

presumption against it. Yet on this fabric such a structure had been reared.' This is the last sentence but one of his report. The last concludes with the amazing assertion that 'the first to mention the alleged episcopate of St. Peter was St. Jerome, about three and a half centuries later'!

We ask his Lordship: Does it contribute to the ends of legitimate controversy to ignore or suppress the great body of evidence that was absolutely required to enable his hearers to form a fair and intelligent view of the subject? In exploring the dark periods of Church history, one cannot afford to shut out the light, from whatever side it comes. But Bishop Nevill has not yet repudiated the report of his discourse that appeared in the public press. And unless that report does him a monstrous wrong, he has (to use the words of his fellow-churchman, Dr. Salmon) followed the 'process of shutting out the light,' which 'is just what one does when one wants to exhibit fancy pictures with a magic lantern.'

Catholics prove the primacy of St. Peter and its perpetuity in the Church from a large body of luminous texts of the Sacred Scriptures. The question as to whether St. Peter was Bishop of Rome has nothing to do with those texts. It is a historical fact, for the evidence of which we must have recourse to the records of history. It is established by (1) the testimonies of the Fathers and other writers of the first four centuries of the Church's history, and (2) by early Christian archaeological monuments in Rome, and especially those in the catacombs. We cannot for a moment suppose that the Anglican Bishop of Dunedin is ignorant of the great mass of material bearing upon the present question, that exists under these two heads. Yet, so far as we can judge from his reported utterances, he did not make the remotest allusion to it, and, by so doing, suggested the inference that no such evidence exists, and that the whole question is to be settled by a fallacious resort to the dangerous argument from the alleged silence of the Scriptures. If he had placed before his hearers a fair and faithful summary of the evidence bearing on this controversy, his statement of the case would have run substantially as follows: (a) That the belief in St. Peter's Roman episcopate has been from time immemorial to the present hour—outside the Protestant creeds—the unbroken possession of Christendom, even of the schismatical Churches of the East; (b) that no period in Christian history, subsequent to the times immediately following those of St. Peter, can be pointed out at which it can be shown, with the smallest pretence of probability or plausibility, that this belief first began; (c) that the line of argument used all along in support of it has been positive, uncontroversial, and based on history; (d) that, among Christians, Protestants alone deny it; (e) that many learned Protestants, and even some rationalists, join with us in affirming the Roman bishopric of St. Peter; (f) that its opponents' contentions against it are exclusively of a negative kind; that they base their objections ultimately on polemical or controversial grounds, arising from the necessity of justifying their rejection of Catholic faith and authority; that they ignore, as though of no account, the immemorial belief of Christendom; and that the principles of unhistorical criticism which they adopt in this connection are those which German rationalistic writers employ in their efforts to disprove the supernatural origin and attributes of the Christian faith.

IV.

It has taken some time and space to clear this question of the tangle of misconception and misrepresentation which surrounded it and to set it forth in its proper light. The historical fact of St. Peter's Roman episcopate is, as stated above, in possession. And in possession it must remain until set aside by solid and convincing reasons based, not upon the needs of defending points of doctrine, but upon the merits of the case. Belief in the Roman episcopate of St. Peter held sole possession in Christendom till the thirteenth century. It was then for the first time denied by the Waldenses on the fallacious argument adopted by Bishop Nevill—the alleged silence of the New Testament in reference thereto. It was first opposed in writing, on the same illogical grounds, by the depraved anti-papal Paduan, Marsilius, in a book of his entitled 'Defensor Pacis.' From Luther to the present day this denial has become an article of belief with many Protestant authors. They have won ready aid from German rationalists, such as Baur and Weiner, who, employing the same unphilosophical methods, endeavor to relegate St. Peter and the whole Gospel story to the realm of myths and legends. We shall briefly trace the evidence of St. Peter's Roman episcopate back step by step from the date of its acknowledged universal acceptance to the sub-apostolic and apostolic days. Such a universal persuasion of East and West must have a proportionate cause, and we shall see that it is founded in the objective reality of the fact itself.

