

next successor, Clement XII., who ought to have passed to the majority in 1735, endured till 1740. The seventeenth, sixteenth, fifteenth, fourteenth, thirteenth, twelfth, eleventh, and tenth centuries do not furnish among them a solitary instance of the verification of this 'singular rule' for 'determining the length of the reigning Pope's life in the earlier half of a century.' This magic formula is as good—and as bad—as a thousand other gamblers' and fortune-tellers' 'systems'; but it is scarcely worth while to pursue it farther back into the mists of antiquity.

ST. PETER, BISHOP OF ROME

REPLY TO BISHOP NEVILL

I.

To Catholics in Australasia one of the most consoling features in connection with the death of the late venerated Pontiff was the kindly eulogy of the Grand Old Man by the secular press and the non-Catholic pulpit, and the sympathetic messages which our prelates throughout the seven colonies received from the heads or local representatives of the Jewish and various Protestant creeds. In New Zealand at least, this generous and kindly appreciation of a great and good Pontiff—one who was ever a friend of the human kind—was marred by only one jarring note: it was the untimely clang of controversy which the Right Rev. Dr. Nevill, Anglican Bishop of Dunedin, raised, so to speak, over the bier around which his Catholic fellow-citizens knelt in sorrow. To Catholics, and (as we personally know) to many Protestants as well, the publication of the apparently official, though condensed, report of Dr Nevill's controversial sermon on the Papacy came as a painful surprise—all the more painful because of the good-will and mutual esteem which have become somewhat of a settled tradition between the Catholic and the Anglican bodies in Dunedin.

The position taken up by Bishop Nevill, so far as it may be gathered from the report—over half a column long—supplied to the 'Otago Daily Times' was as follows: (1) He appeared to gravely question or altogether deny the fact that St. Peter was ever in Rome; (2) he characterised as a 'figment' the statement that St. Peter was ever Bishop of Rome.

Catholics, on the contrary, maintain: (1) that St. Peter received from the Savior a primacy of jurisdiction over the whole Church; (2) that St. Peter finally fixed his See in Rome; and (3) that the Roman Pontiffs are the successors of St. Peter in the See of Rome. (1) The first of these points has not, so far as we can judge by the newspaper report, been raised by Bishop Nevill. At a later stage, however, we may, in order to round off this controversy, deal with the position of St. Peter as the divinely appointed head of the Apostles—the rock-foundation on which the Savior built His Church, the holder of 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven,' the feeder of the lambs and sheep (that is, of the whole flock) of Christ, the Apostle who was first in all things, whose faith should not fail, and whose duty it was to strengthen that of his brethren.

(2) The second point—the episcopate of St. Peter—is the one on which Dr. Nevill focussed all or most of his attention in his ill-timed controversial discourse, the utterance of which, we trust, his Lordship's later thought and more deliberate judgment have already viewed with much regret. The three points enumerated above are intimately bound together. Briefly stated, they together form what Protestant writers commonly call the 'papal claims.' But each can be taken separately. The question of St. Peter's episcopate, raised by the Right Rev. Anglican Prelate of Dunedin, is a question of history. To history he has professed to appeal, and to history we, therefore, go.

II.

In dealing with non-Catholic theological writers, we must ever bear in mind that the primacy of the Holy See is the cardinal point of modern controversy, that the accumulated religious prejudices of three and a half centuries have circled around it; that St. Peter's Roman episcopate is the parting of the ways. Hence it is that some Protestant writers have denied St. Peter's residence in Rome, not for reasons based on history, but because it leads to his Roman episcopate, and his Roman episcopate leads at last to the Roman primacy. Lipsius was apparently one of these. Yet, writing in 1876, he granted that, if 'ever the Prince of the Apostles set foot in the Eternal City, he certainly did not go as a simple traveller, but in virtue of his apostolic power.' Then he adds: 'And if, as many Protes-

