter; Eusebius, the historian, deals only with the coming of Peter to Rome, where his See is found. Other authors, on the contrary, say nothing at all on the subject, but no argument can be drawn from **their silence**. Although Saint Hilarius does not speak of the Primacy, he certainly knows of it, since he quotes, in one of his historical fragments, the passage of a letter of the Council of Sardica to Pope Julius, to whom, says the document, all priests must refer; *ad caput, id est ad Petri Apostoli Sedem*. An author's silence, even when he might have been expected to speak on this subject, proves only that he did not regard this doctrinal point as being as important as it really is; not that he denied it. *Explicit denials, whether by word or deed, are to be found only among the heretics, especially the Arians* or those who came under their influence. The witness of traditional faith is not to be found here. The early authors possess the authority which is implied by the title of Father, only when they speak as witnesses of tradition and in agreement with that tradition" (pgs. 307–8).

I do not want to be included among those that spout their "explicit denials" and I doubt Bill would want to be among them either if he really thought this matter through doctrinally, biblically, and historically.

At this point I think it would be helpful to cite a few paragraphs from my book *Upon this Rock*, pages 151–153, which I try to avoid, since honest readers can examine it for themselves. But Bill has just stated that "Augustine does not endorse the Roman Catholic interpretation. Again and again he states that the rock is Christ, not Peter." I think the following is very appropriate at this time.

"Biblical passages can have several applications although usually only one literal meaning. So, whereas the passage in Matthew 16 is literally and primarily to be understood in light of Jesus' commission of Peter and the investiture of stewardship, it can be marshaled effectively in defense of the deity of Christ and the need for divine revelation. Protestant apologists seem to forget this when they look at the Fathers' usage of the Petrine passage in Matthew. When the Father's refer to the Rock as Christ, or Peter's confession, or Peter's faith, they are not denying the literal intent of the passage. They are simply utilizing the passage for all its riches of apologetical resources.

"Shotwell and Loomis write, 'The name Peter would have little interest for history, if it had not been linked up with the interpretation given in full in the eighteenth verse of the sixteenth chapter of Matthew. . . . That interpretation, which has become the foundation text of the Papacy, has, however, been given varying interpretations itself. The orthodox Catholic view has been the simple and literal one,—that the rock was Peter (Kepha in both cases). But it was also held by some of the Fathers that it was the confession which Peter made—'thou art Christ, the son of

the living God’—which was the corner-stone of the Church, since upon that belief the new religion was in reality based. This view was especially seized upon by the Fathers who were disputing with the bishop of Rome or with the heretics who denied the orthodox statement of Christ’s divinity. Peter’s confession, ratified so emphatically by Jesus, was the strongest text they had. In course of time, however, as the creed was settled the literal meaning became the common one, exalting the ‘fisherman’s chair’ above the other apostolic foundations as the historical embodiment of Christ’s promise. This was not seriously challenged until the Protestant theologians found the text, as commonly accepted, a stumbling block in their denial of papal claims. Most of them fell back, then, to the interpretation first discussed, and found support in the fact that some of the Fathers had once so held’ (James T. Shotwell and Louise Ropes Loomis, *The See of Peter* (New York: Columbia House Publ., 1991), 24.

“As we will see, Peter’s commission can be understood and used in various ways but the useful applications do not negate the primary and literal interpretation of our Lord’s words.

“One further comment on the fact that various *applications* can be gleaned from biblical passages, even though there is one literal *interpretation* of this Matthean passage. John Lowe, an Anglican writes, ‘The statement ‘Thou art Peter (Kepha) and upon this rock (kepha) I will build my church’ must certainly be taken to refer to Peter personally. However true it may be that ultimately Christ himself is the rock, a truth proclaimed in Matthew 21:42 and in 1 Corinthians 8:11, that is not said here. Nor is it at all natural to explain that the rock is the faith of Peter in virtue of which he has confessed that Jesus is Messiah. No doubt it is a legitimate homiletic application to make the point that the Lord’s Messiahship and the faith represented in Peter’s confession are both basic, but from the point of view of pure exegesis it is, I feel, impossible to claim that this meaning can be extracted from these words. Here the word-play does surely necessitate the identification of the rock with the man Peter. Reluctance to admit this, and there is a long history of such reluctance, has been due, consciously or unconsciously, to the supposed requirements of confessional [Protestant] controversy, to the fear that such an admission is to concede the claims of Rome. The authority of Luther, who in most of his thinking virtually equates Peter and Pope, has dominated the reformed tradition, and in the interests of the doctrine of justification by faith alone it has become almost a point of honour to explain away the reference to Peter in this passage—either that or to cut the knot by denying its authenticity. Thus has the critical and exegetical question been beclouded by polemical considerations. If we resolutely cut ourselves loose from the confusing influence of later controversies and look at the words themselves, we must, I think, agree that it is Peter himself personally who is here said to be the rock upon which the



Church is to be built' (John Lowe, *Saint Peter* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1956), 55–56).”

Now back to Bill’s book as we continue to read the pages he provides us.

Karlfried Froehlich sums up Augustine’s views on Peter and the rock of Matthew 16 in these comments:

Augustine’s formulation (of Matthew 16:18-19), informed by a traditional North African concern for the unity of the church, that in Peter *unus pro omnibus* (one for all) had answered and received the reward, did not suggest more than a figurative reading of Peter as an image of the true church. In light of Peter’s subsequent fall and denial, the name itself was regularly declared to be derived from Christ, the true rock. Augustine, who followed Origen in this assumption, was fascinated by the dialectic of the ‘blessed’ Peter (Matt. 16:17) being addressed as ‘Satan’ a few verses later (v. 23). In Peter, weak in himself and strong only in his connection with Christ, the church could see the image of its own total dependence on God’s grace. Augustine rigorously separated the name-giving from its explanation: Christ did not say to Peter: ‘you are the rock,’ but ‘you are Peter.’ The church is not built upon Peter but upon the only true rock, Christ. Augustine and the medieval exegetes after him found the warrant for this interpretation in 1 Cor. 10:4. The allegorical key of this verse had already been applied to numerous biblical rock passages in the earlier African testimonial tradition. Matt. 16:18 was no exception. If the metaphor of the rock did not refer to a negative category of ‘hard’ rocks, it had to be read christologically (Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-Book of the History of Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952), Volume I, p. 182-183).

So we have the opinion of a Protestant writer which has merit but doesn’t tell the whole story. Let’s look at the opinion of another Protestant writer, the respected J. N. D. Kelly in his famous work *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978). (This publisher charged me \$50 last time I cited this book!) Kelly, even as a Protestant, is willing to admit more than Bill. He says, “Ambrose’s teaching is much fuller [than Hilary’s], and there can be no doubt of the extraordinary veneration [veneration??] in which he held the Roman church. From the earliest times, he taught, it had been the unswerving exponent of the Church’s creed in its integrity and purity; to be in communion with Rome was a guarantee of correct belief. Hence he advises that matters touching on faith and order and the mutual relations of orthodox churches should be referred for settlement to the Roman pontiff. Yet he nowhere recognizes the latter as the final interpreter of the laws of ecclesiastical discipline, much less ascribes supreme jurisdiction over the Church to him” (pg. 417–8). The last statement is elaborated on in more detail but the fact that he is willing to admit that Rome held such a place is significant, I think. We see here the development of the flower that God was blooming to maintain the unity of the Church as so clearly stated earlier by Optatus.

Karl Morrison sums up Augustine's views of ecclesiology in these words: Peter was said to have received the power of the keys, not in his own right, but as the representative of the entire Church. Without contesting Rome's primacy of honor, St. Augustine held that all the Apostles, and all their successors, the bishops, shared equally in the powers which Christ granted St. Peter (*De Schismate Donatistorum*, Book I.10; Book 2,3,4,6; C.S.E.L. 26. 12, 36. Cited by E. Giles, *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority* (London: SPCK, 1952), pp. 118-119).

I have Giles' book *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority*, from which Bill says the above quote is cited, but I could not find the above quote on the pages cited. I thought I was having a "senior moment" (though I'm really only a very young forty-four) but even my beautiful young wife couldn't find it (she just turned forty-two, but don't tell her I told you so!) What I did find on page 118 was a quote from Optatus of Mileve, an African bishop like St. Augustine (AD 354–430) who lived during the lifetime of St. Augustine and wrote the following in 370 AD and revised it in 385 AD when St. Augustine was about thirty-one years old. St. Augustine frequently quoted him, by the way. As you read the words of this early African Father, remember that Bill tells us Rome had no special prerogatives or no special and unique chair among these men.

"You cannot deny that you know that upon Peter first in the city of Rome was conferred the episcopal chair, on which sat Peter, the head of all the apostles, whence he was called Cephas, that in this one chair unity should be preserved by all, test the other apostles might uphold each for himself separate chairs, so that he who should set up a second chair, against the unique chair, would already be a schismatic and a sinner. Well, then, on the one chair, which is the first of the endowments, Peter first sat, to whom succeeded Linus; to Linus succeeded Clement, Anacletus, Evaristus, Sixtus, Telesphorus, Iginus, Anicetus, Pius, Soter, Victor, Zephyrinus, Calixtus, Urban, Pontian, Anterus, Fabian, Cornelius, Lucius, Stephen, Sixtus, Dionysius, Felix, Marcellinus, Eusebius, Militades, Silvester, Mark, Julius, Liberius, Damasus; to Damasus Siricius, who to-day is our colleague, and he, with the whole world, agrees with us in one bond of communion through the intercourse of letters of peace. Now do you show the origin of your chair, you who wish to claim the holy Church for yourselves." (Giles, 118).

Reinhold Seeberg, the Protestant Church historian, makes these comments on Augustine's interpretation of Peter pointing out that it reflects the view of Cyprian:

The idea of the Roman Primacy likewise receives no special elucidation at the hands of Augustine. We find a general acknowledgment of the 'primacy of the apostolic chair,' but Augustine knows nothing of any special authority vested in Peter or his successors. Peter is a 'figure of the church' or of 'good pastors,' and represents the unity of the church (serm. 295.2; 147.2). In this consists the significance of his position and that of his successors...As all bishops (in contradistinction from the Scriptures) may err (unit. eccl. II.28), so also the Roman bishop. This view is plainly manifest from the bearing of Augustine and his colleagues in the Pelagian Controversy...Dogmatically, there had been no

advance from the position of Cyprian. The Africans, in their relations with Rome, played somewhat the role of the Gallicanism of a later period (Robert Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1990), pp. 67-69).

Does Bill recognize a “primacy of the apostolic chair”? How does this play out in his ecclesiology? As one who seems at least to promote the Fathers, where is his “apostolic chair”? I find this curious. No development from Cyprian? We’ll discuss him later, because that was another footnote Bill took umbrage at, but the practice and ‘rubber meeting the road” application of both of these Fathers in relation to the bishop of Rome belie an acknowledgment of their extreme respect and up-looking respect for this see, even if the Protestants are not willing to see any more than that.

W.H.C. Frend affirms the above consensus of Augustine’s ecclesiology and his interpretation of Peter’s commission:

Augustine...rejected the idea that ‘the power of the keys’ had been entrusted to Peter alone. His primacy was simply a matter of personal privilege and not an office. Similarly, he never reproached the Donatists for not being in communion with Rome, but with lack of communion with the apostolic Sees as a whole. His view of Church government was that less important questions should be settled by provincial councils, greater matters at general councils (*A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford: Parker, 1844), The Epistles of St. Cyprian, Epistle LXX. 17, 18, 20, pp. 279-281).

Earlier we established the fact that St. Augustine *did* reproach the Donatists based on not being in communion with Rome and the successors of Peter. I won’t rewrite the passage. One only needs to read back a page or two. Maybe Dr. Frend just forgot that passage. Did St. Augustine trust in councils to settle issues? Of course, the same as the Church does today. And the Councils in the early centuries were not hesitant to proclaim “Peter has spoken through Leo [bishop of Rome].

We are repeatedly reminded by Bill that if the Fathers refer to the rock of Matthew 16 as Christ, it necessarily precludes any possibility that it could be also viewed as Peter himself. I would like to remind us all of what we learned, or should have learned, in Grammar School. We should not mix the metaphors. In this regard, I am going to provide a quote from George Salmon’s book *Infallibility of the Church* which states in the foreword “Since the first edition of the “*Infallibility of the Church*” appeared in 1888 no serious attempt has been made by Roman Catholic scholars to reply to the convincing arguments of Dr. Salmon against the Papal claim of infallibility, for the simple reason that they are irrefutable.” He has since been taken up on the challenge and the results are not pretty for Dr. Salmon.

However, I am going to provide the portion of the quote given in Bill’s book *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock*. I will show you what he failed to provide, but what I did provide in *Upon this Rock*. Notice that even Dr. Salmon is willing to

concede that there are various ways to understand “rock” in the New Testament and we should not preclude one in favor of another but remember that there are various metaphors used in Scripture and they must be kept in context. Here is what Bill provides on pages 97–98:

“It is undoubtedly the doctrine of Scripture that Christ is the only foundation [of the Church]: ‘other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ’ (1 Cor 3:11). Yet we must remember that the same metaphor may be used to illustrate different truths, and so, according to circumstances, may have different significations. The same Paul who has called Christ the only foundation, tells his Ephesian converts (2:20):—‘Ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.’ And in like manner we read (Rev 21:14):—‘The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.’ How is it that there can be no other foundation but Christ, and yet that the Apostles are spoken of as foundations? Plainly because the metaphor is used with different applications. Christ alone is that foundation, from being joined to which the whole building of the Church derives its unity and stability, and gains strength to defy all the assaults of hell. But, in the same manner as any human institution is said to be founded by those men to whom it owes its origin, so we may call those men the foundation of the Church whom God honoured by using them as His instruments in the establishment of it; who were themselves laid as the first living stones in that holy temple, and on whom the other stones of that temple were laid; for it was on their testimony that others received the truth, so that our faith rests on theirs...”

What Dr. Salmon says here is very good and I wish it would be read carefully by his fellow opponents of the Papacy, but Bill failed to finish the quote and what he left out is even better. Now I am not suggesting nefarious intent. I know all too well that editors and publishers are always trying to cut unnecessary wording from manuscripts to make books shorter and less repetitive. So, it may be for good reasons that Bill left out these last lines. (I hope he will give me the same consideration if I don’t quote all of what he thinks should have been quoted, as in his e-mail.)

But here are the lines that were left unquoted. They continue on from the last sentence above, without break and can be seen in *Upon this Rock* on pages 16–17):

“...and (humanly speaking) it is because they believed that we believe. So, again, in like manner, we are forbidden to call anyone on earth our Father, ‘for one is our Father which is in heaven.’ And yet, in another sense, Paul did not scruple to call himself the spiritual father of those whom he had begotten in the Gospel. *You see, then, that the fact that Christ is called the rock, and that on Him the Church is built, is no hindrance to Peter’s also being, in a different sense, called rock, and being said to be the foundation of the Church; so that I consider there is no ground for the fear entertained by some, in ancient and in modern times, that, by applying the words personally to Peter, we should infringe on the honour due to Christ alone*” (George Salmon, *The Infallibility of the Church* (London: John Murray, 1914), 338–339, emphasis mine).

Even though there is so much more to discuss about St. Augustine, I must come to and end here because I have exhausted the text provided by Bill in his “rebuttal”, but I have a few final comments. *First*, I have not even touched on half of the material on St. Augustine in my book, so I would encourage the current reader to read the fuller text of my book.

*Second*, we have barely touched on the actions and assumptions of St. Augustine which showed his respect and dependence for the bishop of Rome. My book touches briefly on many of these historical matters, such as the summary of St. Augustine’s statement “Rome has spoken, the matter is closed”. Yes, Bill tries to make hay of this statement, but the actual words of St. Augustine, longer than those attributed to him, demonstrate his respect of the office of the Rome bishop and the church of Rome. Bill only deals with the way St. Augustine interprets Matthew 16 in this “rebuttal”, but my book goes into the actual practice of Papal primacy. One’s actions usually speak as loud or louder than their words.

*Third*, I would like to supply two last quotes from St. Augustine to show how thoroughly Catholic he is (I find myself chuckling to even say such a thing). When heretics (schismatics who decided to separate from the Universal and Catholic Church of which St. Augustine was a bishop) who were very much like the Protestant sects of today claimed their valid churches, St. Augustine wrote to them and demonstrated why he stayed in the Catholic Church. Bill, who unfortunately left the Catholic Church for the sects, though seeming to approve of St. Augustine’s advice throughout this “rebuttal”, unhappily didn’t accept his challenge here:

“[In] the Catholic Church, there are many other things which most justly keep me in her bosom. The consent of peoples and nations keeps me in the Church; so does her authority, inaugurated by miracles, nourished by hope, enlarged by love, established by age. The succession of priests keeps me, beginning from the very seat of the Apostle Peter, to whom the Lord, after His resurrection, gave it in charge to feed His sheep, down to the present episcopate. And so, lastly, does the name itself of Catholic, which, not without reason, amid so many heresies, the Church has thus retained; so that, though all heretics wish to be called Catholics, yet when a stranger asks where the Catholic Church meets, no heretic will venture to point to his own chapel or house. Such then in number and importance are the precious ties belonging to the Christian name which keep a believer in the Catholic Church, as it is right they should.... With you, where there is none of these things to attract or keep me.... No one shall move me from the faith which binds my mind with ties so many and so strong to the Christian religion.... For my part, I should not believe the gospel except as moved by the authority of the Catholic Church” (St. Augustine, “*Against the Epistle of Manichaeus*”, 4, 5 written in 397 AD).

When questions of faith arose the African bishops appealed to Pope Innocent in Rome and St. Augustine responds with the words, “[Pope Innocent] in reference to all things, wrote back to us in the same way in which it is lawful and the duty of the Apostolic see to write” (Sermon 186) and again “We determined that the judgment should stand which was issued by the venerable Bishop Innocent from the See of the most blessed Peter” (*Words of the two hundred and fourteen African bishops, including St. Augustine, in response to Pope Innocent*).

*Fourth*, must take into account the development of doctrine. Bill tells us that we must be able to see the words of Vatican I clearly expressed in the early centuries or we cannot claim to have unanimous consent among the Fathers. Yet, we must acknowledge the development of doctrine. Can we have it both ways? Of course, for as we discussed earlier, the Oak is in the Acorn. We acknowledge the development of doctrine, not that doctrines were invented at a later date, but that the truth that had always been deposited in the Church by Jesus and the blessed Apostles is a treasure-house of deep revelation which takes time to unwrap and understand in its fullness. For example, we have the teaching on the Blessed Trinity. This is not clearly laid out in the New Testament. Nowhere are we told that Jesus is “One Person with Two Natures in a hypostatic union”. This was developed over time as the challenges arose to the teaching of the Apostles concerning Jesus. The doctrine, which was in the New Testament and in the tradition of the Church, was “unpacked” and defined and imposed on Christians everywhere by the bishops of the Catholic Church. At one point, the discussion revolved around the words “*homoousion*” which means “of one and the same nature” and the word “*homoiouson*” which means “like the Father in all essential respects”. (Notice the only difference is the single vowel “i” which in Greek is called an *iota*, thus the phrase “Not one iota of difference”.)

What is this? The use of non-biblical words being developed to define the nature of Jesus? The debate raged around these two words, different only because of an *iota* yet the difference was as significant as all eternity. Was Jesus God, or created *by* God? The doctrines were hammered out. Many objected that the word *homoousion* was not in the Scriptures, yet the Nicene Council chose that word and all orthodox Christians today, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant accept this definition as the “final word” on the nature of Christ. Was this all clearly worded in the first century? Did the apostles use the word *homoousion*? Did the Fathers of the first two centuries use the word *homoousion*? No. Did the Council Fathers at Nicaea “read this doctrine back into the Apostolic Age? Figure it out. Were the Council Fathers anachronistic and proleptic by using such lofty, “later-defined terms” to describe Christ?

When the writings of the Apostles were floating around uncollected and the people were uncertain which of the hundreds of documents claiming apostolic authority, the Church again made determinations and definitions binding upon all believers and

accepted by Protestants today. The bishops determined the extent of the New Testament canon. Canon had not referred to the New Testament prior to this but rather to the baptismal creeds. Only after centuries did the term *canon* come to refer to the books of the New Testament (see page 49 in my book *Crossing the Tiber*). This is a development of doctrine. Were the Council Fathers anachronistic by reading this back into the Apostolic era. Did Jesus or the Apostles ever tell us that there would be a book composed of twenty-seven writings, some written by apostles and others not, that would make up the inspired, infallible, inerrant, authoritative Word of God? No, this was a development of doctrine. Are we surprised not to find the Christians of the first and second century not referring to the New Testament as a closed canon? Of course not. There was no such thing yet. Do we then deny the New Testament books because we would be guilty of historiographical error to read such a thing back into the apostolic era, imposing such an unknown idea of “adding” 27 books to the Scriptures? Heavens no. Nor should we reject the organic development of the Petrine office as we see it flower and impose itself on Christendom the same way the term *homoousion* and the canon of the New Testament were “discovered” and imposed on Christendom. For more on this development, see Appendix A: John Henry Newman on the Papal Primacy and its Development.

*Fifth*, and finally, a quote from Fr. Jaki Fr. Stanley, Ph.D. in physics and theology and a brilliant and marvelous man who often stays at our home. Our girls call him Grandpa Jaki. Fr. Jaki, in his excellent book on the “keys” of Matthew 16 writes, “[Against the Donatists Augustine emphasized] that Peter was first given the keys which later on were communicated to the others apostles. . . . The need to insist on the Church’s power to forgive sins against Donatists and all their kindred ‘spiritualists’ made almost inevitable the insistence that all apostles and all their successors had the power of keys, as a power tied even in Matthew to the power of loosing and binding given to the twelve as well. Such a stretching of the meaning of the passage in Matthew could have led to anarchy in the Church if pivotal importance had not been attributed at the same time to the Roman succession. Only a deliberate oversight of this latter point can prompt one to rehash an old superficiality and make anti-Roman hay out of Augustine’s ignorance of Greek (and Aramaic), which left him undecided whether Christ founded the Church on Peter or on his faith. Only ill-will can turn into a champion of a ‘spiritualist’ invisible church that Augustine who repeatedly greeted Rome’s decision as a *rescriptum* or in Roman legal terminology a decision against which there was no further appeal. . . . For Augustine the twelve [apostles] were no more conceivable without their head, Peter, than the Church was conceivable without the chief apostolic see, Rome” (*The Keys of the Kingdom* [Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1986], 75, 76 as quoted on page 223 in *Upon this Rock*).

I had originally thought of constructing a detailed and fictitious meeting between Bill Webster and St. Augustine, but decided against it for the sake of time. But, it would have gone something like this. Bill would fly through time and space to northern Africa



to apply for a job as St. Augustine's assistant pastor. St. Augustine would be delighted and ask Bill for a recommendation from his bishop at which point Bill would begin to stutter and say, "Well sir, you see, I don't have a bishop." St. Augustine would then respond, "What do you mean you don't have a bishop? How can you not have a bishop? Are you in the Catholic Church or one of the heretical sects?"

To this Bill would respond, "I am just a Bible Christian and I go to an independent Baptist church." St. Augustine would screw up his eyes and wrinkle his brow and say, "Can you repeat that please, I'm not sure I understand what you're talking about." He begins to be concerned. Bill tries to explain to him that the Bible doesn't teach anything about monarchical bishops and priests, only about pastors of local congregations. St. Augustine calls in a priest who assists him and asks, "Have you heard anything like this before. This sounds like a new heresy. We better check with our brother bishops and with Rome."

Bill speaks up, "This is not a heresy Mr. Augustine, it's just Bible teaching. Really nothing to be concerned about, I simply want to be an assistant pastor and preach the Gospel." "Well," says St. Augustine, "let's try a different approach. Are you ordained? And if so, what bishop anointed you with the oil, laid sacred hands upon your head and ordained you?" "Mr. Augustine, you don't need a bishop. You just need to graduate from Bible college and then the Baptist church calls you to serve as pastor and approves you through the board of elected deacons." "How then," asks St. Augustine, "how do you consecrate the Bread and Wine of the Holy Eucharist at the Sacrifice of the Liturgy?" "Well, I guess I don't believe it is a sacrifice, it's just bread and wine, actually we use grape juice. We do this about four times a year where I come from. It is just a remembrance that Jesus died for our sins."

St. Augustine knows that nothing of this nature has *ever* been taught in the Church and he has only heard of such strange things in the heretical sects that would never dare call themselves Catholic. So he spends a few hours trying to help Bill understand the Tradition and authority of the Church. He explains that St. Paul taught that the Church was the "pillar and foundation of the Truth (1 Tim 3:15), but Bill continues to question St. Augustine, suggesting that maybe instead of Bill becoming the assistant pastor, maybe Mr. Augustine should leave such a hierarchical Church filled with Traditions. "Leave the Catholic Church and become a "Bible Christian". Frustrated, he asks one last time, "Mr. Augustine, I perceive that you are deceived by tradition. Leave the Catholic Church!"

St. Augustine smiles brightly, looks off into the distance for a moment, and then gets deadly serious—wrinkling his brow again he looks straight in Bill's eyes "Don't be ridiculous. I'll tell you why I'd *never* leave the Catholic Church. It is the Church founded upon Peter, Peter's faith, the Apostles, the confession of faith—namely, on Christ himself. 'In the Catholic Church, there are many other things which most justly keep me in her

bosom. The consent of peoples and nations keeps me in the Church; so does her authority, inaugurated by miracles, nourished by hope, enlarged by love, established by age. The succession of priests keeps me, beginning from the very seat of the Apostle Peter, to whom the Lord, after His resurrection, gave it in charge to feed His sheep, down to the present episcopate. [You know nothing of such things Bill, but this is the Church of the Fathers and the Apostles.] And so, lastly, does the name itself of Catholic, which, not without reason, amid so many heresies, the Church has thus retained; so that, though all heretics wish to be called Catholics, yet when a stranger asks where the Catholic Church meets, no heretic will venture to point to his own chapel or house. Such then in number and importance are the precious ties belonging to the Christian name which keep a believer in the Catholic Church, as it is right they should. With you [Bill], there is none of these things to attract or keep me. No one shall move me from the faith which binds my mind with ties so many and so strong to the Christian religion. For my part, I should not believe the gospel except as moved by the authority of the Catholic Church” (from the *Epistle Against the Heretic Manichaeus*).

Bill left in frustration mumbling something about “what a strange religion” and “jeez, talk about traditions of men, where’d he come up with all the unbiblical stuff” and then flew back to his own little church where he felt at ease with his own tradition. He would get the final word from his pastor—Pastor James—he’d give him the real truth. The plane ride was smooth and the steak dinner was excellent. So much for the interview with St. Augustine—he sure ain’t no Baptist, that’s for sure.

Bill assumes the mantle of patristic expert in his books and in his “rebuttal” to *Upon this Rock*, yet he is far removed in every way from the tradition and culture of the Apostolic and Patristic Church. This little adventure demonstrates how alien such a tradition as St. Augustine’s is to a modern day American Fundamentalist. With whom do I cast my lot? There’s no question about it. As I wrote in my book *Crossing the Tiber*, “I am not the first to cross the Tiber, I won’t be the last. I am in good company!” I join St. Augustine in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church! Thank you St. Augustine! Alleluia!

### **Continued: Misunderstanding One, Part 2: Chrysostom:**

[What was Chrysostom’s view of Peter and his interpretation of the rock of Matthew 16?](#)

Oh boy, here we go. Let me ask if Bill is really trying to interact with my book and the information I have provided or is he just preaching? I ask this because if you will turn to page 76 in Bill’s book *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock* what you will find is that the follow pages of his “rebuttal” are not really interacting with my book at all, which is the impression he gives, but that everything following here about St. Chrysostom are the exact pages from his book which he *cut ‘n’ pasted* into this “rebuttal”. Is he really interacting with my book *Upon this Rock*? Don’t kid yourself. His

book was published in 1996, three years before mine. He is just regurgitating (sorry if that sounds harsh, but this kind of stuff is really unfair and disingenuous, certainly not worthy of someone who wants to be respected as a serious writer and scholar). At least I gave him the courtesy of reading his books and interacting with it. And, here as well, I am not just *cutting 'n' pasting* quotes from my book, but trying to deal fairly with the issues. But even so, let's deal with the material at hand!

Does it coincide with the teaching of papal primacy espoused by the Church of Rome? The answer is no. Chrysostom's views are very similar to those of Augustine. As we have seen Augustine held a very high view of Peter. He called him the chief and first of the apostles and yet stated that the rock was not Peter but Christ. A very similar picture presents itself in the writings of Chrysostom. In his book *Studies in the Early Papacy*, the Roman Catholic apologist, Dom Chapman, has referenced approximately ninety citations from Chrysostom's writings which he claims as proof of a clear and unambiguous affirmation of a Petrine and thereby a papal primacy. But Dom Chapman has committed a primary error of historiography—that of reading back into the writings of a previous age the presuppositions and conclusions of a later age.

First, I would suggest that the reader acquire Chapman's excellent book and ignore Bill's brush off. Someone seriously concerned with these issues will read Dom Chapman for themselves.

So, do I repeat all my comments again here which I used to explain Bill and St. Augustine? My publisher would cover his head and say "NO, that would be repetitive! Cross reference it! Refer them back to the original statements." I am afraid we are going to hear the same faulty assumptions all over again, this time about St. Chrysostom—kind of like a broken record. About "historiography" and who is *really* guilty of violating its principles, see the extended argument above. I will expect the reader to refer back to my the previous responses concerning St. Augustine, though we will tackle any new issues with vigor. I would suggest the reader of this response read the section on St. Chrysostom in my book *Upon this Rock*. I don't think it wise to reproduce it all here. I will try to limit my words here to responding to Bill and elaborating a bit.

He assumes that because a particular father makes certain statements about Peter that he must have a primacy of jurisdiction in mind and that this applies in his thinking to the bishop of Rome in an exclusive sense as well.

This again is one of Bill's statements that makes me sit back, scratch my head (where my hair used to be), and say, "Gee, I wonder if he read my book or if he only read the footnotes where his name, William Webster, appears." I don't always make that assumption, but I do take the whole experience of each Father and not *just* what they said about Matthew 16. Many Fathers may have said one thing and done another. Sometimes their actions speak louder than their words. Cyprian is a great example and we'll discuss him later. There are many places in *Upon the Rock* where I stipulate that the Fathers are not or may not be affirming a Vatican I understanding when they mention Peter and his

special place among the Apostles. Do the Fathers refer to a jurisdictional authority when they speak of Peter and the primacy? Sometimes they do, sometimes they don't. To say they *always* do is foolish; to say they *never* do is equally foolish. I'm not sure why this keeps coming up, but in Bill's "rebuttal" you will read it again, and again, and again, and again . . .

But as we have seen with Augustine this is not the case. A close examination of the comments of Chrysostom demonstrates this to be true in his case as well.

Bill's admitted argument from silence sounded somewhat of a sour note and was very unconvincing. The same is true with his analysis of St. Chrysostom. My daughter plays several musical instruments and I have learned to spot a flat or sour note. I have found many flat notes, and a few sharp notes in this work of Bill's as well.

Like Augustine, Chrysostom makes some very exalted statements about Peter:

Peter, that chief of the apostles, first in the Church, the friend of Christ who did not receive revelation from man but from the Father, as the Lord bore witness to him saying: 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father who is in heaven': this same Peter (when I say 'Peter,' I name an unbreakable rock, an immovable ridge, a great apostle, the first of the disciples, the first called and the first obeying), this same Peter, I say, did not perpetrate a minor misdeed but a very great one. He denied the Lord. I say this, not accusing a just man, but offering to you the opportunity of repentance. Peter denied the Lord and governor of the world himself, the savior of all...(De *Eleemos* III.4, M.P.G., Vol. 49, Col. 298).

Peter, the coryphaeus of the choir of apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the foundation of the faith, the base of the confession, the fisherman of the world, who brought back our race from the depth of error to heaven, he who is everywhere fervent and full of boldness, or rather of love than boldness (*Hom. de decem mille talentis* 3, PG III, 20. Cited by Dom Chapman, *Studies in the Early Papacy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 74).

We have heard repeatedly from Bill that the Fathers do not refer the Rock of Matthew 16 to Peter and yet it seems clear that St. Chrysostom is referring to Matthew 16 when he says that Peter, not Christ, is the "foundation of the faith". And who is the "mouth" or spokesman for the Apostles?

These are exalted titles but in using them Chrysostom does not mean that Peter possesses a primacy of jurisdiction in the Church or that he is the rock upon which the Church is built.

How do we know this Bill? Are you making a shut-and-closed statement here? What is your criterion—the same as you knew it about St. Augustine—from silence?

Again, we have already seen this in Augustine. He uses similar language in describing Peter but without its having a Roman Catholic meaning. We know this is also true for Chrysostom

because he applies similar titles to the other apostles and did not interpret the rock of Matthew 16 to be Peter.

We just read above “Peter, the coryphaeus of the choir of apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the foundation of the faith, the base of the confession.” What is the foundation of the faith? Peter’s faith? No, Peter is the foundation of the faith. What is the base of the confession? Peter’s confession? No, Peter himself is the base of the confession and the foundation of the faith. And, we will take a look at the titles of the *other* apostles, as mentioned by Bill, now.

The term *coryphaeus*, for example, was a general title applied by Chrysostom to several of the apostles, not to Peter exclusively. It carries the idea of leadership but implies no jurisdiction. Chrysostom uses this term to describe Peter, James, John, Andrew and Paul.

Bill is “jousting with windmills” here because what he says about the term *coryphaeus* is already discussed in my book, actually through the words of an Eastern Orthodox writer. Why does Bill grandstand on this issue on which there is no contention. Is he trying to make the reader think that I attempt to “prove” the primacy of Peter based on the word *coryphaeus* and that I’m unaware of the broader usage of the term? Well it just ‘taint’ so. I keep getting this sneaking suspicion that Bill never read my book, but only zoomed in on his own name. I’m starting also to suspect this is the way he reads history, especially the Fathers, using the hunt-and-peck method looking for passages that support his Fundamentalist tradition. Here is what *my* book *Upon this Rock* says about the term *coryphaeus*, to show that Bill is building a straw man to beat up on:

“The word *coryphaeus*, ‘Latin, leader, from Greek *koryphaios*, from *koryphe* summit’ (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.) on the Logos Library System 2. 1 CD-ROM [Oak Harbor, Wash.: Logos Research Systems, 1997]), means, first, the leader of a party or school of thought and, second, the leader of a chorus. According to Orthodox theologian John Meyendorff, it was evident to Byzantine theologians that ‘Peter is the “coryphaeus” of the apostolic choir; he is the first disciple of Christ and speaks always on behalf of all. It is true that other apostles, *John, James and Paul, are also called “coryphaei” and “primates,”* but Peter alone is the “rock of the Church.” His primacy has, therefore, not only a personal character, but bears an ecclesiological significance’ (“St. Peter in Byzantine Theology”, in Meyendorff, *Primacy of Peter*, 74). It is only fair to point out that Meyendorff also makes it clear that he does not believe the title coryphaeus or the teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Churches supports the Roman ecclesiology or Vatican I understanding of papal infallibility” (*Upon this Rock*, pg. 220). Bill is certainly not telling us anything we don’t already know; in fact, Meyendorff, the Eastern Orthodox theologian recommended by Bill in his personal e-mail to me knows it too but is willing to give it more weight than Bill.

So who is misrepresenting whom, Bill? You make it appear as though I use the word *coryphaeus* to “prove” that Vatican I was taught by St. Chrysostom. I don’t. But since you bring up the word *coryphaeus*, let’s discuss it a little further! Here is the question? Since *coryphaeus* is not used exclusively for Peter, in St. Chrysostom’s writings and in the Fathers in general, does that prove that St. Chrysostom could not have seen in Peter a higher authority of honor or jurisdiction? In other words, Peter is called the *coryphaeus*, and other apostles are called *coryphaei*, therefore Peter must be equal to them and no primacy can be attributed to him.

Let me provide two other patristic passages in which the word *coryphaeus* is used. For example, St. Basil uses the word *coryphaeus* when describing the Holy Spirit teaching the angels how to sing and praise God: “[Is it possible that] an army should maintain its discipline in the absence of its commander, or a chorus its harmony without the guidance of the *coryphaeus*. How could the Seraphim cry “Holy, Holy, Holy,” were they not taught by the Spirit how often true religion requires them to lift their voice in this ascription of glory? (Book of St. Basil on the Spirit, 16 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series: Volume VIII*, [Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.] 1997).

We also find *coryphaeus* being used to describe the leader of Arians, the heretical group denying the deity of Christ. “Originally they were followers of Arius; then they went over to Hermogenes, who was diametrically opposed to the errors of Arius, as is evinced by the Creed originally recited by him at Nicaea. Hermogenes, fell asleep, and then they went over to Eusebius, the *coryphaeus*, as we know on personal evidence, of the Arian ring” (The Hexameron, Letter 244 by St. Basil, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series: Volume VIII*, [Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.] 1997).

In the Fathers we have at least the following called *coryphaeus*: 1) Peter, 1) Peter, James, and John, 3) the Holy Spirit, and 4) an Arian heretic leader. If *coryphaeus* is a term of leveling, according to Bill’s seeming hermeneutic, no one can claim an exalted position over others if they are both called *coryphaeus* then we have a sticky situation because all of the above would then be considered equal in leadership. The word *coryphaeus*, simply means “leader” but does not tell what degree of authority that particular leader has. Therefore, the Holy Spirit as leader of the choirs of heaven certainly has a higher authority than Peter as leader of the Apostolic band; and John the Apostle certainly has a different authority (quantitatively and qualitatively) than Eusebius the heretic leader. Bill Webster can be the “leader” of his local Bible study and Bill Clinton the leader of the United States. Since Bill Webster is called “leader” as well as Bill Clinton, does it therefore follow that Bill Clinton cannot have a higher position or authority than Bill Webster?

Demonstrating the various men are called *coryphaeus* is a red herring. All he is proving by bringing up this issue is that he probably didn't read my book before writing forty pages about it, and second that he uses the Patristic writings poorly, probably with the same hermeneutical method he uses for interpreting Scripture.

But how can Bill say that "leadership" implies no "jurisdiction"? Leadership in the sense used by the Fathers (leader of the band, choir director, captain of the troops, etc.) always implies jurisdiction of those under their care or in their choir. Does not the leader, rightly appointed and recognized, have the authority to reprimand, chastise, correct, and even exclude? To deny that leadership implies no jurisdiction is foolish. I could live with something like "doesn't necessarily imply a full jurisdiction" but Bill's statement is far too simplistic. Each of the apostles had "leadership" or authority within their sphere.

All the Apostles were given authority (jurisdiction) to bind and loose in Matthew 18. What does bind and loose mean? It means the authority, right and jurisdiction to exclude people from the community, include them, doctrinal authority to declare things forbidden or permitted, authority to absolve or condemn. (For more read pages 37–38 in *Upon this Rock*). This sure seems to imply jurisdiction to me. But Peter always had greater prerogatives and Peter is the only one of the Twelve that speaks in the book of Acts. John is by his side a few times but never speaks. James was killed in Acts 12 but never speaks. Of the Twelve, only Peter's words are recorded in the first history of the early Church. Peter had a very special position and a special authority.

Cyprian, whom we will discuss later, acknowledged as we do a "like authority" between Peter and the other Apostles. Both were given the authority to bind and loose as is correctly stated by Bill. But Peter had a significant position: "On [Peter] He builds the Church, and to him He gives the command to feed the sheep; and although He assigns a like power to all the Apostles, yet He founded a single chair, and He established by His own authority a source and an intrinsic reason for that unity. Indeed, the others were that also which Peter was; but a primacy is given to Peter, whereby it is made clear that there is but one Church and one chair" *The Unity of the Catholic Church* 4 in Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 1:220).

Remember as we read the quotes below that I have not said *anywhere* that the one word *coryphaeus* alone proves a primacy for Peter and the Popes. Bill's argument is taking on a hollow, tinny ring now, as we read the following passages.

He states that just as Peter received the charge of the world, so did the apostles Paul and John. Just as Peter was appointed teacher of the world, so was Paul. Just as Peter was a holder of the keys of heaven, so was the apostle John. He places the apostles on an equal footing relative to authority:



He took the *coryphaei* and led them up into a high mountain apart...Why does He take these three alone? Because they excelled the others. Peter showed his excellence by his great love of Him, John by being greatly loved, James by the answer...'We are able to drink the chalice.' (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume X, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, Homily 56.2; p. 345)....

Do you not see that the headship was in the hands of these three, especially of Peter and James? This was the chief cause of their condemnation by Herod (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XI, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*, Homily XXVI, p. 169. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series: Volume VIII*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1997.)

The *coryphaei*, Peter the foundation of the Church, Paul the vessel of election (*Contra Iudaeos et theatra* 1, PG VI, 265. Cited by Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 76).

Here is a clear statement of St. Chrysostom that Peter is the foundation of the Church [Mt 16], but Bill seems to blow by it without comment. I wonder why?

And if any should say 'How then did James receive the chair at Jerusalem?' I would make this reply, that He appointed Peter teacher not of the chair, but of the world...And this He did to withdraw them (Peter and John) from their unseasonable sympathy for each other; for since they were about to receive the charge of the world, it was necessary that they should no longer be closely associated together (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 88.1-2, pp. 331-332).

The chair assumed by James was the chair of the bishop in Jerusalem. Peter had "been promoted" up from the chair of Jerusalem. The chair Peter was assuming was that of the world, and the center of the world was in Rome. That is why the Church has always referred to Rome as the see of Peter, the place where Peter's chair resides. The Fathers are replete with this fact.

For the Son of thunder, the beloved of Christ, the pillar of the Churches throughout the world, who holds the keys of heaven, who drank the cup of Christ, and was baptized with His baptism, who lay upon his Master's bosom, with much confidence, this man now comes forward to us now (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 1.1, p. 1).

The merciful God is wont to give this honor to his servants, that by their grace others may acquire salvation; as was agreed by the blessed Paul, that teacher of the world who emitted the rays of his teaching everywhere (*Homily 24, On Genesis*. Cited by E. Giles, *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority* (London: SPCK, 1952), p. 165).

It is clear from these statements that Chrysostom, while certainly granting a large leadership role to Peter, does not consider him to have been made the supreme ruler of the Church. These passages demonstrate that the exalted titles applied to Peter were not exclusively applied to him. There is one passage in which Chrysostom does state that Peter received authority over the Church:

For he who then did not dare to question Jesus, but committed the office to another, was even entrusted with the chief authority over the brethren (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 88.1-2, pp. 331-332).

This would seem to indicate that Chrysostom taught that Peter was the supreme ruler of the Church. However in the passage cited above Chrysostom speaks of the apostle John as also receiving the charge of the whole world and the keys equally with Peter:

Notice that Bill doesn't like what St. Chrysostom "seems to indicate" so he quickly looks for a way to stomp out the fire (like the rhinoceros in the movie *The Gods Must Be Crazy*). This is typical of Fundamentalists who find passages in the Fathers or verses in the Bible that don't fit their recent and novel Fundamentalist tradition. When these "proof-texters" come to 1 Peter 3:21 they stop short and say, "What do we do with this?" What does 'baptism now saves you' mean?" They end up dancing around, and admitting, as James McCarthy does in "The Gospel according to Rome", that "admittedly, this is one of the most difficult passages of the Bible to interpret" or something very close to that. Why is it difficult to explain? Because it doesn't fit *their* tradition! Bill doesn't like what St. Chrysostom says here either so he quickly scrambles to find some way to help St. Chrysostom reword the passage. I like asking Fundamentalists, when they come to such difficult biblical passages, "How would you advise Peter, Paul, or Jesus to reword that passage so it fits our Protestant tradition?" I would ask Bill the same, "How would you advise St. Chrysostom, one of the greatest preachers of all time (in fact, Chrysostom means "golden-mouth"), to re-word this passage to fit your newly-invented Protestant tradition?" At a point like this we have to ask: "Who really violates the rules of historiography? Who is the real "anachronist"? Let's move on.

And this He did to withdraw them (Peter and John) from their unseasonable sympathy for each other; for since they were about to receive the charge of the world, it was necessary that they should no longer be closely associated together (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 88.1-2, pp. 331-332).

This is one of those statements that should cause the reader to yell, "Hit the brakes". Bill tells us that St. Chrysostom never gives us reason to believe Peter held a jurisdictional primacy over anyone (and thus concludes as above: "He places the apostles on an equal footing relative to authority") and then makes the statement above: "There is one passage in which Chrysostom does state that Peter received authority over the

Church”. Is this double talk? Deny that Chrysostom says it and then admit he says it? There is then a shabby attempt to erase the words of Chrysostom and to eliminate the obvious meaning of the statement.

How does John’s “charge of the world with Peter” eliminate Chrysostom’s statement that Peter was “entrusted with the chief authority over the brethren”? Look carefully here:

“charge of the world” = “chief authority over the brethren”

Is Bill hoping the reader will just slip past this sophist argument and not catch it? The Apostles were all given authority over the world when Jesus commissioned them in Matthew 28:18–19, but what does that have to do with Peter’s “chief authority over the brethren”?

If Bill is trying to say that St. Chrysostom views Peter and Paul as equals because both are referred to as *coryphaeus*, then again we have reason to believe he didn’t read my book before criticizing it. Here is what St. Chrysostom says about Peter and Paul. He never mentions this passage in his book (I couldn’t find it anyway; if it is actually there Bill, let me know where). Bill must have somehow overlooked this passage when he was “reading” my book.

