

United Kingdom is £189,000,000 or over £4 10s per annum per head of the population. The incense and candle bill of Spain, translated into our money, is, roughly, (allowing McCabe's figures to be correct), £1,210,000, or less than 1s 6d per annum per head of the population. That is, the Englishman spends on drink in one week more than the Spaniard spends on candles and incense in a whole year. The Australian spends (per head of population per annum) as much on intoxicants in 10 days as the Spaniard spends on candles and incense in 365. The flourishing totals of Mr. McCabe dwindle to very mean proportions under analysis.'

ST. PETER, BISHOP OF ROME

REPLY TO BISHOP NEVILL

VI.

In our last issue we dropped some picrine shells into the following triplet of strange statements made by the Right Rev. Dr. Nevill, Anglican Bishop of Dunedin, by way of funeral oration over the good old Pope whose life's fitful fever is over: (1) 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'; (2) that the Roman episcopate of St. Peter is a 'figment'; and (3) that 'the first to mention the alleged episcopate of St. Peter was St. Jerome, about three and a half centuries later'!

We showed that Bishop Nevill had fallen into an amazing misstatement of the Catholic position; that his admission of St. Peter's sojourn in Rome was (on Lipsius's principle) tantamount to an assertion of his Roman episcopate; that, outside the Protestant denominations, belief in St. Peter's Roman episcopate has been (as eminent Reformed writers testify) the possession of all Christian antiquity, East and West; that the line of argument used all along in support of it has been positive, uncontroversial, and based on history; that its opponents' objections against it are purely negative and controversial; that Bishop Nevill (as reported in the daily Press) withheld from his hearers all, or practically all, of the vast mass of evidence which makes St. Peter's bishopric of Rome as well established as any other accepted fact of early Christian history; and that his professing to decide the whole question off-hand by an appeal to 'the fallacy of silence' of the New Testament, was in the highest degree calculated to mislead his audience into the belief that no other evidence existed bearing upon the question.

We published, in necessarily brief and condensed form, a catena of testimony showing the constant belief of the Church, both in East and West, in the Roman episcopate of St. Peter during the fourth and third centuries of the Christian era. We showed that this episcopate is asserted by eminent Protestant writers—by Bramhall, Grotius, Leibnitz, Cave, Chamier, Pearson, Baratier, Nevill, Hall, and others. The value of this body of Protestant testimony cannot be over-estimated. We have already pointed out that the admission of the episcopate of St. Peter is the next and natural step to the acknowledgment of the Primacy of the Roman See. The question of St. Peter's Roman episcopate is no mere still-born occurrence, devoid of results, it is a great, living,

Moral Fact

that enters, and for ages has entered, into the order of theological truth, into the domain of practical conduct, religion, and politics. It purports to have its original source in divine Revelation—to be the realisation of divine promises made by Christ to His Church, to be the appointed mode by which that promise is carried into actual effect. And, as such, it has for ages held its place in the minds and hearts of untold millions of the faithful from the dawn of the Christian religion. It is, then, a principle of life and action in the Church—it is a test by which, down the course of the ages, the one Church founded by Christ upon the Rock should be discerned from all man-made counterfeits. This principle cuts at the root of the Anglican system. A defender of Anglicanism has, therefore, no option but to either contest or deny the fact that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, or to explain away or minimise its significance. For this reason minor difficulties are enormously exaggerated, apparent discrepancies (many of them easily reconcilable) of authors ranging over four or five centuries are strung together as of equal authority, the utmost ingenuity is displayed in devising or imagining fresh difficulties, and every effort is made to confuse the one point on which all the divergent accounts are agreed—namely, that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome,

and that the Popes are his successors in that See. And yet, all the time these same writers accept without question the Canon and inspiration of the New Testament, although the evidence for these, though on Catholic principles conclusive, is by no means so cogent as that which proves the episcopacy and primacy of St. Peter and the apostolic succession from him in the See of Rome.

VII.

As regards early Christian testimony in support of St. Peter's Roman episcopate, there is practically no dispute between us and Protestants so far as the fifth, fourth, and third centuries of our era are concerned. During that period, the evidence for both the episcopate and Primacy is overwhelming in its frequency, extent, and clearness. When we come to the second century (A.D. 101-200), the loss and destruction of documents render the testimony of that time for St. Peter's Roman episcopate more scanty but not less conclusive. The third and fourth centuries, however, furnish a gloss or explanation for whatever may be obscure in the second, in the same way that Newman makes the fifth century the comment on those that preceded it. 'It acts,' he wrote ('Discussions,' p. 236) 'as a comment on the obscure text of the centuries before it, and brings out a meaning which, with the help of the comment, any candid person sees really to be theirs.' The assumption of Anglican controversialists of the class referred to above, is that the missing documents of the second century would, if recovered, tell a different tale from those of subsequent centuries. The natural and reasonable presumption is to the contrary. It is strengthened by the fact that all the second century documents that have survived tell the same tale as those of the third, fourth, and fifth. And there is no record, and no pretence of a record, to the contrary.

According to the learned Anglican historian, Bishop Lightfoot, the Christian literature of the second century must have been fairly abundant. But nearly all of it—and nearly all that was contemporary with the beginning of the Catacombs—

Perished in the Flames

of the last great persecution of Diocletian, which opened its red course in the year 303. Bishop Lightfoot (in his 'Hist. Essays,' p. 3) deplors the loss 'of the vast volume of Christian literature, which, with a few meagre exceptions, has altogether perished.' And herein, says Archbishop Carr ('Primacy,' p. 135) 'lies the explanation of the loud talk we hear of "Rome's pretensions." Judging from the writings we have of that century, we may safely conclude that, if the rest had not perished, the second century literature would have supplied us with an irrefutable proof of the Primacy' of the See of St. Peter. It was the martyr-age. The Church was in the Catacombs, and not living in normal conditions. Yet 'whatever doctrines are referred to in the writings of the Fathers of the second century are emphatically Roman, and whenever there is mention of Rome in connection with doctrine and discipline, there is a recognition of the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome' (Loc. cit.). Dr. Salmon (Anglican), of Trinity College, Dublin, has aptly observed that during the second century the Church is

Passing through a Tunnel,

which is well lighted at one end by the Books of the New Testament, and at the other end by the writings of the Fathers from the close of the same century. In the space between, there are a few openings that admit a dim and interrupted light. 'If,' says he, 'in our study of this dimly lighted portion of history, we wish to distinguish what is certain from what is doubtful, we may expect to find the things certain in what can be seen from either of the two well-lighted ends. If the same thing is visible on looking from either end, we can have no doubt about its existence' ('Expositor' 3rd series, vol. 6, pp. 3-4, quoted in 'Primacy,' pp. 87-8). Now St. Peter's Primacy is clear from the end which is lighted by the books of the New Testament. From its luminous pages we establish the Primacy of St. Peter and its perpetuity in the Church. From the other end of the tunnel—that is, from the Fathers and other early Christian writers—we learn where this Primacy was set up and perpetuated. And so far as St. Peter's episcopate and Primacy are concerned, we have already seen, in our previous article, that they are admitted by foremost Protestant historians and divines to be irrefutably proven by the records of the fourth and third centuries.

The dimly lighted tunnel of the second century has not left a scrap or hint of a record that tells a different tale. On the contrary, there is much in the writings that have come down from the wreck of that stormy period which bears abundant witness to the Roman episcopate of the Fisherman-Apostle. It is shown, for instance, in the lists or catalogues of the Bishops of Rome and in the existing works of the Fathers and other ecclesiastical writers of the time.