The noted Anglican historian, Dean Milman, says in his 'History of Latin Christianity' (3rd. ed., vol. i., book ii., p. 106) that 'at the commencement of the fifth century, the lineal descent of the Pope from St. Peter was an accredited tenet of Christianity.' Protestant authorities are so much agreed on this point that it is quite superfluous for us to adduce proofs in support of our thesis from writers of the fifth century (A.D. 401-500). For a like reason it is unnecessary to give more than the most summary statement of the mass of documentary evidence of the fourth century (A.D. 301-400) and of the third century (A.D. 201-300), which is simply overwhelming in the multiplicity, strength, and clearness of its testimony to the episcopate and primacy of St. Peter. It will suffice for us to give brief references to a few distinguished names that represent both the East and West.

Fourth Century.

St. Jerome, one of the most learned men of antiquity, resided long in the East and likewise in Rome, where he was secretary of Pope Damasus. His voluminous writings bear abundant witness to the Roman episcopate of St. Peter. In one of his letters, for instance, he styles Pope Damasus 'the successor of the Fisherman' (that is, of St. Peter). In his 'Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers' he describes St. Peter as 'Prince of the Apostles,' and, on the authority of antiquity, records his journey to Rome, where he 'held for twenty-five years the sacerdotal See,' was crucified in the fourteenth year of Nero and 'buried at Rome in the Vatican.' St. John Chrysostom was an Eastern, a native of Antioch, and Patriarch of Constantinople. In his second homily on the inscription of the Acts of the Apostles, delivered at Antioch, he referred to St. Peter as the rock on which Christ built His Church, 'the Chief of the Apostles,' who had been 'shepherd' in the 'chair' of Antioch, which See had surrendered him to Imperial Rome.' St. Ambrose, the great Bishop of Milan, refers to the Holy See as 'Peter's Chair.' He is the author of the saying: 'Where Peter is, there is the Church.' Eusebius, according to Lipsius (quoted by Rivington) 'expressly asserted' the Roman episcopate of St. Peter. In the Armenian version of his 'History' (ii., 150) he says that 'the Apostle Peter, having first founded the Church at Antioch, goes to the city of the Romans, and there preaches the Gospel, and remains Bishop of the Church there twenty years.' A similar statement as to St. Peter's bishopric of Rome is made in St. Jerome's Latin version, and in the Syriac version of his 'Chronicle.' The renowned Doctor of the Church, St. Augustine, constantly refers to Rome as 'the Apostolic See,' 'the See of the Apostle St. Peter, to whom, after His resurrection, the Lord entrusted His sheep to be fed' (Contra Ep. Manich., n. 5). We might also quote the testimony of St. Epiphanius, St. Optatus, of Milevis, St. Peter of Alexandria, St. Athanasius, and other erudite men of the first note, both of East and West, in the fourth century. Their evidence may be consulted in any edition of the Fathers, or (by those of our readers to whom the Fathers are not available) in able treatises such as those of Sanguinetti and Foggini (Italian), Jungmann (Latin), and Allies, Livius, Rivington, and Archbishop Carr (in English). In the fourth, as in the third, century the Popes claimed to be successors of St. Peter in the See of Rome, and to hold the primacy of jurisdiction in the Church by virtue of that succession. And this was admitted without dispute and as a matter of course. We are here, however, discussing the question of St. Peter's episcopate only. At the first General Council of Constantinople, the papal delegate, who presided, spoke of St. Peter as 'the Prince and Head of the Apostles,' of Pope Celestine as 'his successor in order and holder of his place,' and of Rome as 'the Apostolic See.' And there was not a whisper of dissent from any quarter. The Fathers of the Council of Sardica (A.D. 342) declared Rome to be 'the head, namely, the Chair of Peter.' And the Council of Arles, in its letter to Pope Sylvester, styles Rome 'the greater dioceses' and 'the places where the Apostles constantly preside, and where their blood continually gives glory to God.'

Third Century.

Equally clear and compelling is the testimony of the third century (A.D. 201-300) that St. Peter was Bishop of the See of Rome. In his 'History of Early Christianity' (vol. iii., p. 370, ed. 1840) the noted Anglican writer, Dean Milman, says: 'Before the end of the third century, the lineal descent of Rome's bishops from St. Peter was unhesitatingly claimed and obsequiously admitted by the Christian world.' The same eminent writer, in his 'History of Latin Christianity' (3rd. ed., vol. i., p. 66) writes thus regarding the middle of the same century: 'The succession of the Bishop of Rome from St. Peter was now, nearly 200 years after his death, an accredited tradition.' Among the third century witnesses for St. Peter's Roman episcopate, we may briefly refer to the following: St. Anatolius of Alexan-