“What can be more lowly than such a soul [Paul]? After such successes, wanting nothing of Peter, not even his assent, but being of equal dignity with him, (for at present I will say no more,) he comes to [Peter] as his elder and superior. And the only object of this journey was to visit Peter; thus he pays due respect to the Apostles, and esteems himself not only not their better but not their equal. . . . He says, ‘to visit Peter’; he does not say to see, (ἰδεῖν,) but to visit and survey, (ἰεῖσθαι,) a word which those, who seek to become acquainted with great and splendid cities, apply to themselves. Worthy of such trouble did he consider the very sight of Peter; and this appears from the Acts of the Apostles also” (for more on the study of the words “to see”, read *Jesus, Peter & the Keys*, pgs. 111 ff.) (*Commentary on Galatians* 1, 18 in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1<sup>st</sup> series, 13:12–13, as quoted in *Upon this Rock*, pg. 224).

Tertullian had commented on Peter and Paul two centuries earlier in like manner: “Afterwards, as he himself [Paul] narrates, ‘he went up to Jerusalem for the purpose of seeing Peter,’ [Gal 1:18] *because of his office*, no doubt, and by right of a common belief and preaching” (*On Prescription Against the Heretics* 23 in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* 3:254 as quoted in *Upon this Rock*, pg. 170).

My footnote to Tertullian reads, “Tertullian acknowledges here that Paul, sometime after his conversion went up to see Peter “because of his office, no doubt.” What office? The office mentioned by Paul a few paragraphs earlier. Paul refers to Peter as “Cephas” indicating by Jesus as the “Rock”. Peter holds the office of steward (Is 22; Mt 16), the shepherd or pastor of the Church. Paul later visits the apostles in Jerusalem and records it this way: “I laid before them (but privately before those who were of repute) the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain” (Gal 2:2). Paul, though called by revelation from God, did not function independently of Peter and the Eleven, rather he met with Peter in private, submitted his gospel to the leaders in Jerusalem, and then accepted their decrees at the Jerusalem Council. He had a call from God but recognized the office of Cephas.”

It appears that Bill missed these quotes somehow. Oh well. We’ll carry on.

Bill admits, with a hiss of rejection, and a collection of supposedly contradicting passages, that there is one place where St. Chrysostom grants a place of authority to Peter over the other Apostles. We read it a moment ago: “There is one passage in which Chrysostom does state that Peter received authority over the Church: ‘For he who then did not dare to question Jesus, but committed the office to another, was even entrusted with the chief authority over the brethren’ (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 88.1-2, pp. 331-332).”

What he fails to tell us is that St. Chrysostom doesn’t just mention this in passing, but pounds it home with a sledgehammer by saying it *three times*! The subsequent mention of John being a partner in “charge of the world” is contained in this same passage. Peter governing the Apostles and John being a co-worker in charge of the world are, as we have seen, two completely different things which Bill should be clever enough to notice if he had a desire to treat the text and history with respect. Does he know this passage and how powerfully St. Chrysostom pounds home the point. Yes he does because he has the whole passage cited in his book *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock*. I provide the follow passage directly from his book (thank God and HP for scanners!):

“He saith unto him [Peter], ‘Feed my sheep’, And why, having passed over the others, doth He speak with Peter on these matters? *He was the chosen one of the Apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the leader of the band*; on this account also Paul went up upon a time to enquire of him rather than the others. And at the same time to show him that he must now be of good cheer, since the denial was done away, *Jesus putteth into his hands the chief authority among the brethren*; and He bringeth not forward the denial, nor reproacheth him with what had taken place, but saith: ‘If thou lovest Me, *preside over thy brethren*, and the warm love which thou didst ever manifest, and in which

thou didst rejoice, show thou now; and the life which thou saidst thou wouldest lay down for Me, now give for My sheep'... *And if any should say 'How then did James receive the chair at Jerusalem?' I would make this reply, that He appointed Peter teacher not of the chair, but of the world...* 'Then Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; who also leaned on His breast at supper; and saith, 'Lord, and what shall this man do?' Wherefore hath he reminded us of that reclining? Not without cause or in a chance way, but to show us what boldness Peter had after the denial. For he who then did not dare to question Jesus, but committed the office to another, *was even entrusted with the chief authority over the brethren*, and not only doth not commit to another what relates to himself, but himself now puts another question to his Master concerning another. John is silent but Peter speaks. He showeth also here the love which he bare towards him; for Peter greatly loved John as is clear from what followed, and their close union is shown through the whole Gospel, and in the Acts. *When therefore Christ had foretold great things to him, and committed the world to him, and spake beforehand of his martyrdom*, and testified that his love was greater than that of the others, desiring to have John also to share with him, he said, 'And what shall this man do?' 'Shall he not come the same way with us?' And as at that other time not being able himself to ask, he puts John forward, so now desiring to make him a return, and supposing that he would desire to ask about the matters pertaining to himself, but had not courage, he himself undertook the questioning. What then saith Christ? 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?' Since he spake from strong affection, and wishing not to be torn away from him, Christ, to show that however much he might love, he could not go beyond his love, saith, 'If I will that he tarry-what is that to thee?'...And this He did to withdraw them (Peter and John) from their unseasonable sympathy for each other; for since *they were about to receive the charge of the world [Mt 28:18-19], it was necessary that they should no longer be closely associated together, for assuredly this would have been a great loss to the world*. Wherefore He saith unto him, 'Thou hast a work entrusted unto thee, look to it, accomplish it, labor and struggle. What if I will that he tarry here? Look thou to and care for thine own matters' (Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homily 88.1-2, pp. 331-332, on pgs. 31-311 of *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock*).

So, we see contrary to Bill's comments earlier, and from a quote from his own book, that St. Chrysostom hammers home the fact that *Jesus placed Peter in a place of preeminence over the other Apostles*. So, in the writing of St. Chrysostom, Peter is never given any authority, honorary, jurisdictional, etc. over the other Apostles, eh Bill? I don't know how St. Chrysostom could have made it any plainer. I also don't understand why Bill wants to sweep it under the rug unless he really *doesn't care* what St. Chrysostom actually says and really just wants to maintain his anti-Catholic stance so he can rest easy

in his novel and innovative new tradition opposed completely to the traditions and ecclesiology of the Fathers of the Church!

St. Chrysostom also explains the list of Paul, Apollos and Cephas has Cephas list last. Why? St. Chrysostom says that it is a list emphasizing an ascending list, starting from the least to the greatest. He would argue with anyone who would try to place Peter last in a list. See *Jesus, Peter & the Keys*, pgs. 114ff. for more excellent information on this.

For the Son of thunder, the beloved of Christ, the pillar of the Churches throughout the world, who holds the keys of heaven (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 1.1, p. 1).

He goes on to speak of Paul as being on an equal footing with Peter:

Where the Cherubim sing the glory, where the Seraphim are flying, there shall we see Paul, with Peter, and as chief and leader of the choir of the saints, and shall enjoy his generous love....I love Rome even for this, although indeed one has other grounds for praising it...Not so bright is the heaven, when the sun sends forth his rays, as is the city of Rome, sending out these two lights into all parts of the world. From thence will Paul be caught up, thence Peter. Just bethink you, and shudder, at the thought of what a sight Rome will see, when Paul ariseth suddenly from that deposit, together with Peter, and is lifted up to meet the Lord. What a rose will Rome send up to Christ!...what two crowns will the city have about it! what golden chains will she be girded with! what fountains possess! Therefore I admire the city, not for the much gold, nor for the columns, not for the other display there, but for these pillars of the Church (1 Cor. 15:38) (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XI, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Romans*, Homily 32, Ver. 24, pp. 561-562).

Webster quotes the above to speak of Paul as being on an equal footing with Peter. *Equal in heavenly stature, not in earthly jurisdiction*. Good grief! Can't he tell the difference. Both he and President Clinton are equally citizens of the United States, yet that doesn't preclude the fact that President Clinton, as unworthy as he may be, has an office of superiority over Bill. Come on Bill, let's read the context and try to be honest with the passage!

We have already dealt with St. Chrysostom's view on Peter and Paul earlier and I don't feel it is appropriate to restate it here.

Bill would have us believe that the other Apostles had the same "chief authority" as Peter. I quote from a letter of my good friend Dave Palm to an Orthodox lady, "On your counter-citations from St. John Chrysostom, you would have a case if you could cite an instance in which he says that any of the other Apostles had "chief authority" (Greek: *prostasia*) or "presidency" (Greek: *epistasia*). The *Liddell and Scott Greek-English*

*Lexicon* (abridged) defines *prostasia* as “a being the head of, presidency, chieftainship, leadership” and *epistateo* (from which we get the noun *epistasia*) as “I. to have charge of a thing, to be set over, preside over. II. to be chief President in the assembly” (page 261). Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961) has this for *prostasia*, “1. support, protection, patronage . . . 2. charge, government, leadership” and for *epistasia*, “1. control, authority.” These words seem to have an intrinsically “jurisdictional” force and they are (as far as I can determine) applied only to St. Peter by St. John Chrysostom.

“Guettee, in his *The Papacy* (reprint Blanco, TX: New Sarov Press, n.d., p. 157) claims that St. John C. used *prostasia* of St. Paul in his Homily on Romans 32 but the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers series has *koruphaios* here (see Series 1, vol. 11, p. 561). I need to verify this in Migne but I suspect that Guettee got a little overzealous and that NPNF is correct, since *koruphaios* fits the context of this passage better (in my investigations, *koruphaios* seems to have the notion of “chief” but does not necessarily carry with it any actual controlling authority, though it can).”

The following words from Bill Webster are not a critique of my book, but again multiple pages that he “cut ‘n’ pasted” from his book. Should I waste my time answering him? I’ve already dealt with all this in my book, the text of which he has not read or is just blatantly ignoring in his “rebuttal”.

At this point, we are again just reading pages from Bill’s book. Did he read my book and if so, why is he going on and on about something I have already stipulated and agreed in MY book, even providing the footnote.

Further, Chrysostom speaks of James, and not Peter, as possessing the chief rule and authority in Jerusalem and over the Jerusalem Council:

If Bill had read my book he would have known that I already mention this passage and explain it.

This (James) was bishop, as they say, and therefore he speaks last...There was no arrogance in the Church. After Peter Paul speaks, and none silences him: James waits patiently; not starts up (for the next word). No word speaks John here, no word the other Apostles, but held their peace, for James was invested with the chief rule, and think it no hardship. So clean was their soul from love of glory. Peter indeed spoke more strongly, but James here more mildly: for thus it behooves one in high authority, to leave what is unpleasant for others to say, while he himself appears in the milder part (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XI, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*, Homily 33, pp. 205, 207).

Dom Chapman interprets these statements in a limited sense this way:

Obviously, it is James who has the ‘rule’ and the ‘great power’ as bishop of those believing Pharisees who had initiated the discussion. But the idea that he had (rule) over



Peter is, of course, ludicrous, and the notion that he could possibly be the president of the council certainly never occurred to Chrysostom's mind (Dom John Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 90).

The problem with what Chapman says is that this is not what Chrysostom says. Chrysostom says nothing about the chief rule of James being limited to that of the believing Pharisees. There is not one word said about Pharisees. His reference to the chief rule is of the overall Council over which James presided. When all of his statements about Peter, Paul, James and John are taken together, it becomes clear that in the mind of Chrysostom, all the apostles together held the care of the world and headship of the Church universally. Peter did not hold a primacy of jurisdiction but of teaching, which he says is equally true of John and Paul:

And if anyone would say 'How did James receive the chair of Jerusalem?' I would reply that he appointed Peter a teacher not of the chair, but of the world (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 88.1-2, pp. 331-332).

We have dealt with the issue of "charge of the world" earlier and I am not going to deal with it again. All that we are now reading from Bill is just pages and pages from his book. At the end of this selective proof-texting, I will continue to comment on his shabby "rebuttal".

[Here we continue on page 81 of Bill's book]:

Chrysostom interprets the keys given to Peter as a declarative authority to teach and preach the gospel and to extend the kingdom of God, not a primacy of jurisdiction over the other apostles:

For the Father gave to Peter the revelation of the Son; but the Son gave him to sow that of the Father and that of Himself in every part of the world; and to mortal man He entrusted the authority over all things in Heaven, giving him the keys; who extended the Church to every part of the world, and declared it to be stronger than heaven (*A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford, Parker, 1844), *Homilies of S. John Chrysostom on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Homily 54.3).

This authority was shared equally by all the apostles. Chrysostom states, for example, that John also held the authority of the keys and, like Peter, he held a universal teaching authority over the Churches throughout the world:

For the Son of thunder, the beloved of Christ, the pillar of the Churches throughout the world, who holds the keys of heaven (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XIV, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 1.1, p. 1).

It is also evident from Chrysostom's exegesis of Matthew 16 that he did not teach that Peter was made supreme ruler of the Church. He did not interpret the rock of Matthew 16 to be the person of Peter, but his confession of faith, pointing to Christ himself as the rock and only foundation of the Church:

'And I say unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church'; that is, on the faith of his confession. Hereby He signifies that many were on the point of believing, and raises his spirit, and makes him a shepherd...For the Father gave to Peter the revelation of the Son; but the Son gave him to sow that of the Father and that of Himself in every part of the world; and to mortal man He entrusted the authority over all things in Heaven, giving him the keys; who extended the church to every part of the world, and declared it to be stronger than heaven (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume X, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, Homily 54.2-3; pp. 332-334).

[Now we're on page 82 of Bill's book. Honest rebuttal and critique, eh?]

He speaks from this time lowly things, on his way to His passion, that He might show His humanity. For He that hath built His church upon Peter's confession, and has so fortified it, that ten thousand dangers and deaths are not to prevail over it...(Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume X, Chrysostom, *On Matthew*, Homily 82.3, p. 494).

'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' I say, no man can lay it so long as he is a master-builder; but if he lay it...he ceases to be a master-builder. See how even from men's common notions he proves the whole of his proposition. His meaning is this: 'I have preached Christ, I have delivered unto you the foundation. Take heed how you build thereon, lest haply it be in vainglory, lest haply so as to draw away the disciples unto men.' Let us not then give heed unto the heresies. 'For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid.' Upon this then let us build, and as a foundation let us cleave to it, as a branch to a vine; and let there be no interval between us and Christ...For the branch by its adherence draws in the fatness, and the building stands because it is cemented together. Since, if it stand apart it perishes, having nothing whereon to support itself. Let us not then merely keep hold of Christ, but let us be cemented to Him, for if we stand apart, we perish...And accordingly, there are many images whereby He brings us into union. Thus, if you mark it, He is the 'Head', we are 'the body': can there be any empty interval between the head and the body? He is a 'Foundation', we are a 'building': He a 'Vine', we 'branches': He the 'Bridegroom', we the 'bride': He is the 'Shepherd', we the 'sheep': He is the 'Way', we 'they who walk therein.' Again, we are a 'temple,' He the 'Indweller': He the 'First-Begotten,' we the 'brethren': He the 'Heir,' we the 'heirs together with Him': He the 'Life,' we the 'living': He the 'Resurrection,' we 'those who rise again': He the 'Light,' we the 'enlightened.' All these things indicate unity; and they allow no void interval, not even the smallest (Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Volume XII, Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, Homily VIII.7, p. 47).

[Now we're on page 83 of Bill's book! "Earth to space, earth to space. Bill are you out there? I've already read your book, Bill. I don't need page after page regurgitated for me. I thought you were analyzing *Upon this Rock*? Is this an honest attempt to interact with the material?]

Chrysostom argues that the rock is not Peter but Peter's confession of faith in Christ as the Son of God. Even Dom Chapman is forced to admit that Chrysostom consistently

interpreted the rock to be Peter's confession of faith: 'The rock on which the Church is to be built is regularly taken by St. Chrysostom to be the confession of Peter, or the faith which prompted this confession.' (Dom John Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 77).

I comment repeatedly, here and in my book, that the Fathers interpreted Matthew 16 in many and various way, for many and various reasons. I have stated already that even the Pope in his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* refer to the rock as various things depending on the way the passage is being utilized. So, what is the deal Bill?

It is Peter's confession that is the foundation of the Church. Peter is not the foundation. According to Chrysostom that position belongs to Christ alone. Dom Chapman objects to this claiming that in Chrysostom's mind, the rock is not only Peter's faith but also Peter's person. He cites a quote where Chrysostom speaks of Peter as being strengthened by Christ to stand as a rock against a hostile world:

For those things which are peculiar to God alone, (both to absolve from sins, and to make the church incapable of overthrow in such assailing waves, and to exhibit a man that is a fisher more solid than any rock, while all the world is at war with him), these He promises Himself to give; as the Father, speaking to Jeremiah, said, He would make him as 'a brazen pillar, and as a wall;' but him to one nation only, this man in every part of the world (*A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford, Parker, 1844), *Homilies of S. John Chrysostom on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Homily 54.3.

In light of these statements Chapman says:

I think this statement alone would have made it clear that the Rock is Peter, in St. Chrysostom's view, as well as, and because of, the firmness of his confession. He has no idea of the two notions, 'Peter is the Rock' and 'his faith is the Rock' being mutually exclusive, as, in fact, they are not (Dom John Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 79).

But this statement is a complete misrepresentation. In exegeting the rock of Matthew 16, just prior to the above statements, Chrysostom states that Peter is not the rock. In the quotes given by Chapman, what Chrysostom is saying is that just as the Lord strengthened Jeremiah for his calling so he would strengthen Peter. [Now folks, turn the page and we are all reading together. We are now on page 84 of Bill's book.] He says he will be like a rock, not that he is the rock of Matthew 16. This is very similar to Augustine's position on Peter:

So is it the case that Peter is now true, or that Christ is true in Peter? When the Lord Jesus Christ wished, he left Peter to himself, and Peter was found to be a man; and when it so pleased the Lord Jesus Christ, he filled Peter, and Peter was found to be true. The Rock had made Rocky Peter true, for the Rock was Christ (John Rotelle, *The Works of Saint Augustine* (Brooklyn: New City, 1992), Sermons, *Sermon* 147.3, p. 449).

According to Augustine, the rock is Christ and Christ made Peter a rock of strength in his faith. But Peter is not the rock of Matthew 16. He simply derives strength to be a rock from the rock, Christ Jesus himself. And what is true for Peter becomes true for all Christians because Peter is a figurative representative of the Church. In contradistinction to Chapman's assertions the fathers do in fact separate Peter's faith from Peter's confession, making them mutually exclusive, as we have seen with Augustine and Ambrose. While it is true that it is the person of Peter who makes the confession, the focus of Chrysostom is not on Peter's person but on Peter's faith. Chrysostom holds a similar view to that of Ambrose which we referenced earlier. Ambrose says that where Peter is (his confession), there is the Church. Chrysostom affirms the same point when he says: 'For though we do not retain the body of Peter, we do retain the faith of Peter, and retaining the faith of Peter we have Peter.' (*On the Inscription of the Acts*, II. Cited by E. Giles, *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority* (London: SPCK, 1952), p. 168. Cf. Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy*, p. 96).

While holding a very high view of the status of the apostle Peter, Chrysostom, like Augustine, did not transfer this status to the bishops of Rome. In his thinking, along with Cyprian, Augustine, Jerome and Ambrose, all bishops are successors of Peter. There is no supreme authority of one bishop over another. In all his remarks about Peter, where does Chrysostom apply them to the bishops of Rome in an exclusive sense? He never does that. He never personally makes that application in his statements and it is historically dishonest to assert that that is what he meant when he personally never said it.

Bill is being quite deceitful here because he is pretending to be asking me these questions but again we are reading verbatim from page 84 of his book. But, let's take the accusation seriously. First, I never claimed in my book (see, that's what is so irritating about this "rebuttal" by Bill. He didn't read my book and in this section on Chrysostom, just cut 'n' pasted his book into the section to cheat by not having to interact with my book.) I never in my book claim that St. Chrysostom attributes exclusively to Rome a Petrine privilege!! So why does Bill keep implying I do? Because he didn't read my book, because he's rattling away without LISTENING—typical anti-Catholic practice! He is just quoting the whole section on Chrysostom from his book! If it weren't for intellectual and historical honesty I would . . . Oh well, let's carry on.

In similar fashion to Cyprian, Chrysostom refers to the chair of Peter, stating that the bishop of Antioch possesses that chair, demonstrating that in his mind all legitimate bishops are successors of Peter and not just the bishop of Rome:

In speaking of S. Peter, the recollection of another Peter has come to me, the common father and teacher, who has inherited his prowess, and also obtained his chair. For this is the one great privilege of our city, Antioch, that it received the leader of the apostles as its teacher in the beginning. For it was right that she who was first adorned with the name of Christians, before the whole world, should receive the first of the apostles as her pastor. But though we received him as teacher, we did not retain him to the end, but gave him up to royal Rome. Or rather we did retain him to the end, for though we do not retain the body of Peter, we do retain the faith of Peter, and retaining the faith of Peter we have Peter (*On the Inscription of the Acts*, II. Cited by E. Giles, *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority* (London: SPCK, 1952), p. 168. Cf. Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy*, p. 96).

In his book, *The Eastern Churches and the Papacy*, Herbert Scott makes the assertion that John Chrysostom held to the view of papal primacy because he expressed exalted views about the apostle Peter. He makes the assumption that because Chrysostom speaks of Peter in exalted terms that such statements apply to the bishops of Rome in an exclusive sense. But when pressed by the question as to whether Chrysostom actually makes this application himself, Scott is forced to this significant admission:

Granted that Chrysostom reiterates that Peter is the coryphaeus, 'the universal shepherd,' etc., what evidence is there, it is asked, that he recognized these claims in the Bishop of Rome? Is there anything in his writings to that effect?...If it be held that all this laboring by Chrysostom of the honour and powers of Peter does not of itself demand the exalted position of his successors as its explanation, it must be conceded that there is little or nothing in his writings which explicitly and incontestably affirms that the Bishop of Rome is the successor of S. Peter in his primacy (S. Herbert Scott, *The Eastern Churches and the Papacy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 133).

In other words, there is no evidence in any of the writings of Chrysostom that he applied his statements about Peter to the bishops of Rome. [we're now on page 86 of Bill's book of selective proof-texts, and anachronistic theology. Notice again, that silence is his argument?] Nevertheless, Scott goes on to suggest that Chrysostom's statements imply a papal interpretation to his words. As Scott puts it:

Surely, however, if Peter is the foundation of the Church as Chrysostom constantly affirms, and if the Church is eternal as the Founder made it, he must last as long as the building, the Church, which is erected upon him (S. Herbert Scott, *The Eastern Churches and the Papacy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 133).

The logic employed here by Scott is flawed. Chrysostom never makes such a statement. He has in fact explained what he means when he says that Peter is the foundation. There is no reason to suppose that Chrysostom envisioned a papal office when he speaks of Peter as the foundation of the Church. We have seen quite clearly from Chrysostom's statements that he taught that the Church was built on Peter's confession of faith. It can be said to be built on Peter only in the sense that it is built on his confession. Chrysostom's comments given above on Antioch demonstrate that he teaches that the Church's foundation is preserved throughout history as Peter's confession of faith is preserved. It is not preserved by being built upon the bishops of Rome as supposed exclusive successors of Peter, but upon Peter's confession. As Chrysostom put it, 'Where you have Peter's confession there you have Peter: for though we do not retain the body of Peter, we do retain the faith of Peter, and retaining the faith of Peter we have Peter.' (*On the Inscription of the Acts*, II. Cited by E. Giles, *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority* (London: SPCK, 1952), p. 168. Cf. Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy*, p. 96).

Nevertheless, Scott goes on to offer what he considers incontrovertible proof of the expression of papal primacy from Chrysostom's writings:

[We are now starting on page 86 of Bill's book. Lucky readers, now you don't have to buy his book; he's included most of it for you here in his "rebuttal"]

There is indeed one passage which may be a categorical affirmation of the primacy of the pope: De Sacerdotio 53: 'Why did Christ shed His Blood? To purchase the sheep which He confided to Peter and those who came after him.' It may be urged that S. Chrysostom means no more by this than all those who have the care of souls. On the other hand, there may be a reference to Peter only and to his personal commission: 'Feed my sheep'; and Chrysostom soon afterwards actually quotes these words. And when one recalls his comments on them given above, as meaning Peter's 'government' and 'ruling the brethren,' it is at least likely that here is a reference to Peter's successors in the see of Rome (S. Herbert Scott, *The Eastern Churches and the Papacy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928), p. 133).

Let's stop here for a minute, actually a little longer than that because we need to set the record straight. Because Bill didn't read my book (at least he certainly isn't interacting with it, though he is deceitfully trying to give the appearance of doing so), he is implying throughout that I have specifically stated that St. Chrysostom supports, with specific wording, the later teaching on the infallibility of the Pope as defined in Vatican I. If he had read my book he would have noticed on pages 221–222 that I already commented at length on this very matter:

“Similar words by St. Chrysostom, “Peter, the leader (coryphaeus) of the choir, that mouth of the rest of the Apostles, that head of that brotherhood, that one set over the entire universe, that foundation of the Church, that ardent lover of Christ” (*In Illud, hoc scitote*, 4 in *The Faith of Catholics* 2:32–33). One could not construct a more appropriate set of phrases to describe Peter, nor to describe the office of the papacy, especially when one looks at our current Pope John Paul II. However, one must be honest about the overall situation in the East. There was no clear consensus in the East about Peter and the jurisdictional primacy of Rome, just as there was little consensus during these centuries about the full deity of Christ. As Miller writes, “From Peter’s prominence among the apostles, Easterners drew different conclusions than Westerners did. Some Orientals held that all believers were successors of Peter. Others limited Petrine succession only to bishops. Very few conceded that the bishop of Rome was the successor of Peter in a unique way” (*The Shepherd and the Rock*, 116).

“The East was in constant theological and political flux, yet when trials, heresies, and expulsions afflicted the faithful and orthodox Christian, it was to Rome that they made their appeals; they flew to Rome for letters of reinstatement and “certification” of their orthodoxy. There are innumerable instances, as we have seen, in which a Father may never laud the “infallible” see of Rome, or proclaim her jurisdictional primacy in writing, but runs to her for protection, doctrinal clarification, reinstatement, or to solicit from her a final and authoritative doctrinal or judicial decree. Again, the old maxim holds true that “actions speak louder than words”, and even in the East we are not short of teaching that proclaims the unique authority of Peter and the unique primacy of the bishop of Rome. Why should one be surprised that the East would be less enthusiastic about subscribing to Roman jurisdiction than

the Western Church. For the Orientals, Rome was “way over there across land and sea” and it is never much comfort to be subject to a “distant land”. Nor had the development of Church polity developed fully yet. The Church was growing and so was the internal structure—the framework and governance. One can see the development of Church polity and structure throughout the New Testament (institution the diaconate, appointment of bishops, etc.) and the progress continued throughout the first centuries of the Church. As the edifice grows so does the structure and the foundation becomes ever more important. As a corporation develops, or a tree grows, or as a family expands, so does the need for unity, leadership and a court of final appeal.

Dr. Stanley Jaki comments on the development of the doctrine of the Papacy and why one does not expect to find the Papal Primacy in the See of Rome clearly delineated in St. Chrysostom. It would do well for Bill to stop preaching here for a moment and listen. Because Fr. Jaki summarizes St. Chrysostom with such clarity and force, and because his books are largely unknown and need to be brought out for a wider audience, I am quoting his book *The Keys of the Kingdom* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1986) at length. I am quoting from pages 86–89. Fr. Jaki writes:

“The East’s most eloquent and sustained witness on behalf of Peter’s and of his successors’ primacy was, of course, St. John Chrysostom. For him, Peter was the “mouth of the apostles,” the “conductor of the apostolic choir,” the “fisherman of the world who fished for the whole world,” nay, the “ruler of the entire world.” The contrast Chrysostom drew between Jeremiah and Peter is just as telling about the universality of Peter’s office. Jeremiah was made into a column of brass so that he might prove stronger than an entire nation, but Peter was made into a firm foundation so that it may extend all over the world and be stronger than all the worldly powers. Peter, according to Chrysostom, was appointed by Christ “to the see of the world because he entrusted him with the care of the whole world.” To the question, why James was made the bishop of Jerusalem, Chrysostom had no hesitation in replying: “Christ made Peter not the teacher of that see but of the world.” As to Christ’s questioning Peter whether he loved him, Chrysostom’s reply is no less to the point: “The master asked those questions so that he might teach us how much at heart he has the headship over these sheep.”

“Unlike some latter-day Catholic theologians and exegetes taken aback by Peter’s denial of Christ, Chrysostom is far from being troubled. According to him, Christ allowed Peter to fall so that He might have an even more dramatic background to strengthen the other apostles’ confidence in the one who was given the keys, by promising His prayers so that Peter would in fact strengthen the twelve and their successors. Such was the answer Chrysostom offered to his powerfully phrased question:



““He who built the Church upon his [Peter’s] confession and so fortified it that ten thousand dangers and deaths should not prevail against it; he who gave him the keys of heaven and made him lord (possessor) of so much authority, and who needed no prayer for this (for he said not ‘I have prayed’ but with authority ‘I will build’ and ‘I will give’), how did he need prayer that he might save the soul of one man [Peter]? The answer is to give confidence to the disciples, whose faith was weak.’

“And just as learning humility and drawing confidence were the divinely intended lessons of Peter’s fall for the apostles, much the same was the gist of divine pedagogy in respect to Peter, according to Chrysostom. In commenting on the post-Resurrection scene where Christ rebuked Peter who did not want John to join them, Chrysostom wrote: “He [Christ] moderates him [Peter] that he might not in the future have the same fault, when he should receive the government of the world, but that remembering his fault he might know himself.” Concerning the outbreak of jealousy among the twelve as to which of them was the greatest, Chrysostom traced that incident to their realization of the prominence given by Christ to Peter. While the twelve could tolerate the pre-eminence of three-Peter, James, and John-they could not bear the even greater prominence given to Peter. And, according to Chrysostom, part of Jesus’ answer to their indignation was his choosing Peter for the miraculous catch of the fish with the tax coin in its mouth, and that the tax was to be paid only on behalf of himself and Peter.

“Chrysostom certainly did not notice anything derogatory to Peter’s prominence in his handling the election of Matthias, the replacement of Judas. On the contrary, he saw in it the humility of a leader truly assured in his prominence. In order to cut off the possible charge of favoritism, Peter entrusted the outcome to lottery, although he had the power of constituting an apostle. On reflecting on Chrysostom’s interpretation Erasmus noted that in Chrysostom’s view Peter “habet jus constituendi par omnibus [apostolis],” that is, Peter had a constitutional power equal to that of all the twelve taken together.<sup>61</sup> Thus, according to Chrysostom, Peter did not have to call the council of Jerusalem; he alone could have settled all its business. Unlike many modern exegetes, Chrysostom did not overlook that Peter spoke last at the council as the one who had the last word. In commenting on Paul’s assertion of his right to take along a sisterwoman, Chrysostom called attention to the order in which Paul referred to the similar procedures of the apostles, the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas. “He [Paul] puts the leader last, for in that position he places his most powerful point. For it was not so wonderful to list the others ... as it was to name the primate entrusted with the keys of heaven.’

“Had Chrysostom been severed from communion with Rome for seventeen or perhaps twenty-six years as some claim, one would expect Chrysostom to sing the praises of Antioch, the first see of Peter and the see also of St. Meletius and St. Flavian who for a while were the bone of contention between East and Rome. Chrysostom certainly praised Antioch, but all his praises were only a prelude for even greater praise for the see of Rome, the ultimate see of Peter:

““God has had great account of this city of Antioch, as he has shown in deed, especially in that he ordered Peter, the ruler of the whole world, to whom he entrusted the keys of heaven, to whom he committed the office of bringing all in to pass a long time here ... But though we received him as teacher, we did not retain him to the end, but we gave him up to Royal Rome. Nay, but we did retain him till the end, for we do not retain the body of Peter but we retain the faith of Peter as though it were Peter himself; and while we retain the faith of Peter, we have Peter himself.”

“Of course, that faith, the faith of Peter, had to include all the things that Peter had to believe in, among them the power of keys entrusted to him. Had Chrysostom not had that faith he would not have written a grateful letter to Pope Innocent for the efforts made on his behalf in those terrible years that saw the greatest doctor of the Eastern church and the greatest ever to occupy the see of Constantinople, the second Rome for some, run for dear life, threatened as he was by the evil that befell the Eastern churches: caesaropapism. Its threat to the church in the West was foiled largely because of the papacy’s proximity there.” [The end of Fr. Jaki’s quote]

Unfortunately, the following pages from Bill’s book which follow (pages 87–89) have a hollow tone, like a piano long in need of tuning or of a hound yowling to the sound of beautiful music.

These assertions are refuted by Dom Chrysostom Baur, the Roman Catholic biographer on the life of John Chrysostom. He points out that Chrysostom’s writings contain no allusion to a papal primacy and that the supposed evidence as that appealed to by Scott twists his writings to say what one wants them to say. It is to read a preconceived theology into his writings that Chrysostom himself never expressed. Baur comments:

A more important question is whether Chrysostom considered the primacy of Peter as only personal, or as an official primacy, hence a permanent arrangement of the Church, and whether he correspondingly attributed the primacy of jurisdiction in the Church also to the Bishops of Rome...Chrysostom never made in his works any questionable deductions, never passed sentence with clear words on the jurisdiction of the Pope. Even P. Jugie admits this frankly. N. Marini, who later became a Cardinal, published a book on this question. In this he seeks, with the help...of a number of quotations from Chrysostom, to prove that this must pass for unqualified evidence of the jurisdictional primacy of the successors of Peter in Rome. His first argument is borrowed from the Treatise on the Priesthood. In Book 2.1 Chrysostom asks: ‘Why did Christ shed His blood? In order to ransom His sheep, which He entrusted to Peter and to those after him.’ Marioni translates here ‘Peter and his successors,’ which naturally facilitates his proof. But Chrysostom actually expressed himself in a more general way, and means by ‘those after him’ all the pastors generally, to whom the sheep of Christ had been entrusted after Peter. So it is not practicable to interpret this passage so narrowly as Marini has done. Still less convincing is Marini’s second piece of evidence. In a letter which Chrysostom addressed to Pope Innocent from his exile, he says that he would gladly assist in putting an end to the great evil, ‘for the strife has spread over almost the entire world.’ So then, one concludes, Chrysostom ascribes to the Pope authority over the whole world. Then Chrysostom writes once more, to the Bishop of Thessaloniki: ‘Do

not grow weary of doing that which contributes to the general improvement of the Church,' and he praises Bishop Aurelius of Carthage, because he put forth so much effort and struggle for the churches of the whole world. It would not occur to anyone to wish to construe from this a possible proof of the primacy of the bishops of Saloniki or of Carthage (Dom Chrysostomus Baur, O.S.B., *John Chrysostom and His Time* (Westminster: Newman, 1959), Vol. I, pp. 348-349).

Clearly, Chrysostom cannot be cited as a proponent of a Petrine or papal primacy in the Roman Catholic sense any more than Augustine. Michael Winter candidly admits that Chrysostom's views, especially his interpretation of the rock of Matthew 16, were antithetical to those of Rome and greatly influenced the Eastern fathers who followed him. He states that such Eastern fathers as Theodore of Mopsuestia, Palladius of Helenopolis, Theodore of Ancyra, Basil of Seleucia and Nilus of Ancyra held to an opinion that was unfavourable to the superiority of Peter, an opinion that was widespread in the East in the first half of the fifth century:

Why is Bill quoting Winter to me?? I just provided the quote in my book above (page 222)! Hello Bill, are you listening or just preaching here?

But, let's continue anyway. Before we read Winter's quote, let's remember that Bill has not brought forth one shred of evidence that St. Chrysostom *opposed* papal primacy, only that he did not specifically comment on it. Arguments from silence have already been taunted and ridiculed by Bill earlier in his "rebuttal"

And as Dave Palm again commented: "Isn't it interesting too that Webster cites Winter approvingly here, and yet Winter is stating that the antipathy toward the Roman primacy was based primarily on political and not theological considerations? The Protestants hate it when the Church is over-influenced by the State, unless of course it just happens to skewer the "Roman" position." OK, let's read on:

The antipathy to Rome which finds its echo even in the works of St. John Chrysostom became more pronounced as the Eastern Church came more and more under the control of the emperor and effected eventually their estimate of St. Peter. Although they were not influenced by the Eusebian idea that the 'rock' of the church was Christ, the lesser Antiocheans betray an unwillingness to admit that Peter was the rock. Theodore of Mopsuestia, who died a quarter of a century after Chrysostom, declared that the rock on which the church was built was Peter's confession of faith. The same opinion is repeated by Palladius of Helenopolis in his Dialogues on the life of St. John Chrysostom. Without any elaboration he states that the rock in Matthew 16 is Peter's confession. The complete absence of reasons or arguments in support of the contention is an indication of how widely the view was accepted at that date. Such an opinion was, in fact, held also by Theodore of Ancyra, Basil of Seleucia, and Nilus of Ancyra, in the first half of the fifth century...The opinion unfavourable to the superiority of St. Peter gained a considerable following in the East under the influence of the school of Antioch (Michael Winter, *St. Peter and the Popes* (Baltimore: Helikon, 1960), p. 73).

Don't forget that St. Chrysostom appealed to Rome of relief. My book deals with this and anyone can read about it there. But I would ask Bill a question posed by my friend Dave Palm: "We know of many instances in which Eastern priests, bishops, and even patriarchs appealed to the Roman bishop after receiving unjust treatment at the hands of their fellow Eastern bishops. Can you cite even one example of a Western priest or bishop appealing to an Eastern patriarch after losing his case before the Roman bishop?"

Also, in regard to an "unfavorable opinion" of Roman jurisdiction as stated above, I deal with that extensively in my book and I don't feel inclined to *cut 'n' paste* whole sections of my book into this response, as Bill was inclined to do from his book in his "rebuttal". How and why there was resistance to Roman jurisdiction is clearly discussed over and over in *upon this Rock* for any who want to read it. Also, I agree with Michael Winter on many things, and quoted him freely in many places. But, just because I quote him on various topics does not mean or imply that I agree with him on everything, which I don't. If Bill wants to make that some kind of contradiction, let's remind him that he quotes Meyendorff and many others who he may agree with on certain points, but he certainly is opposed to on the vast majority of issues. Right Bill?

[Stephen Ray gives a further criticism of my comments in these statements:](#) [Now, after reciting untold pages from his book, it appears that Bill has now decided to come back and join us.]

[\[From \*Upon this Rock\*\] Webster continues, "On the one hand the Eastern Fathers and theologians held very high views of the status of the apostle Peter but they did not transfer that status to the bishops of Rome" \(ibid.\). We will provide plenty of evidence to disprove Webster's assertion later in our study; but here is a single reference to put the lie to Webster's claim. Methodius \(c. 815-885\), the famous Eastern Father and "apostle to the Slavs", or one of his disciples, wrote, "It is not true, as this Canon states, that the holy Fathers gave the primacy to old Rome because it was the capital of the Empire; it is from on high, from divine grace, that this primacy drew its origin. Because of the intensity of his faith Peter, the first of the Apostles, was addressed in these words by our Lord Jesus Christ himself 'Peter, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep'. That is why in hierarchical order Rome holds the pre-eminent place and is the first See. That is why the leges of old Rome are eternally immovable, and that is the view of all the Churches" \(N. Brian-Chaninov, \*The Russian Church\* \(1931\), 46; cited by Butler, \*Church and Infallibility\*, 210\) \(\*Upon This Rock\* \(San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999\), p. 177\).](#)

[Please note the defense Mr. Ray employs for his position that the Fathers of the church apply the prerogatives of Peter to the bishops of Rome in an exclusive sense as a refutation of my statements. He gives a questionable quotation from a ninth century Eastern theologian. Notice how he introduces the quotation: 'Methodius, or one of his disciples, wrote.' In other words we do not know for sure who wrote this. There is no reference given to the writing itself as to its genuineness and the citation comes from a source, that is taken from another source, which simply lists it as a quotation. This is very sloppy scholarship if we can call it that at all. In addition, the ninth century is hardly what we would call the](#)

patristic age. Historically, the patristic age is considered to have ended with John of Damascus in the mid eighth century.

If you look above Bill, you will see that you yourself specifically said “Eastern Fathers and theologians” which is a wider category than you are trying to impose on me here! Right, Bill? (*Church of Rome at the Bar of History*, 51 and *Upon this Rock*, 177). Did you miss that? Also, the fact that the quote is from the ninth century is all the more impressive since the East was drawing near to a break with Rome. Such a statement from the East in the ninth century is strong evidence. You can ridicule the quote, but you haven’t disproved it and it remains an excellent quotation. I will acquire a copy of “*The Russian Church*” and then revise my book to cite it directly (it will be here in ten days). How’s that? I think the bottom line is that you just don’t like quote. But if you don’t like that quote, let’s try a few others. I’ll give three more than you asked for, and then others to supplement. Also, as an Appendix xxx, I will supply a slew of additional quotations from the East to demonstrate the your position just won’t hold up.

First, how do you like this one from St. Maximus the Confessor, the Byzantine theologian? St. Maximus (c. 580–622 AD) was an Eastern Greek Father who was a monk and later an abbot of the monastery of Chrysopolis. It is pretty clear here he is referring to Peter and the words Jesus spoke to him and now applies it to the Most Holy Roman Church. St. Maximus the Confessor wrote:

“The extremities of the earth, and everyone in every part of it who purely and rightly confess the Lord, look directly towards the *Most Holy Roman Church* and her confession and faith, as to a sun of unfailling light, awaiting from her the brilliant radiance of the sacred dogmas of our Fathers, according to that which the inspired and holy Councils have stainlessly and piously decreed. For, from the descent of the Incarnate Word among us, all the churches in every part of the world have held that greatest Church alone to be *their base and foundation*, seeing that, according to the promise of Christ Our Savior, *the gates of hell never prevail against her*, that she has *the keys of orthodox confession* and right faith in Him, that she *opens* the true and exclusive religion to such men as approach with piety, and she *shuts* up and locks every heretical mouth which speaks against the Most High.” (*Opuscula theologica et polemica*, Migne PG 90, emphasis mine.)

Second, the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD, was an ecumenical council with over six hundred Eastern bishops, with only two African bishops and two legates from Rome. They stood up and cheered when Pope Leo’s tome was read. They cheered “Peter has spoken through Leo!” (*Upon this Rock*, 235–238).

Third, Jerome who left the West when he was twenty-nine years old, lived the remainder of his life in Palestine – the East – except for a three year stint in Rome.

I'm not going to argue whether he is a Western or Eastern Father because a case could be made either way, but as a ancient living the great majority of his life in Palestine and Antioch, ordained a priest in Antioch, and spent time in Constantinople, I think we can use his quote with some impact. At least *one* of his letters was addressed "To the Westerners". In the book by non-Catholics Shotwell and Loomis, *The See of Peter* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991), on pages 634ff., they list St. Jerome as an "Eastern Father" living from 345–420 AD). St. Jerome is quite explicit granting the prerogatives of Peter to Rome in an exclusive sense. Bill would have known this if he had read my book. Here is what St. Jerome wrote to Pope Damasus and said, "Because the East is shattered by the ancient, fierce antagonisms of its peoples and is rending into tiny fragments the undivided and woven tunic of the Lord and the wolves are destroying Christ's vineyard, so that amid these dry pools that hold no water it is difficult to know where is the fountain sealed and the garden enclosed, therefore I have thought best to turn to the See of Peter and to the faith that was praised by the apostle's lips, to ask now food for my soul from the source where once I received the raiment of Christ. Nor can the vast stretches of the watery element nor the breadth of lands that lie between us prevent my search for the precious pearl. Where the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together. An evil posterity has squandered its patrimony. You alone preserve unspoiled the heritage of the Fathers. Yonder the good soil of your earth is bringing forth the pure seed of the Lord a hundred fold; here the grain is buried in the furrows and degenerating into tares and wild oats. In the West, the sun of justice is now rising; in the East, Lucifer, he who fell from heaven, has set his throne above the stars. You are the light of the world, you are the salt of the earth, you are the vessels of gold and of silver; here are the vessels of earth and of wood, the iron rod and the eternal fire.

"For this reason your greatness terrifies me, yet mercy invites me to you. A victim I implore the priest for salvation, a sheep the shepherd for protection. Away with jealousy of the Roman preeminence, away with ambition! I speak to the successor of the fisherman and to the disciple of the cross. I follow no one as chief save Christ but I am joined in communion with your blessedness, that is, with the See of Peter. Upon that rock I know the Church is built. Whoever eats the lamb outside that house is profane. He who is not in Noah's ark will perish when the flood overwhelms all. And I, who for my sins have journeyed to this solitude which lies between Syria and the bounds of barbarism, and cannot look to receive the Lord's holy thing from your holiness over the wide spaces that separate us, am for this reason adhering to your colleagues here, the confessors of Egypt, and am hiding my little barque behind their great ships. I do not know Vitalis, I repudiate Meletius, I am ignorant of Paulinus. He who gathers not with you scatters; that is, he who is not of Christ is of Antichrist" (Jerome, *Epistolae, XV, To Damasus*. Text. C. T. G. Schoenemann, *Pontificum Romanorum Epistolae Genuinae*, 374-378 as quoted in Shotwell and Loomis, pg. 658–659).

St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (c. 638): “Teaching us all orthodoxy and destroying all heresy and driving it away from the God-protected halls of our holy Catholic Church. And together with these inspired syllables and characters, I accept all his (the pope’s) letters and teachings as proceeding from the mouth of Peter the Coryphaeus, and I kiss them and salute them and embrace them with all my soul ... I recognize the latter as definitions of Peter and the former as those of Mark, and besides, all the heaven-taught teachings of all the chosen mystagogues of our Catholic Church. (Sophronius, Mansi, xi. 461)

There are four quotations. I would also, for effect I guess, like to supplement with the following quotes collected by David Palm in an extended dialog with an Orthodox woman as they contended over the power of Rome and her bishop relating to Ecumenical Councils. I think these quotations are germane to our discussion here. If you’re not interested, just drop down to the point where our discussion continues.