tants also hold, the episcopate is of divine institution, then the claims of the Roman Church to trace her episcopal succession back to Peter is, after all, not so very absurd' ('Zeitschrift für Prot. Theol.' 1876, p. 560). As reported in the 'Otago Daily Times,' Dr. Nevill doubted or denied that St. Peter ever was in Rome. It appears, however, that the report—authoritative though it seemed—did his Lordship an injustice, for we learn from his letter to last week's 'N.Z. Tablet' that he asserted a coming of St. Peter to Rome some time during the years 63-67 and his martyrdom there under Nero. The visit of St. Peter to Rome is no longer an open question. It is one of the settled facts of history, and, in the words of the Anglican writer Whiston (the translator of Josephus—quoted by Livius), 'this is so clear in Christian antiquity that it is a shame for any Protestant to confess that any Protestant ever denied it.' In view of his public contentions, Bishop Nevill can have no controversy with us on the divine institution of the episcopate. On Lipsius's principle, therefore, his admission of St. Peter's residence in Rome is tantamount to a statement of St. Peter's Roman episcopate. He has, however, elected to fly in the face of historic evidence and the testimony of foremost Protestant writers by describing St. Peter's Roman episcopate as a 'figment.'

We must here deal with an absurd misconception of the Catholic position which appears in the report of Bishop Nevill's discourse that was supplied to the 'Otago Daily Times.' It contains this amazing statement: that it is 'indispensable as the basis of the whole Roman scheme' that St. Peter should have been Bishop of Rome for '34 or 35 years'! Of course (1) no Catholic out of Bedlam ever dreamed of making such a statement. (2) St. Jerome and other writers state that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome for 25 years. But Catholics are under no obligation to accept St. Jerome's or any other writer's chronology. Even assuming the 25 years' bishopric, no Catholic writer maintains that St. Peter remained the whole period in the Eternal City. He had the care of all the Churches, and we know from the Acts of the Apostles (ix., 32) that he had visited some of them before he came to Rome. For the rest, a glance at Livius's 'St. Peter Bishop of Rome' (pp. 46 sqq.) and (among other works) at Marucchi's 'S. Pietro e S. Paolo in Roma' (pp. 27 sqq.) would probably make Bishop Nevill hesitate seriously before dismissing the statement of the 25 years' episcopate as unworthy of credit. We shall probably recur to this subject in a later issue. (3) A very brief residence would be sufficient to verify the constant tradition of the Church, the voice of history, and the testimony of eminent Protestant writers as to St. Peter having been bishop in the Eternal City, for, as Lipsius (already quoted above) candidly admits, if he went to Rome at all, he went there as Prince of the Apostles. (4) So far as the Catholic position is concerned, 'it was not,' says the learned historian and theologian, Archbishop Carr, 'necessary for St. Peter to have gone to Rome at all to be its bishop and to make its future bishops his successors; it was sufficient that he should fix upon Rome as his own See' ('The Primacy,' p. 161). Thus, in the penal days in Ireland, several bishops were consecrated in France or Rome and were never able to reach their Sees. But, directly through writing, or indirectly through their accredited representatives, they ruled their several Sees and received the willing obedience of both priests and people. (5) There are thousands of facts in sacred and profane history which are indisputable, although their chronology is uncertain or confused. (6) The able theologian and writer, Archbishop Carr, points out ('Primacy,' p. 164) that 'it was not necessary for St. Peter to have gone to Rome at all to be its bishop and to make its future bishops his successors, it was sufficient that he should fix upon Rome as his own See.' During the penal days in Ireland, several bishops were consecrated for that afflicted country in France and Rome; but, owing to the rigorous measures taken against them, they were unable to reach their dioceses. But they governed their Sees nevertheless, either directly by writing or verbal messages, or indirectly through their accredited representatives. But St. Peter's sojourn in Rome is so far outside the reach of doubt or discussion that it is asserted even in the 'Speaker's Commentary' (Anglican) and in the Chronological Table appended to the Teacher's Edition of the Authorised Version of the Protestant Bible.

III.

If we are to judge from the apparently authoritative report of the 'Otago Daily Times,' Dr. Nevill not alone conveyed a serious and complete misconception of the Catholic position as to the episcopate of St. Peter, but he shut out from his hearers, as well, all, or practically all, of the vast mass of evidence which makes this as well established as any other accepted fact of early Christian history. 'There is no scriptural evidence,' said he, 'as to the episcopate of St. Peter, but the strongest