**Socrates Scholasticus:** “Neither was Julius, bishop of the great Rome, there, nor had he sent a substitute, although an ecclesiastical canon commands that the churches shall not make any ordinances against the opinion of the bishop of Rome” (*Eccl. Hist.* 8). (“Socrates is not quoting any other writer, but stating a fact as he knew it to be. This makes it entirely indubitable that his own view coincides with the opinion he attributes to St. Julius in ii.15 and ii.17, quoted above” [Chapman, *Studies*, 60 n. 1]).

**Sozomen:** “He wrote blaming them for making stealthy innovations in the Nicene dogma, and for not inviting him to the synod, contrary to the laws of the Church, saying that it was a sacerdotal law that what was done against the will of the Roman bishop was null and void. “ (*Eccl. Hist.* 3:10). (“The statement that Julius complained of not being invited to their Council is a mistake. The famous assertions that the ecclesiastical law invalidated any canons disapproved by the bishops of Rome is doubtless implied in his letter, but it is not stated. It is remarkable that the two Greek historians of the following century read into the letter of the Pope the claim which they thought it natural he should make” [Chapman, *Studies*, 59]).

**St. Peter Chrysologus:** “We exhort you, honourable brother, that you obediently listen to what has been written by the blessed Pope of the city of Rome, since Blessed Peter, who lives and presides in his own see, offers the truth of faith to those who seek. For we, in our zeal for peace and faith, cannot decide questions of faith apart from the consent of the Bishop of Rome” (*Ad. Eutychem.*, Sermon 25:2).

**Pope Innocent I:** “In making inquiry with respect to those things that should be treated with all solicitude by bishops, and especially by a true and just and Catholic Council, by preserving, as you have done, the example of ancient tradition, and by



being mindful of ecclesiastical discipline, you have truly strengthened the vigour of our religion, no less now in consulting us than before in passing sentence. For you decided that it was proper to refer to our judgement, knowing what is due to the Apostolic See, since all we who are set in this place, desire to follow the Apostle from whom the very episcopate and whole authority of this name is derived. Following in his steps, we know how to condemn the evil and to approve the good. So also, you have by your sacerdotal office preserved the customs of the Fathers, and have not spurned that which they decreed by a divine and not human sentence, that whatsoever is done, even though it be in distant provinces, should not be ended without being brought to the knowledge of this See.” (Ep. 181; cited in Chapman, *Studies*, 146).

“(Innocent is referring to inveterate custom up to his own time. As to “apocryphal history,” St. Innocent knew more than Dr. Bright about the frequency of appeals to Rome, and the principle involved in them. It was not only at Rome such statements were made. A dozen years afterwards Socrates (H.E. ii, 8 and 17), a Greek, and twenty years after him Sozomen (iii, 10, *cf.* Theodoret. H.E. ii, 4), another Greek, made just the same statement. Dr. Bright (p.84), says that these two Greeks have “gravely misapprehended” the letter of St. Julius, to which alone he supposes them to refer. What it he (following Coustant) is right? It remains to explain why they so “gravely misapprehended” a (to Dr. Bright) perfectly plain passage, unless they themselves were accustomed to the doctrine which they state, that ecclesiastical law forbids any canons to be made without the consent of the Bishop of Rome (see p.59 above). What Innocent, Zosimus, Boniface, Celestine, and their successors throughout this century all repeated and acted upon in East and West was at least not looked upon as apocryphal history in their time, for they were disobeyed frequently, but they were never contradicted. Dr. Bright is at liberty to disbelieve them. He is not at liberty to imply that the Church of the fifth century disbelieved them.” [Chapman, *Studies*, 146 n1]).

**The Fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council** to Pope Celestine: “The zeal of your holiness for piety, and your care for the right faith, so grateful and highly pleasing to God the Saviour of us all, are worthy of all admiration. For it is your custom in such great matters to make trial of all things, and the confirmation of the Churches you have made your own care. But since it is right that all things which have taken place should be brought to the knowledge of your holiness, we are writing of necessity [to inform you] that, by the will of Christ the Saviour of us all, and in accordance with the orders of the most pious and Christ-loving Emperors, we assembled together in the Metropolis of the Ephesians from many and far scattered regions, being in all over two hundred bishops.”

**St. Flavian, a saint and confessor of the Orthodox Church:**

On the heresy of Eutyches [Flavian] writes thus to the Pope: ‘The whole question needs only your single decision and all will be settled in peace and quietness. Your sacred letter will with God’s help completely suppress the heresy which has arisen and the disturbance which it has caused; [Mansi, Concil., v.1356] and so’, he continues, ‘the convening of a council which is in any case difficult will be rendered superfluous’ (cited in Vladimir Soloviev, I don’t have the citation at my fingertips, sorry. I am trying to find a copy of this valuable book but it appears to be a rare findxxx).

**Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus to Pope Leo the Great:**

Next to the saintly patriarch of Constantinople should be quoted the learned bishop of Cyrus, Theodoret, who has been beatified by the Greek Church. ‘If Paul the herald of truth and the trumpet of the Holy Spirit,’ he writes to Pope Leo, ‘had recourse to the great Peter . . . we, simple and humble as we are, ought all the more to hasten to your apostolic throne to receive at your hands healing for wounds which afflict the Churches. For the primacy belongs to you for every reason. Your see is adorned with every sort of privilege and above all with that of faith; to which the divine Apostle bears sufficient witness when in addressing the Church of Rome he exclaims: ‘Your faith is spoken of in the whole world’. . . . It is your see which possesses the tombs of the fathers and doctors of the truth, Peter and Paul, enlightening the souls of the faithful. That divine and thrice blessed pair appeared in the East and shed their rays abroad; but it was in the West that they chose to be delivered from this life and it is from thence that they now illumine the whole world. They have shed manifest lustre upon your throne and that is the crown of your blessings.’ [Mansi, Concil., vi. 36, 37] ‘As for me I have only to await the sentence of your apostolic see. And I beg and beseech your Holiness to give me, who am unjustly accused, access to your lawful and just tribunal; give but the word and I hasten to receive from you my doctrine in which I have only desired to follow in the Apostles’ footsteps’. [Mansi, Concil., vi. 40] (cited in Vladimir Solovievxxx)

**The Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council to Pope Leo the Great:**

“And we further inform you that we have decided on other things also for the good management and stability of church matters, being persuaded that your holiness will accept and ratify them, when you are told. . . . Accordingly vouchsafe most holy and blessed father to accept as your own wish, and as conducing to good government the things which we have resolved on for the removal of all confusion and the confirmation of church order. . . . Accordingly, we entreat you, honour our decision by your assent, and as we have yielded to the head our agreement on things honourable, so may the head also fulfil for the children what is fitting. . . . But that you may know that we have done nothing for favour or in hatred, but as being guided by the Divine Will, we have made known to you the whole scope of our proceedings

to strengthen our position and to ratify and establish what we have done (Leo's Epistles, *Ep.* xcvi).

They speak of Pope Leo's relationship to themselves, "of whom you were, chief, as the head to the members, showing your goodwill in the person of those who represented you" (*Ibid.*). They portray the Pope as "the head," compared to their own status as "children" and speak of him as their "most holy and blessed father." They also speak of him as their "guide in all that is good" and as one who specially embodies the ongoing ministry of St. Peter:

"And this golden chain leading down from the Author of the command to us, you yourself have steadfastly preserved, being set as the mouthpiece unto all of the blessed Peter, and imparting the blessedness of his Faith unto all. Whence we too, wisely taking you as our guide in all that is good, have shown to the sons of the Church their inheritance of Truth . . . (*Ibid.*)

Gone is any notion that the Roman bishop's position in the Church is strictly honorary or political. As Philip Hughes points out,

"The bishops, in this letter, have dropped the language about the imperial importance of the new city, and about recognition of the pope's primacy as related to the like importance of Rome. It is to him as primate because Peter's successor that they address their plea—the one sure concrete reality beneath their wealth of insinuating compliment (*The Church in Crisis: A History of the General Councils, 325-1870*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1961, 90).

**Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople on the 28<sup>th</sup> canon of Chalcedon:**

"All the force and confirmation of what was thus done was reserved for the authority of your Blessedness [*Cum et sic gestorum vis omnis et confirmatio auctoritati vestrae beatitudinis fuerit reservata*]" (Leo's Epistles, *Ep.* cxxxii.c.4).

**Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople:**

"The king compelled Macedonius of Constantinople to anathematize the Chalcedonian synod, just as he had [so compelled] Elias of Jerusalem. But Macedonius said that apart from an ecumenical synod, having as its chief the bishop of Rome, it is impossible to do this" (PG 108:360a; translation David Palm's).

**The Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council to Pope Agatho:**

"Serious illnesses call for greater helps, as you know, most blessed [father]; and therefore Christ our true God, who is the creator and governing power of all things, gave a wise physician, namely your God-honoured sanctity, to drive away by force the contagion of heretical pestilence by the remedies of orthodoxy, and to give

the strength of health to the members of the church. Therefore to thee, as to the bishop of the first see of the Universal Church, we leave what must be done, since you willingly take for your standing ground the firm rock of the faith, as we know from having read your true confession in the letter sent by your fatherly beatitude to the most pious emperor: and we acknowledge that this letter was divinely written (*perscriptas*) as by the Chief of the Apostles, and through it we have cast out the heretical sect of many errors which had recently sprung up, having been urged to making a decree by Constantine who divinely reigns, and wields a most clement sceptre. . . . And, as has been said, we rejected and condemned that most impious and unsubstantial heresy which affirmed but one will and one operation in the incarnate Christ our true God, and by so doing we have pressed sore upon the crowd who confound and who divide, and have extinguished the inflamed storm of other heresies, but we have set forth clearly with you the shining light of the orthodox faith, and we pray your paternal sanctity to confirm our decree by your honourable rescript” (NEED CITATION).xxx

**xxx Gregory the Great (check the accuracy of these citations carefully before posting!!!):** “But, when this my brother with new presumption and pride calls himself universal bishop, having caused himself in the time of our predecessor of holy memory to be designated in synod by this so proud a title, *though all the acts of that synod were abrogated, being disallowed by the Apostolic See*,--the most serene Lord gives me a somewhat distressing intimation, in that he has not rebuked him who is acting proudly, but endeavours to bend me from my purpose, who in this cause of defending the truth of the Gospels and Canons, of humility and rectitude; whereas my aforesaid brother and fellow-priest is acting against evangelical principles and also against the blessed Apostle Peter, and against all the churches, and against the ordinances of the Canons” (Book V, Epist. XXI).

“Now eight years ago, in the time of my predecessor of holy memory Pelagius, our brother and fellow-bishop John in the city of Constantinople, . . . held a synod in which he attempted to call himself Universal Bishop. Which as soon as my said predecessor knew, he dispatched letters *annulling by the authority of the holy apostle Peter the acts of the said synod*; of which letters I have taken care to send copies to your Holiness” (Book V, Epist. XLIII).

“I wonder exceedingly at this, since I remember how thou wouldest fain have fled from the episcopal office rather than attain it. And yet, now that thou hast got it, thou desirest so to exercise it as if thou hadst run to it with ambitious intent. For, having confessed thyself unworthy to be called a bishop, thou hast at length been brought to such a pass as, despising thy brethren, to covet to be named the only bishop. And indeed with regard to this matter, weighty letters were addressed to your Holiness by my predecessor Pelagius of holy memory; in which he annulled the acts

of the synod, which had been assembled among you in the case of our once brother and fellow-bishop Gregory, because of that execrable title of pride, and forbade the archdeacon whom he had sent according to custom to the threshold of our lord, to celebrate the solemnities of mass with you” (Book V, Epist. XVIII).

**Xxx The Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council to Pope Leo II:** “The brilliant light of the true Faith we have clearly announced with thee; and we, therefore, earnestly request thy paternal Holiness to confirm this anew by thy venerable decrees” (Hergenrother, NEED CITATION).

**Theodore the Studite:** “Let him [the Patriarch Nicephorus] assemble a synod of those with whom he has been at variance, if it is impossible that representatives of the other Patriarchs should be present, a thing which might certainly be, if the Emperor should wish the Western Patriarch to be present, to whom is given the authority over an ecumenical synod; but let him make peace and union, by sending his synodical letters to the prelate of the first see” (PG 99:1420).

**St. Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople:**

“Without whom [the Romans presiding in the seventh Council] a doctrine brought forward in the Church could not, even though confirmed by canonical decrees and by ecclesiastical usage, ever obtain full approval or currency. For it is they [the Roman Pontiffs] who have had assigned to them the rule in sacred things, and who have received into their hands the dignity of headship among the Apostles” (*Niceph. Cpl. pro. s. imag.* C 25).

**St. Methodius:**

“Because of his primacy, the pontiff of Rome is not obliged to go to all the holy ecumenical councils; but without his participation, manifested by sending some subordinates, every ecumenical council is non-existent, for it is he who presides in the council” (cited in *The Russian Church*, N. Brian-Chaninov, 1931, 46).

David Palm also provided the following: “I followed up on a citation in Butler, et al. *Jesus, Peter, and the Keys*. They cite Hergenrother’s *Anti-Janus* who in turn cites Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople speaking of the relationship of the Pope to an ecumenical Council. In that book there was just a summary of the text but there was a reference to Migne. Here is my own translation of the actual Greek text, in case this will be helpful to anybody out there; I found it quite amazing. Basically the context is that the Emperor Anastatius was trying to allow barbarians (non-Greeks) to be baptized “in the name of the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.” The Council of Chalcedon went opposed to this formula and now the Emperor was trying to get Patriarch Macedonius to reject that synod’s conclusion. Here is what Theophanes, the Greek historian (canonized by both East and West and a signatory to Nicea II) has to say:

“The king compelled Macedonius, patriarch of Constantinople, to anathematize the Chalcedonian synod, just as he had [so compelled] Elias of Jerusalem. But Macedonius said that apart from an ecumenical synod, having as its chief [Greek: *proedron*] the bishop of Rome, it is impossible [Greek: *adunaton*] to do this” (PG 108:360a; translation mine). The word *proedron* has these definitions in Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (pp. 1144-5): “president, leading official, leader; 1. of leading officials in the Church...2. leading person, chief...”.

After a masterful survey of the evidence, Luke Rivington summarizes well this testimony of the council fathers of Chalcedon concerning the position of the Bishop of Rome:

“If insincerely used, they testify to the necessity under which these bishops found themselves, of crouching at the feet of a master in order to gain the object of their desires. If used in sincerity, they are the testimony of witnesses, naturally the most unwilling, to the position of headship which the East recognised in the occupant of the See of Peter. We cannot claim for [the authors of the 28<sup>th</sup> canon] the authority of the council, for these men were not the council; but we are compelled to see in these terms the strongest possible evidence that the idea of the connection between Rome and St. Peter, and of such a consequent ‘headship’ of Rome over Constantinople that the latter could not arrange its own relations with other sees in the East without the acquiescence of Rome—we are compelled, I say, to acknowledge that this was so deeply rooted in the mind of the Eastern Church that it was simply useless to ignore it, and that the only thing to be done was to admit it plainly and to win the adhesion of Rome to their projected canon” (*Primitive Church*, 455).

OK, OK, enough of that. I think I have now more than met Bill’s requirements and so we move on. At this point, Bill goes back to quoting from his book again, pages 160–61 and 238–39, if I’m not mistaken. Since I’ve already stipulated with most of the following already in this response and especially in my book, it is clear that again Bill is not addressing the material in *Upon this Rock* and is building a straw man to bravely tear down. If I had argued against him on these points then he could disagree with me and state his case, but why pontificate on this matter when my book has virtually agreed with him on most of the following material?

Furthermore, Yves Congar, the Roman Catholic theologian and historian, affirms the fact that the Eastern Fathers of the patristic age and afterwards did not hold to the view of an exclusive Petrine primacy at Rome. These are not the comments of a Protestant historian, but of one of the most eminent Roman Catholic theologians and historians of this century:

Many of the Eastern Fathers who are rightly acknowledged to be the greatest and most representative and are, moreover, so considered by the universal Church, do not offer us any more evidence of the primacy. Their writings show that they recognized the primacy of the Apostle Peter, that they regarded the See of Rome as the *prima sedes* playing a major part in the Catholic communion—we are recalling, for example, the writings of St. John Chrysostom and of St. Basil who addressed himself to Rome in the midst of the difficulties of the schism of Antioch—but they provide us with no theological statement on the universal primacy of Rome by divine right. The same can be said of St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. John Damascene (Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years* (New York: Fordham University, 1959), pp. 61-62).

It does sometimes happen that some Fathers understood a passage in a way which does not agree with later Church teaching. One example: the interpretation of Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16–19. Except at Rome, this passage was not applied by the Fathers to the papal primacy; they worked out an exegesis at the level of their own ecclesiological thought, more anthropological and spiritual than juridical (Yves Congar, *Tradition and Traditions* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 398).

It must be confessed that the consciousness of the Roman primacy was not expressed in the East at the period when the primacy became classically fixed in tradition, at least not with a clarity that alone could have avoided schism. In the great councils held in the East, there had never been a formula on the universal primacy by divine right...We do not find texts in the East as strong as those in the West; the rescripts of Theodore and of Valentinian II and Valentinian III concern the West. In a number of documents Rome is merely portrayed as an ecclesiastical and canonical court of first instance. In other texts, Rome is recognized as having the right as first See, of intervening to preserve the purity of doctrinal tradition, but not to regulate the life of the churches or to settle questions of discipline in the East. Finally—and to our mind this is the most important point—although the East recognized the primacy of Rome, it did not imply by this exactly what Rome herself did, so that, even within the question on which they were in agreement, there existed the beginning of a very serious estrangement bearing upon the decisive element of the ecclesiastical constitution and the rule of communion (Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years* (New York: Fordham University, 1959), pp. 61-62.)

The East never accepted the regular jurisdiction of Rome, nor did it submit to the judgment of Western bishops. Its appeals to Rome for help were not connected with a recognition of the principle of Roman jurisdiction but were based on the view that Rome had the same truth, the same good. The East jealously protected its autonomous way of life. Rome intervened to safeguard the observation of legal rules, to maintain the orthodoxy of faith and to ensure communion between the two parts of the church, the Roman see representing and personifying the West...In according Rome a 'primacy of honour', the East avoided basing this primacy on the succession and the still living presence of the apostle Peter. A *modus vivendi* was achieved which lasted, albeit with crises, down to the middle of the eleventh century...From the perspective of an ecclesiology which is not only theoretical but is also put into practice, we are confronted by two logics. The East remained oriented on the logic of local or particular churches in communion with one another in the unity of faith, love and eucharist; this unity was realized by means of exchanges and communications and then, when the need made itself felt, by the holding of a council. It was a unity of communion. The West, which Islam had cut off from North Africa, accepted the authority of the Roman see, and over



the course of history Rome occupied an increasingly prominent place. It is a fact that the two gravest crises between Byzantium and Rome arose in times when the papal authority was affirmed most strongly: with Photius under Nicholas I and John VIII, and with Cerularius at the time of the so-called Gregorian Reform (Nicholas II, Leo IX, Humbert, Gregory VII) (Yves Congar, *Diversity and Communion* (Mystic: twenty-third, 1982), pp. 26-27)

Pierre Batiffol likewise affirms the fact that the Eastern Church, historically, has never embraced the ecclesiology of Roman primacy:

I believe that the East had a very poor conception of the Roman primacy. The East did not see in it what Rome herself saw and what the West saw in Rome, that is to say, a continuation of the primacy of St. Peter. The bishop of Rome was more than the successor of Peter on his *cathedra*, he was Peter perpetuated, invested with Peter's responsibility and power. The East has never understood this perpetuity. St. Basil ignored it, as did St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. John Chrysostom. In the writings of the great Eastern Fathers, the authority of the Bishop of Rome is an authority of singular grandeur, but in these writings it is not considered so by divine right (Cited by Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years* (New York: Fordham University, 1959), pp. 61-62).

It should be clear from the foregoing documentation that Mr. Ray's charge is a purposeful misrepresentation. How does what I wrote to him in my email differ from what I have written in *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock*? My statements in the book affirm in every detail and in much greater length what I wrote to him in my email. I have given full documentation from the writings of the Church Fathers and then have backed up my conclusions with the judgments of leading Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant historians.

I want to close this section on St. Augustine with my footnote on St. Augustine's statement "Rome has spoken, the matter is closed" (*Sermons* 131, 10) from my book *Upon this Rock*. Bill addresses this issue in his book *The Matthew 16 Controversy* on pages 213ff. and we seem to have a variance of opinion on this as well. And finally, after that, a hypothetical interview between Bill Webster and St. Augustine.

"These sermons were presented between 391–430. This sermon however, was written subsequent to the Councils of Carthage and Milevis (416 A.D.). This popular, shortened version of Augustine's statement put to rest the contention caused by the Pelagian heretics. The full text of his statement—the exact equivalent of the shortened version above—is, "[On the matter of the Pelagians] two Councils have already been sent to the Apostolic See [Rome]; and from there rescripts [decrees from the Pope] have come. The matter is at an end [*causa finita est*]; would that the error too might sometime be at an end" (Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers* 3:28. "In matters of faith, [Augustine] says, it is the duty of all to have recourse to the Apostolic See and its pastoral ministry; for God specially directs the Pope in giving his decisions. It is true, the oft quoted phrase: 'Roma locuta est, causa finita est,' is not found verbally in any writings of Augustine; but its equivalents occur again and again. And this is all

that is required to make him a staunch supporter of Papal infallibility” (Bernard J. Otten, *A Manual of the History of Dogmas* [St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1917], 1:336). Rome was the final appeal. “[The authority of the Apostolic See] was an authority beyond and including the authority of local councils, which, when they had done their best, referred to it for approval and ratification of what they had done. No part of the Church was more autonomous than the African; yet when 130 bishops had met under the Primates of Carthage and Numidia, and were as sure as to the truth of the doctrinal statements which they opposed to error as bishops could be, St. Augustine himself being one of them, they did not think their labours concluded until they had sent their decrees to be ratified at Rome. St. Augustine described their authority as being a rivulet when compared with the fountainhead” (Thomas W. Allies, *The Throne of the Fisherman* [London: Burns & Oates, Limited, 1887], 338). (From *Upon this Rock*, pg. 233–234).

Now for the hypothetical interview. This is not meant to belittle, I hope it doesn’t come across that way. It is intended to show the vast disparity between the views and methodology of Fundamentalist Protestants and that of the great Church Fathers. Please step into the local county courtroom as the trial of misrepresentation begins:

“Order in the Court! Order in the Court! All rise! The Honorable Judge Smith presiding.” The judge takes his seat. “The trial is hereby commenced. We are here to discover who is guilty of misrepresentation? Bill Webster, please rise.” “Yes, your honor.” Do you accuse Stephen Ray of stating or implying that St. Chrysostom spoke of the Primacy of Rome as later Catholic theologians defined it?”

“Ah, well I guess so your honor. I did by the way spend many pages refuting him on this point.” The judge asks, “Did you read in his book where he stated that St. Chrysostom did no such thing?” “Ah, I’m not sure your honor, you see I was just assuming Mr. Ray did because others have done so. His book was very painful for me to read, so I really, well, you know, I really didn’t want to read the whole thing. I found my name in the index of his book, and I did read those footnotes.”

“But Bill,” asks the judge, “if Stephen Ray never made those claims and you say he did, were you not misrepresenting him? And in quoting all those pages verbatim from your book to refute something Stephen Ray never said, aren’t you jousting windmills and doing the truth a great disservice?”

“Well your honor, he misrepresented me first. He said I never said something that I really did say.” “And what was that Bill?” “Well, Stephen said I never told my readers that not one Father ever denied a Petrine primacy; neither did any deny it was successive.” The judge asks, “Well did you tell your readers that?” “Of course your Honor.” “OK then Bill, can you please show it to us from your book?”

After an hour of thumbing through the pages of his book, Bill looks sheepishly at the judge and says, “Well your Honor, I can’t find it right now but I’ll look again later.” “So,” says the Judge looking at Bill, “was Stephen Ray really guilty of misrepresenting you then?”

After closing arguments the Judge dismisses the jury to make their deliberation. After thirty minutes, they re-enter the courtroom. “Have you reached a verdict?” “Yes your Honor.”

Since you readers are the jurors, you certainly know what the verdict was. At least Bill didn’t get convicted of plagiarism or copyright laws since, after all, it was his book he copied all the pages from!

In my comment on Bill’s e-mail I simply stated that Bill never told his readers that “No Father ever denied the Primacy of Peter and no Father ever denied the Succession of that Primacy” That is not a misrepresentation for I still and staunchly maintain the same thing. If he did tell his readers, all he has to do is show us where he said it. The fact that many argued with the bishop or Rome, debated, disagreed, refused to obey, etc. yet never

There is another important Chrysostom passage that Bill fails to mention, here or in his book (if I’m wrong Bill, let me know). I am not implying a nefarious intent. I know Bill couldn’t quote every passage of St. Chrysostom in his book (again, I hope he will extend the same courtesy with me). This is a significant passage and I close with it even though it is in my book and I also include the footnote by Fr. Stanley Jaki, a marvelous Petrine scholar.

“Again, consider the moderation of James. He it was who received the Bishopric of Jerusalem, and here he says nothing. Mark also the great moderation of the other Apostles, how they concede the throne to him [Peter], and no longer dispute with each other. . . . [Peter says, ‘Men and brethren’—Acts 1:15–16, etc.] Here is forethought for providing a teacher; here was the first who ordained a teacher. He did not say, ‘We are sufficient.’ So far was he beyond all vainglory, and he looked to one thing alone. *And yet he had the same power to ordain as they all collectively.* But well might these things be done in this fashion, through the noble spirit of the man, and because prelacy then was not an affair of dignity, but of provident care for the governed. This neither made the elected to become elated, for it was to dangers that they were called, nor those not elected to make a grievance of it, as if they were disgraced. But things are not done in this fashion now; nay, quite the contrary.—For observe, they were an hundred and twenty, and he asks for one out of the whole body with good right, as having been put in charge of them: for to him had Christ said, ‘And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren’” (*Homily 3 in Acts in The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1<sup>st</sup> series, 11:20, quoted in

*Upon this Rock*, pgs. 222–223; emphasis mine. For a very thorough analysis of Chrysostom’s thoughts and teachings on Peter and the primacy of Rome, see S. Herbert Scott’s *The Eastern Churches and the Papacy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1928) and John Chapman’s *Studies on the Early Papacy* [Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1928], 89).

Fr. Jaki’s comments are included in my footnote of which I provide the full text (and though I provided Fr. Jaki’s comments earlier, I will cite them again as part of the larger footnote): “Chrysostom’s understanding of the replacement of Judas by Matthias is interesting. Stanley Jaki writes, ‘While the twelve could tolerate the pre-eminence of three—Peter, James, and John—they could not bear the even greater prominence given to Peter. And, according to Chrysostom, part of Jesus’ answer to their indignation was his choosing Peter for the miraculous catch of the fish with the tax coin in its mouth, and that the tax was to be paid only on behalf of himself and Peter. Chrysostom certainly did not notice anything derogatory to Peter’s prominence in his handling the election of Matthias, the replacement of Judas. On the contrary, he saw in it the humility of a leader truly assured in his prominence. In order to cut off the possible charge of favoritism, Peter entrusted the outcome to lottery, although he had the power of constituting an apostle. On reflecting on Chrysostom’s interpretation Erasmus noted that in Chrysostom’s view Peter ‘habet jus constituendi par omnibus [apostolic],’ that is, Peter had a constitutional power equal to that of all the twelve taken together. Thus, according to Chrysostom, Peter did not have to call the council of Jerusalem; he alone could have settled all its business. Unlike many modern exegetes, Chrysostom did not overlook the fact that Peter spoke last at the council as the one who had the last word. In commenting on Paul’s assertion of his right to take along a sister-woman, Chrysostom called attention to the order in which Paul referred to the similar procedures of the apostles, the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas. ‘He [Paul] puts the leader [Peter] last, for in that position he places his most powerful point. For it was not so wonderful to list the others . . . as it was to name the primate entrusted with the keys of heaven’ (*The Keys of the Kingdom* [Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1986], 88).

“Chapman comments, ‘I know no more emphatic testimony to the supreme jurisdiction of St. Peter in any writer, ancient or modern, than the view taken in this homily of the election of St. Matthias, for I know of no jurisdiction in the Church more tremendous than the appointment of an apostle. . . . And, I ask, will anyone venture, after considering the last sentence of the passage quoted, to maintain that the apostles were excluded from the ‘brethren’ over whom Peter was told to rule’” (John Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy* [Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1928], 89).

### **Misunderstanding Two: Tertullian:**

Bill now moves on to his second of six “misrepresentations”; this one dealing with Tertullian.

A second misrepresentation has to do with Tertullian's interpretation of the rock of Matthew 16. In my book *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* and *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock* I make reference to the writings of Tertullian and in particular his comments from his treatise, *On Modesty*. The reason for concentrating on this work is because this is the first instance of an actual exegesis of the meaning of the rock of Matthew 16:18 in the history of the Church. There are passing comments in other of Tertullian's writings, such as his treatise, *On Prescription Against Heretics*, in which he refers to Peter as the rock. But in his treatise, *On Modesty*, while he again affirms that Peter is the rock, he explains what he means by this statement. In other words he gives an exegesis of the passage.

Stephen Ray makes the following criticism of my comments [From *Upon this Rock*]: *On Modesty* 21, ANF 4:99. This treatise was written in 220, at the peak of Tertullian's Montanist period. He was in a sect that would have been extremely odious to Protestants and Orthodox today. He scorned the orthodox teaching of the Church and depended upon the ecstatic trances and revelations of two women prophets: Prisca and Maximilla. Interestingly enough, this is the only quotation from Tertullian that William Webster refers to in his book *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* - a book with the intent of discrediting the Catholic Church. Webster writes, “Tertullian, at the beginning of the third century, was the first to identify the ‘rock’ of Matthew 16:18 with Peter in his treatise *On Modesty*. But what he means by this identification is not that Peter is the rock in the sense that the Church is built on him, but that it is built through him as he preaches the gospel” (48-49). He then quotes the above passage in its entirety. Whether Webster is being dishonest by withholding pertinent information, or whether he failed to research the issue thoroughly, is not certain; but there are two severe problems with his assertion. First, he does not tell us that there is actually a reference to Peter as the “rock” twenty years earlier, made, by Tertullian himself while in his orthodox period. We read it a few pages back: “anything withheld from the knowledge of Peter, who is called ‘the rock on which the church should be built,’ who also obtained ‘the keys of the kingdom of heaven,’ with the power of ‘loosing and binding in heaven and on earth.’” We also find Tertullian referring to the Church as “built upon him (Peter)”. Why does Webster not inform his readers of Tertullian's earlier orthodox teaching? Second, Webster neglects to alert his reader to the fact that the passage cited is from the depths of Tertullian's Montanist period-his descent into heresy. Webster himself would recoil at Montanist extremes and would shun Montanist theology, especially the expectation of the imminent descent of the heavenly Jerusalem, coming down from the sky to settle near Pepuza in Phrygia. Is it not curious that Webster, in rejecting the orthodox teaching, the early Church on Peter's primacy (as reflected in Tertullian's orthodox writings), sides with the heretical Tertullian in the interpretation of this Scripture passage?

“It should be remembered that Tertullian had turned his back on the Church; and was writing in indignation - with all the acrimony he could muster-to repudiate the Church and her foundations. All the orthodox theologians of the time condemned him and his Montanist theology. Tertullian's indictment of the Church's understanding of Matthew 16, however, only serves to prove beyond a shadow of doubt that the Church did teach that Matthew 16 referred to Peter as the Rock and that that office and authority had been passed on to the Church. If the Church had not assumed this foundational

understanding, and overtly taught it, why else would Tertullian strike out vindictively to subvert the accepted interpretation?" (*Upon This Rock* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), pp. 175-176).

In my reference to Tertullian's comments in *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* I was not intentionally withholding information from the reader. I was simply making reference to the fact that Tertullian is the first church Father to identify the rock of Matthew 16 with Peter and I use his treatise *On Modesty* as an example of that fact.

Now of accuracy's sake, the most we can really say is that Tertullian's comments are the first on Matt 16:18 to *survive* to the present day. This is an important consideration when we study ancient writings since we have very few surviving documents from the first two centuries of the Church.

In addition, I used this treatise because it gives Tertullian's full explanation of what he means by the terms he uses. Mr. Ray implies that I am possibly dishonest or am ignorant of the true facts regarding Tertullian's writings. But this is a baseless charge. William Jurgens, who is a Roman Catholic patristics scholar, in citing evidence for the papal primacy in the early Church, cites the very same quotation from Tertullian's treatise, *On Modesty*, which I also cite in *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History*, except that he fails to give the full quotation thereby distorting the meaning of the passage. But he does not inform the reader of any other passages from the writings of Tertullian that pertain to that subject. He is content to allow this passage to stand on its own as an expression of the fact that Tertullian identified the rock with Peter. That does not mean that there were no other references to that fact or that Mr. Jurgens is ignorant of those writings. The same pertains in my reference to Tertullian in *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History*. But Mr. Ray knows this is so and that his charges against me are disingenuous because of what I have written in *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock*. It is significant that Mr. Ray completely neglects to inform his readers of what is written there. He is being purposefully deceitful and misleading because I cite the very passage he references above from Tertullian's treatise, *On Prescription Against Heretics*, in addition to the passage from, *On Modesty*, as an affirmation of Tertullian's identification of the rock with Peter. The following are my comments from *The Matthew 16 Controversy*:

I appreciate the fact that, at least here, Bill notifies us he is "cutting 'n' pasting" several pages from his book. Previously, he failed to inform us that he was quoting multiple pages from his book, but gave us the impression he was interacting with my book. I don't know what Jurgens's has to do with this. Though I find Jurgens's extremely helpful, I do not defend Jurgens or his selection of texts, and I did not quote any of his opinions in this section. So, the criticism of Jurgens is irrelevant at this point.

But to address the substance of Bill's criticism. I was not discussing Bill's book *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter the Rock* in this footnote. I know what that book says. Rather, I was commenting on his use of Tertullian in his book *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* and what I said about his remarks in that book remain valid and true. This book was professionally published by a well-known publisher, *Banner of Truth* and thus would seem to have a much wider readership. (I know a number of people who

have *The Church of Rome* who have never heard of *The Matthew 16 Controversy*.) Frankly, quoting from *The Matthew 16 Controversy* to prove I was wrong in pointing out a weakness in *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* seems like a dodge to me. Does *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* stand alone as a book, or does it depend upon *The Matthew 16 Controversy* to be dependable?

To represent the ancient writers correctly, especially Tertullian (and as we shall soon see, Origen), it seems important that Bill revise his most widely-read book so that his readers know that Tertullian at the time of writing on Matthew 16 is out of the Church, a heretic, part of a bizarre sect, and has an extreme attitude problem when it comes to ecclesial authority.

Nothing Bill says in this section invalidates anything I said in *Upon this Rock*; in fact, as we'll see, he circles around in the end and agrees with me. My central point stands untouched: When Bill simply makes reference to Tertullian in his heretical period he gives the impression that he was *always* contrary to Rome and always denied that the Rock was Peter, which just isn't so. Talk about your violations of historiography!

“[P]urposefully deceitful and misleading” is a strong charge and I deny it most vociferously as unsubstantiated. I was both criticizing Bill for failing to provide pertinent quotations in *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* from Tertullian's orthodox period where he states Peter is the Rock, for not informing his readers about the orthodox and heretical periods of Tertullian's writings, and for not letting them know that the quote of Tertullian's he uses is from the heretical period. All of Tertullian's writings are not equal and it is important for his readers to know that. This was my only comment concerning Bill regarding Tertullian so I'm not quite sure what all this bluster is about. But, my words stand!

Tertullian was born in Carthage in North Africa and practiced law before his conversion to Christianity ca. A.D. 193. As a Christian he was a prolific writer and has been called the 'Father of Latin Christianity'. He was most likely a layman and his writings were widely read. He had a great influence upon the Church fathers of subsequent generations, especially Cyprian. He is the first of the Western fathers to comment on Matthew 16. In one of his writings Tertullian identifies the rock with the person of Peter on which the Church would be built:

I also provide a short bio on Tertullian in *Upon this Rock* on page 168–169. The difference is that I inform my readers that Tertullian's Christian life falls into three sections: 1) his orthodox period (from his conversion before 197–206 AD); 2) his semi-Montanist period (206–212 AD); 3) and his heretical period as fully committed to the Montanist sect (213–220 AD). These divisions are important to understand, which I demonstrate in my book and will merely touch on here.



Was anything withheld from the knowledge of Peter, who is called the 'rock on which the church should be built' who also obtained 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven,' with the power of 'loosing and binding in heaven and earth? (Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), Volume III, Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics* 22).

Though Tertullian states that Peter is the rock he does not mean it in a pro-papal sense. We know this because of other comments he has made. But if we isolate this one passage it would be easy to read a pro-Roman interpretation into it.

In trying to wiggle out of this charge, Bill now calls upon the early Tertullian that is pro-Peter, then says, "Though Tertullian states that Peter is the rock he does not mean it in a pro-papal sense. We know this because of other comments he has made. However, if we isolate this one passage it would be easy to read a pro-Roman interpretation into it." How does Webster "know this"? Because, dear reader, in his *Montanist phase* Tertullian rebuts the "pro-Roman" view. But again, Webster does not inform the reader that there has been a massive shift of perspective on the part of Tertullian in between these two writings. *And that's just the point.* It is Webster who reads back the later anti-Roman interpretation of Tertullian into the former citation, without reason, without evidence, and without informing the reader of what he is doing.

However, in other comments on Matthew 16:18–19, Tertullian [*let's add these words "in his heretical stage" for effect*] explains what he means when he says that Peter is the rock on which the Church would be built:

If, because the Lord has said to Peter, 'Upon this rock I will build My Church,' 'to thee have I given the keys of the heavenly kingdom;' or, 'Whatsoever thou shalt have bound or loosed in earth, shall be bound or loosed in the heavens,' you therefore presume that the power of binding and loosing has derived to you, that is, to every Church akin to Peter, what sort of man are you, subverting and wholly changing the manifest intention of the Lord, conferring (as that intention did) this (gift) personally upon Peter? 'On thee,' He says, 'will I build My church;' and, 'I will give thee the keys'...and, 'Whatsoever thou shalt have loosed or bound'...In (Peter) himself the Church was reared; that is, through (Peter) himself; (Peter) himself essayed the key; you see what key: 'Men of Israel, let what I say sink into your ears: Jesus the Nazarene, a man destined by God for you,' and so forth. (Peter) himself, therefore, was the first to unbar, in Christ's baptism, the entrance to the heavenly kingdom, in which kingdom are 'loosed' the sins that were beforetime 'bound;' and those which have not been 'loosed' are 'bound,' in accordance with true salvation...(Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), Volume IV, Tertullian, *On Modesty* 21, p. 99).

When Tertullian says that Peter is the rock and the Church is built upon him he means that the Church is built through him as he preaches the gospel.

This preaching is how Tertullian explains the meaning of the keys. They are the declarative authority for the offer of forgiveness of sins through the preaching of the gospel. If men respond to the message they are loosed from their sins. If they reject it they remain bound in their sins. In the words just preceding this quote Tertullian explicitly denies that this promise

can apply to anyone but Peter and therefore he does not in any way see a Petrine primacy in this verse with successors in the bishops of Rome. The patristic scholar, Karlfried Froehlich, states that even though Tertullian teaches that Peter is the rock he does not mean this in the same sense as the Roman Catholic Church:

'Tertullian regarded the Peter of Matthew 16:18–19 as the representative of the entire church or at least its 'spiritual' members.' (Karlfried Froehlich, *Saint Peter, Papal Primacy, and Exegetical Tradition, 1150-1300*, pp. 13. Taken from *The Religious Roles of the Papacy: Ideals and Realities, 1150-1300*, ed. Christopher Ryan, *Papers in Medieval Studies 8* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1989).

Of course! Tertullian is now a heretic and denies churchly authority. He only accepts the authority of the prophetesses Prisca and Maximilla and oracles of the Holy Spirit given through ecstatic prophesies.

It is a common practice of Roman Catholic apologists to omit part of the quotation given above by Tertullian in order to make it appear that he is a proponent of papal primacy. An example of this is found in a recently released Roman Catholic defense of the papacy entitled *Jesus, Peter and the Keys*.

We can ignore the following comments because, even though it may be “a common practice for Roman Catholic apologists to omit part of the quotation given above”, it was not something *this* Roman Catholic apologist did. I quoted the passage in its entirety, citing even more of it than Bill provides, as can be seen on pages 174–175 in *Upon this Rock*. Again we are on auto-pilot here as Bill is just ignoring the content of my book and cutting ‘n’ pasting pages from his book into his “rebuttal”. How frustrating.

Secondly, I don’t see what *Jesus, Peter, and the Keys* has to do with my book or this “rebuttal”. Though I find it a very helpful book, I did not write it nor am I responsible to defend their usage of various passages from the Fathers. Again, it is only brought up here because Bill is on auto-pilot quoting from his book and failing to interact with my material.

But frankly, given what we’ve seen already, I don’t think Bill is in any position to criticize others like Butler or Jurgens for shortening passages or being selective in what he quotes (e.g., Salmon, and earlier quotes from Tertullian for just a few). All of us for one reason or another, even if it is just pressure from the publisher to keep things short, must limit how much of any passage we cite.

The authors give the following partial citation from Tertullian: I now inquire into your opinion, to see whence you usurp this right for the Church. Do you presume, because the Lord said to Peter, ‘On this rock I will build my Church, I have given you the keys of the kingdom of heaven’ [Matt. 16:18-19a] or ‘whatever you shall have bound or loosed on earth will be bound or loosed in heaven’ [Matt. 16:19b] that the power of binding and loosing has thereby been handed on to you, that is, to every church akin to Peter? What kind of man are you, subverting and changing what was the manifest intent of the Lord when he conferred

this personally upon Peter? On you, he says, I will build my Church; and I will give to you the keys, not to the Church; and whatever you shall have bound or you shall have loosed, not what they shall have bound or they shall have loosed (Scott Butler, Norman Dahlgren, David Hess, *Jesus, Peter and the Keys* (Santa Barbara: Queenship, 1996), pp. 216-217).

When comparing this citation with the one given above it is clear that these authors have left out the last half of the quotation. The part of the quotation that is omitted defines what Tertullian means when he states that Christ built his Church on Peter and invested him with authority. Again, what he means by these words is that Christ built his church on Peter by building it *through* him as he preached the gospel. This is a meaning that is clearly contrary to the Roman Catholic perspective. To omit this is to distort the teaching of Tertullian and to give the impression that he taught something he did not teach. So, though Tertullian states that Peter is the rock, he does not mean this in the same way the Roman Catholic Church does. Peter is the rock because he is the one given the privilege of being the first to open the kingdom of God to men. This is similar to the view expressed by Maximus of Tours when he says: 'For he is called a rock because he was the first to lay the foundations of the faith among the nations' (*Ancient Christian Writers* (New York: Newman, 1989), *The Sermons of St. Maximus of Turin*, Sermon 77.1, p. 187).

Not only do we see a clear denial of any belief in a papal primacy in Tertullian's exegesis of Matthew 16, but such a denial is also seen from his practice. In his later years Tertullian separated himself from the Catholic Church to become a Montanist. He clearly did not hold to the view espoused by Vatican I that communion with the Bishop of Rome was the ultimate criterion of orthodoxy and of inclusiveness in the Church of God (*The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock* (Battle Ground: Christian Resources, 1996), pp. 26-28).

Of course Bill, what would you expect from a heretic?!?! It is the same thing we see from Arius, Marcion, and the other hosts of heretics who left the ark of the Church for schismatic sects, joining the rest of the rabble who rejected the orthodox teaching of Christianity and the Church. We are in full agreement here, though I reject Tertullian's heretical impulses, whereas you seem to be finding great comfort in them. And, what is more shoddy, leaving off part of the quotation or not informing the reader that Tertullian was a heretic at the time?

Now we get to the heart of my criticism of Bill on this section of his book *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History*. But what we find is that he does a very similar thing in *The Matthew 16 Controversy*. After discussing the passage from Tertullian on Matthew 16 and stating that Tertullian holds an anti-Roman view and giving him accolades and pats on the back, what does Bill finally tell his readers? Let's see: "*Not only do we see a clear denial of any belief in a papal primacy in Tertullian's exegesis of Matthew 16, but such a denial is also seen from his practice. In his later years Tertullian separated himself from the Catholic Church to become a Montanist*" (as printed on page 28 of *The Matthew 16 Controversy* and mentioned above).

Now, does the reader know, either from *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* or from *The Matthew 16 Controversy* that Tertullian was out of the Church and in a

heretical sect when his words on Matthew 16 were written? Does the above statement “In his later years Tertullian separated himself from the Catholic Church to become a Montanist” give you the impression that this happened before or after Tertullian’s “commentary” on Matthew 16? Does Bill inform his readers what Montanism was? He implies that to become a Montanist was something similar to leaving the Catholic Church today to join the First Baptist Church on Main Street (which, considering they are both sects in schism from the Church, probably has some merit). Bill seems to imply Montanism was just an accepted alternative Bible-believing part of the church (small “c”). Now, was I misrepresenting Bill? I think not. I think he was caught and is now fighting to free himself.

Bill concludes his section on Tertullian in *The Matthew 16 Controversy* by saying, “[Tertullian] clearly did not hold to the view espoused by Vatican I that communion with the Bishop of Rome was the ultimate criterion of orthodoxy and of inclusiveness in the Church of God.” Of course not!! He is a heretic! He has left the Church and as I clearly point out in *Upon this Rock* he is attempting with every ounce of energy and with every fiber of his being, to discredit orthodox Christianity and the Church. I do not think it is wise to draw comfort from Tertullian at this point and to praise his exegesis here is to give aid to the enemy. That is why I stated in my footnote on page 176, “Isn’t it curious that Webster, in rejecting the orthodox teaching of the early Church on Peter’s primacy (as reflected in Tertullian’s orthodox writings, which Webster failed to mention), sides with the heretical Tertullian in the interpretation of this scripture passage?”

Surely these comments demonstrate that Mr. Ray’s charges are groundless and misleading because he purposefully omits reference to them. Now Mr. Ray would have us believe that Tertullian’s comments are to be discounted because he is writing as a Montanist and that his point of view expressed in the treatise *On Modesty* is somehow different from his earlier references to Peter as the rock in his pre-Montanist days in his treatise *On Prescription Against Heretics*.

I think Bill agrees, because he doesn’t inform his readers of this important fact. To tell them the heresy of Tertullian would have weakened his argument.

But where is the evidence for this? The Montanist heresies embraced by Tertullian were condemned by his contemporaries but where is the censure for his exegesis of Matthew 16:18-19 which is antithetical to present day Roman ecclesiology?

Wasn’t a censure of Tertullian as a schismatic and heretic enough to cover his teaching and life during this Montanist period? Did the orthodox Christian world have to make a catalog of every teaching of Tertullian beyond 213 AD and specifically list them as heretical? Or, let’s look at it another way. If Bill wants to condemn the Mormons as heretics and anti-Christian cult members, can he do so generally, or is it incumbent on him to list every biblical passage they ever quote and condemn them each individually? I think the answer to this is obvious and his comments as are exposed on their face.

There was none. The fact of the matter is, Tertullian makes precisely the same statement as a Montanist that he made in his pre-Montanist days as recorded in his treatise *On Prescription Against Heretics* in which he refers to Peter as 'the rock on which the Church would be built.'

This is not true.

In his treatise *On Monogamy*, written as a Montanist, [Bill mentions this here, but not in his books] Tertullian makes this statement about Peter: 'Peter alone do I find...to have been married. Monogamist I am led to presume by consideration of the Church, which, built upon him, was destined to appoint every grade of her Order from monogamists' (Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, Ed, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), Volume 4, *On Monogamy* Chapter VIII, p. 65). There is no difference between these statements. In both cases he states that the Church is built upon Peter.

One can use the same words but apply very different meanings. They have one meaning as an orthodox Christian that understands the authority of Peter and Rome (see all the other arguments in *Upon this Rock*) and they can have very different connotations depending on where the person stands theologically. Remember that not too many years ago the word "gay" meant one thing, but the same good word has now been destroyed to mean something quite different.

Now, let's look deeper. Is there no difference? What about the context? In the first passage, during his Montanist years, you say Peter is the foundation and given the keys in that he "preaches the gospel" and opens the door to heaven, so to speak. Specifically you state above, "*When Tertullian says that Peter is the rock and the Church is built upon him he means that the Church is built through him as he preaches the gospel.*" But, it seems apparent to me (maybe I'm just having another "senior moment"; hey, that can't be! I'm only forty-four as I stated earlier!) that the two citations are quite different, not only in Tertullian's mindset, but also in emphasis.

In the last, as a Montanist, Tertullian equates the Petrine prerogatives with the proclamation of the Gospel. Bill and I basically agree on the content, though we may disagree on Tertullian's mindset. But, Bill wants to equate this statement in *On Modesty* with the earlier statement of Tertullian about Peter as the Rock upon which the Church is built.

There are a few distinctions to make here. First, the orthodox statement of Tertullian states that Peter is the "Rock"; the statement during his heretical period mentions "built upon him" but does not mention the word "Rock", which is only a minor distinction. Second, there is no reason to assume that Tertullian means the same thing by "built upon" over 16 years later, after his spiritual and mental off-road disaster in Montanism. I don't have the time here, but I would surmise that a review of Tertullian's

words before and after his capitulation into heresy would find many identical words used with very different meanings before and after. People's journeys have a lot to do with their use of words. For example, when Saul the Pharisee spoke of the "holy temple" while studying under the great Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), he certainly meant something quite different than twenty or so years later when, as St. Paul, he referred to the "holy temple" (Eph 2:21). It seems obvious to me that, under these circumstances, the burden of proof is on Bill to *prove* that Tertullian means the same as a heretic as he meant as an orthodox Christian. A safe assumption, since he now hates clericalism and the Catholic Church, is that he had quite different meanings in mind.

I would remind the reader that during his orthodox period Tertullian referred to the Roman church as follows: "Come now, if you would indulge a better curiosity in the business of your salvation, run through the apostolic Churches in which the very thrones [cathedrae] of the Apostles remain still in place; in which their own authentic writings are read, giving sound to the voice and recalling the faces of each. Achaia is near you, so you have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi. If you can cross into Asia, you have Ephesus. But if you are near to Italy, you have Rome, *whence also our authority derives*. How happy is that Church, on which Apostles poured out their whole doctrine along with their blood, where Peter endured a passion like that of the Lord, where Paul was crowned in a death like John's [the Baptist], where the Apostle John, after being immersed in boiling oil and suffering no hurt, was exiled to an island" (*Upon this Rock*, 170).

My footnote on this quotation reads as follows: "*On Prescription Against the Heretics* 36, 1 in Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 1:122. Where does one find the authentic teaching and authority? Earlier Tertullian argues, "For this reason we should not appeal merely to the Scriptures nor fight our battle on ground where victory is either impossible or uncertain or improbable. For a resort to the Scriptures would but result in placing both parties on an equal footing, whereas the natural order of procedure requires one question to be asked first, which is the only one now that should be discussed. 'Who are the guardians of the real faith? To whom do the Scriptures belong? By whom and through whom and when and to whom was the committed the doctrine that makes us Christians? For wherever the truth of Christian doctrine and faith clearly abide, there will be also the true Scriptures and the true interpretations and all the true Christian traditions'" (Shotwell and Loomis, *The See of Peter*, 289). Tertullian then presents the true doctrine and the repository of this doctrine—the apostolic churches, especially Rome. He reminds his readers, the heretics, that each apostolic church had the apostles' chair (*cathedra*) still prominently in its place. Next, he reminds them of Rome's singular position from where "our authority derives." He is not necessarily referring to any type of governmental authority here, but the authority of the true gospel. Rome has the final word as to correct teaching and apostolic authority. Did the primacy of Rome begin late in the history of the

Church? No. The universal acceptance of Rome's primacy in the first centuries is simply a fact of history.

Also, one must remember that Tertullian, as an orthodox Christian tells us that Paul came to visit Peter "because of [Peter's] office. What office? More in *Upon this Rock*, pg. 170.

Let's remember that Bill is a Baptist who rejects hierarchical authority within the church. Baptists believe each congregation is independent of any outside authority. What a far cry from the Fathers and the practice of orthodox Christians in the early Church! Remember also, that Tertullian in his Montanist period rejected the teaching of Rome for a much more rigorist, spiritualist sect.

Regarding this statement by Tertullian as a Montanist Mr. Ray offers these comments:

Even during his heretical Montanist period, Tertullian verifies that the early Church accepted the interpretation of Matthew 16, which declared Peter as the rock and the foundation of the Church. It was not contested; in fact, Tertullian uses it as given in his argument. Had the interpretation not been a given, his argument would have fallen flat. That Tertullian says the Church was built upon Peter is not as significant as the manner in which he says it. He states it, not as a point to be proved, but as a proof for his point. The early Church was extremely conservative and held tenaciously to the teaching passed down from the apostles, both written and in practice. Tertullian, even as a Montanist makes this statement confidently, knowing that all those who heard or read his statement would agree without question, since it was the clear understanding of the whole of Christendom (*Upon This Rock* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), Footnote #47 pp. 172-173).

Tertullian states that Peter is the rock on which the Church was built. He says this as a Montanist. Mr. Ray contends that Tertullian is expressing the belief of the universal Church, a belief handed down from the Apostles themselves. And then in his treatise *On Modesty* Tertullian tells us what he actually means when he says that Peter is the rock on whom the Church would be built and his exegesis is completely contrary to the Roman Catholic interpretation. Mr. Ray states that from Tertullian's words it is obvious that the early Church accepted the interpretation which declared Peter as the rock and foundation of the Church. It follows then that the early Church also followed Tertullian's exegesis of what that meant. Let me point out again that this is the first instance of the actual interpretation of the Matthew 16 passage in the history of the Church. So one cannot argue that Tertullian's exegesis is somehow contrary to the prevailing exegesis of the day.

Yes we can because we don't know that it is the *first*, only that it is the first to survive to modern times. Second, Tertullian is out of the Church and fighting against it. Why would they then accept Tertullian's heretical teaching of the passage on Matthew 16, which in the context says that sins are only forgiven through the "New Prophets" of the Montanist cult?



While it is true that Tertullian embraced heretical tendencies in certain areas as a Montanist, this does not mean that he was wrong in everything he wrote. Many of his treatises written in defense of the faith during his Montanist period were orthodox. As the editor writes in the Introduction to Tertullian's works in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*: 'Whatever perverting effect Tertullian's secession to the sect of Montanus may have had on his judgment in his latest writings; it did not vitiate the work against Marcion. With a few trivial exceptions, this treatise may be read by the strictest Catholic without any feeling of annoyance' (Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, Ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994, Volume 3, pp. 7-8).

I have not commented on whether Tertullian was incorrect on anything and everything he taught and said. Overall, they were excluded from the Church and orthodox Christianity as heretics because they rejected essential teachings of the Christian faith as taught in the Apostolic churches, as preserved by the Bishops in the Apostolic Succession. Maybe a short description of the Montanist schism is in order for readers unfamiliar.

One Evangelical Protestant writer, Bruce Shelley, describes *Montanism* in his book *Church History in Plain Language* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), "Montanus' doctrine of the new age of the Spirit suggested that the Old Testament period was past, and that the Christian period centering in Jesus had ended. The prophet claimed the right to push Christ and the apostolic message into the background. The fresh music of the Spirit could override important notes of the Christian gospel; Christ was no longer central. In the name of the Spirit Montanus denied that God's decisive and normative revelation had occurred in Jesus Christ" (pg. 81).

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says, "It soon became clear, however, that the Montanist prophecy was new. True prophets did not, as Montanus did, deliberately induce a kind of ecstatic intensity and a state of passivity and then maintain that the words they spoke were the voice of the Spirit. It also became clear that the claim of Montanus to have the final revelation of the Holy Spirit implied that something could be added to the teaching of Christ and the Apostles and that, therefore, the church had to accept a fuller revelation.

One last bit of background information on Tertullian and Montanism comes from Daniel-Rops book *The Church of Apostles and Martyrs* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1960), "Tertullian was a rigorist; but little by little his severity was to carry him a-way. The violent current which he had himself engendered finally engulfed him. It was not enough for him to fulminate against the enemies of God, the Gnostics and Marcion, or the Roman magistrates: he set to work to criticize—and in what language!—those of his brethren in Christ who did not seem to him to be sufficiently vehement or severe. The Church of Tertullian's dreams was a Church of perfect souls, of saints, of ascetic heroes, a Church according to the Spirit, of which he considered himself the principal repository. The heresy of Montanus' now threw open to him its proud horizons; he hurled himself

into it, not, it should be added, without some reservations, and very soon, a heretic among heretics, he founded his own sect, his little rebel Church. In it he died, at an advanced age, swallowed up in oblivion as in the sands of Africa, the wretched trickle which had cut itself off from the great streams of Living Water. However, although he is no Father of the Church, this rebel deserves to be mentioned alongside the greatest of them. During his Catholic period Tertullian endowed Christianity with several great books, written in a vigorous, colorful Latin, which attracts and holds the reader's attention" (pg. 350).

Before we dig into the topic at hand, I would suggest that the readers of this current response read the pages on Tertullian in *Upon this Rock* (168–175) to get the full context of my study of Tertullian. Now to the two Tertullian passages in question written in his Montanist period: *Monogamy* and *On Modesty*. Something happened between these two writings. Tertullian changed his tune and his interpretation of the "rock". What is it? I was generous in my book and stated in accordance with Jurgens that *Monogamy* was probably written after 213 AD. However, others date *Monogamy* earlier. For example, the footnote in the Eerdmans series *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (4:59) used extensively by Bill and myself, states that *Monogamy* was written "circa AD 208". If this dating is correct, this would place *Monogamy* prior to Tertullian's "exit" from the Catholic Church. "The formal succession of Tertullian from the Church of Carthage seems to have taken place in either 211 or 212 or at the end of 212 at least. The earlier date is fixed by Harnack. . . . It is unlikely that he left the Church by his own act. Rather it would seem that when the Montanist prophecies were finally disapproved at Rome, the Church of Carthage excommunicated at least the more violent among their adherents" (*The Catholic Encyclopedia* in 16 volumes [New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912], 14:523). Tertullian would probably have been out of the Church at this time or shortly thereafter depending on whether he would be considered one of the "more violent" or not.

So, what happened between his statement about Peter as "the foundation of the Church" in *Monogamy*, and his denial that Peter is the Rock foundation of the Church as much as eighteen years later? Tertullian was excommunicated or defiantly left the Catholic Church! Would this not be a quite substantial event, one that would influence and alter his view of the Catholic Church and cause him to disparage and undermine her authority? Before his excommunication, yet while still a Montanist, he states, as in his earlier days, that Peter is the foundation of Church, yet denies it and finds another interpretation after he is finally, fully, and officially spurned and removed from the Church.

Now, I consider the above to be a fully satisfactory answer to the different usages of "foundation" in these diverse passages, but for the sake of thoroughness and honest argumentation, let's look at two other perfectly feasible explanations.

First, let's look at the two Montanist passages again. Are they saying the same thing, as Bill asserts? I think not. Does the passage in *On Modesty* "explain" the meaning of "foundation of the Church" in *Monogamy*? I don't think so. *On Modesty* speaks of the "spiritual" Peter and the "psychic" or carnal church. Tertullian is declaring Peter to be the rock, as Bill says, based on the preaching of Peter. The argument addressed in this section is one of the forgiveness of sins. Tertullian says that the church cannot forgive sins but he Paraclete only. The Paraclete is currently, in Tertullian's day, refusing to grant forgiveness through the Church, but only through the New Prophets of the Montanist cult. The New Prophets are like Peter who had a special revelation from God (Mt 16) and the ecstatic words of God in the New Prophets constituted the truth Church but even now the Paraclete was withhold forgiveness for fear that the sinner would sin again after forgiven.

In short, the foundation of the church, as Bill rightly states, is the preaching of Peter. But, how is that different from Peter as the foundation of the Church in the treatise *Monogamy*? Simply this. In *Monogamy* it is not the *preaching* of Peter that Tertullian is referring to but the *person* of Peter. Because the person Peter was monogamous and is the foundation of the Church, all that are built on him, all that flow from him, all that succeed him must by nature and reason also be monogamous, or better yet celibate. One is Peter's special revelation and spirituality and (thus his preaching), the other is the person of Peter the foundation (therefore all successors must be what he was). Very different things Bill.

And, if that is not enough, let's assume for a moment (just to clinch this with a hypothetical situation) that Tertullian does *not* mean Peter is the Rock foundation of the Church in accordance with Roman Catholic interpretation. What does that mean? Tertullian is arguing vociferously against the Catholic Church, which has recently (as we assume) excommunicated him from the Church. He is now chastising them on the issue of remarriage. Since Peter was monogamous, all men in the church should be as Peter was. Even if Tertullian rejected Peter as the foundation of the Church in the way the Catholic Church understood it, he might still be arguing from a point which the orthodox Christians dearly held. As I said in my footnote (*Upon this Rock*, 173), "He states it, not as a point to prove, but as a proof for his point." It may be argued this way: "You must be monogamous and never remarry for any reason. Even from your own teaching, Peter the person, the foundation of the Church, was monogamous, so all of you in the Church built upon him as a foundation must be as he since you are built up from and upon him."

These are three very viable and feasible reasons why I reject Bill's charge concerning these Tertullian passages. Now we move on to his concluding statements for this "Second Misrepresentation".

Mr. Ray speaks in glowing terms of Origen in his book but Origen was also condemned as a heretic by the Church. But he is completely silent on this fact. He is willing to accept Origen's statements, even though he is a heretic, because he feels that Origen supports his position,

which in fact he doesn't. When Tertullian gives his exegesis of the rock and keys of Matthew 16 he is explaining what he means when he states that Peter is the rock and the Church is built on him. Mr. Ray is willing to accept Tertullian as a Montanist when he states that Peter is the rock, without any qualifying exegesis. But the moment he interprets his words he suddenly becomes a heretic whose words are to be rejected. The double standard here is plain for all to see.

Like Tertullian, there is much that can be praised in Origen. They were not demons with horns. They were marvelous at times and questionable at other times and in the end, both were excommunicated. And, interestingly enough, they both made their extensive comments and interpretations of Matthew 16 *after* they were both excommunicated from the Church, and yet these are the passages Bill rushes to to supposedly explain the teaching of the early Fathers! Do I always speak of Origen "in glowing terms" as alleged by Bill? Actually, I am quite hard on Origen, which Bill would have known if he had read footnote #63 (*Upon this Rock*, 179–180).

Also, and Bill could not have known this so I give him some latitude in his criticism on this point. In my original manuscript, I had a poignant footnote added to the Origen texts about his heretical tendencies and eventual excommunication and its relation to his later writings on Matthew 16. The publisher determined to remove it for sake of space, etc. I do not praise Origen without discernment, any more than I do Tertullian. Both are praiseworthy in many ways. But again with Origen, in his earlier years he speaks of Peter as the Rock and foundation of the Church, as does Tertullian, but only later, at the end of his life, after he had been excommunicated, he, like Tertullian, wrote his commentary on Matthew 16. Both speak of Peter as the foundation of the Church in their earlier years; both write attempt to exegete the Matthew 16 passage after excommunication, when they are out of the Church and resisting her authority. This is certainly a point of interest. I suggest the readers of this response consider the fuller text on Origen in my book *Upon this Rock*. Also, as Bill fails to mention, I do critically comment on Origen, especially his allegorical method of biblical interpretation.

A further point which is germane to the topic is this: Origen was not excommunicated from the Church for theological reasons, as Tertullian was. He was never called a heretic in his lifetime, as the Montanists, and therefore as Tertullian was. It appears Origen was excommunicated for disciplinary, not doctrinal reasons. St. Jerome declares expressly that Origen was not condemned on a point of doctrine. These distinctions should be kept in mind.

As stated by Daniel-Rops (*The Church of Apostles and Martyrs* [London: J. M. Dent, 1960], 348), "His successors at the Alexandrian *didascalia* relied on him as their authority, and later on, in the West, St Hilary, St Ambrose and St Jerome were to owe a very great deal to him. A number of Origen's more fanatical disciples subsequently isolated and exaggerated certain aspects of his philosophy, and thus compromised it

beyond repair. When Arius and his followers afterwards claimed the Alexandrian teacher as their forerunner, the Church, which had never condemned Origen himself, rejected Origenism. But he had cleared a decisive stage in religious thought; and today, although the Church does not venerate this saintly individual at her altars, she retains a profound admiration for him as the pioneer of theologians.” Not quite in the category of Tertullian I wouldn’t say.

A final comment of Origen and his “heresy” as alleged by Bill. Schaff, in his multi-volume series on Church history wrote, “In the course of time heresy was defined to be a religious error held in willful and persistent opposition to the truth after it has been defined and declared by the church in an authoritative manner, or *“pertinax defensio dogmatis ecclesiae universalis judicio condemnati.”* Speculations on open questions of theology are no heresies Origen was no heretic in his age, but was condemned long after his death” (Schaff, Philip, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, chap. 12, sec. 137 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1997.

Mr. Ray makes much of the fact that Tertullian and the early Church positively state that the rock is Peter. There is no debate about this. But what Mr. Ray blinds himself to is the fact that these Fathers do not mean this in a pro-papal sense. He imports theological meanings developed from a later age into their words. It is possible to believe that Peter is the rock and not believe this means a papal office.

Bill ought to consider that fact that it may be he that is reading his Protest-ant traditions back into the Fathers, especially when siding with Tertullian as a heretic and jumping to accept Origen’s teaching after he has been removed from the Church and possibly interpreting Matthew 16 as he does as a means of retaliation. Bill has blinded his readers to the fact that both of these “interpretations” of Matthew 16 were written when the perspective writers were outside of the Church.

We must allow the words of the Fathers themselves to give us the understanding of what *they* meant by the words they used and not force them to say what we want them to say because we have a theological agenda we are promoting. Tertullian [as a heretic spewing invectives at the Church and orthodox Christianity] has told us precisely what he means when he states that Peter is the rock and it is a meaning [which Tertullian explains as a schismatic] contrary to the Roman Catholic position espoused today. (*Words in brackets are my own for emphasis!*)

Amen Bill, we couldn’t agree more!!

But, let’s let Origen have the last word, since you so maligned him. I think he deserves the last word as he speaks of authority, actually “of the sum of authority being delivered to Peter as to feeding the sheep, and the Church being founded upon him as upon the earth” (*In Rom. Lib. V. tom. Iv. 568 in The See of Peter*, by Thomas Allies

[London: Catholic Truth Society, 122). This is a bonus quote since I didn't have this one in my book.

I am going to provide a lengthy quotation here from an eminent scholar of history, theology, patristics, and even a doctorate in physics. Stanley Jaki's summary of Tertullian and the papacy is very instructive. This is taken from pages 58–62 of his book *The Keys of the Kingdom* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1986).

“The first of these backgrounds to be recalled is Montanism which had Tertullian for its most illustrious Victim. He brought into the Church a brilliant legal mind and a gripping mastery of both Latin and Greek penmanship when in his mid-thirties, around 195, he asked for baptism and became a priest shortly afterwards. Twenty years later he was exalting the role of prophecy. In doing so he not only slighted any and all priesthood but also made light of the submission, enjoined by St. Paul, of all gifts of prophecy to the common good of the body. He kept nothing of the reverence which no less a prophetic spirit than Hermas showed toward priests in particular and authority in general. In the second decade of the third century the rise of Montanus and of his two associates, Prisca and Maximilla, was already history. No longer did crowds throng to a plain near Pepuza in Phrygia where those three promised the heavenly Jerusalem soon to appear in the clouds.

“Frenzy, when not at high pitch, could appear prophetic inspiration not necessarily leading to uncontrollable convulsions and hysterical utterances. Such inspiration could but greatly appeal to a temperament like that of Tertullian (known by his contemporaries as *vir ardens* or burning soul) in whom an incisive legal mind was joined with a passionate commitment to the cause in which he believed. Once in the hold of Montanist prophetism the mind in question could not help carrying its logic to its very limits. Hence the most logical thing for Tertullian, the Montanist, to do was to discredit ecclesial authority, the ever gravest obstacle to the supreme rights of “prophetic” inspiration.

“Most revealingly, Tertullian took on the authority of the bishop of Rome in tacit acknowledgment of the pivotal status of his authority in the Church. In doing so Tertullian was most careful not to omit references to the keys given to Peter. As a good lawyer Tertullian knew that it would be self-defeating for him to deny everything to Pope Callistus, the target of his diatribe. He allowed the Pope “the duty of maintaining the discipline” and “the headship of ministry, though not the headship of empire.” Such was a clever way of reducing the pope to the level of an administrator however exalted. Intrinsic authority the pope could not have, let alone the “vast power of the forgiveness of sins,” and certainly not on the basis of Christ's words to Peter. Clearly, Callistus and his predecessors must have referred to those words or else Tertullian would not have stated:

““Because the Lord said to Peter: “Upon this rock I will build my Church,” . . .  
“To thee have I given the keys of the Kingdom of heaven’ “ or “Whatsoever thou

shalt bind or loose on earth shall be bound or loosed in heaven,” you therefore assume that the power of binding and loosing has descended to you or to any church related to Peter.’

“For Tertullian such an inference was arrogance incarnate: “Who and what are you to -show mercy, who conduct yourself neither as prophet nor as apostle and are destitute of the virtue that is necessary for one who is merciful?”<sup>9</sup> In the eyes of a Montanist, Callistus’ alleged lack of virtue settled matters. But Tertullian could not deny the lawyer in him, who would settle only with conclusive arguments. He insisted that Christ’s words were addressed to Peter’s person alone and rephrased Christ’s words with the needed emphasis: “On thee, He said, will I build my Church and unto thee will I give the keys, that is, not unto the Church.” If such was the case, not only the successors of Peter were excluded but all bishops, nay, the entire Christian community insofar as it was a Church. Conversely, all those had the power of the keys conferred on them who were as spiritual as Peter was: “As this power was conferred upon Peter personally, so it belongs to spiritual men, whether apostle or prophet.” Hence Tertullian had no choice but to say: “The Church indeed will forgive sins but only the Church of the Spirit, through the voice of a spiritual man, not the Church which is merely a collection of bishops.”

“But the force of that logic threatened even the spirituals [Montanists] if it was true what Tertullian added in the same breath: “For justice and judgment belong to the Lord, not to a servant; to God alone, not to a priest.” The spirituals were certainly not priests, but if they claimed to be servants (had a Christian any other right than to be a servant?), then their privileged position, too, was threatened. Tertullian could not, of course, be logical to the extent of providing a criterion to distinguish true spiritual persons from Montanus, Prisca, Maximilla, and their kindred. Only those could do this who saw matters as did the anonymous author of an antimontanist tract written shortly before Tertullian became Christian. The description there of Montanus and of the two women as ones “whom the devil stirred up and filled with the spirit of lies” should seem far less important than the remark that “their manner was contrary to the constant custom of the Church handed down by tradition from the beginning.’

“Of that tradition few were so spirited and incisive defenders as Tertullian was in his Catholic days. Then he kept insisting that in confronting heretics the most important thing was to deny the very supposition on the basis of which they wanted to argue their case. Such was the gist of Tertullian’s method in his *De praescriptione haereticorum* or “ruling out of heretics.” The word *praescription* stands for that move which in Roman legal practice aimed at dismissing the opponent out of court right at the outset. The heretics, Tertullian stated, had no right to argue against Catholics who had been legitimate heirs to the full apostolic tradition. Tertullian’s reasoning tellingly contains a reference to the keys given to Peter. To the claim of heretics that for the full grasp of truth ample time was needed so that the Spirit might reveal its richness to whomever it chose, Tertullian replied: “Was anything withheld from Peter, who was



called the rock on which the church should be built, who also obtained the keys of the kingdom of heaven with the power of loosing and binding in heaven and on earth?”

“In the context of Tertullian’s reasoning this meant the subsequent transmission of the power of keys to the Church, and with such a fullness as to invest the bishops with intrinsic authority. Hence any effort from the ranks to set up rival bishops was tantamount to schism, and was indeed the ‘mother of schisms.’ The Catholic unity pivoted in the bishops had its contrast in the intrinsically critical attitude of schismatics toward their own presiding officers- In Tertullian ‘s inimitable phrase, ‘schism is their very unity.’”

### **Misrepresentation Three: Cyprian:**

[A third misrepresentation by Stephen Ray has to do with the teachings of Cyprian. The following are my comments on Cyprian and his teaching from \*The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock\*:](#)

Again we are going to be given the great pleasure of reading many pages from Bill’s book *The Matthew 16 Controversy*, pages 31–40 to be exact. I wonder if I really want to discuss his whole chapter on Cyprian since he is again not interacting with the material in my book but simply “cutting ‘n’ pasting” from his own book which was written three years earlier. Again, I do appreciate him notifying us at least that he has again put his “rebuttal” into “auto-pilot”.

But, since I *am* going to interact with Bill’s material, I want to make a few preliminary comments. Bill is a master at generalizations. He will try to clump all Catholic apologist into a category of his own making. According to him, Catholic apologists see St. Cyprian as “preaching and practicing the content of Vatican I”. If he can paint us all into such a corner then he can raise his hands in shout of victory. However, such is not the case. Some apologists read far too much into the writings of St. Cyprian—I agree wholeheartedly with Bill on this. However, not *all* apologist do this and if anyone has read my book, or the books of other conservative Catholic scholars, they will realize immediately that I have presented a very fair and balanced view of Cyprian’s position. Bill is printing nine pages of his book into his “rebuttal” trying to appear as though he is addressing me directly which is a misrepresentation pure and simple.

However, an objective reader will know that I have already agreed with Bill on much of what he has written and so he is being somewhat unfair. I wish he had taken the time to actually interact with my book instead of just taking the cheap route of “cutting ‘n’ pasting”. I have tried to work with his material fairly, both in my book and here in my response. I will provide short snippets and footnotes from my book to validate this.

Second, I think most historians will agree that St. Cyprian is somewhat of an enigma. He was only a Christian ten years before his martyrdom and he was made a

bishop only two years after his conversion to Christianity. Hardly a seasoned theologian or churchman. He has proved to be a bundle of seeming contradictions from which various and contradictory traditions, Protestant and Catholic alike, can glean support for their agendas. I have tried to strike the balance and explain Cyprian's struggles. I think anyone who takes the time to deal objectively with the material and arguments in *Upon this Rock* will appreciate this fact. Now to Bill's book:

Cyprian was a bishop of Carthage in North Africa in the mid-third century. He was one of the most influential theologians and bishops of the Church of his day and gave his life in martyrdom for his faith. He was greatly influenced by the writings of Tertullian, the North African father who preceded him. He is often cited by Roman Catholic apologists as a witness for papal primacy.

There is more information on St. Cyprian in my book with a brief outline of his career. Notice that he is canonized as St. Cyprian, which will be an interesting note to remember later in our response. As to a witness for papal primacy, I would say he is used for good reason, as we shall see. However, I sincerely recommend that the current readers study my section on St. Cyprian on pages 180–187 in *Upon this Rock*.

In his treatise *On the Unity of the Church* Cyprian gives the following interpretation of the rock of Matthew 16:

The Lord saith unto Peter, I say unto thee, (saith He,) that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. 16:18–19). To him again, after His resurrection, He says, Feed My sheep. Upon him being one He builds His Church; and although He gives to all the Apostles an equal power, and says, As My Father sent Me, even so I send you; receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted to him, and whosoever sins ye shall retain, they shall be retained (John 20:21);—yet in order to manifest unity, He has by His own authority so placed the source of the same unity, as to begin from one (*A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford: Parker, 1844), Cyprian, *On The Unity of the Church* 3–4, pp. 133–135).

Cyprian clearly says that Peter is the rock. If his comments were restricted to the above citation it would lend credence to the idea that he was a proponent of papal primacy. However Cyprian's comments continue on from the statements given above. His additional statements prove conclusively that although he states that Peter is the rock he does not mean this in a pro-Roman sense. His view is that Peter is a symbol of unity, a figurative representative of the bishops of the Church. Cyprian viewed all the apostles as being equal with one another. He believed the words to Peter in Matthew 16 to be representative of the ordination of all Bishops so that the Church is founded, not upon one Bishop in one see, but upon all equally in collegiality. Peter, then, is a representative figure of the episcopate as a whole. His view is clearly stated in these words:

Certainly the other Apostles also were what Peter was, endued with an equal fellowship both of honour and power; but a commencement is made from unity, that the Church

may be set before as one; which one Church, in the Song of Songs, doth the Holy Spirit design and name in the Person of our Lord: My dove, My spotless one, is but one; she is the only one of her mother, elect of her that bare her (Cant. 9:6) (*A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford: Parker, 1844), Cyprian, *On The Unity of the Church* 3, p. 133).

Our Lord whose precepts and warnings we ought to observe, determining the honour of a Bishop and the ordering of His own Church, speaks in the Gospel and says to Peter, I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. Thence the ordination of Bishops, and the ordering of the Church, runs down along the course of time and line of succession, so that the Church is settled upon her Bishops; and every act of the Church is regulated by these same Prelates (*A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford: Parker, 1844), The Epistles of S. Cyprian, *Ep.* 33.1).

Cyprian, like Tertullian and Origen, states that Peter is the rock. But such a statement must be qualified. He definitely does not mean this in the same way the Church of Rome does.

This last conclusion is a matter of opinion. And, as we progress we see that there is another whole way of understanding St. Cyprian besides Bill's understanding.

In his treatise, *On the Unity of the Church*, Cyprian teaches that Peter alone is not the rock or foundation on which the Church is built, but rather, he is an example of the principle of unity. He is representative of the Church as a whole. The entire episcopate, according to Cyprian, is the foundation, though Christ is himself the true Rock. The bishops of Rome are not endowed with divine authority to rule the Church. All of the bishops together constitute the Church and rule over their individual areas of responsibility as coequals. [*We will soon see that this is the current teaching of the Catholic Church*] If Cyprian meant to say that the Church was built upon Peter and he who resists the bishop of Rome resists the Church (cutting himself off from the Church), then he completely contradicts himself, for he opposed Stephen, the bishop of Rome, in his interpretation of Matthew 16 as well as on theological and jurisdictional issues.

This is a red herring, since many that have believed in and espoused the jurisdictional primacy of Rome have felt free, and even obligated to oppose the Pope. I give a classic example of this with St. Catherine of Sienna on page 57 in *Upon this Rock*. Opposing the Pope is certainly no indication of a disbelief in Papal Primacy. An early instance is in the second chapter of Galatians, which I address in some detail in my book. So, we have a big red herring. A red herring, by the way, is something that draws attention away from the central issue. It came from the practice of putting a red herring fish on an animal's trail to distract hunting dogs.

Also, let's realize that "resisting the Pope" does not necessarily "cut one off from the Church". Another misrepresentation or exaggeration provided by Bill Webster, possibly to hoodwink an unsuspecting reader.

His actions prove that his comments about Peter could not coincide with the Roman Catholic interpretation of his words. To do so is a distortion of his true meaning.

His words and his actions prove no such thing, as we shall see.

Historically there has been some confusion on the interpretation of Cyprian's teaching because there are two versions of his treatise, *On the Unity of the Church*.

This has been thoroughly discussed in my book *Upon this Rock*.

In the first Cyprian speaks of the chair of Peter in which he equates the true Church with that chair. He states that there is only one Church and one chair and a primacy given to Peter. In the second, the references to a Petrine primacy are softened to give greater emphasis to the theme of unity and co-equality of bishops. Most Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars now agree that Cyprian is the author of both versions. He wrote the second in order to offset a pro-Roman interpretation which was being attached to his words which he never intended.

This also has been carefully discussed in my book, in quite a bit more detail than provided here by Bill. By the way, we are currently on page 34 of Bill's book.

The episcopate is to him the principle of unity within the Church and representative of it. The 'chair of Peter' is a figurative expression which applies to every bishop in his own see, not just the bishops of Rome. The bishop of Rome holds a primacy of honor but he does not have universal jurisdiction over the entire Church for Cyprian expressly states that all the apostles received the same authority and status as Peter and the Church is built upon all the bishops and not just Peter alone. Some object to these conclusions about Cyprian citing his statements about the chair of Peter. Roman Catholic apologists would lead us to believe that Cyprian's comments refer exclusively to the bishops of Rome and that they therefore possess special authority as the successors of Peter.

Cyprian is a little more complicated and intricate than Bill has understood, and I don't appreciate being clumped in with all other "Roman Catholic apologists" as though anyone who defends the historic Catholic faith is taken from the same cookie cutter. But then again, Bill is not interacting here but quoting his book at me. I am holding my substantive comments until the end, and then we will look at what St. Cyprian is really talking about.

The Roman Catholic historian, Robert Eno, repudiates this point of view as a misrepresentation of Cyprian's view. As he points out Cyprian did not believe that the bishop of Rome possessed a higher authority than he or the other African bishops. They were all equals:

We will discuss Robert Eno a little later, and his theory toward the end of this section.

[Eno says] Cyprian makes considerable use of the image of Peter's cathedra or chair. Note however that it is important in his theology of the local church: 'God is one and Christ is one: there is one Church and one chair founded, by the Lord's authority, upon

Peter. It is not possible that another altar can be set up, or that a new priesthood can be appointed, over and above this one altar and this one priesthood' (Ep. 43.5).

The cathedri Petri symbolism has been the source of much misunderstanding and dispute. Perhaps it can be understood more easily by looking at the special treatise he wrote to defend both his own position as sole lawful bishop of Carthage and that of Cornelius against Novatian, namely, the *De unitate ecclesiae*, or, as it was known in the Middle Ages, *On the Simplicity of Prelates*. The chapter of most interest is the fourth. Controversy has dogged this work because two versions of this chapter exist. Since the Reformation, acceptance of one version or the other has usually followed denominational lines.

Much of this has subsided in recent decades especially with the work of Fr. Maurice Bevenot, an English Jesuit, who devoted most of his scholarly life to this text. He championed the suggestion of the English Benedictine, John Chapman, that what we are dealing with here are two versions of a text, both of which were authored by Cyprian. This view has gained wide acceptance in recent decades. Not only did Cyprian write both but his theology of the Church is unchanged from the first to the second. He made textual changes because his earlier version was being misused.

The theology of the controverted passage sees in Peter the symbol of unity, not from his being given greater authority by Christ for, as he says in both versions, '...a like power is given to all the Apostles' and '...No doubt the others were all that Peter was.' Yet Peter was given the power first: 'Thus it is made clear that there is but one Church and one chair.' The Chair of Peter then belongs to each lawful bishop in his own see. Cyprian holds the Chair of Peter in Carthage and Cornelius in Rome over against Novatian the would-be usurper. You must hold to this unity if you are to remain in the Church. Cyprian wants unity in the local church around the lawful bishop and unity among the bishops of the world who are 'glued together' (Ep. 66.8).

Apart from his good relations and harmony with Bishop Cornelius over the matter of the lapsed, what was Cyprian's basic view of the role, not of Peter as symbol of unity, but of Rome in the contemporary Church? Given what we have said above, it is clear that he did not see the bishop of Rome as his superior, except by way of honor, even though the lawful bishop of Rome also held the chair of Peter in an historical sense (Ep. 52.2).

Take a look at the last sentence and see if it agrees with Bill's conclusions, or with his personal ecclesiology. "Equal" but one has more *honor* than another. Reminds one of the Marxist conclusion that "all men are equal, but some are more equal than others". And, here we find Eno admitting that in a historical sense, the bishop of Rome was sitting on the historical seat of Peter and had a position on honor. This will make more sense to the readers when we provide a very good explanation of St. Cyprian's Petrine theory.

Another term frequently used by the Africans in speaking of the Church was 'the root' (*radix*). Cyprian sometimes used the term in connection with Rome, leading some to assert that he regarded the Roman church as the 'root.' But in fact, in Cyprian's teaching, the Catholic Church as a whole is the root. So when he bade farewell to some Catholics travelling to Rome, he instructed them to be very careful about which group of Christians they contacted after their arrival in Rome. They must avoid schismatic groups like that of Novatian. They should contact and join the Church presided over by Cornelius because it alone is the Catholic Church in Rome. In other words, Cyprian exhorted '...them to discern the womb and root...of the Catholic Church and to cleave to it' (Ep. 48.3).

It is clear that in Cyprian's mind . . . one theological conclusion he does not draw is that the bishop of Rome has authority which is superior to that of the African bishops (Robert Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1990), pp. 57-60).

We are grateful for this extended quotation from Robert Eno. He is presented as a "Roman Catholic historian" and later as a "conservative Roman Catholic" and to Bill that somehow makes him the final "Catholic" word on St. Cyprian. However, it should be noted that not all "Roman Catholic historians" are equal, any more than all Protestant historians are equal. Robert Eno happens to be in a category which some would call "liberal" or one who is doesn't hold carefully to the teachings of the Church and is willing to give away the ship in the name of ecumenical dialog—hardly conservative. In his book, which Bill quotes, *The Rise of the Papacy*, Eno is described as one whose "work in ecumenical and historical studies is widely recognized". The preface of the book makes it clear that the whole purpose of the book quoted by Bill is one of ecumenism and interreligious dialog, which is too often a code word for capitulation and compromise. Some would call Eno a modernist. How might we define the word "modernist"?

A modernist might be defined as someone adhering to the heresy of Modernism – a heresy which was clearly defined in the encyclicals of Pope St. Pius X entitled *Lamentabili Sane* ("With Truly Lamentable Results"), *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* ("Of the Primary Obligations"), and *Sacrorum Antisistum* ("Oath Against Modernism") at the beginning of this century. That is to say, (in the Catholic sense) a modernist is a person who claims to be a Catholic Christian, but who denies or questions the objective value of Sacred Tradition; and who regards the deposit of Faith (especially the Sacred Scriptures) to be subject to critical analysis and revisionism based on modes of "scientific" thought which arose during the so-called "Enlightenment" of the 18th and 19th centuries. By that definition, Eno might be termed a modernist, which is not immaterial to this discussion.

In Eno's book *The Rise of the Papacy*, this "conservative Roman Catholic scholar", as Bill is wont to call him, dismisses the reality of the "Petrine succession" on the basis of speculation built upon speculation (pgs. 26–29). Eno's major thesis is that there were plural leaders in Rome; therefore, there can be no Petrine succession. And Bill has the *chutzpah* to call him a "conservative Roman Catholic scholar"? I don't think so.

Now, calling Eno a modernist doesn't get me far if that is my only argument. He is a practicing Catholic (we assume) and Bill may say, "Who are you to dismiss him as a modernist when your own hierarchy hasn't disciplined him and he eats at the same table as you? You sound like a Protestant determining the boundaries of church membership on your own authority." All of that to say that Eno's arguments should be answered rather than his person being dismissed. I agree and I think that I have answered Eno's arguments in my book and in a lesser way here in this response. But my major reason for bringing up the "modernist", "liberal" issue is to expose one of Bill's favorite sources for

what it is—unreliable. Let’s challenge Bill to find a cadre of truly “conservative” and orthodox Roman Catholic scholars if he wants to build his mythical consensus.

So, in short, though Bill may place great stock in Mr. Eno’s opinions “as a Roman Catholic historian”, I do not share his opinion.

As Charles Gore has pointed out, Cyprian used the phrase, the Chair of Peter’ in his Epistle 43, which Roman apologists often cite in defense of an exclusive Roman primacy, to refer to his own see of Carthage, not the see of Rome. *[not necessarily in an exclusive sense]* This is confirmed as a general consensus of Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic historians.

Charles Gore? According to the *Who’s Who of Christianity* (J. D. Douglas and Philip W. Comfort, editors [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1992], 747), Gore “was an Anglo—Catholic [Anglican Protestant] of the most liberal kind who accepted the findings of evolutionary science and biblical criticism.” And he becomes Bill’s expert?

James McCue, writing for Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, in the work *Papal Primacy and the Universal Church*, affirms this interpretation of Cyprian’s view in the following comments:

According to Cyprian’s interpretation of Matthew 16:18, Jesus first conferred upon Peter the authority with which he subsequently endowed all the apostles. This, according to Cyprian, was to make clear the unity of the power that was being conferred and of the church that was being established. Cyprian frequently speaks of Peter as the foundation of the church, and his meaning seems to be that it was in Peter that Jesus first established all the church—building powers and responsibilities that would subsequently also be given to the other apostles and to the bishops.

Peter is the source of the church’s unity only in an exemplary or symbolic way...Peter himself seems, in Cyprian’s thought, to have had no authority over the other apostles, and consequently the church of Peter cannot reasonably claim to have any authority over the other churches (*Papal Primacy and the Universal Church*, Edited by Paul Empie and Austin Murphy (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974), *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue* V, pp. 68-69).

Bill seems to have missed a few important sections of Luther James McCue’s chapter and used only the parts that propped up his case. First, McCue says it is not as “cut and dried” as Bill seems to imply. Second, there should be an ellipses ( . . . ) between the two paragraphs above. I don’t usually mind if a writer leaves out significant material in between sentences, if at least he informs us that the material is left out. I don’t know whether this was simply an oversight by Bill, or whether he intended to give his readers the impression he was providing the whole text in context, but either way it is not good scholarship (or editing) to mess up a quotation which is so important to Bill’s case and leave the damaging heart of the quote out without notifying his readers. Even though Bill makes us think there is no material between the paragraphs above, there is, and it seems that the reason it was left out is because it contradicts what Bill is trying to twist McCue



into saying. Let's read the whole section so as to get the full import. I provide italics for important statements left out by Bill and I underline the actual text Bill provided.

“According to Cyprian’s interpretation of Matthew 16-18, Jesus first conferred upon Peter the authority with which he subsequently endowed all the apostles. This, according to Cyprian, was to make clear the unity of the power that was being conferred and of the church that was being established. Cyprian frequently speaks of Peter as the foundation of the church, and his meaning seems to be that it was in Peter that Jesus first established all the church-building powers and responsibilities that would subsequently also be given to the other apostles and to the bishops.

*“The significance of this for the role or status of the Roman church and the Roman bishop is not altogether clear. In a letter written to Cornelius (A.D. 252) before serious conflict arose between Rome and Carthage, Cyprian speaks of Rome as ‘. . . , the throne of Peter . . . the chief church whence priestly unity has arisen—’ad Petri cathedram adque ad ecclesiam principalem unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est’ (Ep. 59:14). Here the Petrine role seems to be transferred to the church of Rome. Whereas most frequently Cyprian speaks of Peter as the source of the church’s oneness, here he speaks of an ‘ecclesia principalis’ as the source of the episcopal unity. The difficulty in making any coherent sense out of this transfer from Peter to the cathedra Petri is that Peter is the source of the church’s unity only in an exemplary or symbolic way. That is, Peter does not create or strengthen the church’s unity by what he does (or at least it is not Cyprian’s point that he does), but rather *Jesus makes clear the oneness of the church by originally creating the church or the plenitude of the apostolic-episcopal powers in one man.* It would seem that the only church that could in some way parallel Peter in this regard would be Jerusalem. In principle this role of being chronologically first cannot be inherited. *It would seem therefore, that this parallel has not been worked through very systematically by Cyprian.* We may tentatively reconstruct his thought as follows: Rome is the cathedra Petri. *Though in De unitate, 4, this expression does not refer to Rome in Ep. 59 it clearly does. Even Firmilian in his harshly critical letter of 256 (Ep. 75) does not criticize Stephen’s claim to have the cathedram Petri per successionem.* Cyprian is therefore following along with a rather common tradition in so identifying Rome. *And because of the Petrine basis of the Roman church, and in light of the widespread influence of the Roman church already in evidence by 252, Rome can be considered as the church that in a special way has present responsibility for the unity of the bishops and the churches.* But this responsibility is not really supported by any authority. Peter himself seems, in Cyprian’s thought, to have had no authority over the other apostles, and consequently the church of Peter cannot reasonably claim to have any authority over the other churches. Consequently, when this view of Rome’s principalitas collides with those ecclesiological views which are at the heart of Cyprian’s thought, the result is predictable. The Roman “primatial” view simply disappears, and from Cyprian’s point of view the issue must be settled on the basis of his “episcopal” theory of church*

order” (*Papal Primacy and the Universal Church*, Edited by Paul Empie and Austin Murphy (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974), *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue V*, pp. 68-70).

Now I ask: was Bill straightforward with this quote from McCue? I don’t think so. This Lutheran writer is much broader in his conclusions than Bill allows his own readers to realize. I think we could even say that Bill has misrepresented author James McCue. Now back to Bill’s words. We are now on page 37 of his book and he now quotes from Michael Winter.

This judgment is further affirmed by the Roman Catholic historian, Michael Winter:

Cyprian used the Petrine text of Matthew to defend episcopal authority, but many later theologians, influenced by the papal connexions of the text, have interpreted Cyprian in a propapal sense which was alien to his thought...Cyprian would have used Matthew 16 to defend the authority of any bishop, but since he happened to employ it for the sake of the Bishop of Rome, it created the impression that he understood it as referring to papal authority...Catholics as well as Protestants are now generally agreed that Cyprian did not attribute a superior authority to Peter. [*However, there is an almost equal division of opinion as to whether he saw Peter merely as the model of unity, or also as some kind of source of the unity which he exemplified*], in other words, if his chair in Rome was itself the source of unity through the successor of Peter]. (Michael Winter, *St. Peter and the Popes* (Baltimore: Helikon, 1960), pp. 47-48). The sentence in brackets and quotation marks was left out by Bill but I provided it for the fuller context with comment. It shows that everything is not as “cut ‘n’ dried” as Bill is making it sound.

This Roman Catholic historian insists that it is a misrepresentation of Cyprian’s true teaching to assert that he is a father who supports the Roman Catholic interpretation of Matthew 16. And he says that both Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars are now agreed on this. Once again, Roman Catholic historians specifically repudiate what some Roman apologists often teach about Cyprian and his comments on the ‘Chair of Peter’.

I would encourage readers to read the whole context of Winter’s book and not just the passages excised out of the center of the discussion. In the wider context, one finds Winter saying things like the following:

“The original church (*ecclesia principalis*) is the episcopal authority at Rome, understood as having begun at Caesarea Philippi. From this starting-point the unity of the church received not merely the exemplar on which it would be modelled, but the source from which it took its veritable origin. Admittedly the interpretation of this letter is by no means unanimous, yet it must be remembered that if Cyprian had wished to describe Peter merely as the model of unity there are any number of dearer ways in which he could have done it. Other writings of Cyprian go even farther and name the two aspects of Peter’s function, namely that of being model and source of unity. ... Thus it would appear that a fair estimate of Cyprian’s understanding of St. Peter must go beyond the notion of a mere model of church unity and include the idea

of his being the causal source from whom the bonds of unity take their origin” (Michael Winter, *St. Peter and the Popes* (Baltimore: Helikon, 1960), pp. 49). And,

“For the present it can be seen that Cyprian attributes some kind of primacy to Peter in the grant of power which he received at Caesarea Philippi. In this grant of authority he became, moreover, the foundation of the church and received episcopal power which appeared for the first time in the church. In all these matters Cyprian is in accord with the general ecclesiastical [Catholic] tradition. In one matter only is he at variance with the authentic tradition, in his refusal to accord seniority to St. Peter, whose unique position was being clarified at this time (Michael Winter, *St. Peter and the Popes* (Baltimore: Helikon, 1960), pp. 50). This insight from Winter is important in one sense, though I disagree with him that Peter was not given a seniority. He shows that the flower was blooming. It would still be over one hundred years before the canon of the New Testament would be codified and formed into a “New Testament”. The papacy and the understanding of Peter’s role in the Church was likewise developing. As the need for unity increased, the unity St. Cyprian so desired, Papal primacy was blossoming (imposing itself) to provide that unity as heresy and dissention grew within the ever expanding Church.

Winter also writes, “The text does not say precisely who shall excommunicate Marcian, but from the circumstances it is clear [in Cyprian’s letter] that it must be Rome. In fact, this letter shows that Cyprian recognized Rome’s power over Arles as being superior to that of the bishops of Gaul. Here it is apparent that Cyprian is echoing the tradition of the church, namely in acquiescing in the right of appeal to Rome, and Rome’s competence to excommunicate another bishop and decide who is the legitimate holder of the see” (Michael Winter, *St. Peter and the Popes* (Baltimore: Helikon, 1960), p. 149). Seems Bill failed to inform us of these passages in the whole context of Winter’s book. I wonder why?

I am tempted to provide all of chapter 7 from Winter’s book in which he discusses the practice of St. Cyprian. I won’t though, but I encourage everyone to read it. I hope Bill takes the time to read it. It clearly echoes the content of my book *Upon this Rock*. I also suggest the reading of pages 67–73 of Stanley Jaki’s excellent book *The Keys of the Kingdom*.

Karlfrid Froehlich states:

Cyprian understood the biblical Peter as representative of the unified episcopate, not of the bishop of Rome...He understood him as symbolizing the unity of all bishops, the privileged officers of penance...For (Cyprian), the one Peter, the first to receive the penitential keys which all other bishops also exercise, was the biblical type of the one episcopate, which in turn guaranteed the unity of the church. The one Peter equaled the one body of bishops (Karlfrid Froehlich, *Saint Peter, Papal Primacy, and the Exegetical Tradition*, 1150-1300, p. 36, 13, n. 28 p. 13. Taken from *The Religious Roles of the*

*Papacy: Ideals and Realities, 1150-1300*, ed. Christopher Ryan, *Papers in Medieval Studies* 8 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1989).

John Meyendorff explains the meaning of Cyprian's use of the phrase 'chair of Peter' and sums up the Cyprianic ecclesiology which was normative for the East as a whole:

The early Christian concept, best expressed in the third century by Cyprian of Carthage, according to which the 'see of Peter' belongs, in each local church, to the bishop, remains the longstanding and obvious pattern for the Byzantines. Gregory of Nyssa, for example, can write that Jesus 'through Peter gave to the bishops the keys of heavenly honors.' Pseudo-Dionysius when he mentions the 'hierarchs'—i.e., the bishops of the early Church—refers immediately to the image of Peter....Peter succession is seen wherever the right faith is preserved, and, as such, it cannot be localized geographically or monopolized by a single church or individual (John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* (New York: Fordham University, 1974), p. 98).

Cyprian's view of Peter's 'chair' (cathedri Petri) was that it belonged not only to the bishop of Rome but to every bishop within each community. Thus Cyprian used not the argument of Roman primacy but that of his own authority as 'successor of Peter' in Carthage...For Cyprian, the 'chair of Peter', was a sacramental concept, necessarily present in each local church: Peter was the example and model of each local bishop, who, within his community, presides over the Eucharist and possesses 'the power of the keys' to remit sins. And since the model is unique, unique also is the episcopate (episcopatus unus est) shared, in equal fullness (in solidum) by all bishops (John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's, 1989), pp. 61, 152).

And finally, Reinhold Seeberg explains Cyprian's interpretation of Matthew 16 and his ecclesiology in these words:

According to Matt. 16:18f., the church is founded upon the bishop and its direction devolves upon him: 'Hence through the changes of times and dynasties the ordination of bishops and the order of the church moves on, so that the church is constituted of bishops, and every act of the church is controlled by these leaders' (Epistle 33.1)...The bishops constitute a college (collegium), the episcopate (episcopatus). The councils developed this conception. In them the bishops practically represented the unity of the church, as Cyprian now theoretically formulated it. Upon their unity rests the unity of the church...This unity is manifest in the fact that the Lord in the first instance bestowed apostolic authority upon Peter: 'Hence the other apostles were also, to a certain extent, what Peter was, endowed with an equal share of both honor and power; but the beginning proceeds from unity, in order that the church of Christ may be shown to be one' (de un. eccl. 4)...In reality all the bishops—regarded dogmatically—stand upon the same level, and hence he maintained, in opposition to Stephanus of Rome, his right of independent opinion and action...(Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-Book of the History of Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952), Volume I, p. 182-183).

The above quotations from world renowned Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox historians reveal a consensus of scholarly opinion on Cyprian's teaching effectively demonstrating the incompatibility of Cyprian's views with those espoused by Vatican I. This consensus also reveals the danger of taking the statements of Church fathers at face value

without regard for the context of those statements or for seeking a proper interpretation of the meaning of the terms they use.

If Bill had actually read my book he would have remembered that in the section on St. Cyprian I expressly stated, “Do the words of the very first Christians contain the full-blown understanding of the Papacy as expressed in Vatican I? No, they do not, as Webster correctly observes” (*Upon this Rock*, pg. 184). So, read the following pages carefully and in the context of what I *actually* said in my book and not what Bill assumes or implies that I said in my book.

It is easy to import preconceived meanings into their statements resulting in misrepresentation of their teaching. The authors of *Jesus Peter and the Keys* are guilty of this very thing. They list quotations from Cyprian in total disregard of the true facts as they have been enumerated by the above historians giving the impression that Cyprian believed in papal primacy when in fact he did not. Their point of view and that of many of the Roman apologists of our day is thoroughly repudiated even by conservative Roman Catholic historians. Cyprian is an excellent example of a father who states that Peter is the rock but who does not mean this in a Roman Catholic sense.

I was not involved in Butler’s book *Jesus, Peter, and the Keys* so I don’t understand why that is brought up here as though I am somehow in collusion with Mr. Butler. There is much I would praise with Butler’s book, but to bring up Butler’s book to somehow criticize mine is a bit disingenuous, even a misrepresentation, since I consciously struggled to give an objective and honest overview of Cyprian, something I don’t think Bill did in his book as he put his Fundamentalist spin on all the Fathers. He would do President Clinton proud with his expertise as a Spin Doctor.

But without giving the proper historical context and understanding of his writings it would be quite easy to mislead the uninitiated by investing Cyprian’s words with the doctrinal development of a later age thereby misrepresenting his actual position (*The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock* (Battle Ground: Christian Resources, 1996), pp. 32-40).

Stephen Ray makes the following observations on my comments:

William Webster, who mentions only the passages he considers harmful to the Catholic Church, fails, of course, to mention this quotation and others from Cyprian in his *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* and *Peter and the Rock* because it does not fit his “proof-texting” agenda. In his book *Peter and the Rock*, Webster attempts to prove that Cyprian had no concept of Roman primacy and says that the citations he provides “reveal a consensus of scholarly opinion on Cyprian’s teaching effectively demonstrating the incompatibility of Cyprian’s views with those espoused by Vatican 1” (39). His comments seem to betray an ignorance of scholars who disagree with him. His imagined “consensus” is one built upon selective proof-texting. He quite blithely dismisses a complete modern consensus that cuts across Protestant, Catholic, and even secular (as well as conservative and liberal) lines with respect to the identification of Peter and the Rock in Matthew 16: 18). Instead, he points to Protestant apologists who often cite modernist Catholic theologians - those who have abandoned the historic teachings of

the Church - to try to show that “our own” scholars have rejected our position but then refuse even to acknowledge their own Evangelical Protestant scholars who disagree with their position. This amounts to a huge double standard that needs to be exposed for what it is. Scholars who do not fit Webster’s “consensus” include B. C. Butler, John Chapman, E. Giles, A. H. Cullen, William Barry, and Warren Carroll, to mention only a few.

“Webster’s section on St. Cyprian also demonstrates his unwillingness to represent fairly the process and necessity of doctrinal development within the Church. As we have demonstrated earlier in this book: the oak tree has grown and looks perceptibly different from the fragile sprout that cracked the original acorn, yet the organic essence and identity remain the same. Do the words of the very first Christians contain the full-blown understanding of the Papacy as expressed in Vatican I? No, they do not, as Webster correctly observes. But then, neither do the words of the first Christians present the fully developed understanding of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ (or the canon of the New Testament, for that matter) as expounded and practiced by later generations of the Church. One must be careful not to read too much into the early centuries-but one must also be careful not to ignore the obvious doctrinal substance contained and practiced by our forebears, which was simply developed and implemented as the need arose throughout subsequent centuries (*Upon This Rock* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), p. 183-184, Footnote #70).

The consensus of scholarly opinion I make reference to come partially from the comments of two conservative Roman Catholic historians, Robert Eno [*conservative??*] and Michael Winter. In fact, Mr. Ray quotes extensively and approvingly from Michael Winter throughout his book as a reliable source. These are not men who are ‘liberal’ and have been censured by the Roman Church as Mr. Ray falsely claims.

Whoa! Hold on a minute here. Where did I say that these Catholic men were “censured by the Roman church” as Bill “*falsely claims*”? My exact words were, “he points to Protestant apologists who often cite modernist Catholic theologians - those who have abandoned the historic teachings of the Church”. Nothing about “censure” here. If Bill wants to accuse me of misrepresenting him, he ought to be exceedingly careful not to represent me. People who live in glass houses should never start a stone throwing contest.

Note the conclusions of these two historians:

Because I quote from Winter in some areas, certainly does not mean I agree with everything he says, any more that Bill’s quoting from Eastern Orthodox John Meyendorff implies that Bill agrees with everything he says.

Robert Eno: It is clear that in Cyprian’s mind...one theological conclusion he does not draw is that the bishop of Rome has authority which is superior to that of the African bishops (Robert Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1990), pp. 57-60).

Michael Winter: Catholics as well as Protestants are now generally agreed that Cyprian did not attribute a superior authority to Peter (Michael Winter, *St. Peter and the Popes* (Baltimore: Helikon, 1960), pp. 47-48).

Are we to conclude that these Roman Catholic historians are guilty of proof-texting because they come to a conclusion which is unsatisfactory to Mr. Ray. These men are true historians who deal honestly with the facts.

Come on Bill, you consider them *true* historians because they agree with you on a few points! I can multiply other *true* historians who disagree with them. So, is the final test of a true historian whether or not he agrees with Bill Webster's anachronistic view of Christian and Catholic history? I think not. And, as I pointed out repeatedly in my book, Cyprian is often enigmatic and inconsistent, not easy to nail down. His actions often speak louder than his words and he contradicts himself as he struggles to understand the polity of the Church.

Notice how Stanley Jaki exposes the confusion and contradictions in St. Cyprian's own thinking: "Like any theological work written with a view on a special situation, and on a highly disputatious situation at that, the *De unitate* too is restricted to a very specific aspect of a very broad problem. The immediate objective, the upholding of the right of the lawful bishop against a faction within the local church, is presented with vigor and sweep. The broader aspect, the question of the unity of bishops, is not broached there. The logic of a sharp focusing on a particular question could therefore force Cyprian to dispute the existence of a "bishop of bishops." The ecclesial experience engaged him, however, in procedures which clearly suggested the contrary. For the same ecclesial experience, from which Cyprian derived his passionate reminders of the need of all bishops to cohere, was the sole justification for Cyprian's continual convening of the bishops of Northern Africa of which Carthage was a metropolis. Moreover, he knew all too well that the bishop of Rome invited far greater attention than the bishop of Carthage in convening a synod of bishops.

"Indeed, even without convening such synods, recourse to the bishops of Rome had been made with far reaching consequences and touched off just as far reaching rulings on their part. Cyprian also knew that no provincial synods, not even the synod of Carthage which in May 251 heard Cyprian read the *De unitate*, could settle matters. Shortly after that synod another spiritualist group appealed to Rome against Cyprian. As one would expect, Cyprian was indignant but his indignation could not hide his awareness of the preponderance of the Roman See. The emissaries of the faction, he complained to Pope Stephen, "dare to sail even to the chair of Peter and carry letters from schismatics and seculars to the principal Church, the source of sacerdotal unity. Such was an all too clear admission that the unity of the Church not only had its source in the Church first founded on Peter but that source lived on in the particular church of Rome presided over by the successors of Peter. In writing with such clarity of the primacy of the church of Rome only a month after the public reading of his *De unitate*, Cyprian could naturally intend for its genuine text the so-called "conflated" version. There it is stated that although Christ "gave all apostles the same authority, he established only one chair ... What Peter was were also the others,



but Peter was given the primacy so that [as a result] one church and one chair is in evidence” (*Keys of the Kingdom*, 69–70).

Don’t put words in my mouth. I never stated nor implied that St. Cyprian held to a “Vatican I” definition of papal primacy. But I do state that he had an understanding of the primacy of Peter and of Rome. And if one reads my book, it is clear that I bring out Cyprian’s ambiguity and resistance to the see of Rome in his writings. I have not, as Bill would like to imply, denied the confusion of Cyprian’s idea of Church authority, but even though Cyprian struggled as his theories developed, one thing he does know, and this was written to Pope Stephen regarding heretics, is that they “dare to sail even to the chair of Peter [Rome] and carry letters from schismatics and seculars to the principle Church, the source of sacerdotal unity”. Of this same Church he had stated earlier, “although He assigns a like power to all the Apostles, yet He founded a single chair, and He established by His own authority a source and an intrinsic reason for that unity. Indeed, the others were that also which Peter was; but a primacy is given to Peter, whereby it is made clear that there is but one Church and one chair.”

Michael Winter affirms that the consensus of scholarly opinion today is that Cyprian’s ecclesiology is antithetical to claims of Rome. That is not just my own personal opinion but that of a Roman Catholic historian. Go argue with your own authorities Mr. Ray.

I certainly will argue with them I will on some points. As Catholics we do not disdain in-house arguments. Just as you Bill, are quite willing to argue with some in your own camp, and within the 30,000 other denominations that make up Protestantism, if you determine they are less than accurate on a particular point. Your last sentence was quite unnecessary and seems to portray an ignorance of scholarly pursuit and disagreement.

Mr. Ray goes on to state that I am guilty of a double standard because I will quote Roman Catholic historians who discredit Roman Catholic claims all the while neglecting to mention Evangelical scholars who disagree with our own.

Yes.

He says that my comments on a scholarly consensus relative to Cyprian ‘seem to betray an ignorance of scholars who disagree with him. His imagined “consensus” is one built upon selective proof-texting. He quite blithely dismisses a complete modern consensus that cuts across Protestant, Catholic, and even secular (as well as conservative and liberal) lines with respect to the identification of Peter and the Rock in Matthew 16: 18).’ Now Mr. Ray has just performed a subtle sleight of hand. He has changed the subject. I was dealing with a scholarly opinion with respect to Cyprian’s perspective. He suddenly shifts the ground of discussion to a scholarly Evangelical consensus on the meaning of the rock of Matthew 16. The scholarly opinion with regard to Cyprian stands.

First, Bill’s “scholarly consensus” on Cyprian does *not* stand, as I think I have shown. And it is not a simplistic a proposition with simple answers as he has attempted to

portray it. Second, I do not shift the argument away from Cyprian. I simply make the statement about Bill's *methodology*, not his *conclusions*. He accuses me of ignoring my Catholic "scholars" on a certain point, and I remind him again that he is accusing me of something he is wont to do. He ignores the recent scholarship on the issue of Matthew 16 while holding to those who agree with his point of view. My comment certainly does not intend to shift the argument away from a substantive argument about Cyprian. I have no reason to shift the argument.

What Ray is referring to on the other is that a number of prominent evangelical scholars and theologians such as Oscar Cullmann, D. A. Carson and William Hendriksen have stated that Peter is the rock.

Modern Evangelical scholarship *does* favor the Catholic position on Peter as the Rock in Matthew 16. Not only the names above, but also Albright, France, Hill and a slew of others. In fact, one is hard pressed to find any Protestant scholar today who will deny that Peter the person is the Rock of Matthew 16. My book goes into great detail on this matter. For example, Lutheran scholar Oscar Cullmann in his watershed book on Peter (Cullmann, Oscar. *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, trans. by Floyd Filson Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1953) states that "The idea of the Reformers that Jesus is referring to the faith of Peter is quite inconceivable in view of the probably different setting of the story . . . for there is no reference here to the faith of Peter. Rather, the parallelism of 'thou art Rock' and 'on this rock I will build' shows that the second rock can only be the same as the first. It is thus evident that Jesus is referring to Peter, to whom he has given the name Rock....To this extent Roman Catholic exegesis is right and all Protestant attempts to evade this interpretation are to be rejected."

Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* explains further, "'Aramaic original of the saying enables us to assert with confidence the formal and material identity between *petra* [petra] and *Petros*; *Petros* = *petra*.'" I know this is not the point, but I want to substantiate the point that modern Protestant scholarship recognizes the Rock in Matthew 16 at Peter himself.

And so he leaves the reader with the implication that these evangelicals agree with the Roman Catholic interpretation.

This is a major misrepresentation of my book. I do not give the reader the implication that the Evangelicals I quote agree with Roman Catholic interpretations. This is a preposterous misrepresentation. Bill should be careful of such statements in a "rebuttal" that charges me with misrepresentations. I frequently quote a wide range of sources: secular, Jewish, Protestant, Orthodox, Catholic, etc., but never do I imply or state that they follow through to the Catholic conclusion. In fact, I frequently inform my readers that even though the writer I am citing agreed to a certain point, they do not hold

to the Catholic position as it is extended out theologically. I am especially careful to make this “disclaimer” when quoting the Eastern Orthodox theologians.

For example, I quote D. A. Carson in one context and then inform my readers that “Carson later dismisses the whole passage by relegating it to irony” (*Upon this Rock*, 47). Another example is on page 142. If Bill had actually read my book he would have known that I do not do injustice to those I quote. I intentionally used Protestant commentators for several reasons. *First*, I have a whole library in my home (10,000+ volumes), most of which are Evangelical Protestant books. *Second*, Protestants have much good to say. *Third*, Protestant commentators support much of the Catholic teaching and I use them to prove that point. Can I cite them to prove a specific point, like Cullmann stating that Peter is the Rock, without implying somehow that Cullmann would stoop to kiss the Pope’s ring? Of course I can.

Does Bill always give us the honor of telling us what all his sources *actually* believe? What about John Meyendorff the Orthodox theologian? Does Bill inform us that Meyendorff agrees with more that is Catholic than Evangelical? Does Bill cite him for his own purposes without telling us that Meyendorff doesn’t agree with Bill on everything or come to the same *Protestant conclusions*? Bill often quotes from Catholic and Orthodox theologians without qualifying the fact that they don’t stoop to Evangelical conclusions in the end. He is willing to quote Protestants without letting us know that many of them might disagree on the matter of Peter and the Rock.

Now, let me ask you: who is applying a double standard, me or Bill Webster? I have been honest enough to tell my readers that the author’s I cite do not follow me all the way, and I never imply they do. For a classic example of this, see my response to Baptist minister Chris Bayack’s “review of my book *Crossing the Tiber* on my website at <http://www.catholic-convert.com/writings/response.html>.

The authors of the book, *Jesus, Peter and the Keys* have done precisely the same thing.

Again, what does *Jesus, Peter and the Keys* have to do with me or my book *Upon this Rock*?

What he fails to mention is that none of these scholars agree with the Roman Catholic interpretation. There indeed are a number of evangelical scholars who agree that Peter is the rock, but there is likewise a unanimous consensus from these same scholars that this does not mean papal primacy. Just as it is possible for Tertullian, Origen and Cyprian to state that Peter is the rock and not mean that in a Roman Catholic sense, it is the same with these scholars.

I never implied that just because an Evangelical holds that Peter is the Rock that it necessarily flows that they accept Papal Primacy? Where does Bill come up with this stuff? Again, he has misrepresented me in a “rebuttal” that is supposed to, but has failed

to demonstrate my misrepresenting him. If Bill had actually read my book he would have remembered footnotes #65 and 66 on pages 181–182 in *Upon this Rock*. Since they demonstrate that other scholars, Protestant, Orthodox (these will suffice since Catholic scholars can be multiplied) do not hold to Bill’s mythical consensus, I will reproduce these two footnotes here. Had Bill not misrepresented me in this “rebuttal”, such reproduction of two footnotes would be unnecessary. But, to clear the record, here they are:

Footnote #65 from the Orthodox side: “Interestingly enough, Nicholas Afanassieff (†1966), who was professor of canon law and church history at the Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris writes, ‘To posterity [Cyprian] has left an ideal picture of ‘the bishop’ which shines so brightly and clearly that our minds really see it; he has left us a literary heritage broken by frequent self-contradiction, which has been a matter for controversy from then until the present day. . . . According to [Cyprian’s] doctrine there should have been really one single bishop at the head of the universal Church. He was unwilling to place the Bishop of Rome outside the *concors numerositas* of bishops, and yet the place given by him to the Roman Church did raise it above the ‘harmonious multitude.’ The ideal ‘Peter’s throne’ occupied by the whole episcopate became confused in Cyprian’s mind with the actual throne occupied by the Bishop of Rome. According to Cyprian, every bishop occupies Peter’s throne (the Bishop of Rome among others), but the See of Peter is Peter’s throne *par excellence*. The Bishop of Rome is the direct heir of Peter, whereas the others are heirs only indirectly, and sometimes only by the mediation of Rome. Hence Cyprian’s insistence that the Church of Rome is the root and matrix of the Catholic Church. The subject is treated in so many of Cyprian’s passages that there is no doubt: to him, the See of Rome was *ecclesia principalis unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est*’ (“The Church Which Presides In Love”, in *The Primacy of Peter* ed. John Meyendorff [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1992],98–99).

And footnote #66 for the Evangelical Protestant side: “Earle Cairns, professor of church history at Wheaton College from 1943 to 1977 writes, “The Roman church has insisted from earliest times that Christ gave to Peter a special rank as the first bishop of Rome and the leader of the apostles. *Cyprian [not from Rome] and Jerome did the most to advance this position by their assertion of the primacy of the Roman see to the other ecclesiastical seats of authority*” (*Christianity Through the Centuries*, revised edition [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1954, 1981], 117. Philip Schaff, writes, “*Cyprian is clearest, both in his advocacy of the fundamental idea of the papacy*, and in his protest against the mode of its application in a given case. Starting from the superiority of Peter, upon whom the Lord built his church, and to whom he entrusted the feeding of his sheep, in order to represent thereby the unity in the college of the apostles, *Cyprian transferred the same superiority to the Bishop of Rome, as the successor of Peter, and accordingly called the Roman church the chair of Peter*, and the fountain of priestly unity, the root, also, and mother of the catholic church (*History of the Christian Church* [Grand Rapids,

Mich: Eerdmans, 1980], 2:161. And finally, Jaroslav Pelikan, Sterling Professor of History at Yale University writes, “No passage in Cyprian’s writings has received more detailed attention than the two versions of the exegesis of these words in chapter 4 of his *Unity of the Church* [on Mt 16]: *one version seems to assert the primacy of Peter as prerequisite to unity among the bishops*, while the other seems to treat the primacy of Peter as only representative of that unity” (*The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* [Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971], 1:159). (I added some of the emphasis.)

So much for Bill’s illusive consensus! It is quite easy to put a prejudicial spin on reality and to find sympathetic quotes, as our current Presidential administration has shown. It is quite another thing to prove that the Spin Doctor’s reality really exists.

And finally Mr. Ray states that my comments on the church Fathers belie an ignorance of the truth of doctrinal development. He would have us believe that the Roman Catholic teaching is that the early Church only believed in the Roman primacy in an implicit sense and that it eventually flowered fully at a later age. Mr. Ray is forced to this conclusion by the weight of patristic evidence against his position. But unfortunately for Mr. Ray, Vatican I, in promulgating the decrees on papal primacy, has stated that there was no development of this doctrine in the Church, that it was there in full belief, understanding and practice from the very beginning because it was established by Christ himself.

True and not true. Let’s start with the teaching on the Trinity. Bill would have to say the doctrine of the Trinity was understood in the first centuries *implicitly*, but was not defined for several centuries. Bill is forced to this conclusion by the weight of patristic evidence. Did the Church always teach the Trinity? Of course, as Bill and I would both agree. But when was this doctrine fully defined in the first centuries? Do we find the word “trinity” in the Bible? If you say ‘Yes’ then please show me where. To the best of our knowledge, the word “trias” was first used about 180 AD by Theophilus of Antioch. In the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997) we read, “Finding the appropriate concepts was not easy, and many 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century Christians adopted views that were later considered unorthodox. . . . In the West, the doctrine was developed in a somewhat different manner . . .” (pg. 1641). The point should be obvious, Bill wants to accept the development of doctrine in areas that fit his comfort zone, but is unwilling to accept development in areas that are contrary to his recently devised traditions—theological *novum*, a phrase used by Allister McGrath. Theological development is a reality of history.

I certainly admit to doctrinal development. Any Christian must do so. Now, does this development somehow contradict the teaching of Vatican I? Of course not. We discussed this earlier when we defined the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

Bill makes a very definitive statement about the teaching of Vatican I, so let’s see if he properly represents Vatican I (if not, he is again found to be guilty of

misrepresentation). He says, “Vatican I, in promulgating the decrees on papal primacy, has stated that there was no development of this doctrine in the Church, that it was there in full belief, understanding and practice from the very beginning because it was established by Christ himself.” Notice he doesn’t give any quotations or citations where the reader can verify this for themselves. I will provide the full text of the Vatican I documents for those who choose to read them. Let’s look through the documents themselves and see if we can find the exact words Bill has claimed appear therein. If they don’t appear, would it be correct to assert that Bill “misrepresents” Vatican I and the teaching of the Church, and in the long run, me? I am preparing to give the full quotation of the documents of Vatican I regarding Peter and the Primacy. I challenge anyone with a computer to search for Bill’s phrases within the full text. Search for “no development of this doctrine” and “there in full belief” and “understanding and practice from the very beginning because it was established by Christ himself”. Neither these phrases, nor the narrow-minded speculation of Bill Webster can be found in the following documents. Who is misrepresenting whom?

If anyone has read my book *Upon this Rock*, they will understand the Council’s declaration. I have presented the material in a balanced and honest manner. The following full text is taken from Denzinger’s *The Sources of Catholic Dogma* (London: B. Herder Book Co., 1954), pages 452–457.

“1822 [Against heretics and schismatics]. So we teach and declare that according to the testimonies of the Gospel the primacy of jurisdiction over the entire Church of God was promised and was conferred immediately and directly upon the blessed Apostle Peter by Christ the Lord. For the one Simon, to whom He had before said: “Thou shalt be called Cephas” [John 1:42], after he had given forth his confession with those words: “Thou art Christ, Son of the living God” [Matt. 16:16], the Lord spoke with these solemn words: “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I shall give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven” [Matt. 16:17ff.]. [against Richerius etc. (see n. 1503)]. And upon Simon Peter alone Jesus after His resurrection conferred the jurisdiction of the highest pastor and rector over his entire fold, saying: “Feed my lambs,” “Feed my sheep” [John 21:15 ff.]. To this teaching of Sacred Scriptures, so manifest as it has been always understood by the Catholic Church, are opposed openly the vicious opinions of those who perversely deny that the form of government in His Church was established by Christ the Lord; that to Peter alone, before the other apostles, whether individually or all together, was confided the true and proper primacy of jurisdiction by Christ; or, of those who affirm that the same primacy was not immediately and directly bestowed upon the blessed

Peter himself, but upon the Church, and through this Church upon him as the minister of the Church herself.

“1823 [Canon]. If anyone then says that the blessed Apostle Peter was not established by the Lord Christ as the chief of all the apostles, and the visible head of the whole militant Church, or, that the same received great honor but did not receive from the same our Lord Jesus Christ directly and immediately the primacy in true and proper jurisdiction: let him be anathema. [Let’s remember that no orthodox Father of the Church ever said the above words in denial.]

## **“Chap. 2. The Perpetuity of the Primacy of Blessed Peter among the Roman Pontiffs**

“1824 Moreover, what the Chief of pastors and the Great Pastor of sheep, the Lord Jesus, established in the blessed Apostle Peter for the perpetual salvation and perennial good of the Church, this by the same Author must endure always in the Church which was founded upon a rock and will endure firm until the end of the ages. Surely “no one has doubt, rather all ages have known that the holy and most blessed Peter, chief and head of the apostles and pillar of faith and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ [this is obvious since it is stated expressly in Scripture], the Savior and Redeemer of the human race; and he up to this time and always lives and presides and exercises judgment in his successors [as the Council of Chalcedon declared “Peter has spoken through Leo], the bishops of the holy See of Rome, which was founded by him and consecrated by his blood, [cf. Council of Ephesus, see n. 112]. Therefore, whoever succeeds Peter in this chair, he according to the institution of Christ himself, holds the primacy of Peter over the whole Church. “Therefore the disposition of truth remains, and blessed Peter persevering in the accepted fortitude of the rock does not abandon the guidance of the Church which he has received.” For this reason “it has always been necessary because of mightier pre-eminence for every church to come to the Church of Rome [as we have seen over and over again, at least for those who have actually read my book, Bill], that is those who are the faithful everywhere,” so that in this See, from which the laws of “venerable communion” emanate over all, they as members associated in one head, coalesce into one bodily structure.

“1825 [Canon]. If anyone then says that it is not from the institution of Christ the Lord Himself, or by divine right that the blessed Peter has perpetual successors in the primacy over the universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of blessed Peter in the same primacy, let him be anathema [Let’s remember that no Father ever denied this. Remember, Bill admits in his e-mail that no Father ever denied that Peter had a primacy or that the primacy was successive].

## **“Chap. 3. The Power and Manner of the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff**



“1826 [Assertion of primacy]. Therefore, relying on the clear testimonies of Sacred Scripture, and adhering to the eloquent and manifest decisions not only of Our predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, but also of the general Councils, We renew the definition of the Ecumenical Council of Florence, by which all the faithful of Christ most believe “that the Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff hold primacy over the whole world, and that the Pontiff of Rome himself is the successor of the blessed Peter, the chief of the apostles, and is the true vicar of Christ and head of the whole Church and faith, and teacher of all Christians; and that to him was handed down in blessed Peter, by our Lord Jesus Christ, full power to feed, rule, and guide the universal Church, just as is also contained in the records of the ecumenical Councils and in the sacred canons” [see n. 694].

“1827 [Consequences denied by innovators]. Furthermore We teach and declare that the Roman Church, by the disposition of the Lord, holds the sovereignty of ordinary power over all others, and that this power of jurisdiction on the part of the Roman Pontiff, which is truly episcopal, is immediate; and with respect to this the pastors and the faithful of whatever rite and dignity, both as separate individuals and all together, are bound by the duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience, not only in things which pertain to faith and morals, but also in those which pertain to the discipline and government of the Church [which is] spread over the whole world, so that the Church of Christ, protected not only by the Roman Pontiff, but by the unity of communion as well as of the profession of the same faith is one flock under the one highest shepherd. This is the doctrine of Catholic truth from which no one can deviate and keep his faith and salvation.

“1828 [The jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff and of the bishops]. This power of the Supreme Pontiff is so far from interfering with that power of ordinary and immediate episcopal jurisdiction by which the bishops, who, “placed by the Holy Spirit” [cf. Acts 20:28], have succeeded to the places of the apostles, as true shepherds individually feed and rule the individual flocks assigned to them, that the same (power) is asserted, confirmed, and vindicated by the supreme and universal shepherd, according to the statement of Gregory the Great: “My honor is the universal honor of the Church. My honor is the solid vigor of my brothers. Then am I truly honored, when the honor due to each and everyone is not denied.”\*

“1829 [Free communication with all the faithful]. Furthermore, it follows that from that supreme power of the Roman Pontiff of ruling the universal Church, the same has the right in the exercise of this duty of his office of communicating freely with the pastors and flocks of the whole Church, so that the same can be taught and guided by him in the way of salvation. Therefore, We condemn and disapprove the opinions of those who say that this communication of the supreme head with pastors and flocks can lawfully be checked, or who make this so submissive to secular power that they contend that whatever is established by the Apostolic See or its authority for

the government of the Church has no force or value unless confirmed by an order of the secular power [Placitum regium, see n. 1847].

“1830 [Recourse to the Roman Pontiff as the supreme judge]. And since the Roman Pontiff is at the head of the universal Church by the divine right of apostolic primacy, We teach and declare also that he is the supreme judge of the faithful [cf. n. 1500], and that in all cases pertaining to ecclesiastical examination recourse can be had to his judgment [cf. n. 466]; moreover, that the judgment of the Apostolic See, whose authority is not surpassed, is to be disclaimed by no one, nor is anyone permitted to pass judgment on its judgment [cf. n. 330 ff.]. Therefore, they stray from the straight path of truth who affirm that it is permitted to appeal from the judgments of the Roman Pontiffs to an ecumenical Council, as to an authority higher than the Roman Pontiff.

1831 [Canon]. If anyone thus speaks, that the Roman Pontiff has only the office of inspection or direction, but not the full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the universal Church, not only in things which pertain to faith and morals, but also in those which pertain to the discipline and government of the Church spread over the whole world; or, that he possesses only the more important parts, but not the whole plenitude of this supreme power; or that this power of his is not ordinary and immediate, or over the churches altogether and individually, and over the pastors and the faithful altogether and individually: let him be anathema.

#### **“Chap. 4. The Infallible “Magisterium” of the Roman Pontiff**

“1832 [Arguments from public documents]. Moreover, that by the very apostolic primacy which the Roman Pontiff as the successor of Peter, the chief of the Apostles, holds over the universal Church, the supreme power of the magisterium is also comprehended, this Holy See has always held, the whole experience of the Church approves, and the ecumenical Councils themselves, especially those in which the Last convened with the West in a union of faith and charity, have declared.

“1833 For the fathers of the fourth council of Constantinople, adhering to the ways of the former ones, published this solemn profession: “Our first salvation is to guard the rule of right faith [. . .]. And since the sentiment of our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be passed over when He says: ‘Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church’ [Matt. 16:18], these words which were spoken are proven true by actual results, since in the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been preserved untainted, and holy doctrine celebrated. Desiring, then, least of all to be separated from the faith and teaching of this [Apostolic See], We hope that We may deserve to be in the one communion which the Apostolic See proclaims, in which the solidarity of the Christian religion is whole and true”

“1834 [cf. n. 171 f.]. Moreover, with the approval of the second council of Lyons, the Greeks have professed, “that the Holy Roman Church holds the highest and the full primacy and pre-eminence over the universal Catholic Church, which it truthfully and humbly professes it has received with plenitude of power from the Lord Himself in blessed Peter, the chief or head of the Apostles, of whom the Roman Pontiff is the successor; and, just as it is bound above others to defend the truth of

“1835 faith, so, too, if any questions arise about faith, they should be defined by its judgment” [cf. n. 466]. Finally, the Council of Florence has defined: “That the Roman Pontiff is the true vicar of Christ and head of the whole Church and the father and teacher of all Christians; and to it in the blessed Peter has been handed down by the Lord Jesus Christ the full power of feeding, ruling, and guiding the universal Church” [see n. 694].

“1836 [Argument from the assent of the Church]. To satisfy this pastoral duty, our predecessors always gave tireless attention that the saving doctrine of Christ be spread among all the peoples of the earth, and with equal care they watched that, wherever it was received, it was preserved sound and pure. Therefore, the bishops of the whole world, now individually, now gathered in Synods, following a long custom of the churches and the formula of the ancient rule, referred to this Holy See those dangers particularly which emerged in the affairs of faith, that there especially the damages to faith might be repaired where faith cannot experience a failure. The Roman Pontiffs, moreover, according as the condition of the times and affairs advised, sometimes by calling ecumenical Councils or by examining the opinion of the Church spread throughout the world; sometimes by particular synods, sometimes by employing other helps which divine Providence supplied, have defined that those matters must be held which with God’s help they have recognized as in agreement with Sacred Scripture and apostolic tradition. For, the Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of Peter that by His revelation they might disclose new doctrine, but that by His help they might guard sacredly the revelation transmitted through the apostles and the deposit of faith, and might faithfully set it forth. Indeed, all the venerable fathers have embraced their apostolic doctrine, and the holy orthodox Doctors have venerated and followed it, knowing full well that the See of St. Peter always remains unimpaired by any error, according to the divine promise of our Lord the Savior made to the chief of His disciples: “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren” [Luke 22:32].

“1837 So, this gift of truth and a never failing faith was divinely conferred upon Peter and his successors in this chair, that they might administer their high duty for the salvation of all; that the entire flock of Christ, turned away by them from the poisonous food of error, might be nourished on the sustenance of heavenly doctrine, that with the occasion of schism removed the whole Church might be saved as one, and relying on her foundation might stay firm against the gates of hell.

“1838 [Definition of infallibility]. But since in this very age, in which the salutary efficacy of the apostolic duty is especially required, not a few are found who disparage its authority, We deem it most necessary to assert solemnly the prerogative which the Only-begotten Son of God deigned to enjoin with the highest pastoral office.

“1839 And so We, adhering faithfully to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, to the glory of God, our Savior, the elevation of the Catholic religion and the salvation of Christian peoples, with the approbation of the sacred Council, teach and explain that the dogma has been divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks ex cathedra, that is, when carrying out the duty of the pastor and teacher of all Christians by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority he defines a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, through the divine assistance promised him in blessed Peter, operates with that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer wished that His church be instructed in defining doctrine on faith and morals; and so such definitions of the Roman Pontiff from himself, but not from the consensus of the Church, are unalterable.

“1840 [Canon]. But if anyone presumes to contradict this definition of Ours, which may God forbid: let him be anathema [sounds just like St. Clement of Rome in 96 AD!].”

I am very sorry for placing so many pages in my response to Bill Webster, but when he makes such outspoken and bold misrepresentations of the Church’s teaching, it is helpful for his readers to see the full text and judge for themselves if what he says is true. As you can see, those who have read the Vatican I documents on Peter and the Primacy, the claims of Bill Webster fizzle out and die on the vine.

Since I have been promising all along to share the understanding of St. Cyprian, I will do so now. This was developed by Mark Bonocore and I reproduce it with his permission.

“For Cyprian, Rome possesses a universal primacy: ‘...the whole Church of Rome has confessed unanimously; and once again, its faith, praised by the Apostle, is celebrated throughout the whole world’. (Ep.Ix). Writing to the Pope, Cyprian apologizes for his delay in acknowledging him; he had at least urged all those who sailed to Rome to make sure that they acknowledged and held ‘the womb and root of the Catholic Church’ (Ep. xlviii, 3).

“Mark is challenged: “Show me a quote where Cyprian calls himself Peter’s successor.” Mark replies, I’ll do better than that. I’ll quote him referring to all bishops as the successors of Peter. If someone thinks this is not the same thing, that it is a gross misunderstanding, consider the following: As I Catholic, I can clearly say that the Archbishop of my city holds the “Chair of Peter” in this city. Furthermore, the archbishop of another city holds the ‘Chair of Peter’” in *that* city. Yet, only Rome holds the Chair of

Peter of the *principal church*: the Chair of *Sacerdotal Unity*. This is the ecclesiology of Cyprian.

“I do not see Cyprian calling all bishops the ‘successors of Peter’ anywhere. Rather, Cyprian refers to the principal of a monarchical bishop. Nowhere does Cyprian refer to the Petrine ministry of universal unity. He is clearly speaking in a regional sense. However, when he does speak of the Roman Bishop, it’s only then that he uses expressions like: “[Pope] Cornelius . . . when the place of [Pope] Fabian, which is the place of Peter, the dignity of the Sacerdotal Chair, was vacant, Since it has been occupied both at the will of God and with the ratified consent of all of us...” (Letters 48 [A.D. 253]).”

“In the same epistle, he also tells Pope Cornelius: “We decided to send and are sending a letter to you from all throughout the province [of Africa] so that all our colleagues might give their decided approval and support to you and to your communion, that is, to both the unity and the charity of the Catholic Church” (Letters 48:1, 3 [A.D. 253]).

“This is clearly recognition of a universal ministry of unity. It was Cornelius who specifically held “the place of Peter” – not for the local or regional Church (where Cyprian or another bishop held primacy), but for the entire (universal), Catholic Church. As Cyprian puts it: “Indeed, the others were what Peter also was; but a *primacy* is given to Peter, whereby it is made clear that there is but one Church and *one chair*.”

“By this “one Chair,” Cyprian is referring to the teaching authority of the Church. And, his ecclesiology works like this:

- a) On the local level, the “one Chair” is held by the local bishop.
- b) On the regional level, the “one Chair” is held by the regional bishop (or metropolitan ...which was Cyprian’s office as Bishop of Carthage: Metropolitan of all Africa and Numidia).
- c) On the universal level, the “one Chair” was held by Peter’s actual successor at Rome. This was the “*principal church*,” in which “*sacerdotal unity*” has its source. This was the “*womb and root of the catholic church*,” and the Bishop of Rome held the “*place of Peter*.” He held the “one Chair” in the universal sphere, for communion with him was “*communion with the catholic church*.”

“That’s what Cyprian is saying! So, I don’t know what could be more clear. And, indeed, Cyprian bases his ecclesiology on the Jewish Tradition of the “Chair of Moses” (Matt 23:1-3). In the Jewish understanding, the “Chair of Moses” was the teaching authority of the synagogue; and:

- a) On the local level, the “Chair of Moses” was held by the principal rabbi of a particular city’s synagogue (e.g. Corinth or Rome).
- b) On the regional level, the “Chair of Moses” was held by the principal rabbi of a particular region (e.g. Rabbi Akiba at Jamnia).

c) But, on the universal level, the “Chair of Moses” was *actually* held by the High Priest in Jerusalem. This is clear from John 11:49-52 and from Acts 23:2-5, where Paul backs down because the law defined the High Priest as “the *ruler* of thy people.” See also Acts 28:17-21, where those who held the “Chair of Moses” in Rome (i.e., the “leaders of the Jews”): speak about receiving authoritative instruction from Jerusalem (i.e., from the *actual* and *universal* “Chair of Moses,” the High Priest).

“For the Jews of the Diaspora, one could not be said to be part of Israel if he rejected the rightful authority of Jerusalem. Such a position would make oneself a Samaritan.

“Indeed, the Jewish historian Josephus says how the Hellenistic Jews before the fall of the theocracy in Palestine looked reverently toward Jerusalem and favored religious currents coming from it: “Doubts were referred there for solution” (Josephus, *Contra Apion* 1.30-36). We also know that the Jews of the Dispersion turned to Jerusalem for their Scriptures (2 Mc 2.13-15) and for its translation [Est 11.1 (Vulg.); 10.31 (LXX)]. Such were appeals to the ultimate “chair of Moses” (Matt 23:1-3), the High Priest and the Sanhedrin itself.

“Cyprian is writing in a *very* Catholic sense. For the Catholic Church, every bishop holds the “chair of Peter” – *in his own city*, that is. And that’s what Cyprian is saying. Yet, when universal matters are to be decided, it is the Bishop of Rome who holds the actual Chair: The Chair of “Sacredotal Unity.” So, one cannot “pick and choose” when it comes to Cyprian.” Thanks Mark for pertinent explanation.

Well, we finally come to the end of this third section, the “third misrepresentation”. We will now address Bill’s “fourth misrepresentation”.

#### **Misrepresentation Four: Origen, Ambrose, and James of Nisbis:**

Mr. Ray has gone on in the book to make several other assertions which need to be addressed. In dealing with several quotes from Origen, he puts forth the following challenge: ‘Can anyone claim that the Fathers attributed Jesus’ words recorded in Matthew’s Gospel, ‘You are Peter (Rock) and upon this Church [Bill, I think you meant the word “rock” here, not “church” since “rock” is the word I use in my footnote] I will build my Church’ (Mt 16:18), to Peter’s confession alone and not to Peter himself?’ The answer quite simply is yes. Augustine does precisely that. He makes the following statement in one of his sermons:

First, this wasn’t meant in the context to be a challenge. It was rather an exclamation of satisfaction, as in “My goodness, look at the evidence of the early Fathers!” It was a rhetorical question. Nevertheless, I can see why Bill took it as a challenge so I will respond. Since we have repeatedly seen a variety of applications to the passage of Matthew 16 extensively in my book and less so here, I do not feel it is necessary to expound on it again. However, to state the case: the Fathers of the Church

used Matthew 16 for many expository purposes; for example, to teach faith, to teach the necessity of confessing the faith, to teach the deity of Christ, to establish Peter as the foundation of the Church, etc.

I am not unaware, as readers of my book will realize, that many Fathers interpret the rock as Christ, the faith of Peter, Peter's confession, or Peter himself. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, as we have seen earlier, does the same thing. But the question is really one of *exclusivity*. St. Augustine, whom Bill brings forward as a "witness" against me, used all of the above at one time or another in his writings. Did St. Augustine teach that Peter's confession was the only and exclusive foundation for the church, referring to Matthew 16? I think not. St. Augustine even in the passage below implies that Christ is the rock, Peter simply being "a chip off the old block" so to speak, and then goes on to say that the Rock is Peter's confession of faith. Here the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* echoes the words of St. Augustine.

Remember, in this man Peter, the rock. He's the one, you see, who on being questioned by the Lord about who the disciples said he was, replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' On hearing this, Jesus said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jona, because flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you'...'You are Peter, Rocky, and on this rock I shall build my Church, and the gates of the underworld will not conquer her. To you shall I give the keys of the kingdom. Whatever you bind on earth shall also be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall also be loosed in heaven' (Mt 16:15–19). In Peter, Rocky, we see our attention drawn to the rock. Now the apostle Paul says about the former people, 'They drank from the spiritual rock that was following them; but the rock was Christ' (1 Cor 10:4). So this disciple is called Rocky from the rock, like Christian from Christ.

"Why have I wanted to make this little introduction? In order to suggest to you that in Peter the Church is to be recognized. Christ, you see, built his Church not on a man but on Peter's confession. What is Peter's confession? 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' There's the rock for you, there's the foundation, there's where the Church has been built, which the gates of the underworld cannot conquer (John Rotelle, O.S.A., Ed., *The Works of Saint Augustine* (New Rochelle: New City Press, 1993), *Sermons*, Volume III/6, Sermon 229P.1, p. 327).

If this was the only quote we had in the whole Augustinian corpus, then touché. But my question has a broader context. I did not say "Can you find one quote where Peter is said not to be the Rock but actually the rock is his faith?" That would be silly because in the context of Origen, where this rhetorical question is posed, Origen himself claims in his commentary on Matthew that the Rock is something other than Peter the person (my book goes into great detail again on Origen and his commentary on Matthew). So the context of my question is not "Can you find one patristic quote" but does any Father (and that is the way my "challenge" was worded) absolutely deny that Peter is the rock in an exclusive sense, considering the whole corpus of his writings. Remember, I use the word "alone" as in "Peter's confession alone and not to Peter himself". In his *Retractations* which I included in my book on page 231, St. Augustine himself admitted that the



passage of Matthew 16 could be applied to Peter the person and that he himself had done so. This was written long after the quotation given above by Bill.

St. Augustine writes, “In a passage in this book, I said about the Apostle Peter: ‘On him as on a rock the Church was built.’ This idea is also expressed in song by the voice of many in the verses of the most blessed Ambrose where he says about the crowing of the cock: ‘At its crowing he, this rock of the Church, washed away his guilt.’ But I know that very frequently at a later time, I so explained what the Lord said: ‘Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church,’ that it be understood as built upon Him whom Peter confessed saying: ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,’ and so Peter, called after this rock, represented the person of the Church which is built upon this rock, and has received ‘the keys of the kingdom of heaven. For, ‘Thou art Peter’ and not ‘Thou art the rock’ was said to him. But ‘the rock was Christ,’ in confessing whom, as also the whole Church confesses, Simon was called Peter. But let the reader decide which of these two opinions is the more probable.”

So, toward the end of his life St. Augustine does *not* say that the rock upon which Christ built his Church was the *confession* of Peter, or the *faith* of Peter; but rather, the *man* Peter or the *person* of Christ. St. Augustine says that he and Ambrose referred to Peter as the man and the rock upon which the Church was built and that even now at the end of his life finds this to be a feasible and acceptable interpretation. So, where does St. Augustine, as implied by Bill, outright deny in an exclusive sense that Peter is the Rock in the whole of his corpus? My comment and question in the section on Origen (page 177) stands.

Another example that can be cited is Ambrose. he states:

He, then, who before was silent, to teach us that we ought not to repeat the words of the impious, this one, I say, when he heard, ‘But who do you say I am,’ immediately, not unmindful of his station, exercised his primacy, that is, the primacy of confession, not of honor; the primacy of belief, not of rank.

This, then, is Peter, who has replied for the rest of the Apostles; rather, before the rest of men. And so he is called the foundation, because he knows how to preserve not only his own but the common foundation.... Faith, then, is the foundation of the Church, for it was not said of Peter’s flesh, but of his faith, that ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ But his confession of faith conquered hell. And this confession did not shut out one heresy, for, since the Church like a good ship is often buffeted by many waves, the foundation of the Church should prevail against all heresies (*The Fathers of the Church* (Washington D.C., Catholic University, 1963), Saint Ambrose, Theological and Dogmatic Works, *The Sacrament of the Incarnation of Our Lord* IV.32-V.34, pp. 230-231).

In this passage, Peter is called the foundation as well as his faith. Ambrose is teaching on faith and confession and so emphasizes this aspect. We will see shortly that he seemingly “contradicts” himself, though it is not a contradiction, but the same thing as in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It is not either-or but-and. The Matthew 16

passage was utilized, as we have repeatedly said, for many purposes in the preaching of the Fathers. Ambrose understands the literal meaning of the passage but uses many applications. No exclusivity here.

Peter therefore did not wait for the opinion of the people, but produced his own, saying, 'Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God': Who ever is, began not to be, nor ceases to be. Great is the grace of Christ, who has imparted almost all His own names to His disciples. 'I am,' said He, 'the light of the world,' and yet with that very name in which He glories, He favored His disciples, saying, 'Ye are the light of the world.' 'I am the living bread'; and 'we all are one bread' (1 Cor. x. 17)...Christ is the rock, for 'they drank of the same spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ' (1 Cor. x. 4); also He denied not to His disciple the grace of this name; that he should be Peter, because he has from the rock (petra) the solidity of constancy, the firmness of faith. Make an effort, therefore, to be a rock! Do not seek the rock outside of yourself, but within yourself! Your rock is your deed, your rock is your mind. Upon this rock your house is built. Your rock is your faith, and faith is the foundation of the Church. If you are a rock, you will be in the Church, because the Church is on a rock. If you are in the Church the gates of hell will not prevail against you...He who has conquered the flesh is a foundation of the Church; and if he cannot equal Peter, he can imitate him (*Commentary in Luke VI.98, CSEL 32.4*).

So, are we to believe that St. Ambrose denies Peter is the Rock in the whole corpus of his work. Again, we can't look to just one or two citations where St. Ambrose the preacher is applying the passage for various purposes, but what did St. Ambrose believe? St. Augustine tells us that in the Church of his time the Rock of Matthew 16 is proclaimed in song—a song written by St. Ambrose. St. Augustine writes, "This ideas is also expressed in song by the voice of many in the verses of the most blessed Ambrose where he says about the crowing of the cock: 'At its crowing he, this rock of the Church, washed away his guilt'" (cited on page 231 in *Upon this Rock*).

So, not only did St. Ambrose teach that the Rock *was* the person of Peter, but he actually wrote a song about it and "the voice of many" sang the praises of Peter, the Rock upon whom the Church was built. If these "many voices" sang such songs in the Sunday liturgy in the many churches, are we to believe that the Fathers all exclusively denied that Peter was the Rock of the Church. The "nay-sayers" fail to impress me, and their exclusive interpretations of the Fathers impress me even less. I would suggest that my section on Ambrose be read for more context and information. Again, my statement stands!

Both of these Fathers separate Peter's confession from Peter's person. Augustine states explicitly that the Church is not built on Peter's person but on his confession of faith. This was Augustine's personal perspective throughout his ministry.

Not so, as we have already demonstrated, especially quoting St. Augustine later in his life, long after the above passage was written. It looks like Bill reads St. Augustine

the way he *wants* to read it and does not take the whole corpus and practice of St. Augustine into account.

But one will not find this citation or that from Ambrose in Mr. Ray's book even though he knows they exist because they are listed in my book *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock*.

Again I wonder if Bill actually read my book because here we have a gross misrepresentation of my book. He states that you won't find the above quotes in my book when in reality, the second of the two Ambrosian statements *is* included in my book on page 218–219. Good grief!

However, I never claim to have *every* citation available included in *Upon this Rock*. There are many citations not found in my book, just as there are many citations not found in Bill's book. Authors are limited by space and emphasis. At the risk of being repetitive, both Bill and I have included citations that others in our respective camps tend to avoid. I actually compliment Bill on such in the paragraph below. If one were to add every citation that mentions Matthew 16, the practice and history of the primacy, Council references, current scholarship on the matter, etc. the book would be unruly and unpublished. One needs to be somewhat selective. Since I go into great detail in my book on the various usages of Matthew 16, along with current scholarship, and explain that the Fathers use the passage in many ways (the rock being Christ, Peter, faith, confession, etc.) and I give many examples of each. I don't need to list every single one. I hope Bill is not implying a nefarious intent in the above comment.

Mr. Ray makes some additional comments on this subject when he references the teaching of the Church Father, James of Nisbis. He provides the following quotation from James: 'And Simon the head of the Apostles, he who denied Christ...our Lord received him, and made him the foundation, and called him the rock of the edifice of the Church.' He then offers the following critique of my comments:

To William Webster's credit, he included this passage from Jacob of Nisbis along with another, which reads "Our Lord Jesus Christ is the firm and true foundation; and upon this rock our faith is established. Therefore, when any one has come to faith, he is set upon a firm rock.... And Simon, who was called a rock, was deservedly called a rock because of his faith", and another referring to "Simon the rock of faith". [Ed. Note: Please note that even though Bill implies I don't disclose passages such as this, I have never hesitated to show the whole picture and provide passages such as the one mentioned here]. However, Webster concludes by saying that "James, like Eusebius and Augustine, states that the rock of the Church is Christ. He alone is the true and unique foundation. However, Peter is also called a rock foundation of the Church but only because of his faith. The Church is built upon Christ as the foundation, not upon Peter. It can be said to be built on Peter only in the sense that it is built upon his faith which points to Christ" (Webster, *Peter and the Rock*, 100). Why does Webster have to work so hard to establish the *either-or* dichotomy? Why not accept the *both-and* position of the Fathers

and the Catholic Church? (*Upon This Rock* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), Footnote #93, p. 193).

I appreciate the fact that Stephen Ray had the courtesy to note that I had included the additional quotations from James of Nisbis, in addition to the one citation he gave in his book. [Ed. Note: *I have always tried to be fair and honest with the writings of Bill Webster and others. Even when challenging them, there is certainly no hostile intent or dislike. I simply disagree with some of their conclusions*]. The additional citations are important because they explain what James means when he states that Peter is the foundation and rock of the Church.

Does Peter as the Rock mean that Christ cannot be the Rock? Are these two statements mutually exclusive? Who or what is the foundation of the Church? Well, we must conclude that *Christ* is because in 1 Corinthians 3 it states that “no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ”. But we are told later by St. Paul that we are “of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord” Eph 2:21–23). So which is it? Is the foundation Christ or the apostles? Is Christ the foundation, the builder, or the cornerstone? It is not either-or, it is both-and. And following, to try to dismiss the possibility that Peter can be the foundation because Christ is given that honor by Paul, is to mix the metaphors and confuse the over-all teaching of Scripture. We discussed this earlier when we provided the *full* quote from the anti-papal writer George Salmon.

All that the full spectrum of passages demonstrate is the Jacob of Nisbis used the Matthean passage for different applications as we have discussed over and over again. One can’t necessarily take one passage and force its *application* as a *definition* of the other passages. We discussed this with Tertullian and Origen earlier. If we force St. Paul’s definition of Christ as the foundation in 1 Corinthians 3 on his passage in Ephesians 2 we create the same sort of confusion Bill finds as he tries to understand the Fathers.

He is consistent in his perspective with that expressed by Eusebius, a contemporary of James, and Augustine. The emphasis in James’ writing is on the faith of Peter and as we have seen in the above citations from Ambrose and Augustine, the early Church Fathers separated the faith of Peter from his person.

I think we have adequately discounted this last statement by Bill Webster. Even those in his camp will have to admit that, *at best* it is not as simple and clear cut as Bill asserts. The Fathers do not, in the whole corpus of their work and practice, separate faith of Peter from his person. What they are dealing with is the “Confessing Peter”. It is Peter, his faith, and his confession rolled into one. Each aspect is emphasized at various times, but in the end, the “Confessing Peter” is the rock upon which the Church is built, and Christ is the builder.

Stephen Ray asks, 'Why does Webster have to work so hard to establish the *either-or* dichotomy? Why not accept the *both-and* position of the Fathers and the Catholic Church?' The simple answer, Mr. Ray, is that the Fathers themselves established the *either-or* dichotomy. They do not have the *both-and* position that the Roman Church would like to promote in terms of papal primacy. I am not laboring hard to twist the words of this church Father to say something that is inconsistent with the prevailing view of his day. These comments are consistent with the overall patristic interpretation. Christ is the rock and foundation of the Church. Peter is the rock and foundation, along with all the other apostles (Eph. 2:20), because of their faith and teaching. The Church is built upon this faith, which points to Christ. But as Augustine points out, the Church is not built upon Peter's person. Therefore when the Fathers say that the Church is built upon Peter they mean upon his confession of faith. This is why James of Nisbis refers to Peter as the 'rock of faith.'

Again, I ask the question, in light of the whole patristic witness, coupled with their practice regarding the Church in Rome, why does Bill separate the various interpretations of Matthew 16 into exclusive water-tight compartments? St. Augustine, toward the end of his life, admits that he and Ambrose had both taught that the person of Peter was the foundation rock of the Church and that, even though there were other ways to interpret and apply the passage, the Petrine foundation was viable and currently taught and even "sung" in the churches. Do I need to go further? My book is loaded with positive citations and examples (not just silence I may add) which show that Bill has to force false dichotomies on the Fathers to substantiate his position.

I think a lot of this disagreement goes back to what I said about a hundred pages back. Bill and I read history differently. He reads it through his Fundamentalist Protestant lens and I view it through Catholic eyes. I don't know if we will ever be able to agree. He claims I am anachronistic by reading current Catholic teaching back into the Fathers and I claim that he does the same, in fact, I would say that Bill denies the very principles of interpretation (hermeneutics) of the Apostles and the Fathers. But, we've gone over all this before. My question or *either-or* instead of *both-and* stands, not only for the Papacy, but also for all other aspects of Christian belief such as *either* faith *or* baptism, *either* Bible *or* tradition, *either* faith *or* reason, etc. etc.

### **Misunderstanding Five: Ambrose:**

Another misrepresentation that needs to be addressed by Mr. Ray are some of his comments on Ambrose. In his writings Ambrose makes the following statement:

It is to Peter himself that He says: 'You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.' Where Peter is, there is the Church (W. A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1979), Volume 2, St. Ambrose, On Twelve Psalms 440,30, p. 150).

Mr. Ray gives the following interpretation to these words: 'Peter is the rock upon which the Church is built. If one is with Peter, that is, the bishop of Rome, he is with the Church—all others are on the outside' (*Upon This Rock* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), p. 218). What

Mr. Ray would have us believe is that when Ambrose states that 'Where Peter is there is the Church', what he means is 'Where the Bishop of Rome is there is the Church'.

I would again suggest that readers read my whole section on St. Ambrose with the collection of quotes, not just this one taken out of the bunch along with the extended footnotes. I am again grateful that Bill gives us notice that he is quoting from his book. As to my statement, I stand by it completely as we have demonstrated throughout my book and in this response to Bill's challenge.

I gives the following refutation of that position in the following comments from *The Matthew 16 Controversy*:

The impression given by (Roman Catholic apologists) is that in these comments Ambrose supports the Roman Catholic interpretation of Matthew 16. They apply the following logic to his statement: The above quote seems to suggest that Peter's person is the rock. And since the bishops of Rome are the successors to Peter they are, therefore, by succession, the rocks of the Church.

I don't recall saying that the bishops of Rome are "rocks". Peter is the rock, and the bishops fill his office, sit on his "chair" but I don't recall saying they are Rocks in that they replace Peter. I don't know where Bill gets this idea unless he is just misrepresenting Catholic apologists.

Therefore, according to Ambrose, the Church is founded upon the universal rule of the bishops of Rome. To be in communion with Rome is to be in the Church. To be out of communion with Rome is to be out of the Church for where Peter (that is, the bishop of Rome) is, there is the Church. Is this what Ambrose meant? If we divorce this one sentence from its context and from the rest of his comments on Peter in other writings, we could certainly lean towards that interpretation. However, Ambrose made other comments on Peter and Matthew 16 which explain exactly what he meant when he said that Peter is the rock.

Bill again tries to dismiss the words of a Father by forcing an *either-or* dichotomy and by bringing in words that supposedly counteract what Ambrose has said.

Unfortunately, these other comments are often neglected in discussions by Roman Catholic apologists. Often a quote like this is given out of the context. The result is that an interpretation is given the words of Ambrose that is completely foreign to his true meaning. This becomes clear upon examination of his other statements: (I then list the quotations from Ambrose cited above).

What does Ambrose mean when he says that Peter is the foundation? In the sense that he was the first to openly confess faith in Christ as the Messiah and Son of God. The rock is not Peter himself but Peter's confession of faith!

Is that really all that St. Ambrose means? Bill says that St. Ambrose doesn't teach that Peter himself is the foundation. Yet, how did St. Ambrose's star student and prodigy

understand Ambrose's teaching. Why should I care how Eno interprets St. Ambrose when we have a commentary by St. Augustine himself. In his *Retractations* as we have already quoted, St. Augustine says, "'In a passage in this book, I said about the Apostle Peter: 'On him as on a rock the Church was built.' This idea is also expressed in song by the voice of many in the verses of the most blessed Ambrose where he says about the crowing of the cock: 'At its crowing he, this rock of the Church, washed away his guilt.'

It is this faith which is the foundation of the Church. Peter possesses a primacy, but he explains that primacy as one of confession and faith and not of rank in the sense of ruling over the other apostles. Thus, when Ambrose says that 'where Peter is there is the Church,' he means that where Peter's confession is, there is the Church.

St. Ambrose doesn't say this, Bill Webster does. Is Bill interpreting St. Ambrose correctly? No. He explains him in a manner that fits his Fundamentalist presuppositions.

He does not mean the bishop of Rome at all. He goes on to give an exposition of the rock reminiscent of the interpretation of Origen who says that all believers are rocks. As (Roman Catholic historian) Robert Eno points out, when the overall context of Ambrose's statement is taken into account, it demonstrates that the interpretation given by (Roman Catholic apologists) is a complete misrepresentation of Ambrose's statement since his statement has nothing to do with ecclesiology and papal authority. Robert Eno gives the following explanation:

I have already given my opinion of the modernist historian Robert Eno. I flat out disagree with Eno and so do a host of other scholars which we will demonstrate, as we follow along with Bill's book.

There is no question then that Ambrose honored the Roman see, but there are other texts which seem to establish a certain distance and independence as well. He commented, for example, that Peter's primacy was a primacy of confession, not of honor; a primacy of faith, not rank.... Finally, one further text should be mentioned in connection with Ambrose since it is a text which like *Roma locuta est* has become something of a shibboleth or slogan. This is the brief phrase from his commentary on the fortieth Psalm: *Ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia* (where Peter is, there is the Church).... As Roger Gryson has shown, in his study on Ambrose and the priesthood, the context of such a statement has nothing to do with any treatise on ecclesiology. It is but one statement in a long chain of allegorical exegesis starting with the line from Ps. 41:9: 'Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted...has lifted his heel against me.' This is not to deny the fairly common association of Peter as the symbol of the Church, the *figura ecclesiae* we have seen in Augustine. But it says little that is new and nothing at all about papal authority (Robert Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1990), pp. 83-84).

So, we have an opinion of a liberal historian who is, in the name of ecumenism, seemingly willing to give away the store simply to "get along". What do other scholars say? I provide a few in *Upon this Rock*, but I will add them here again for convenience. "Miller writes, 'Peter was the chief, the head of the apostles. According to St. Ambrose, Peter was personally the rock upon which Christ built the Church. The bishop of Milan,



convinced that the responsibility given to Peter was transmitted to his successors on the *cathedra* at Rome, was also the first to draw together coherently the three Petrine texts of Matthew, Luke, and John. By the middle of the fourth century, the see of Peter became more simply ‘the apostolic see’ without comparison—as if no others worth mentioning existed” (*The Shepherd and the Rock*, 82).”

Luke Rivington wrote, “[St. Ambrose] considered that [Pope] Damasus sat in the chair of Peter, and he held Peter to be the rock in Matthew 16 and taught that from the Church of Rome ‘the rights of venerable communion flow to all’” (*The Primitive Church and the See of Rome* [London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1894], pg. 242).

Stanley Jaki writes in *The Keys of the Kingdom*, “A chapter later (12:11), in reflecting on the factions among the Corinthians, Ambrose reminded them that John the Baptist obtained no power over Jesus by baptizing him. To this corrective to the Corinthians’ infatuation with the order in which various persons baptized them, Ambrose added the almost incidental remark which has the incisiveness of an entire treatise: “Andrew preceded Peter in following Christ and yet not Andrew but Peter received the primacy.’ Just as unplanned should seem the comment, soon a famed dictum, which the passage “and the persecutors fell down backward” (Ps 40:15) prompted Ambrose to make. It would have been clearly enough for Ambrose’s purpose to recall that Judas and other persecutors of Jesus drew back and fell to the ground in the Garden of Gethsemani. But Ambrose went on:

“ ‘The persecutor falls to the ground and into hell. Christ [falls] on the risen, Christ falls on the rock, Christ falls on the Church. Hear how Christ falls on the Church! In the background was Peter who followed him as he was led by the Jews to the house of Caiaphas, the head of the Synagogue. Peter is the one to whom he said: “You are Peter and on this rock I shall build my Church.” *Where Peter is, there is the Church; where the Church is, there is no death, but eternal life* [Ubi ergo Petrus, ibi Ecclesia; ubi Ecclesia, ibi nulla mors, sed vita aeterna]. And therefore he added: “And the gates of hell do not prevail over it, and I give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” Blessed [is that] Peter, over whom the gates of hell do not prevail, and before whom the door of heaven does not shut itself; on the contrary he destroyed the vestibules of hell, opened the celestial ones. Being placed on earth, he opened the heaven, closed the hell. *There was in all this not a hint that what performed those stupendous deeds was Peter’s faith and not Peter himself* (Italics added).”

In the view of the fathers, as seen in the examples of Cyprian, Ambrose and Augustine, the Church is not embodied in one individual but in a confession of right faith.

These above sentence has a hollow ring once a wider reading is provided. Fortunately, the two (Peter and his confession) are not mutually exclusive. The Fathers’ view things much more expansive than current Evangelical Protestants. They did not hesitate to say the rock was Peter, Jesus, the confession or faith—almost in one breath! For

them it was not an exclusive interpretation and the literal always underlies the figurative and expository.

Where you have that right confession you have Peter [Ed. Note: And, not coincidentally, where Peter is, there is the right confession!]. This is explicitly stated for example by Chrysostom. Like Ambrose, he says that where Peter is there is the Church in the sense of Peter's confession and he applies it not to Rome but to Antioch: 'Though we do not retain the body of Peter, we do retain the faith of Peter, and retaining the faith of Peter we have Peter' (*On the Inscription of Acts*, II. Taken from E. Giles, *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority* (London: SPCK, 1952), p.168)(*The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock* (Battle Ground: Christian Resources, 1996), pp. 62-66).

We've already dealt with St. Chrysostom, so I hold my peace here.

Did St. Ambrose interpret Scripture like Bill does? Would Bill feel comfortable studying the Bible with St. Ambrose? Bill presumes to interpret St. Ambrose and assumes an understanding of St. Ambrose's biblical interpretations. Does he? He and St. Ambrose are worlds apart in this regard. Here is where I demonstrated earlier, that Bill is really the violator of historiography by being anachronistic and proleptic. He assumes the Fathers interpret Scripture as he does. He is again reading his modern, critical hermeneutical method into the Fathers. He is squeezing them into a biblical interpretive straightjacket they would have not understood. For an example, let's consider the following.

In his new book, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove: IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), Protestant author Christopher Hall writes this of St. Ambrose: "Hermeneutical sampler [of Ambrose's hermeneutic]. Ambrose's many letters to emperors, bishops and priests are a treasure trove of resources for examining how he read Scripture and how he felt it should be preached. In Ambrose's letter to the bishop Constantius (before Lent A.D. 379) he describes Scripture as a "sea ... which has within it profound meanings and the mysterious depths of the Prophets. Into this sea many rivers have entered. Delightful and dear are these streams; these fountains are cool, springing up into life everlasting..."

"The salutary advice Ambrose so eagerly wants to deliver to his flock often centers on the moral sense of Scripture. In a letter to the priest Horontianus (spring A.D. 387) Ambrose develops both the moral and mystical sense of the creation of the world in six days. Why did God create the world in six days and not immediately, "since a moment suffices for Him to do what He wishes"? God took six days because God is a God of order and creation itself demands order. "[T]hings which are made require an order and order generally requires both time and number."

"Ambrose then quickly springs to the moral wisdom the text contains. God's creation of the world in six days gives us a pattern for our own work "He observed a number of days and seasons. We, too, need time to do something well, so as not to hurry

our plans and works, or fail to keep a proper order.”<sup>4</sup> Finally, since God rested on the seventh day, Ambrose explores the possible links the number seven might have on a mystical or allegorical level. *Ambrose’s interest in discerning a mystical or allegorical meaning in the biblical text is surely the aspect of his hermeneutics that many modern interpreters will find most troubling.* The lack of hermeneutical control in allegorical interpretation seems to lay the biblical text wide open for subjective whimsy. When Ezekiel speaks of the outer gate of the sanctuary, for example, is he referring to the Virgin Mary as Ambrose argues?

“What is that gate of the sanctuary, that outer gate facing the East and remaining closed: ‘And no man,’ it says, ‘shall pass through it except the God of Israel’? Is not Mary the gate through whom the Redeemer entered this world? ... Holy Mary is the gate of which it is written: ‘The Lord will pass through it, and it will be shut after birth, for as a virgin she conceived and gave birth’.

“Many modern scholars might demur from Ambrose’s judgment. Yet Ambrose would insist it was perfectly legitimate to read Scripture through the lens of its overarching narrative. After all, Jesus himself had taught that the law and the prophets spoke of him (cf. Lk 24:25-27). But, we may ask, how did they speak of him? Ambrose, like many fathers in the Alexandrian tradition, believed that behind the literal shell of a biblical text lay enclosed a deeper meaning, a message to be discerned through the Holy Spirit and in line with the central biblical narrative centered on God’s work in Christ. Why, Ambrose would ask, should we find it surprising to find Ezekiel speaking in a veiled way of Mary if he is speaking prophetically through the Spirit?

“The problem allegorical interpretation poses, among others, is how one is to discern and interpret this deeper meaning without being enveloped in hermeneutical subjectivism. Ambrose trusted that the biblical narrative itself supplied a brake on interpretive fancy” (pages 106–107).

When St. Ambrose finds figurative meaning behind the installation of Peter as the Rock and Steward of the Church, he is *not* denying the historical and literal meaning. The Fathers had creative “fun” finding all the deeper meanings in Scripture and Bill tries to squeeze all their various interpretations into his Fundamentalist hermeneutic. It is easy to go to St. Ambrose, like the others, to find a few passages that support a certain point of view, but *the context of the phrase, “where Peter is there is the Church” is not insignificant. Interestingly enough, the words preceding “where Peter is there is the Church” are “It is to Peter himself that He says, ‘You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church’.*”

### **Misrepresentation Six: Cyprian and the “bishop of bishops”:**

We now address the sixth and final “misrepresentation” alleged by Bill Webster. Am I getting tired yet? Nope. I love this kind of stuff. Defending Jesus and his Church makes me flush with enthusiasm and joy. My kids are climbing all over me, my oldest daughter is on her way home for the summer, the chickens are all put away for the night,

the ten acres are all mowed, my wife is snuggled on the couch next to me here in our home den, my five hundred employees are out taking care of my business, I am surrounded by over 10,000 books, and I have the joy of the Lord filling my soul and my family. Who could ask for more! I love being Catholic! So, let's carry on with this last "misrepresentation".

One final misrepresentation I would like to address are some additional comments Mr. Ray makes in his Introduction. He states:

The bishop of Rome was unique in assuming the authority and obligation to oversee the Churches. Clement and Ignatius make this clear from the first century and the beginning of the second. If the authority exercised had been illegitimate, or wrongly arrogated, it would have been an act of overzealousness at one end of the spectrum, of tyranny at the other. Yet no one ever stood up and said, "No, you have no authority. Who are you to order us, to teach us, to require obedience from us, to excommunicate us?" If the jurisdictional primacy of Rome had been a matter of self-aggrandizement, someone would have opposed it as they opposed other innovations and heresies in the Church. The silence is profound (Upon This Rock (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), p. 13).

Bill is about to make a big commotion about an enthusiastic statement I made in my book, as stated above. This statement was not meant to be a challenge as in: "Find one patristic witness to resist or deny papal authority and I will take a back seat." It was rather an exclamation of satisfaction, as in "My goodness, look at the overwhelming acknowledgment of papal primacy in the early Church, expressed not only in the positive evidence I am about to provide but in the silence of the Fathers as well!" My exclamation was in the manner of St. Vincent of Lerins, "Catholic," which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally. This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity, consent. We shall follow universality if we confess that one faith to be true, which the whole Church throughout the world confesses; antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is manifest were notoriously held by our holy ancestors and fathers; consent, in like manner, if in antiquity itself we adhere to the consentient definitions and determinations of all, or at the least of almost all priests and doctors" (*Commonitory* 2). It was especially taken in the context of Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and especially St. Irenaeus who opposed the determination of the Pope Victor, asked him to prudently reconsider, but never denied Pope Victor's authority to excommunicate.

Since Bill brought this topic up, let's go back to my book and read the whole context of my statement and not just the few sentences provided by Bill. Again we come back to Bill's e-mail response sent to me.

"While reading Webster's book, I noticed, along with his selective use of the Fathers in attempting to discredit the Catholic Church's teaching on the Papacy, that there are no citations "revealed" in his book in which a Christian, especially a Church Father,

explicitly denies the Petrine primacy or the Petrine succession. Webster collects a large number of passages that are supposed to prove that the Fathers oppose Catholic teaching, yet never is there a flat-out denial of the Petrine primacy or the primacy of Rome. This is a silence that speaks volumes! We may find differing interpretations of Peter's primacy, which is what we should expect, according to John Henry Newman, yet we find no denial of that primacy.

"I wrote to William Webster and asked him if he knew of any Church Father who denied the primacy of Peter or of his successors. Mr. Webster's response was very telling, and I wish he had been forthright about this matter in his book. His return E-mail stated, "No father denies that Peter had a primacy or that there is a Petrine succession. The issue is how the fathers interpreted those concepts. They simply did not hold to the Roman Catholic view of later centuries that primacy and succession were 'exclusively' related to the bishops of Rome. What an extraordinary admission; what an extraordinary truth. Many of the Fathers were in theological or disciplinary disagreement with Rome (for example, Cyprian and Irenaeus), yet they never denied Rome's primacy. They may have debated what that primacy meant, or how it was to work out in the universal Church, but they never denied the primacy. The quickest way to achieve jurisdictional or doctrinal victory is to subvert or disarm the opponent. In this case it would have been as simple as proving from the Bible or from tradition that Peter, and subsequently his successors in Rome, had no primacy, no authority to rule in the Church. Yet, as even Webster freely admits, this refutation never occurred. Irenaeus may challenge the appropriateness of a decision made by Victor, but he never challenges Victor's authority to make the binding decision. Cyprian may at times disagree with a decree of Stephen's on baptism, but he never rejects the special place of the Roman See, which would have been the easiest means of winning the debate. The bishop of Rome was unique in assuming the authority and obligation to oversee the Churches. Clement and Ignatius make this clear from the first century and the beginning of the second. If the authority exercised had been illegitimate, or wrongly arrogated, it would have been an act of overzealousness at one end of the spectrum, of tyranny at the other. Yet no one ever stood up and said, "No, you have no authority. Who are you to order us, to teach us, to require obedience from us, to excommunicate us?" If the jurisdictional primacy of Rome had been a matter of self-aggrandizement, someone would have opposed it as they opposed other innovations and heresies in the Church. The silence is profound.

"As doctrines develop, as authority develops, as even a family or society develops, there is discussion relating to authority and its exercise. Amazingly enough, this is also true for the canon of the New Testament, which was not finally collected and codified for almost four hundred years after the death of Christ. Does the fact that there were various interpretations of what the New Testament was, or which books it contained-a discussion, by the way, that raised its head again in the teaching of Martin Luther-in anyway prove that somehow the New Testament held by the Protestant is

uncertain or in doubt because there were various applications or perceptions of that canon in the early years? The faithful Christian may have believed various things about the canon, but he never denied that the Scriptures held a special place. He may have clung to a different collection of books, yet he always understood that there were “apostolic” books. In the same way, early Fathers, especially Eastern Fathers, may have defined the primacy of Peter and the supremacy of his successors in nuanced ways, yet they never denied that the primacy or authority was attached to Peter and his See in Rome.

“Authority has always been an object of distrust and, very often, defiance. The nation of Israel refused to hear authority: they rejected the authority of the prophets and rejected their Messiah sent by the Father. The apostles themselves were abused and rejected. Should it surprise us that many in our present day reject and demean the unifying authority God has ordained in his Church? In the primitive Church, as we learn from St. Irenaeus, the greatest theologian of the second century, many groups splintered off from the apostolic Church and “assembled in unauthorized meetings”. Rejecting the Church and spurning her shepherd is nothing new to our day” (*Upon this Rock*, 12–14).

This should establish the context. However, since Bill took the “No one ever said...” as a challenge, I will respond.

[These statements are a complete misrepresentation of the truth and demonstrate a profound ignorance of church history.](#)

This is a very strong charge. A “profound ignorance of church history”? Really Bill! Are you an expert on Church history able to judge all others? I think that I have proven in my book, for those who read the whole thing and not just a few footnotes with their names in it, and for those who have read *this* response all the way up to this point may tend to disagree with your condescending statement. Am I the finest historian of all time? Of course not, but “profoundly ignorant”? I don’t think so. We may have a difference of opinion on many points, but I never stooped to calling you profoundly ignorant. But, leaving your condescending *argumentum ad hominem* behind us, let’s continue with content of the argument.

[The church Fathers and ecumenical councils are not silent on their opposition to the claims of the bishops of Rome which they considered to be in fact illegitimate and innovations.](#)

As we have seen, and I deign to repeat it all here, this last statement by Bill is a gross exaggeration and misrepresentation of history. It fits his Fundamentalist tradition, but it is certainly not a characterization of the early Church. “Peter has spoken through Leo” (Ecumenical Council of Carthage), and as Sergius, Metropolitan of Cyprus (649 A.D.) writes to Pope Theodore, “O Holy Head, Christ our God hath destined thy Apostolic See to be an immovable foundation and a pillar of the Faith. For thou art, as the

Divine Word truly saith, Peter, and on thee as a foundation-stone have the pillars of the Church been fixed.” (Sergius Ep. ad Theod. lecta in Session ii. Concil. Lat. anno 649). Bill may find his quotations and take them out of their fuller setting to make it sound like the Fathers “denied” a Roman primacy, but the full history belies such a claim. Did some oppose the Pope and fight his dictates? Absolutely, but that is not the same as denying an overall primacy.

The fact that Cyprian changed the wording of his treatise, *On the Unity of the Church*, because Stephen the bishop of Rome misapplied his words to mean papal primacy is clear evidence that they were opposed to any thought that the bishop of Rome held universal jurisdiction within the Church.

Yet, does St. Cyprian in his revision *categorically deny* that the bishop of Rome held a unique position. Does “toning down” equal “flat out spoken denial”, which is what I was speaking of? I don’t think so. By the way, I added this specific information about St. Cyprian’s revision in much greater detail. I am quite aware of the history of St. Cyprian’s *On the Unity of the Church*. Did Bill know that I already included a good bit of detail on this point? Why would I add the “rhetorical statement” in my introduction if I felt it was contradicted by Cyprian and his treatise *On the Unity of the Church*? I’m not sure why Bill brings this up because it certainly proves nothing. Here is what my book already said about this topic, footnote #68 on pages 182–183:

“*The Unity of the Catholic Church* 4 in Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 1:220 written between 251–256 A.D. Few selections from the Fathers have been as heatedly debated as these words of Cyprian. Certain ambiguities in Cyprian’s writings cause partisans to claim him for their individual “causes”. After verbal altercations with Pope Stephen over baptism, Cyprian toned down his treatise in a later revised version, possibly because “Rome was making more of his words than he had intended” (Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)*, 1:159), especially now that he was in theological disagreement with Rome. Bévenot summarizes the situation, “At Rome, where there were no doubts about its Bishop’s authority over the whole Church, Cyprian’s original text could not fail to be read as a recognition of that fact. If, in the course of the baptismal controversy this was, as it were, thrown in his teeth, he will have exclaimed, quite truthfully: ‘But I never meant *that!*’—and so he ‘toned it down’ in his revised version. He did not then repudiate what he had formerly held. He had never held that the Pope possessed universal jurisdiction. But he had never denied it either; in truth he had never asked himself the question where the final authority in the Church might be. . . . We have in Cyprian’s *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* a good example of what a dogma can look like while still in an early stage of development. The reality (in this case, the Primacy of Rome) is there all the time: it may be recognized by some; by others it may even be denied, and that though much of what they say or do unconsciously implies it. . . . Cyprian is a standing example of what we mean when we speak of the Papal Primacy being



‘implicit’ in the early Church” (*Ancient Christian Writers* 25:7–8 quoted in Jurgens’, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 1:220). Cyprian seems to have adopted a modified view of primacy after Cornelius, possibly as a result of his disagreements with Stephen, the bishop of Rome. The modified conception leveled the office of bishop and in theory anyway, perceived the government of the Church to be an “aristocracy of equal bishops” each accountable to God alone. Instead of seeing Peter as invested with a dynastic office, Cyprian seems to have modified his view to perceive Peter alone as the recipient of the keys so as to *symbolize* the unity of the episcopate and the Church. However, even in his own lifetime he saw the impossibility of unity on this unrealistic basis which is demonstrated by his frequent appeal to Rome for theological and practical determinations. Dom John Chapman, whose book should be read by any wanting to understand Cyprian’s attitude toward Rome, wrote, “I fear it was the shortness of his experience which made it possible to put forward a theory which no one has ever held before or since. This is why I think ‘St. Cyprian’s theory of the episcopate’ is of no importance except for his own biography” (*Studies in the Early Papacy* [Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1971], 44).”

So, even though Bill implies I must be ignorant of the above information, it was in my book all the long for those who have read it.

This is also seen in the example of Cyprian and the Eastern Fathers who opposed Stephen and his demands for their submission to his teaching on the rebaptism of heretics. I give the following summation of that controversy in *The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock*:

Before we read this section from Bill’s book, we should state up front that it proves nothing against what I said earlier. Opposing the bishop of Rome is certainly no proof of a denial of papal authority. There have been saints (as St. Cyprian is venerated) and doctors of the Church (as we have mentioned St. Catherine of Sienna) who have scolded, reprimanded, and even opposed the Pope. St. Cyprian even refused to obey the Pope and yet the Church has still seen fit to honor him with the title of Saint. This opposition does not suggest, and certainly doesn’t not prove, that those who confronted the Pope rejected the primacy of the Roman bishop. They just aren’t the same thing. I don’t think Bill can find anywhere where I said that no one ever opposed the bishop of Rome. Many opposed St. Paul and his directives without necessarily questioning his apostolic authority.

The conflict regarding heretical baptism was over whether or not it was necessary to rebaptize those who had been baptized by Novationist groups—which baptized in the name of the Trinity—who were then later converted and sought membership in the orthodox Church. Cyprian and many Eastern bishops said yes, while Stephen said no. The controversy escalated to the point where Stephen demanded submission by Cyprian and the others to his point of view on pain of exclusion from communion with Rome upon refusal.

Does St. Cyprian deny that Pope Stephen had the authority or power to excommunicate? This is exactly my point! This is not the first time that a whole section of the Church opposed the bishop of Rome. For those who read my book (pages 161–163), they will remember the writings and visit of St. Irenaeus who traveled to Rome. He appealed to the Pope not to excommunicate the Asian churches. St. Irenaeus, the greatest theologian of the second century never questioned Pope Victor’s authority or prerogative to excommunicate the Asian churches. Rather, he argued as to its prudence. Opposition or argument with the bishop of Rome does not prove what Bill would like it to prove. I already dealt with such things in my book.

We have also discussed earlier whether “Eastern bishops” were involved in this debate at Carthage. I won’t go into it again here, but accuracy with terms is significant if one is to earn our trust and confidence in his historical acumen.

Stephen went so far as to denounce Cyprian as a false prophet and deceitful worker. It is evident from Cyprian’s correspondence that such a demand by Stephen was made on the basis of his application of Matthew 16 to himself as Peter’s successor.

We see the imposition of the Petrine primacy, close to the form of Vatican I, understood and practiced at this early date by the Roman bishops. This imposition was resisted at times, questioned, and struggled against, but in the end, the Roman theology and decisions won out as the orthodox teaching.

So, we have the bishop of Rome as early as the mid-third century claiming what the bishops of Rome understood—they held the seat of Peter in the see of Rome. This was certainly not the first time bishop of Rome assumed such authority. It was recognized by St. Clement of Rome in the first century. St. Clement said that the Apostles themselves taught their disciples the principle of succession to the “sacred office”. And, does the fact that a bishop criticizes a bishop of Rome at one point in their life invalidate everything else the bishop believed and practiced throughout the rest of their ministry?

In light of this, the response of Cyprian and the Eastern bishops is significant. Did they submit to Stephen? They did not.

First, Cyprian was not an Eastern bishop; he was an African bishop. Second, at first they did resist the Papal determination, but in the end all the African bishops acquiesced to Rome’s stance on the issue of re-baptism, a teaching that is still the unquestioned doctrine of the Church today! This was not the first nor the last instance of resistance to the Church’s authority. Nothing is new under the sun. It certainly does not invalidate my point.

In fact, Stephen’s demand, his interpretation of scripture, and the ecclesiology which it represented, was unanimously repudiated by these bishops. Their response was a North African Council in 256 A.D., attended by eighty-six Eastern and Western bishops.

Eastern and Western bishops? That Cyprian and his synod were Western can be debated, since they were near Rome, but quite separate across the Mediterranean in Africa, but where do you find Eastern bishops in the council? Even St. Cyprian himself, in the introductory remarks writes: “When, in the kalends of September, a great many bishops from the provinces of Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania, had met together at Carthage . . .” (*The Seventh Council of Carthage under Cyprian* as recorded in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 5:565). In the *Atlas of the Bible and Christian History* (ed. Tim Dowley [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997], 75), we see that Numidia and Mauretania are on the northern coast of Africa in the current countries of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. Alexandria Egypt, well over one thousand miles to the east, which could have been considered “Eastern”, had no representative listed, nor any others from Antioch, Jerusalem, or other Eastern sees. No European (“Western”) bishops were represented. This was strictly a local synod of African bishops. What is my point?

Wasn’t I just accused a few minutes ago of being “profoundly ignorant of church history”? Bill, there were no Eastern bishops at the Council of Carthage in 256! Was St. Cyprian and the council members “Eastern”? These were the first champions of Latin. “As paradoxical as it may seem, the first Christian documents in Latin come not from Rome but from Roman Africa” (*The Fathers of the Church*, [Vicenza: Instituto San Gaetano, 1987], pg. 137). It was an African Council, not an Eastern Greek council. Look at the list of names and cities within the document itself. One shouldn’t call another “profoundly ignorant of church history” and then a few paragraphs later say something as incorrect as this. We will see another such blunder when we are told that St. Cyprian was out of communion with the Pope.

To Bill’s credit, and I just read this comment in a subsequent response posted on his web site, he says, “Steve did point out an error in one of my statements in reference to the participants at the Council of Carthage. He says: ‘Jurgens says of this council ‘The Seventh Council of Carthage, of which Cyprian was president, met with eighty-seven bishops present (from the African church, and not from the East and West as stated by Bill), in the year 256 A.D.’ I erroneously assumed that due to the aggressive support Cyprian had received from the East that there were Eastern bishops present at the Council. I was mistaken. All 87 Bishops were western bishops from the region of North Africa. Thanks for pointing this out. It has been duly noted and corrected.”

I appreciate Bill’s professionalism and kind words in this matter. I think if Bill and I ever meet over lunch, I will be impressed with his genuine character and gentlemanliness.

All agreed with Cyprian in rejecting not only Stephen’s theology and practice on heretical baptism but also his claims to authority.

That they rejected Pope Stephen's *authority* is certainly a personal opinion. It is one thing to resist authority, it is quite another to deny that the authority exists. Did every bishop reject the authority of Rome, or did they only argue with his stance on baptism? The burden of proof is certainly on Bill to prove his claim. In addition, isn't it interesting that the African bishops eventually, and quietly acquiesced to Pope Stephen's dictates on baptism. Charles Poulet warns us, "It would be a mistake to conclude from this misunderstanding that St. Cyprian, the apostle of unity, was opposed to the primacy of the pope; he calls Rome the '*locus Petri*' (the see of Peter), and again '*ecclesia principalis, unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est*' (the principle Church, the birthplace of sacerdotal unity)" (*A History of the Catholic Church* [St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1941], 101.

Was St. Cyprian's objection an aggressive, all-out rejection of authority and the papal office? If so, why didn't Cyprian, especially in the midst of his Synod, if he believed all bishops equal, why didn't he excommunicate Pope Stephen if he thought he was such a heretic and wicked man? He had pleaded with the Pope to excommunicate others, so why, if all bishops were equal, did he and Firmilian not excommunicate Pope Stephen? F. P. Havey in his article "African Synods" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton, 1907) writes, "These records also show how the close relations between Africa and Rome were several times troubled during the course of five centuries. The baptismal controversy put the Church into a state in passive resistance to Rome. In the Synod of September, 256, St. Cyprian was placed in a painful dilemma. While maintaining the right of bishops to think for themselves, he still clung to the necessity of unity in the Church, and would not break the revered bond with Rome" (pg. 1:200). Ah, Rome, the seat of Peter!

In their opening remarks to the Council the bishops give the following remarks which clearly reflect their understanding of ecclesiology:

It remains that we severally declare our opinion on this same subject, judging no one, nor depriving any one of his right of communion, if he differ from us. For no one setteth himself up as a Bishop of Bishops, or by tyrannical terror forceth his Colleagues to a necessity of obeying; inasmuch as every Bishop, in the free use of his liberty and power, has the right of forming his own judgment, and can no more be judged by another than he can himself judge another. But we must all await the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who alone has the power of both setting us in the government of His Church, and of judging of our acts therein (*A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford: Parker, 1844), *The Epistles of St. Cyprian, The Judgments of Eighty-Seven Bishops in the Council of Carthage on the Question of Baptizing Heretics*, pp. 286-287).

Bill really jumped the gun on this matter. A little background. After reading Bill's "rebuttal", a friend on my Bulletin Board (at [www.catholic-convert.com/wwwboard](http://www.catholic-convert.com/wwwboard)) asked about Webster's citing of "bishop of bishops" in his "rebuttal". In a matter of minutes I quickly responded in a very impromptu and unofficial manner and even at the

end of the text on Bill's web site ([www.christiantruth.com](http://www.christiantruth.com)), is my concluding words "Just a start on one point in his rebuttal". All messages on my Board are routinely deleted after 15 days to make room for the new 100+ messages a day that are posted on my Board. If I consider something important, I permanently place in the "Studies & Writings" page. So, my quick comments were hardly an "official" statement. In fact, the message is already well over 15 days old and long ago deleted. However, Bill jumped right in and treated my posting as some kind of major pronouncement and wrote a twelve page "rebuttal" *and posted it on his web site*. Actually I'm honored that such a quick and spontaneous "e-mail" from little 'ol me merits a twelve page "rebuttal"! Actually, with the marvelous spate of new apologists rising up to defend the Catholic Church, I think a lot of Protestant apologists are quite nervous and a bit jumpy right now.

We are going to spend a good bit of time on the above quotation, so bear with me. Bill has made a big deal of this passage so we will look at it carefully. This is an interesting quotation Bill brings to bear but with it we have a few problems. *First*, is this the final, definitive, and only thing St. Cyprian had to say? Can one fluctuate and vacillate on matters of authority during a lifetime of trial and turbulence? Of course. It happens all the time and in every century. Did Cyprian fluctuate and vacillate? You bet. Just because he opposes a Pope's demands at one point in his career in the heat of controversy, doesn't necessarily mean that Cyprian rejected the Primacy of Peter's chair in Rome in general. Let's look at his uncertainty and inconsistency throughout his short ten years as a Christian, as the travails of persecution and conflict washed against him. First, we saw his strong statement as to Peter being different from the rest and the source of unity—his strong statements about Petrine Primacy as centered in Rome. But what other inconsistencies showed themselves?

"First of all when the African envoys arrived in Rome they found themselves treated as heretics. They were refused communion, refused even hospitality, and the pope refused them a hearing. Cyprian was regarded as the false prophet of a false Christ. The second fact is St. Cyprian's letter. For all his recognition of the *ecclesia principalis* he writes as though in this matter he considered all bishops were equals, as though the administration of baptism was a detail of the local church's domestic life and if the detail differed from church to church that was the business of the local church and of the local church alone. To God alone is the local bishop responsible. This is hardly in keeping with the theory of 254 that bishops are to be judged by the people who elected them and, if bad, deposed. *St. Cyprian is once again weaving a theory to justify his policy*, and weaving it from one day to the next. *Another contradiction of his own theory* is the declaration in the letter to Rome that this question of the validity of baptism is one on which Catholic bishops can differ. In 255 he had explained to Marcianus that it is an article of faith!" (Philip Hughes, *A History of the Church* [New York: Sheed & Ward, 1935], 1:144). As I stated earlier, St. Cyprian can be seen as a bundle of contradictions in his short ten years as a Christian.

Michael Winter, who Bill quotes frequently here (as I do in my book) again demonstrates the confusion of Cyprian's conclusions, a confusion that caused Cyprian to change like a chameleon when dealing with various issues and crises. Can Bill demonstrate that because St. Cyprian under pressure speaks of "bishop of bishops" as a "left-handed challenge" to Pope Stephen, that that was his final theology, set in cement? No, this man St. Cyprian was struggling with his theories and while admitting a special Petrine authority and leadership in Rome, he resisted or yielded depending upon the circumstances. Winter writes,

"How such unanimity was to be preserved he did not say, and as Chapman pointed out, this notion could only have occurred to him as a result of *his lack of experience of ecclesiastical affairs*. The principle of unanimity is closely linked with Cyprian's insistence on the role of councils in the government of the church. Although it does not seem to have occurred to Cyprian, at least at the beginning of his career, *the authority of a council is incompatible with the equality of bishops which he championed*, and which he expressed so clearly at the council of Carthage in 256. 'None of us poses as the bishop of bishops; none tyrannizes his colleagues to force their assent, since every bishop is free to exercise his power as he thinks best; he can neither judge, nor be judged by, another bishop. We must all wait upon the judgement of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom alone it belongs to rule over us in the government of the church and to judge our conduct.' In practice unanimity was ensured in the African councils by the force of Cyprian's own personality. *If this unity were not forthcoming, Cyprian's theory had no remedy*. Admittedly he approved of excommunication of bishops, as in the case of Marcian of Arles, but *this procedure was not consistent with his principles of the equality and autonomy of bishops*. Basically *he had no remedy for the disagreement of bishops*, and it was a rude shock to him to realize that such a thing could happen. *The dispute over the validity of heretical baptism exposed the inadequacy of Cyprian's theory; and in that time of crisis his ecclesiology broke down completely having no remedy to offer*.

"The gravity of the baptismal controversy has tended to focus undue attention on Cyprian's theory. In reality it was never widely held; Cyprian himself was the only early ecclesiastic who took it seriously. It finds no echo in the authentic tradition of the church, and Batiffol did not hesitate to describe the idea of the autonomous bishop as a complete chimera" (*St. Peter and the Popes*, 152, emphasis mine).

*Second*, there seems to be a problem with the translation used. Maybe he should have read it more carefully and checked the translation he used. First, this comment on 'the Bishop of Bishops' is not necessarily a decree of the council but a statement made by St. Cyprian within the council. Of course, this may be construed to be the official statement, though this is not stated. Actually, we do not have the decrees of this council and they are basically a collection of comments by various African bishop's who



attended the council, along with St. Cyprian's opening and closing comments. Denouncing Roman primacy is certainly not included as a promulgation of the council. Why not? If Pope Stephen was a heretic, why not condemn and excommunicate him as part of the council's deliberations and pronouncements? St. Cyprian provides a multitude of opinions expressed by bishops attending the council to show a consensus of opinion on the baptism of heretics (not on the primacy of Rome). Whereas Bill implies that the Council of Carthage made a solemn decree that no bishop could be a bishop of bishops, this is not the case.

Cyprian does not say, as the translation used by Bill implies that "no one setteth himself up as a Bishop of Bishops" as though this is a final decree of the Council – no one like the Bishop of Rome has the authority to set themselves up as a supreme bishop. However, the four alternate translations in my library quote the words of Cyprian a bit differently, which is why I question Bill's used the translation he did. I am not saying he had a deceitful intent, I am simply stating that the translation he used is certainly not in the majority of translations, in fact I haven't been able to find a translations that omits the word "us". Eerdman's edition of the Council of Carthage and St. Augustine's later quotation of the same passage (*On Baptism, Against the Donatists*) translated by the Rev. Robert Ernest Wallis, Ph.D., renders the passage "For no one of us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops" (ANF 5:565). Notice the little preposition "us". Who does the "us" refer to? The African bishops! Cyprian does not say "*no* one is Bishop of Bishops" but "*none of us* [African bishops] claim to be a bishop of bishops". This statement of Cyprian *does* imply a rebuke indirectly directed at Pope Stephen, but it is does not force a reading of an outright denial of special prerogatives of the Petrine office that Bill implies, and it certainly doesn't meet the criterion I set in my book.

Bill subsequently critiques my comments but fails to tell his readers that I agreed with him that Stephen was the intended target of the barb. Even Jurgens comments in *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, "In the context of the present question of opposition between Rome and Carthage, it is impossible to believe that in committing himself to the words of the present address, Cyprian did not have Stephen in mind" (1:241). I stated, in agreement with Bill that "This statement of Cyprian *does* imply a rebuke indirectly implicating Pope Stephen", but it is certainly not the outright denial of the special Petrine see that Bill implies. It certainly does not meet the negative criterion of the "challenge" in my book. There is a big difference between an outright denial—looking the opponent in the eye and saying, "You are not in an authoritative office", and saying out of the side of one's mouth, "None of *us* claim to be the chief!" I hope the reader can see the difference. This is *all* I was saying in my book, and all I was saying in my comment on the "bishop of bishops." Bill ought to acknowledge there is a difference and we can agree that St. Cyprian was challenging Pope Stephen's decision and authority at this moment in his career, under the extreme political and doctrinal pressure challenging Stephen's correctness. Cyprian wanted to know "how could a heretic be in the seat of Peter?"



The second and alternative translation of this passage from Cyprian and the *Seventh Ecumenical Council of Carthage* is in William Jurgens' *Faith of the Early Fathers*. We find the same distinction here. Jurgens says this of the council "*The Seventh Council of Carthage*, of which Cyprian was president, met with eighty-seven bishops present (from the African church, and not from the East and West as stated by Bill), in the year 256 A.D. The subject of their meeting was now the hotly controverted question of the baptism of heretics. They refused to acquiesce to the demands of Pope St. Stephen, even in the face of his threats of excommunication. Emissaries were sent to Rome from the council, but Stephen refused to give the audience" (Jurgens, 1:240). Interestingly enough, Cyprian and the African bishops sent emissaries to Rome and they were rebuffed for they represented a renegade council and the African church was threatened by Pope St. Stephen with excommunication. Do we find any dogmatic statement by the Africans that St. Stephen had not authority to excommunicate them any more than Irenaeus never denied the authority of Pope Victor had authority to excommunicate the Asian churches in the second century?

A third translation contained in E. Giles' *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority: AD 96–454* again renders it against Webster's wishes as "For no one of us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops." Giles adds the comment: "Both Puller and Batiffol have read into these remarks of Cyprian the idea that the bishop of Rome had claimed to be 'bishop of bishops'. But all that Cyprian actually says is that no African bishop claims such a position. If this is all he means, he seems to be underlining what he had previously written to Stephen and to Jubian, to the effect that he did not wish to impose his convictions on his colleagues" (pg. 72).

St. Augustine quotes Cyprian and the Council word for word it is cited the same way as translated earlier by Wallis though this is translated by J. R. King. He translates it "For no one of us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops" (*On Baptism, Against the Donatists* in NPNF first series, 4:426). Interesting enough, earlier in the same book, St. Augustine sets the stage to show how Peter and Cyprian both worked to preserve the unity, while the Donatists brought about schism. St. Augustine writes of Peter and Cyprian, "The authority of Cyprian does not alarm me, because I am reassured by his humility. We know, indeed, the great merit of the bishop and martyr Cyprian; but is it in any way greater than that of the apostle and martyr Peter, of whom the said Cyprian speaks as follows in his epistle to Quintus? 'For neither did Peter, whom the Lord chose first, and on whom He built His Church, when Paul afterwards disputed with him about circumcision, claim or assume anything insolently and arrogantly to himself, so as to say that he held the primacy, and should rather be obeyed of those who were late and newly come'. [The statement of Cyprian does not deny a primacy; rather, it *affirms* the primacy. It shows the great humility of Peter in that even though he had the great primacy, he was still humble when shown when and how he was wrong in his practice. Cyprian's

challenge was for Pope Stephen to have the same humility in his primacy that Peter had shown in his primacy.] I suppose that there is no slight to Cyprian in comparing him with Peter in respect to his crown of martyrdom; rather I ought to be afraid lest I am showing disrespect towards Peter. For who can be ignorant that the primacy of his apostleship [in his see, as stated in the next sentence] is to be preferred to any episcopate whatever? But, granting the difference in the dignity of their sees, yet they have the same glory in their martyrdom” (NPNF first series, 4:425, 426).

Bill has certainly done no damage to my claim in *Upon this Rock*. It should also be noted that even with all the bluster and resistance of the Cyprian and the African bishops, the position of Pope Stephen is very soon vindicated in Africa as the teaching of the Apostles and the whole Church and within a short time the African church dropped its insistence on re-baptizing heretics and quietly acquiesced and followed Rome and the whole Church. As the *Catholic Encyclopedia* comments on the situation, “St. Cyprian strove to press the African views on Rome, but Pope Stephen menaced excommunication. At the celebrated September Synod of 256 the eighty-seven bishops assembled from the three provinces still maintained their attitude against Baptism by heretics.... These records also show how the close relations between Africa and Rome were several times troubled during the course of five centuries. The baptismal controversy put the Church into a state of passive resistance to Rome. In the Synod of September, 256, St. Cyprian was placed in a painful dilemma. While maintaining the right of bishops to think for themselves, he still clung to the necessity of unity in the Church, and would not break the revered bond with Rome” (“African Synods” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* ed. Charles G. Herbermann [New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907], 1:200).

Did the whole Church eventually teach the Roman position on baptism? There seems to be some discussion as to the details and various aberrations in some areas. Bill provides a quote and comment which I reproduce here: “There were three views in the ancient Church: first, that of the early African Church and of Asia Minor, in the time of Firmilian, which rejected all baptism out of the Church, schismatical as well as heretical; second, that of the Greek Church generally, stated fully by S. Basil, which accepted schismatical, but rejected heretical baptism; third, that first mentioned by Stephen, Bishop of Rome, who accepted all baptism, even of heretics, which had been given in the name of the Trinity. The second continues to be the rule of the Greek, the third (with some modifications) of the Latin, Church (*A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford: Parker, 1844), Volume 30, p. 281). Eastern fathers who reject heretical baptism include: Basil the Great, Athanasius, Epiphanius, and Cyril of Jerusalem. One can find an expression of Basil’s view in Canons 1 and 47 of the Canons of Basil.”

Since the eventual teaching regarding baptism is not the thrust of this whole discussion, but since it is brought up, I will provide a few more quotes without getting into depth with the primary documents. Athanasius by the way, rejected Arian baptism

because he knew that they meant something completely different than an Orthodox Christian when he said the words, “In the Name of the Father, and the [created] Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Philip Schaff writes, “In the course of the fourth century, however, the Roman theory gradually gained on the other, received the sanction of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 [along with the defense of the deity of Christ], was adopted in North Africa during the Donatistic controversies, by a Synod of Carthage, 348, defended by the powerful dialectics of St. Augustin against the Donatists, and was afterwards confirmed by the Council of Trent with an anathema on the opposite view” (Schaff, Philip, *History of the Christian Church*, 2:264–265, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1997.

It is summed up nicely by Dom Chapman in *Studies in the Early Papacy*, “In the East there were others in the fourth century besides St. Basil who thought it might be well sometimes to rebaptize heretics; but such peculiarities were apparently only put in practice in rare cases. It was certainly not the custom anywhere to rebaptize Arians or Semi-Arians. From the fifth century onwards the East is absolutely in line with the West, and St. Basil’s theoretical opinion remains a dead letter. All St. Cyprian’s torrents of argument, eloquence, invective against the teaching of Rome were in vain” (pg. 50).

And finally, from Stanley Jaki, “No turning of Peter’s keys ever was so momentous in the history of the Church. *It made possible in the long run that ecumenical movement which today rightly recognizes the overriding importance of the validity of baptism in all Christian denominations.* The savior of the future Church was Stephen because already the whole past was with the see he held. In analyzing the situation of the Church as it existed two generations before Stephen, Harnack and other leading Protestant historians of Christian dogma and church constitution plainly acknowledged, as was already noted, the Catholic, or Roman, character of Christianity already in its early stage. *As to the present, or Stephen’s days, the most telling judgment on the overriding importance of his see was passed by none other than Emperor Decius. That most resolute enemy of Christians “would have preferred to hear that a rival claim to his empire had been elected in Rome than that a bishop had been elected there.” We owe this report on Decius to none other than Cyprian.* Clearly he had no excuse. Nor do those who ascribe the ascendancy of the bishop of Rome either to imperial favor, or to the power vacuum created by the fall of the empire. Constantine was half a century away, and the fall of imperial Rome one and a half centuries still in the future” (*The Keys of the Kingdom*, 72–73, emphasis mine).

For a very comprehensive summary of the re-baptism issue and its rejection in the whole Church, the short-term exceptions, and the final results, read *History of Dogmas* (M. Tixeront [St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1930], 1:366ff.).

It is obvious from these comments that these bishops reject the notion that one particular bishop holds a position of authority over other bishops as head of the Church universal. No single bishop can legitimately claim to be 'Bishop of Bishops' as they put it.

“These incidents throw light on the growing recognition, in the middle of the 3rd cent., of the pre-eminent position of Rome, as a court of appeal at any rate for Gaul and Spain, and as the see with which other sees deemed it appropriate to be in communion. Stephen emerges as an imperious and uncompromising prelate, fully aware of his special prerogative; his rival bishops did not hesitate to put the blame for splitting the church on him. It is interesting that he was accused of ‘glorying in his standing as bishop and of claiming to hold the succession from Peter, on whom the foundations of the church were laid’. He was in fact the first pope, so far as is known, to find a formal basis for the Roman primacy in the Lord’s charge to the Apostle Peter cited in Matt. 16:18” (J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Popes*, Oxford Paperbacks, 21).” *He is not the first to assume the authority, but the first recorded to utilize the Matthean text as a biblical basis. The authority had been exercised since the first century. This primacy of Rome based on Matthew 16 was still over a hundred years before the final collection of the New Testament canon!*

I cite below the excellent explanation of St. Cyprian’s view of the Church and her government provided by Mark Bonocore. I think it clear up a whole lot of confusion and makes sense of all St. Cyprian’s seeming “contradictions” about the chair and see of Peter.

“As I Catholic, I can clearly say that the Archbishop of my city holds the “Chair of Peter” in this city. Furthermore, the archbishop of another city holds the ‘Chair of Peter’” in *that* city. Yet, only Rome holds the Chair of Peter of the *principal church*: the Chair of *Sacerdotal Unity*. This is the ecclesiology of Cyprian.

“I do not see Cyprian calling all bishops the ‘successors of Peter’ anywhere. Rather, Cyprian refers to the principal of a monarchical bishop. Nowhere does Cyprian refer to the Petrine ministry of universal unity. He is clearly speaking in a regional sense. However, when he does speak of the Roman Bishop, it’s only then that he uses expressions like: “[Pope] Cornelius . . . when the place of [Pope] Fabian, which is the place of Peter, the dignity of the Sacerdotal Chair, was vacant, Since it has been occupied both at the will of God and with the ratified consent of all of us...” (Letters 48 [A.D. 253]).”

“In the same epistle, he also tells Pope Cornelius: “We decided to send and are sending a letter to you from all throughout the province [of Africa] so that all our colleagues might give their decided approval and support to you and to your communion, that is, to both the unity and the charity of the Catholic Church” (Letters 48:1, 3 [A.D. 253]).

“This is clearly a recognition of a universal ministry of unity. It was Cornelius who specifically held “the place of Peter” – not for the local or regional Church (where Cyprian or another bishop held primacy), but for the entire (universal), Catholic Church. As Cyprian puts it: “Indeed, the others were what Peter also was; but a *primacy* is given to Peter, whereby it is made clear that there is but one Church and *one chair*.”

“By this “one Chair,” Cyprian is referring to the teaching authority of the Church. And, his ecclesiology works like this:

- a) On the **local** level, the “one Chair” is held by the local bishop.
- b) On the **regional** level, the “one Chair” is held by the regional bishop (or metropolitan ...which was Cyprian’s office as Bishop of Carthage: Metropolitan of all Africa and Numidia).
- c) On the **universal** level, the “one Chair” was held by Peter’s actual successor at Rome. This was the “*principal church*,” in which “*sacerdotal unity*” has its source. This was the “*womb and root of the catholic church*,” and the Bishop of Rome held the “*place of Peter*.” He held the “one Chair” in the universal sphere, for communion with him was “*communion with the catholic church*.”

“That’s what Cyprian is saying! So, I don’t know what could be more clear. And, indeed, Cyprian bases his ecclesiology on the Jewish Tradition of the “Chair of Moses” (Matt 23:1-3). In the Jewish understanding, the “Chair of Moses” was the teaching authority of the synagogue; and:

a) On the **local** level, the “Chair of Moses” was held by the principal rabbi of a particular city’s synagogue (e.g. Corinth or Rome).

b) On the **regional** level, the “Chair of Moses” was held by the principal rabbi of a particular region (e.g. Rabbi Akiba at Jamnia).

c) But, on the **universal** level, the “Chair of Moses” was *actually* held by the High Priest in Jerusalem. This is clear from John 11:49-52 and from Acts 23:2-5, where Paul backs down because the law defined the High Priest as “the ruler of thy people.” See also Acts 28:17-21, where those who held the “Chair of Moses” in Rome (i.e., the “leaders of the Jews”): speak about receiving authoritative instruction from Jerusalem (i.e., from the *actual* and *universal* “Chair of Moses,” the High Priest).

“For the Jews of the Diaspora, one could not be said to be part of Israel if he rejected the rightful authority of Jerusalem. Such a position would make oneself a Samaritan.

“Indeed, the Jewish historian Josephus says how the Hellenistic Jews before the fall of the theocracy in Palestine looked reverently toward Jerusalem and favored religious currents coming from it: “Doubts were referred there for solution”

(Josephus, *Contra Apion* 1.30-36). We also know that the Jews of the Dispersion turned to Jerusalem for their Scriptures (2 Mc 2.13-15) and for its translation [Est 11.1 (Vulg.); 10.31 (LXX)]. Such were appeals to the ultimate “chair of Moses” (Matt 23:1-3), the High Priest and the Sanhedrin itself.

“Cyprian is writing in a Catholic sense. For the Catholic Church, every bishop holds the “chair of Peter” – *in his own city*, that is. And that’s what Cyprian is saying. Yet, when universal matters are to be decided, it is the Bishop of Rome who holds the actual Chair: The Chair of “Sacerdotal Unity.” So, one cannot “pick and choose” when it comes to Cyprian.”

This is further illustrated by Firmilian, the leading bishop of Cappadocia, who completely supported Cyprian in his opposition to Stephen.

Remember, opposition is not equal to denial of authority. My son may oppose me, but saying I am not his father and have no fatherly prerogatives is quite another thing. He may in a “heat of battle” say such a thing when blinded by rage, but to actually sit down and formulate it is another thing. That is what my point was in my book. I hope is becoming clear.

In a personal letter to Cyprian he expressed his own personal opposition to Stephen by stating that Stephen had fallen into error and adopted a false ecclesiology by misinterpreting Matthew 16. He gives his point of view in the following words:

But how great his error, how exceeding his blindness, who says, that remission of sins can be given in the synagogues of heretics, and abideth not on the foundation of the one Church which was once fixed by Christ on a rock, may be hence learnt, that Christ said to Peter alone, Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven: and again in the Gospel, when Christ breathed on the Apostles only, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. The power then of remitting sins was given to the Apostles, and the Churches which they, sent by Christ, established, and to the Bishops who succeeded them by vicarious ordination.

And herein I am justly indignant at such open and manifest folly in Stephen, that he who boasts of the seat of his episcopate, and contends that he holds the succession from Peter, on whom the foundations of the Church were laid, introduces many other rocks, and buildeth anew many Churches, in that by his authority he maintains baptism among them...Nor does he perceive that he who thus betrays and abandons unity, casts into the shade, and in a manner effaces, the truth of the Christian Rock...Stephen, who proclaims that he occupies by succession the chair of Peter, is roused by no zeal against heretics...He who concedes and assigns to heretics such great and heavenly privileges of the Church, what else does he than hold communion with them, for whom he maintains and claims so much grace?...But as to the refutation of the argument from custom, which they seem to oppose to the truth, who so foolish as to prefer custom to truth, or not to leave darkness, when he sees light?...And this you of Africa may say in answer to Stephen, that on discovering the truth you abandoned the error of custom. But we join custom to truth, and to the custom of the Romans we oppose custom, but that of

truth; from the beginning holding that which was delivered by Christ and by His Apostles (A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church (Oxford: Parker, 1844), *The Epistles of St. Cyprian*, Epistle LXXV. 17, 18, 20, pp. 279-281).

I have dealt with Firmilian at some length in my book and don't want to spend a lot of time on it here. His exclamations have very little to do with a challenge to my book and the rhetorical statement I made. Let's finish Bill's comments and then make a few of our own.

Firmilian expresses a view of the overall government of the Church which is directly opposed to that of Vatican I. He states that the keys were given to Peter alone as a representative of the Church universal, but were subsequently given to all the Apostles who then passed them on to every legitimate succeeding bishop. In the mind of Firmilian, all bishops are on an equal footing. He mocks Stephen's claim of superiority to other bishops based on his possessing a unique Petrine succession. According to Firmilian all bishops possess the chair of Peter and are built upon the rock. This is not the exclusive and unique possession of the bishops of Rome. And if, as Firmilian claims Stephen did, they depart from the unity of the Church which is expressed in the collegiality of its bishops, they separate themselves from the rock and foundation of the Church. Because Stephen, in Firmilian's view, had departed from Apostolic truth, he was no longer in unity with Apostolic succession and the rock foundation of the Church. The Roman see itself was not inherently authoritative simply because it could claim a Petrine foundation and succession. This did not impress the Eastern bishops. The important thing to them, and to Cyprian as well, was conformity to Apostolic truth. Where Roman custom opposed what they considered to be truth, they felt obliged to oppose the bishop of Rome. These bishops did not submit to the bishop of Rome and Cyprian died out of communion with him.

We will look closely at the above paragraph in sections. First, let's discuss Firmilian and his opposition to the Pope. Schaff explains the motives and reasons behind Firmilian's harsh invectives.

Philip Schaff writes, "Still more sharp and unsparing was the Cappadocian bishop, Firmilian, a disciple of Origen, on the bishop of Rome, *while likewise implying a certain acknowledgment of his primacy*. Firmilian charges him with folly, and with acting unworthily of his position; because, as the successor of Peter, he ought rather to further the unity of the church than to destroy it, and ought to abide on the rock foundation instead of laying a new one by recognizing heretical baptism. *Perhaps the bitterness of Firmilian was due partly to his friendship and veneration for Origen, who had been condemned by a council at Rome*" (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 2:162, emphasis is mine). We discussed this excommunication of Origen and its possible effect on his interpretation of the Matthew 16 passage.

Firmilian does nothing to discredit the primacy of the seat of Peter in Rome; in fact, he only confirms the authority of the Pope. This was my point exactly in my book and Michael Winter makes my point quite ably. Bill would like to turn the invectives of



Firmilian into proof that the Fathers rejected the authority of Rome to excommunicate, lead, and hold the primacy. Since Bill has earlier stated that Winter is an “*honest historian*” (with which I agree), let’s hear what Winter has to say:

“Firmilian’s protest amounts almost to the classical conditions for the argument from silence. *Despite his anger there is no formal denial of Stephen’s competence to excommunicate other bishops.* Everything would seem to provoke such a denial if it had been possible. Instead he can say no more than that when Stephen has excommunicated everyone he will have severed himself from the whole of the church. By contrast there is no suggestion that Cyprian or Firmilian attempted to excommunicate Stephen. The persecution of Valerian put an end to this stage of the dispute, since both Stephen and Cyprian were martyred. At a later date the whole church, characteristically, followed the Roman tradition (*St. Peter and the Popes*, 151). (Geez, I wish I had added this quote to my book, eh? Oh well, guess I couldn’t put everything in it!)

This is exactly what I said in the Introduction to my book which stirred up such a reaction from Bill, but here was have it, in Bill’s words, from an *honest Roman Catholic historian* –. “No one denied that the Pope had the authority!”

Webster also says St. Cyprian died out of communion with Pope Stephen. If he were out of communion it would mean he had been excommunicated or had left the Church. Neither are the case. St. Augustine uses the fact that St. Cyprian maintained communion with the whole Church including Rome as his main argument against the Donatists (*On Baptism, Against the Donatists*) who actually *did* break communion. What Bill may fail to realize is that St. Stephen died a year “before” St. Cyprian, and St. Cyprian died in good relations with Pope Stephen’s successor St. Sixtus II (See Hamell, Patrick. J., *Handbook of Patrology* [New York: Alba House, 1968], 74). Warren Carroll writes, “Despite this important disagreement and Cyprian’s actual disobedience, he was never excommunicated, and remained in close contact with Rome” (*The Founding of Christendom* [Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1985], pg. 495. Was St. Cyprian canonized a saint because he was out of communion with Rome? Come on Bill, you know better than that.

(Note: In a subsequent correspondence Bill stated “Sorry Steve, I did not state this correctly. What I meant to say is the Cyprian was never reconciled to Stephen and he continued his opposition to the Roman practice even after Stephen died.” Bill then provided supporting evidence to prove that Cyprian was never in agreement, to the best of our knowledge, with the practice of Rome regarding re-baptism. I agree with Bill about the failure to reconcile differences between Cyprian and Rome. Bill then went on to say, “When I refer to Cyprian being out of communion with Rome I do not mean that he became a schismatic but that the issue was never resolved and he remained steadfast in his opposition to Rome on that point.”) I understand now what Bill tried to say and

appreciate the clarification; but on the other hand, the word *communion* is a very specific term and not appropriate in this context.

The word “communion” cannot be used loosely in theological or historical matters involving the Church. Maybe it’s my “profound ignorance of church history”, but I understand communion to be much more specific. In theology and ecclesiology, *communion* means common life together. The word “excommunication” is the opposite, *removal* from the common life of the Church. One can be in communion yet in stark disagreement or even disobedience. To be “out of communion” is to have been excommunicated, which Cyprian was not, or to leave the bounds of communion in the Church, as a schismatic, which Cyprian never did. Therefore to use the phrase “out of communion” is imprecise language and should be avoided.

What does St. Augustine say about Cyprian regarding his error? “The statement that Cyprian entertained opinions at variance with those approved by the constitution and practice of the Church is found, not in canonical Scripture, but in his own writings, and in those of a Council; and although it is not found in the same records that he corrected that opinion, it is nevertheless by no means an unreasonable supposition that he did correct it, and that this fact may perhaps have been suppressed by those who were too much pleased with the error into which he fell, and were unwilling to lose the patronage of so great a name” (Epistle XCIII in Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series: Volume I*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1997.

They clearly did not view the Roman bishop as the universal ruler of the Church, nor communion with him a necessary condition for membership in the Church universal.

Cyprian could say, ‘He who does not have the Church for his mother does not have God for his father,’ but in so stating he did not mean submission to and communion with the bishop of Rome. Karl Morrison sums up the controversy between Stephen and Cyprian and the Eastern bishops [Editor’s note: *Again, we are not dealing with Eastern bishops here and Bill may want to correct this on page 206 of his book The Matthew 16 Controversy*] in these words:

Stephen had condemned Cyprian as ‘false Christ, false apostle, and practicer of deceit,’ because he advocated re-baptism; and the Bishop of Carthage reciprocated in kind. Since the headship which Stephen claimed was unwarranted, by the example of St. Peter, he could not force his brethren to accept his views. Even worse, his judgment opposed the authentic tradition of the Church. The bishop of Rome, wrote Cyprian, had confounded human tradition and divine precepts; he insisted on a practice which was mere custom, and ‘custom without truth is the antiquity of error.’ Whence came the ‘tradition’ on which Stephen insisted? Cyprian answered that it came from human presumption. Subverting the Church from within, Stephen wished the Church to follow the practices of heretics by accepting their baptisms, and to hold that those who were not born in the Church could be sons of God. And finally, Cyprian urged that bishops (Stephen was meant) lay aside the love of presumption and obstinacy which had led them to prefer custom to tradition and, abandoning their evil and false arguments, return

to the divine precepts, to evangelical and apostolic tradition, whence arose their order and their very origin.

In a letter to Cyprian, Firmilian endorsed everything the bishop of Carthage had said and added a few strokes of his own...Recalling the earlier dispute about the date of Easter, he upheld the practice of Asia Minor by commenting that, in the celebration of Easter and in many other matters, the Romans did not observe the practices established in the age of the Apostles, though they vainly claimed apostolic authority for their aberrant forms. The decree of Stephen was the most recent instance of such audacity, an instance so grave that Firmilian ranked Stephen among heretics and blasphemers and compared his doctrines and discipline with the perfidy of Judas. The Apostles did not command as Stephen commanded, Firmilian wrote, nor did Christ establish the primacy which he claimed...To the Roman custom, Firmilian, like Cyprian, opposed the custom of truth, 'holding from the beginning that which was delivered by Christ and the Apostles.' And, Firmilian argued, by his violence and obstinacy, Stephen had apostacized from the communion of ecclesiastical unity; far from cutting heretics off from his communion, he had cut himself off from the orthodox and made himself 'a stranger in all respects from his brethren, rebelling against the sacrament and the faith with the madness of contumacious discord. With such a man can there be one Spirit and one Body, in whom perhaps there is not even one mind, slippery, shifting, and uncertain as it is?' (Karl Morrison, *Tradition and Authority in the Western Church* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1969), pp. 31-32).

These facts are certainly no endorsement of the views promulgated by the First Vatican Council. The writings and practice of Cyprian reveal that he held an opinion directly opposing that of Vatican One on papal supremacy.

We have answered this charge repeatedly and I have no intention of repeating it again here. Bill's "rebuttal" is seriously running out of gas as we come down to the final paragraphs. I have to say that if this is the worst that can be thrown at my book *Upon this Rock* and the Catholic Church's teaching on the Papal Primacy, Catholics can certainly live proud and sleep easy.

William Jurgens affirms this in the following summation of Cyprian's practice which reflected his theory of ecclesiology:

Although Cyprian was on excellent terms with Pope St. Cornelius...he fell out sharply with Cornelius' successor, Pope St. Stephen...on the question of the rebaptizing of converted heretics. It was the immemorial custom of the African Church to regard Baptism conferred by heretics as invalid, and in spite of Stephen's severe warnings, Cyprian never yielded. His attitude was simply that every bishop is responsible for his own actions, answerable to God alone (William Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1970), Volume I, p. 216-217) (*The Matthew 16 Controversy: Peter and the Rock* (Battle Ground: Christian Resources, 1966), pp. 196-199).

Stephen Ray says, 'If the authority exercised had been illegitimate, or wrongly arrogated, it would have been an act of overzealousness at one end of the spectrum, of tyranny at the other. Yet no one ever stood up and said, "No, you have no authority. Who are you to order us, to teach us, to require obedience from us, to excommunicate us?" If the jurisdictional primacy of Rome had been a matter of self-aggrandizement, someone would have opposed

it as they opposed other innovations and heresies in the Church. The silence is profound' (*Upon This Rock* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), p. 13).

Again, since Firmilian was the most vocal and acerbic witness against Pope Stephen, let's read again the words of our "honest" church historian. "Firmilian's protest amounts almost to the classical conditions for the argument from silence. *Despite his anger there is no formal denial of Stephen's competence to excommunicate other bishops*. Everything would seem to provoke such a denial if it had been possible. Instead he can say no more than that when Stephen has excommunicated everyone he will have severed himself from the whole of the church. By contrast there is no suggestion that Cyprian or Firmilian attempted to excommunicate Stephen. The persecution of Valerian put an end to this stage of the dispute, since both Stephen and Cyprian were martyred. At a later date the whole church, characteristically, followed the Roman tradition (*St. Peter and the Popes*, 151).

Again, Cyprian, Firmilian, and all the others who opposed papal authority throughout the centuries still did not deny their special prerogatives. As we've said before (this gets old after 170 pages) my son can resist and even disobey me, but that is quite a different thing from saying I am not his father and have no fatherly prerogatives.

The foregoing facts give the lie to these assertions. It is not the silence but the clear expression of outrage and opposition that is profound. The Council of Carthage explicitly denies the right of any bishop to call himself the Bishop of Bishops and to demand obedience to his demands. William Jurgens is a Roman Catholic patristic scholar quoted over and over again by Stephen Ray. He repudiates the the above assertions of Mr. Ray when he says that 'in spite of Stephen's severe warnings, Cyprian never yielded. His attitude was simply that every bishop is responsible for his own actions, answerable to God alone' (William Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1970), Volume I, p. 217).

This is just one example of many that could be cited. Others would be the opposition of the Eastern Churches to Victor, the bishop of Rome, in the second century; the opposition of Augustine and the North Africans to Zosimus in the fifth century; the excommunication of Vigilius by the North African bishops in the sixth; the repudiation of the primacy claims of Rome by the Second (I Constantinople) and the Fourth (Chalcedon) ecumenical councils; the official condemnation of Honorius as a heretic by the Sixth (III Constantinople) ecumenical council. And all of these culminating of course in the final and continuing repudiation by the Eastern Churches of the primacy claims of Rome with the split between the East and West in the eleventh century. But since Mr. Ray states that there is not one single example in all the history of the early Church this one example will suffice.

We have already discussed this at great length Bill, and though we agree on the obstinacy of St. Cyprian, Firmilian, and many others throughout history. It does nothing to disprove my assertions or to invalidate Vatican I. It should be remembered that the men at Vatican I were no dummies. They understood history and the details of the Fathers. They were scholars who have spent their lives studying and living the teachings

of the Ancient Church and the Fathers. They knew what they were doing as the Church always does. I for one, cast my lots with them, not with the tens of thousands of vagabond sects circling out of unison, howling and taunting the historical Church, challenging her every word and defining themselves over and over again as Protest-ants, not only against the Catholic Church of St. Peter, St. Clement, St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome, but against each other as well. No source of unity, no unity! No leader, no cohesion! No infallible teaching, ten thousand contradictory teachers! I, blessed be the Name of the Lord, am a Catholic Christian!

*These are only a few of the many misrepresentations that are evident in Mr. Ray's book, *Upon This Rock*. He has consistently misrepresented my statements and those of the Church Fathers. If there is anyone guilty of proof-texting and of promoting an agenda it is Mr. Ray.*

I think my response demonstrates quite clearly who is really guilty of misrepresentation. I will leave the final evaluation up to the honest (and obviously tenacious reader). Having spent this amount of time answering the questions, clearing up the confusion, and defending my book, I have no hard feelings toward Bill. I have enjoyed this exercise immensely and intend to respond to any other critics depending on my available time. I find Bill to be a bright man, passionate in his belief, and an able debater. I also love him as a brother in our Lord Jesus and expect to spend eternity with him in the glory of the celestial city which has no light but the glory of our Lord. We will conclude our discussion and controversy there, in the light of the True Word, the Son of the Father.

I was asked, "After reading and responding to Bill's "rebuttal", what do you think about your book now?" I would have to say that I was proud of the book and its content when I finished writing it and seeing it published, but after "defending my dissertation", I am more pleased and proud of it than ever. I wouldn't change anything at this point and if I had the ability to revise it I would add a few more supporting documents but I would detract nothing. I hope Bill takes the time to read the whole book, if he hasn't so far, and consider the fuller arguments.

As I conclude my response, I find myself saying about Bill Webster what Dom Chapman said about Prof. Koch with whom he debated (specifically about St. Cyprian) Chapman said, "Professor Koch, is a very good-natured controversialist; he is accurate and never does willful violence to the texts he interprets, though I cannot always think he has got hold of the right interpretation. Still I often agree with him. His fault is his attempt to systematize what is unsystematic. He has studied the ultimate results of a few expressions, and uses them as a norm, explaining away whatever is out of harmony with them. In much the same way some Catholic controversialists have been so impressed by a few texts of Cyprian about Rome that they have understood other passages without sufficient warrant in a similar sense, and have glossed over some difficulties. This is

equally mistaken in method, but it is at least kinder to the Saint” (*Studies on the Early Papacy*, 47).

I have enjoyed this discussion with Bill and apologize for its length. I hope no ill-will is taken, as none is intended. I used some humor, satire, and respectful jousting all in the name of a good debate. As I said in the beginning, I hope to meet Bill in person someday and share a cup of coffee. He may call me Steve, and I plan to call him Bill. I somehow feel like I already know him a bit. May God bless us all and build the Kingdom in the visible unity of our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

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*The Wisdom of John Henry Cardinal Newman: On the Papacy*<sup>1</sup>

“I will take one instance more. Let us see how, on the principles which I have been laying down and defending, the evidence lies for the Pope’s supremacy.

“As to this doctrine the question is this, whether there was not from the first a certain element at work, or in existence, divinely sanctioned, which, for certain reasons, did not at once show itself upon the surface of ecclesiastical affairs, and of which events in the fourth century are the development; and whether the evidence of its existence and operation, which does occur in the earlier centuries, be it much or little, is not just such as ought to occur upon such an hypothesis.

2. “For instance, it is true St. Ignatius is silent in his Epistles on the subject of the Pope’s authority; but if in fact that authority could not be in active operation then, such silence is not so difficult to account for as the silence of Seneca or Plutarch about Christianity itself, or of Lucian about the Roman people. St. Ignatius directed his doctrine according to the need. While Apostles were on earth, there was the display neither of bishop nor Pope; their power had no prominence, as being exercised by Apostles. In course of time, first the power of the bishop displayed itself, and then the power of the Pope. When the Apostles were taken away, Christianity did not at once break into portions; yet separate localities might begin to be the scene of internal dissensions, and a local arbiter in consequence would be wanted. Christians at home did not yet quarrel with Christians abroad; they quarreled at home among themselves. St. Ignatius applied the fitting remedy. The *Sacramentum Unitatis* was acknowledged on all hands; the mode of fulfilling and the means of securing it would vary with the occasion; and the

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<sup>1</sup> “*An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*” in *Conscience, Consensus, and the Development of Doctrine* (New York: Image Books, Doubleday, 1992), 156–169.

determination of its essence, its seat, and its laws would be a gradual supply for a gradual necessity.

3. “This is but natural, and is parallel to instances which happen daily, and may be so considered without prejudice to the divine right whether of the Episcopate or of the Papacy. It is a common occurrence for a quarrel and a lawsuit to bring out the state of the law, and then the most unexpected results often follow. St. Peter’s prerogative would remain a mere letter till the complication of ecclesiastical matters became the cause of ascertaining it. While Christians were ‘of one heart and one soul,’ it would be suspended; love dispenses with laws. Christians knew that they must live in unity, and they were in unity; in what that unity consisted, how far they could proceed, as it were, in bending it, and what at length was the point at which it broke, was an irrelevant as well as unwelcome inquiry. Relatives often live together in happy ignorance of their respective rights and properties, till a father or a husband dies; and then they find themselves against their will in separate interests, and on divergent courses, and dare not move without legal advisers. Again, the case is conceivable of a corporation or an academical body going on for centuries in the performance of the routine business which came in its way, and preserving a good understanding between its members, with statutes almost a dead letter and no precedents to explain them, and the rights of its various classes and functions undefined—then of its being suddenly thrown back by the force of circumstances upon the question of its formal character as a body politic, and in consequence developing in the relation of governors and governed. The *regalia Petri* might sleep, as the power of a chancellor has slept; not as an obsolete, for they never had been carried into effect, but as a mysterious privilege which was not understood; as an unfulfilled prophecy. For St. Ignatius to speak of popes when it was a matter of bishops, would have been like sending an army to arrest a housebreaker. The bishop’s power indeed was from God, and the Pope’s could be no more; he, as well as the Pope, was our Lord’s representative, and had a sacramental office, but I am speaking, not of the intrinsic sanctity or divinity of such an office, but of its duties. He just posted a 40 page rebuttal to my book UPON THIS ROCK. I am finishing up a 100 page response. I am really doing it for myself since I like my research challenged so I can dig deeper and prove more.

From Mark Shea: Always a good thing [to rebutt and dig deeper]. However, don’t let these guys snooker you into always playing defense and wasting time chasing down their bad arguments. The reality is, the devil sends these guys into the world to distract you from speaking to the people who are listening. There really is a reason Jesus says to wipe the dust from your feet when it becomes clear they are not listening to reason. There are people out there who will listen and we must attend to them. (And believe me, I know the temptation to focus on the \*one\* guy out of a crowd of 200 who refuses to listen. :)) But it is a temptation. One I wish I had resisted. :(



4. “When the Church, then, was thrown upon her own resources, first local disturbances gave exercise to bishops, and next ecumenical disturbances gave exercise to Popes; and whether communion with the Pope was necessary for Catholicity would not and could not be debated, till a suspension of that communion had actually occurred. It is not a greater difficulty that St. Ignatius does not write to the Asian Greeks about Popes than that St. Paul does not write to the Corinthians about bishops. And it is a less difficulty that the Papal supremacy was not formally acknowledged in the second century than that there was no formal acknowledgment on the part of the Church of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity till the fourth. No doctrine is defined till it is violated. “And, in like manner, it was natural for Christians to direct their course in matters of doctrine by the guidance of mere floating, and, as it were, endemic tradition, while it was fresh and strong; but in proportion as it languished, or was broken in particular places, did it become necessary to fall back upon its special homes, first the Apostolic sees, and then the See of St. Peter.

5. “Moreover, an international bond and a common authority could not be consolidated, were it ever so certainly provided, while persecutions lasted. If the Imperial power checked the development of Councils, it availed also for keeping back the power of the Papacy. The Creed, the Canon, in like manner, both remained undefined. The Creed, the Canon, the Papacy, Ecumenical Councils, all began to form, as soon as the Empire relaxed its tyrannous oppression of the Church. And as it was natural that her monarchical power should display itself when the Empire became Christian, so was it natural also that further developments of that power should take place when that Empire fell. Moreover, when the power of the Holy See began to exert itself, disturbance and collision would be the necessary consequence. Of the Temple of Solomon it was said that ‘neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron was heard in the house, while it was in building.’ This is a type of the Church above; it was otherwise with the Church below, whether in the instance of Popes or Apostles. In either case, a new power had to be defined; as St. Paul had to plead, nay, to strive for his apostolic authority, and enjoined St. Timothy: ‘as Bishop of Ephesus, to let no man despise him: so Popes too have not therefore been ambitious because they did not establish their authority without a struggle. It was natural that Polycrates should oppose St. Victor; and natural too that St. Cyprian should both extol the See of St. Peter, yet resist it when he thought it went beyond its province. And at a later day it was natural that Emperors should rise in indignation against it; and natural, on the other hand, that it should take higher ground with a younger power than it had taken with an elder and time-honoured.

6. “We may follow Barrow here without reluctance, except in his imputation of motives.

“‘In the first times,’ he says, ‘while the Emperors were pagans, their [the Popes’] pretences were suited to their condition, and could not soar high; they were not then so mad as to pretend to any temporal power, and a pittance of spiritual eminency did

content them.’ “Again: ‘The state of the most primitive Church did not well admit such an universal sovereignty. For that did consist of small bodies incoherently situated, and scattered about in very distant places, and consequently unfit to be modeled into one political society, or to be governed by one head, especially considering their condition under persecution and poverty. What convenient resort for direction or justice could a few distressed Christians in Egypt, Ethiopia, Parthia, India, Mesopotamia, Syria, Armenia, Cappadocia, and other parts, have to Rome!’ “Again: ‘Whereas no point avowed by Christians could be so apt to raise offence and jealousy in pagans against our religion as this, which setteth up a power of so vast extent and huge influence; whereas no novelty could be more surprising or startling than the creation of an universal empire over the consciences and religious practices of men; whereas also this doctrine could not be but very conspicuous and glaring in ordinary practice, it is prodigious that all pagans should not loudly exclaim against it,’ that is, on the supposition that the Papal power really was then in actual exercise. “And again: ‘It is most prodigious that, in the disputes managed by the Fathers against heretics, the Gnostics, Valentinians, etc., they should not, even in the first place, allege and urge the sentence of the universal pastor and judge, as a most evidently conclusive argument, as the most efficacious and compendious method of convincing and silencing them.’ “Once more: ‘Even Popes themselves have shifted their pretences, and varied in style, according to the different circumstances of time, and their variety of humours, designs, interests. In time of prosperity, and upon advantage, when they might safely do it, any Pope almost would talk high and assume much to himself; but when they were low, or stood in fear of powerful contradiction, even the boldest Popes would speak submissively or moderately.’ “On the whole, supposing the power to be divinely bestowed, yet in the first instance more or less dormant, a history could not be traced out more probable, more suitable to that hypothesis, than the actual course of the controversy which took place age after age upon the Papal supremacy. 7. “It will be said that all this is a theory. Certainly it is: it is a theory to account for facts as they lie in the history, to account for so much being told us about the Papal authority in early times, and not more; a theory to reconcile what is and what is not recorded about it; and, which is the principle point, a theory to connect the words and acts of the Antenicene Church with that antecedent probability of a monarchical principle in the Divine Scheme, and that actual exemplification of it in the fourth century, which forms their presumptive interpretation. All depends on the strength of that presumption. Supposing there be otherwise good reason for saying that the Papal supremacy is part of Christianity, there is nothing in the early history of the Church to contradict it. 8. “It follows to inquire in what this presumption consists? It has, as I have said, two parts, the antecedent probability of a Popedom, and the actual state of the Postnicene Church. The former of these reasons has unavoidably been touched upon in what has preceded. It is the absolute need of a monarchical power in the Church which is our ground for anticipating it. A political body cannot exist without government, and the larger is the body the more concentrated must the government be. If the whole of Christendom is to form one Kingdom, one head is essential; at least this is the experience of eighteen

hundred years. As the Church grew into form, so did the power of the Pope develop; and wherever the Pope has been renounced, decay and division have been the consequence. We know of no other way of preserving the *Sacramentum Unitatis* but a centre of unity. The Nestorians have had their 'Catholicus'; the Lutherans of Prussia have their general superintendent; even the Independents, I believe, have had an overseer in their missions. The Anglican Church affords an observable illustration of this doctrine. As her prospects have opened and her communion extended, the See of Canterbury has become the natural centre of her operations. It has at the present time jurisdiction in the Mediterranean, at Jerusalem, in Hindustan, in North America, at the Antipodes. It has been the organ of communication, when a Prime Minister would force the Church to a redistribution of her property, or a Protestant sovereign abroad would bring her into friendly relations with his own communion. Eyes have been lifted up thither in times of perplexity; thither have addresses been directed and deputations sent. Thence issue the legal decisions, or the declarations in Parliament, or the letters, or the private interpositions, which shape the fortunes of the Church and are the moving influence within her separate dioceses. It must be so; no Church can do without its Pope. We see before our eyes the centralizing process by which the See of St. Peter became the sovereign head of Christendom. "If such be the nature of the case, it is impossible, if we may so speak reverently, that an Infinite Wisdom, which sees the end from the beginning, in decreeing the rise of an universal Empire, should not have decreed the development of a sovereign ruler. "Moreover, all this must be viewed in the light of the general probability, so much insisted on above, that doctrine cannot but develop as time proceeds and need arises, and that its developments are parts of the Divine system, and that therefore it is lawful, or rather necessary, to interpret the words and deeds of the earlier Church by the determinate teaching of the later.

9. "And, on the other hand, as the counterpart of these anticipations, we are met by certain announcements in Scripture, more or less obscure and needing a comment, and claimed by the Papal See as having their fulfillment in itself. Such are the words, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give unto Thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.' Again: 'Feed My lambs, feed My sheep.' And 'Satan hath desired to have you; I have prayed for thee, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' Such, too, are various other indications of the Divine purpose as regards St. Peter, too weak in themselves to be insisted on separately, but not without a confirmatory power; such as his new name, his walking on the sea, his miraculous draught of fishes on two occasions, our Lord's preaching out of his boat, and His appearing first to him after His resurrection. "It should be observed, moreover, that a similar promise was made by the patriarch Jacob to Judah: 'Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: the sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh come'; yet this promise was not fulfilled for perhaps eight hundred years, during which long period we hear little or nothing of the tribe descended from him. In like manner, 'On this rock I will build My Church,' 'I give unto thee the Keys,' 'Feed My sheep,' are not precepts merely, but prophecies and promises, promises to be accomplished by Him who made them, prophecies to be

fulfilled according to the need, and to be interpreted by the event—by the history, that is, of the fourth and fifth centuries, though they had a partial fulfillment even in the preceding period, and a still more noble development in the middle ages. 10. “A partial fulfillment, or at least indications of what was to be, there certainly were in the first age. Faint one by one, at least they are various, and are found in writers of many times and countries, and thereby illustrative of each other, and forming a body of proof. Thus St. Clement in the name of the Church of Rome, writes to the Corinthians when they were without a bishop; St. Ignatius of Antioch addresses the Roman Church, out of the Churches to which he writes, as ‘the Church, which has in dignity the first seat, of the city of the Romans,’ and implies that it was too high for his directing as being the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul. St. Polycarp of Smyrna has recourse to the Bishop of Rome on the question of Easter; the heretic Marcion excommunicated in Pontus, betakes himself to Rome; Soter, Bishop of Rome, sends alms, according to the custom of his Church, to the Churches throughout the empire, and, in the words of Eusebius, ‘affectionately exhorted those who came to Rome, as a father his children’; the Montanists from Phrygia come to Rome to gain the countenance of its bishop; Praxeas, from Asia, attempts the like, and for a while is successful; St. Victor, Bishop of Rome, threatens to excommunicate the Asian Churches; Irenaeus speaks of Rome as ‘the greatest Church, the most ancient, the most conspicuous, and founded and established by Peter and Paul,’ appeals to its tradition, not in contrast indeed, but in preference to that of other Churches, and declares that ‘to this Church, every Church, that is, the faithful from every side must resort’ or ‘must agree with it, *propter potiolem principalitatem* [superior authority].’ ‘O Church, happy in its position,’ says Tertullian, ‘into which the Apostles poured out, together with their blood, their whole doctrine’; and elsewhere, though in indignation and bitter mockery, he calls the Pope ‘the Pontifex Maximus, the Bishop of Bishops.’ The presbyters of St. Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, complain of his doctrine to St. Dionysius of Rome; the latter expostulates with him, and he explains. The Emperor Aurelian leaves ‘to the Bishops of Italy and of Rome’ the decision, whether or not Paul of Samosata shall be dispossessed of the see-house at Antioch; St. Cyprian speaks of Rome as ‘the See of Peter and the principal Church, whence the unity of the priesthood took its rise . . . whose faith has been commended by the Apostles, to whom faithlessness can have no access’; St. Stephen refuses to receive St. Cyprian’s deputation and separates himself from various Churches of the East; Fortunatus and Felix, deposed by St. Cyprian, have recourse to Rome; Basilides, deposed in Spain, betakes himself to Rome, and gains the ear of St. Stephen.

11. “St. Cyprian had his quarrel with the Roman See, but it appears he allows to it the title of the ‘Cathedra Petri [Chair of Peter],’ and even Firmilian is a witness that Rome claimed it. In the fourth and fifth centuries this title and its logical results became prominent. Thus St. Julius (A.D. 342) remonstrated by letter with the Eusebian party for ‘proceeding on their own authority as they pleased,’ and then, as he says, ‘desiring to obtain our concurrence in their decisions, though we never condemned

[Athanasius]. Not so have the constitutions of Paul, not so have the traditions of the Fathers directed; this is another form of procedure, a novel practice. . . . For what we have received from the blessed Apostle Peter, that I signify to you; and I should not have written this, as deeming that these things are manifest unto all men, had not these proceedings so disturbed us.' St. Athanasius, by preserving this protest, has given it his sanction. Moreover, it is referred to by Socrates, and his account of it has the more force, because he happens to be incorrect in the details, and therefore did not borrow it from St. Athanasius: 'Julius wrote back,' he says, 'that they acted against the Canons, because they had not called him to the Council, the Ecclesiastical Canon commanding that the Churches ought not to make Canons beside the will of the Bishop of Rome.' And Sozomen: 'It was a sacerdotal law, to declare invalid whatever was transacted beside the will of the Bishop of the Romans.' On the other hand, the heretics themselves, whom St. Julius withstands, are obliged to acknowledge that Rome was 'the School of the Apostles and the Metropolis of Orthodoxy from the beginning'; and two of their leaders (Western bishops indeed) some years afterwards recanted their heresy before the Pope in terms of humble confession. 12. Another Pope, St. Damasus, in his letter addressed to the Eastern bishops against Apollinaris (A.D. 382), calls those bishops his sons. 'In that your charity pays the due reverence to the Apostolical See, ye profit yourselves the most, most honoured sons. For if, placed as we are in that Holy Church, in which the Holy Apostle sat and taught, how it becometh us to direct the helm to which we have succeeded, we nevertheless confess ourselves unequal to that honour; yet do we therefore study as we may, if so be we may be able to attain to the glory of his blessedness.' 'I speak,' says St. Jerome to the same St. Damasus, 'with the successor of the fisherman and the disciple of the Cross. I, following no one as my chief but Christ, am associated in communion with thy blessedness, that is, with the See of Peter. I know that on that rock the Church is built. Whosoever shall eat the Lamb outside this House is profane; if a man be not in the Ark of Noe, he shall perish when the flood comes in its power.' St. Basil entreats St. Damasus to send persons to arbitrate between the Churches of Asia Minor, or at least to make a report on the authors of their troubles, and name the party with which the Pope should hold communion. 'We are in no wise asking anything new,' he proceeds, 'but what was customary with blessed and religious men of former times, and especially with yourself. For we know, by tradition of our fathers of whom we have inquired, and from the information of writings still preserved among us, that Dionysius, that most blessed Bishop, while he was eminent among you for orthodoxy and other virtues, sent letters of visitation to our Church at Cæsarea, and of consolation to our fathers, with ransomers of our brethren from captivity.' In like manner, Ambrosiaster, a Pelagian in his doctrine, which here is not to the purpose speaks of the 'Church being God's house, whose ruler at this time is Damasus.' 13. 'We bear,' says St. Siricius, another Pope (A.D. 385), 'the burden of all who are laden; yea, rather the blessed Apostle Peter beareth them in us, who, as we trust, in all things protects and defends us the heirs of his government.' And he in turn is confirmed by St. Optatus. 'You cannot deny your knowledge,' says the latter to Parmenian, the Donatist, 'that, in the city Rome, on Peter first hath an Episcopal See

been conferred, in which Peter sat, the head of all the Apostles, . . . in which one See unity might be preserved by all, lest the other Apostles should support their respective Sees; in order that he might be at once a schismatic and a sinner, who against that one See (*singularem*) placed a second. Therefore that one See (*unicam*), which is the first of the Church's prerogatives, Peter filled first; to whom succeeded Linus; to Linus, Clement; to Clement, etc., etc. . . . to Damasus, Siricius, who at this day is associated with us (*socius*), together with whom the whole world is in accordance with us, in the one bond of communion, by the intercourse of letters of peace.' Another Pope: 'Diligently and congruously do ye consult the *arcana* of the Apostolical dignity,' says St. Innocent to the Council of Milevis (A.D. 417), 'the dignity of him on whom, beside those things which are without, falls the care of all the Churches; following the form of the ancient rule, which you know, as well as I, has been preserved always by the whole world.' Here the Pope appeals, as it were, to the Rule of Vincentius; while St. Augustine bears witness that he did not outstep his prerogative, for, giving an account of this and another letter, he says, 'He [the Pope] answered us as to all these matters as it was religious and becoming in the Bishop of the Apostolic See.' Another Pope: 'We have especial anxiety about all persons,' says St. Celestine (A.D. 425), to the Illyrian bishops, 'on whom, in the holy Apostle Peter, Christ conferred the necessity of making all men our care, when He gave him the Keys of opening and shutting.' And St. Prosper, his contemporary, confirms him, when he calls Rome 'the seat of Peter, which, being made to the world the head of pastoral honour, possesses by religion what it does not possess by arms'; and Vincent of Lerins, when he calls the Pope 'the head of the world.' 14. "Another Pope: 'Blessed Peter,' says St. Leo (A.D. 440), 'hath not deserted the helm of the Church which he had assumed . . . His power lives and his authority is pre-eminent in his See.' 'That immoveableness, which, from the Rock Christ, he, when made a rock, received, has been communicated also to his heirs. And as St. Athanasius and the Eusebians, by their contemporary testimonies, confirm St. Julius; and St. Jerome, St. Basil; and Ambrosiaster, St. Damasus; and St. Optatus, St. Siricius; and St. Augustine, St. Innocent; and St. Prosper and St. Vincent, St. Celestine; so do St. Peter Chrysologus, and the Council of Chalcedon confirm St. Leo. "Blessed Peter," says Chrysologus, 'who lives and presides in his own See, supplies truth of faith to those who seek it.' And the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, addressing St. Leo respecting Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria: He extends his madness even against him to whom the custody of the vineyard has been committed by the Saviour, that is, against thy Apostolical holiness.' But the instance of St. Leo will occur again in a later chapter. 15. "The acts of the fourth century speak as strongly as its words. We may content ourselves here with Barrow's admissions:

" 'The Pope's power,' he says, 'was much amplified by the importunity of persons condemned or extruded from their places, whether upon just accounts, or wrongfully, and by faction; for they, finding no other more hopeful place of refuge and redress, did often apply to him: for what will not men do, whither will not they go in straits? Thus did Marcion go to Rome, and sue for admission to communion there. So



Fortunatus and Felicissimus in St. Cyprian, being condemned in Africa, did fly to Rome for shelter; of which absurdity St. Cyprian doth so complain. So likewise Martianus and Basilides in St. Cyprian, being outed of their Sees for having lapsed from the Christian profession, did fly to Stephen for succour, to be restored. So Maximus, the Cynic, went to Rome, to get a confirmation of his election at Constantinople. So Marcellus, being rejected for heterodoxy, went thither to get attestation to his orthodoxy, of which St. Basil complaineth. So Apiarus, being condemned in Africa for his crimes, did appeal to Rome. And, on the other side, Athanasius being with great partiality condemned by the Synod of Tyre; Paulus and other bishops being extruded from their sees for orthodoxy; St. Chrysostom being condemned and expelled by Theophilus and his complices; Flavianus being deposed by Dioscorus and the Ephesine synod; Theodoret being condemned by the same; did cry out for help to Rome. Chelidonius, Bishop of Besançon, being deposed by Hilarius of Aries for crime, did fly to Pope Leo.’ “Again: ‘Our adversaries do oppose some instances of popes meddling in the constitution of bishops; as, Pope Leo I. saith, that Anatolius did ‘by the favour of his assent obtain the bishopric of Constantinople.’ The same Pope is alleged as having confirmed Maximus of Antioch. The same doth write to the Bishop of Thessalonica, his vicar, that he should ‘confirm the elections of bishops by his authority.’ He also confirmed Donatus, an African bishop: ‘We will that Donatus preside over the Lord’s flock, upon condition that he remember to send us an account of his faith.’ . . . Pope Damasus did confirm the ordination of Peter Alexandrinus.’ 16. “And again: ‘The Popes indeed in the fourth century began to practise a fine trick, very serviceable to the enlargement of their power; which was to confer on certain bishops, as occasion served, or for continuance, the title of their vicar or lieutenant, thereby pretending to impart authority to them; whereby they were enabled for performance of divers things, which otherwise by their own episcopal or metropolitical power they could not perform. By which device they did engage such bishops to such a dependence on them, whereby they did promote the papal authority in provinces, to the oppression of the ancient rights and liberties of bishops and synods, doing what they pleased under presence of this vast power communicated to them; and for fear of being displaced, or out of affection to their favourer, doing what might serve to advance the papacy. Thus did Pope Celestine constitute Cyril in his room. Pope Leo appointed Anatolius of Constantinople; Pope Felix, Acacius of Constantinople. . . . Pope Simplicius to Zeno, Bishop of Seville: “We thought it convenient that you should be held up by the vicariat authority of our see.” So did Siricius and his successors constitute the bishops of Thessalonica to be their vicars in the diocese of Illyricum, wherein being then a member of the western empire they had caught a special jurisdiction; to which Pope Leo did refer in those words, which sometimes are impertinently alleged with reference to all bishops, but concern only Anastasius, Bishop of Thessalonica: “We have entrusted thy charity to be in our stead; so that thou art called into part of the solicitude, not into plenitude of the authority.” So did Pope Zosimus bestow a like presence of vicarious power upon the Bishop of Aries, which city was the seat of the temporal exarch in Gaul.’ “More ample testimony for the Papal supremacy, as now professed by Roman Catholics, is scarcely

**Comment:** In the original text the word is spelled “Afric”.

**Comment:** Correct spelling in the text.

**Comment:** Correct spelling in the text.



necessary than what is contained in these passages; the simple question is, whether the clear light of the fourth and fifth centuries may be fairly taken to interpret to us the dim, though definite, outlines traced in the preceding.”

## Opinions of the Eastern Patriarchs

There are many probably good-intentioned folks who try to convince us that the Eastern Patriarchs unanimously rejected the early Churches understanding of St. Peter as the Rock, the visible head of the Church, and that the Roman Bishops succeeded him in the Primacy of Rome. Here are a few examples of Eastern Fathers and Patriarchs who spoke quite openly to the contrary. This was taken from Antoine Valentim's webpage at <http://web.globalserve.net/~bumblebee/ecclesia/patriarchs.htm>

### ALEXANDRIA

#### **St. Peter, Bishop of Alexandria (306-311 A.D.):**

*Head of the catechetical school in Alexandria, he became bishop around A.D. 300, reigning for about eleven years, and dying a martyr's death.*

Peter, set above the Apostles. (Peter of Alexandria, Canon. ix, Galland, iv. p. 98)

#### **St. Anthony of Egypt (330 A.D.):**

Peter, the Prince of the Apostles (Anthony, Epist. xvii. Galland, iv p. 687).

#### **St. Athanasius (362 A.D.):**

Rome is called the Apostolic throne. (Athanasius, Hist. Arian, ad Monach. n. 35).

The Chief, Peter. (Athan, In Ps. xv. 8, tom. iii. p. 106, Migne)

#### **St. Macarius of Egypt (371 A.D.):**

The Chief, Peter. (Macarius, De Patientia, n. 3, p. 180)

Moses was succeeded by Peter, who had committed to his hands the new Church of Christ, and the true priesthood. (Macarius, Hom. xxvi. n. 23, p. 101)

#### **St. Cyril of Alexandria (c. 424):**

He suffers him no longer to be called Simon, exercising authority and rule over him already having become His own. By a title suitable to the thing, He changed his name into Peter, from the word 'petra' (rock); for on him He was afterwards to found His Church. (Cyril, T. iv. Comm. in Joan., p. 131)

He (Christ) promises to found the Church, assigning immoveableness to it, as He is the Lord of strength, and over this He sets Peter as shepherd. (Cyril, Comm. on Matt., ad loc.)

Therefore, when the Lord had hinted at the disciple's denial in the words that He used, 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith not fail,' He at once introduced a word of consolation, and said (to Peter): 'And do thou, when once thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' That is, 'Be thou a support and a teacher of those who through faith come to me.' Again, marvel also at the insight of that saying and at the completeness of the Divine gentleness of spirit. For so that He should not reduce the disciple to despair at the thought that after his denial he would have to be debarred from the glorious distinction of being an Apostle, He fills him with good hope, that he will attain the good things promised. ...O loving kindness! The sin was not yet committed, and He already extends

His pardon and sets him (Peter) again in his Apostolic office. (Cyril Comm. on Luke's Gospel)

For the wondrous Peter, overcome by uncontrollable fear, denied the Lord three times. Christ heals the error done, and demands in various ways the threefold confession ... For although all the holy disciples fled, ...still Peter's fault in the threefold denial was in addition, special and peculiar to himself. Therefore, by the threefold confession of blessed Peter, the fault of the triple denial was done away. Further, by the Lord's saying, Feed my lambs, we must understand a renewal as it were of the Apostleship already given to him, washing away the intervening disgrace of his fall, and the littleness of human infirmity. (Cyril, Comm. on John's Gospel).

They (the Apostles) strove to learn through one, that preeminent one, Peter. (Cyril, Ib. 1. ix. p. 736).

And even blessed Peter, though set over the holy disciples, says 'Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall be done to Thee. (Cyril, Ibid. 924).

If Peter himself, that prince of the holy disciples, was, upon an occasion, scandalized, so as suddenly to exclaim, 'Lord, be it far from Thee,' what wonder that the tender mind of woman should be carried away? (Cyril, Ibid, p. 1064)

That the Spirit is God we shall also learn hence. That the prince of the Apostles, to whom 'flesh and blood,' as the Savior says, 'did not reveal' the Divine mystery, says to Ananias, 'Why hath Satan tempted thy heart, &c.' (Cyril, T. v. Par. 1. Thesaur. p. 340)

Besides all these, let there come forward that leader of the holy disciples, Peter, who, when the Lord, on a certain occasion, asked him, 'Whom do men say that the Son of man is?' instantly cried out, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' (Cyril, T. v. P.2, Hom. viii. De Fest. Pasch. p. 105)

'If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me.' When the Coryphaeus (Peter) had heard these words, he began to change. (Cyril, Ib. Hom.)

This bold man (Julian), besides all this, cavils at Peter, the chosen one of the holy Apostles. (Cyril, T. vi.l. ix. Contr. Julian. p. 325).

#### **Eulogius of Alexandria (581 A.D.):**

*Born in Syria, he became the abbot of the Mother of God monastery at Antioch. In 579, he was made Patriarch of Alexandria; and became an associate of St. Gregory the Great while visiting Constantinople. Much of their subsequent correspondence is still extant.*

Neither to John, nor to any other of the disciples, did our Savior say, 'I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven,' but only to Peter. (Eulogius, Lib. ii. Cont. Novatian. ap. Photium, Biblioth, cod. 280)

## **ANTIOCH**

#### **Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus in Syria (450):**

*A native of Antioch, Theodoret ruled under the Antiochean Patriarch.*

The great foundation of the Church was shaken, and confirmed by the Divine grace. And the Lord commanded him to apply that same care to the brethren. 'And thou,' He says, 'converted, confirm thy brethren.' (Theodoret, Tom. iv. Haeret. Fab. lib. v.c. 28)

'For as I,' He says, 'did not despise thee when tossed, so be thou a support to thy brethren in trouble, and the help by which thou was saved do thou thyself impart to others, and exhort them not while they are tottering, but raise them up in their peril. For this reason I suffer thee also to slip, but do not permit thee to fall, thus through thee gaining steadfastness for those who are tossed.' So this great pillar supported the tossing and sinking world, and permitted it not to fall entirely and gave it back stability, having been ordered to feed God's sheep. (Theodoret, Oratio de Caritate in J. P. Minge, ed., Paratologiae Curses Completus: Series Graeca).

I therefore beseech your holiness to persuade the most holy and blessed bishop (Pope Leo) to use his Apostolic power, and to order me to hasten to your Council. For that most holy throne (Rome) has the sovereignty over the churches throughout the universe on many grounds. (Theodoret, Tom. iv. Epist. cxvi. Renato, p. 1197).

If Paul, the herald of the truth, the trumpet of the Holy Spirit, hastened to the great Peter, to convey from him the solution to those in Antioch, who were at issue about living under the law, how much more do we, poor and humble, run to the Apostolic Throne (Rome) to receive from you (Pope Leo) healing for wounds of the the Churches. For it pertains to you to have primacy in all things; for your throne is adorned with many prerogatives. (Theodoret Ibid, Epistle Leoni)

## **CONSTANTINOPLE**

### **St. John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople (c. 387):**

Peter himself the Head or Crown of the Apostles, the First in the Church, the Friend of Christ, who received a revelation, not from man, but from the Father, as the Lord bears witness to him, saying, 'Blessed art thou, &c.' This very Peter and when I name Peter I name that unbroken Rock, that firm Foundation, the Great Apostle, First of the disciples, the First called, and the First who obeyed he was guilty ...even denying the Lord." (Chrysostom, T. ii. Hom)

Peter, the Leader of the choir of Apostles, the Mouth of the disciples, the Pillar of the Church, the Buttress of the faith, the Foundation of the confession, the Fisherman of the universe. (Chrysostom, T. iii Hom).

Peter, that Leader of the choir, that Mouth of the rest of the Apostles, that Head of the brotherhood, that one set over the entire universe, that Foundation of the Church. (Chrys. In illud hoc Scitote)

(Peter), the foundation of the Church, the Coryphaeus of the choir of the Apostles, the vehement lover of Christ ...he who ran throughout the whole world, who fished the whole world; this holy Coryphaeus of the blessed choir; the ardent disciple, who was entrusted with the keys of heaven, who received the spiritual revelation. Peter, the mouth of all Apostles, the head of that company, the ruler of the whole world. (De Eleemos, iii. 4; Hom. de decem mille tal. 3)

In those days Peter rose up in the midst of the disciples (Acts 15), both as being ardent, and as entrusted by Christ with the flock ...he first acts with authority in the matter, as having all put into his hands ; for to him Christ said, ‘And thou, being converted, confirm thy brethren. (Chrysostom, Hom. iii Act Apost. tom. ix.)

He passed over his fall, and appointed him first of the Apostles; wherefore He said: ‘ ‘Simon, Simon,’ etc. (in Ps. cxxix. 2). God allowed him to fall, because He meant to make him ruler over the whole world, that, remembering his own fall, he might forgive those who should slip in the future. And that what I have said is no guess, listen to Christ Himself saying: ‘Simon, Simon, etc.’ (Chrys, Hom. quod frequenter conveniendum sit 5, cf. Hom 73 in Joan 5).

And why, then, passing by the others, does He converse with Peter on these things? (John 21:15). He was the chosen one of the Apostles, and the mouth of the disciples, and the leader of the choir. On this account, Paul also went up on a time to see him rather than the others (Galatians 1:18). And withal, to show him that he must thenceforward have confidence, as the denial was done away with, He puts into his hands the presidency over the brethren. And He brings not forward the denial, nor reproaches him with what had past, but says, ‘If you love me, preside over the brethren, ...and the third time He gives him the same injunction, showing what a price He sets the presidency over His own sheep. And if one should say, ‘How then did James receive the throne of Jerusalem?,’ this I would answer that He appointed this man (Peter) teacher, not of that throne, but of the whole world. (Chrysostom, In Joan. Hom. lxxxviii. n. 1, tom. viii)

**St. Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople (434):**

*A disciple of St. John Chrysostom,...*

Peter, the coryphaeus of the disciples, and the one set over (or chief of) the Apostles. Art not thou he that didst say, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God’? Thou Bar-Jonas (son of the dove) hast thou seen so many miracles, and art thou still but Simon (a hearer)? He appointed thee the key-bearer of Heaven, and has though not yet layed aside thy fisherman’s clothing? (Proclus, Or. viii In Dom. Transfig. t. ix. Galland)

**John Cassian, Monk (c. 430):**

That great man, the disciple of disciples, that master among masters, who wielding the government of the Roman Church possessed the principle authority in faith and in priesthood. Tell us, therefore, we beg of you, Peter, prince of Apostles, tell us how the Churches must believe in God (Cassian, Contra Nestorium, III, 12, CSEL, vol. 17, p. 276).

**St. Nilus of Constantinople (448):**

*A disciple of St. John Chrysostom, ....*

Peter, Head of the choir of Apostles. (Nilus, Lib. ii Epistle.)

Peter, who was foremost in the choir of Apostles and always ruled amongst them. (Nilus, Tract. ad. Magnam.)

**Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople (466-516)**

Macedonius declared, when desired by the Emperor Anastasius to condemn the Council of Chalcedon, that ‘such a step without an Ecumenical Synod presided over by

the Pope of Rome is impossible.’ (Macedonius, Patr. Graec. 108: 360a (Theophan. Chronogr. pp. 234-346 seq.)

**Emperor Justinian (520-533)**

*Writing to the Pope, ...*

Yielding honor to the Apostolic See and to Your Holiness, and honoring your Holiness, as one ought to honor a father, we have hastened to subject all the priests of the whole Eastern district, and to unite them to the See of your Holiness, for we do not allow of any point, however manifest and indisputable it be, which relates to the state of the Churches, not being brought to the cognizance of your Holiness, since you are the Head of all the holy Churches. (Justinian Epist. ad. Pap. Joan. ii. Cod. Justin. lib. I. tit. 1).

Let your Apostleship show that you have worthily succeeded to the Apostle Peter, since the Lord will work through you, as Supreme Pastor, the salvation of all. (Coll. Avell. Ep. 196, July 9th, 520, Justinian to Pope Hormisdas).

**St. Maximus the Confessor (c. 650)**

*A celebrated theologian and a native of Constantinople, ...*

The extremities of the earth, and everyone in every part of it who purely and rightly confess the Lord, look directly towards the Most Holy Roman Church and her confession and faith, as to a sun of unfailing light awaiting from her the brilliant radiance of the sacred dogmas of our Fathers, according to that which the inspired and holy Councils have stainlessly and piously decreed. For, from the descent of the Incarnate Word amongst us, all the churches in every part of the world have held the greatest Church alone to be their base and foundation, seeing that, according to the promise of Christ Our Savior, the gates of hell will never prevail against her, that she has the keys of the orthodox confession and right faith in Him, that she opens the true and exclusive religion to such men as approach with piety, and she shuts up and locks every heretical mouth which speaks against the Most High. (Maximus, Opuscula theologica et polemica, Migne, Patr. Graec. vol. 90)

How much more in the case of the clergy and Church of the Romans, which from old until now presides over all the churches which are under the sun? Having surely received this canonically, as well as from councils and the apostles, as from the princes of the latter (Peter & Paul), and being numbered in their company, she is subject to no writings or issues in synodical documents, on account of the eminence of her pontificate .....even as in all these things all are equally subject to her (the Church of Rome) according to sacerdotal law. And so when, without fear, but with all holy and becoming confidence, those ministers (the popes) are of the truly firm and immovable rock, that is of the most great and Apostolic Church of Rome. (Maximus, in J.B. Mansi, ed. Amplissima Collectio Conciliorum, vol. 10)

If the Roman See recognizes Pyrrhus to be not only a reprobate but a heretic, it is certainly plain that everyone who anathematizes those who have rejected Pyrrhus also anathematizes the See of Rome, that is, he anathematizes the Catholic Church. I need hardly add that he excommunicates himself also, if indeed he is in communion with the Roman See and the Catholic Church of God ...Let him hasten before all things to satisfy

the Roman See, for if it is satisfied, all will agree in calling him pious and orthodox. For he only speaks in vain who thinks he ought to persuade or entrap persons like myself, and does not satisfy and implore the blessed Pope of the most holy Catholic Church of the Romans, that is, the Apostolic See, which is from the incarnate of the Son of God Himself, and also all the holy synods, according to the holy canons and definitions has received universal and supreme dominion, authority, and power of binding and loosing over all the holy churches of God throughout the whole world. (Maximus, Letter to Peter, in Mansi x, 692).

**John VI, Patriarch of Constantinople (715):**

The Pope of Rome, the head of the Christian priesthood, whom in Peter, the Lord commanded to confirm his brethren. (John VI, Epist. ad Constantine. Pap. ad. Combefis, Auctuar. Bibl. P.P. Graec.tom. ii. p. 211, seq.)

**St. Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople (758-828):**

Without whom (the Romans presiding in the seventh Council) a doctrine brought forward in the Church could not, even though confirmed by canonical decrees and by ecclesiastical usage, ever obtain full approval or currency. For it is they (the Popes of Rome) who have had assigned to them the rule in sacred things, and who have received into their hands the dignity of headship among the Apostles. (Nicephorus, Niceph. Cpl. pro. s. imag. c 25 [Mai N. Bibl. pp. ii. 30]).

**St. Theodore the Studite of Constantinople (759-826):**

*Writing to Pope Leo III ....*

Since to great Peter Christ our Lord gave the office of Chief Shepherd after entrusting him with the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, to Peter or his successor must of necessity every novelty in the Catholic Church be referred. [Therefore], save us, oh most divine Head of Heads, Chief Shepherd of the Church of Heaven. (Theodore, Bk. I. Ep. 23)

*Writing to Pope Paschal, ...*

Hear, O Apostolic Head, divinely-appointed Shepherd of Christ's sheep, keybearer of the Kingdom of Heaven, Rock of the Faith upon whom the Catholic Church is built. For Peter art thou, who adornest and governest the Chair of Peter. Hither, then, from the West, imitator of Christ, arise and repel not for ever (Ps. xliii. 23). To thee spake Christ our Lord: 'And thou being one day converted, shalt strengthen thy brethren.' Behold the hour and the place. Help us, thou that art set by God for this. Stretch forth thy hand so far as thou canst. Thou hast strength with God, through being the first of all. (Letter of St. Theodore and four other Abbots to Pope Paschal, Bk. ii Ep. 12, Patr. Graec. 99, 1152-3)

*Writing to Emperor Michael, ...*

Order that the declaration from old Rome be received, as was the custom by Tradition of our Fathers from of old and from the beginning. For this, O Emperor, is the highest of the Churches of God, in which first Peter held the Chair, to whom the Lord said: Thou art Peter ...and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Theodore, Bk. II. Ep. 86)



I witness now before God and men, they have torn themselves away from the Body of Christ, from the Supreme See (Rome), in which Christ placed the keys of the Faith, against which the gates of hell (I mean the mouth of heretics) have not prevailed, and never will until the Consummation, according to the promise of Him Who cannot lie. Let the blessed and Apostolic Paschal (Pope St. Paschal I) rejoice therefore, for he has fulfilled the work of Peter. (Theodore Bk. II. Ep. 63).

In truth we have seen that a manifest successor of the prince of the Apostles presides over the Roman Church. We truly believe that Christ has not deserted the Church here (Constantinople), for assistance from you has been our one and only aid from of old and from the beginning by the providence of God in the critical times. You are, indeed the untroubled and pure fount of orthodoxy from the beginning, you the calm harbor of the whole Church, far removed from the waves of heresy, you the God-chosen city of refuge. (Letter of St. Theodore & Four Abbots to Pope Paschal).

Let him (Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople) assemble a synod of those with whom he has been at variance, if it is impossible that representatives of the other Patriarchs should be present, a thing which might certainly be if the Emperor should wish the Western Patriarch (the Roman Pope) to be present, to whom is given authority over an ecumenical synod; but let him make peace and union by sending his synodical letters to the prelate of the First See. (Theodore the Studite, Patr. Graec. 99, 1420)

## **JERUSALEM**

### **St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Patriarch (363):**

Our Lord Jesus Christ then became a man, but by the many He was not known. But wishing to teach that which was not known, having assembled the disciples, He asked, 'Whom do men say that the Son of man is?' ...And all being silent (for it was beyond man to learn) Peter, the Foremost of the Apostles, the Chief Herald of the Church, not using the language of his own finding, nor persuaded by human reasoning, but having his mind enlightened by the Father, says to Him, 'Thou art the Christ,' not simply that, but 'the Son of the living God.' (Cyril, Catech. xi. n. 3)

For Peter was there, who carrieth the keys of heaven. (Cyril, Catechetical Lectures A.D. 350).

Peter, the chief and foremost leader of the Apostles, before a little maid thrice denied the Lord, but moved to penitence, he wept bitterly. (Cyril, Catech ii. n. 15)

In the power of the same Holy Spirit, Peter, also the foremost of the Apostles and the key-bearer of the Kingdom of Heaven, healed Aeneas the paralytic in the name of Christ. (Cyril, Catech. xviii. n. 27)

### **St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (c. 638):**

Teaching us all orthodoxy and destroying all heresy and driving it away from the God-protected halls of our holy Catholic Church. And together with these inspired syllables and characters, I accept all his (the pope's) letters and teachings as proceeding from the mouth of Peter the Coryphaeus, and I kiss them and salute them and embrace them with all my soul ... I recognize the latter as definitions of Peter and the former as

those of Mark, and besides, all the heaven-taught teachings of all the chosen mystagogues of our Catholic Church. (Sophronius, Mansi, xi. 461)

Transverse quickly all the world from one end to the other until you come to the Apostolic See (Rome), where are the foundations of the orthodox doctrine. Make clearly known to the most holy personages of that throne the questions agitated among us. Cease not to pray and to beg them until their apostolic and Divine wisdom shall have pronounced the victorious judgement and destroyed from the foundation ...the new heresy. (Sophronius,[quoted by Bishop Stephen of Dora to Pope Martin I at the Lateran Council], Mansi, x., 893)

**Stephen, Bishop of Dora in Palestine (645):**

And for this cause, sometimes we ask for water to our head and to our eyes a fountain of tears, sometimes the wings of a dove, according to holy David, that we might fly away and announce these things to the Chair (the Chair of Peter at Rome) which rules and presides over all, I mean to yours, the head and highest, for the healing of the whole wound. For this it has been accustomed to do from old and from the beginning with power by its canonical or apostolic authority, because the truly great Peter, head of the Apostles, was clearly thought worthy not only to be trusted with the keys of heaven, alone apart from the rest, to open it worthily to believers, or to close it justly to those who disbelieve the Gospel of grace, but because he was also commissioned to feed the sheep of the whole Catholic Church; for ‘Peter,’ saith He, ‘lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep.’ And again, because he had in a manner peculiar and special, a faith in the Lord stronger than all and unchangeable, to be converted and to confirm his fellows and spiritual brethren when tossed about, as having been adorned by God Himself incarnate for us with power and sacerdotal authority .....And Sophronius of blessed memory, who was Patriarch of the holy city of Christ our God, and under whom I was bishop, conferring not with flesh and blood, but caring only for the things of Christ with respect to your Holiness, hastened to send my nothingness without delay about this matter alone to this Apostolic see, where are the foundations of holy doctrine.

**CYPRUS**

**St. Epiphanius, Archbishop of Salamis (385):**

Holy men are therefore called the temple of God, because the Holy Spirit dwells in them; as that Chief of the Apostles testifies, he that was found to be blessed by the Lord, because the Father had revealed unto him. To him then did the Father reveal His true Son; and the same (Peter) furthermore reveals the Holy Spirit. This was befitting in the First of the Apostles, that firm Rock upon which the Church of God is built, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The gates of hell are heretics and heresiarchs. For in every way was the faith confirmed in him who received the keys of heaven; who looses on earth and binds in heaven. For in him are found all subtle questions of faith. He was aided by the Father so as to be (or lay) the Foundation of the security (firmness) of the faith. He (Peter) heard from the same God, ‘feed my lambs’; to him He entrusted the

flock; he leads the way admirably in the power of his own Master. (Epiphanius, T. ii. in Anchor).

**Sergius, Metropolitan of Cyprus (649 A.D.)**

*He writes to Pope Theodore, ....*

O Holy Head, Christ our God hath destined thy Apostolic See to be an immovable foundation and a pillar of the Faith. For thou art, as the Divine Word truly saith, Peter, and on thee as a foundation-stone have the pillars of the Church been fixed. (Sergius Ep. ad Theod. lecta in Session ii. Concil. Lat. anno 649)