

The Church Guardian.

Upholds the Doctrines and Rubrics of the Prayer Book.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."—Eph. vi., 24.
 "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—Jude: 3.

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WAS ST. PETER EVER AT ROME?

THE editor of the *Church Times*, who is, we believe, our talented fellow-countryman, Dr. Littledale, throws considerable light upon this vexed question. In answer to a correspondent he says:—"The legendary nature of the story of St. Peter's twenty-five years' session at Rome can be proved by direct dates, as well as by the silence of St. Luke in the acts and of St. Paul in the epistle to the Romans, and the epistles he wrote from Rome itself. These are enough for any one with the faculty of understanding historical evidence, but there are further proofs drawn from the now received chronology of the acts. If St. Peter was 25 years at Rome, we must count then from A. D. 42, as it is agreed that he was put to death in A. D. 67. But St. Paul's conversion took place about A. D. 35 or 36. It was three years after (A. D. 39) that he went to Jerusalem to see St. Peter (Gal. i. 18). The missionary journal of St. Peter, during which he converted Cornelius, is set down at about A. D. 41, or more probably 43. Herod Agrippa I., who became King of Judea in A. D. 41, imprisoned St. Peter shortly before his own death, which was in A. D. 44, already two years past the time when St. Peter is said to have been at Rome, though before the beginning of his alleged seven years session as Bishop of Antioch. But when St. Paul went up again to Jerusalem, 14 years after his conversion, and so about A. D. 49 or 50, perhaps even as late as 53, St. Peter is still at Jerusalem, and apparently associated with SS. James and John in charge of the Jewish Christians Gal. ii. 1. 8. 9; while no hint, however faint, of such an important fact as a journey of his to Rome and foundation of the Church there, which we cannot imagine being omitted, is to be found. At this point St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans comes in (A. D. 58) showing that no Apostle up to then had been at Rome (Rom. i. 15; xv. 20), and that there was not even an organised Church with Clergy there. The origin of the error is very simple, and was pointed out nearly 200 years ago by the great Roman Catholic historical critic Pagi, in his corrections of Baronius. The notion that St. Peter came to Rome during the reign of Claudius, in A. D. 42, is due to Eusebius (or, more likely, some interpolator of his Chronicle), writing in A. D. 338. But the fact is that Eusebius merely blundered over a statement by Lactantius, written a good deal earlier, who says that the Apostles were engaged in founding Churches for 25 years after the Ascension. And then he adds that St. Peter came to Rome in Nero's reign, which did not even begin till A. D. 53. Eusebius mixes up the two statements, and hence the mistake. As to the legend in Rome itself, it is easily explained. The first Roman Christians were the Jews from Rome, converted by St. Peter, at Jerusalem, on the Day of Pentecost. Nothing

more natural than that they should look to him as having, in fact, founded Roman Christianity, especially as no Apostle reached the imperial city for nearly 30 years more."—*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.*

ON THE GROWTH OF THE AMERICAN CHURCH AND ITS POWER OF ATTRACTION.

OUR Church has been steadily and remarkably *intensifying her own life from within*, bringing out from her treasures things new and old, recovering lost portions of her ancient heritage, and making more and more prominent, in richness, splendour, and power, *her own distinctive principles*. The Church of Rome in this country has *not* been doing the like, but is being slowly, yet steadily modified by the atmosphere of America, so that her Romanism—in the masses of her people—is less and less bigoted and intolerant, and more and more unlike what is at Rome, at Loretto, at La Sallette, and at Lourdes. On the whole, the American Romanists are quietly and steadily, though slowly, drifting towards us; for every change in them that is not toward infidelity must bring them toward us. All the great Protestant denominations are changing also, and *not one* of them is intensifying its own peculiar life from within; on the contrary, each one of them is rapidly *losing* its own distinctiveness, and is being modified *from without*, so that, in all their changes, they are actually drawing nearer to us, or—at the least—they are removing old sectarian obstacles out of the way of their people, so as to render future union the easier. The sharp crystallization of the sects in their original principles is steadily crumbling away. The Evangelical Alliance is, in itself, a confession that not one of the sects united in it is necessary; for each one of the members leaves his sectarianism outside, and yet *all* profess that they are at one in everything that makes up the integrity of the Christian faith. The Young Men's Christian Association is, in like manner, a confession that not one of the sects that unite in it is necessary for the performance of good works. And if the sects are thus demonstrated by their own favourite organizations to be *not* necessary, either for the integrity of the faith or for the performance of good works, why should they be kept up? Those two institutions are *grinding the rocks to powder*; and, in another generation, that powder will be good soil, through which the roots of the old Church vine will run in every direction without serious hindrance. Thus the changes of the past half century prove that our Church is the living centre from which the changing influence has gone forth, and that the changes of all the rest are, therefore, such as to show, on the part of them all, a gradual approximation toward *us*. We are the common centre of gravity of all

the varieties of Christianity in the land, and the only possibility of the future unity of all is in their crystallising *around us*.—*Bp. Doane.*

GROWTH IN CHURCH DOCTRINE TENDS TOWARDS UNITY.

"NOTHING is more marked, in contrast with a half century ago, than what may be called the increased churchliness in the Church; the hold upon the distinctive doctrines, of creeds, and of the offices of the Book of Common Prayer; the Catholicity, in its best sense, of teaching, worship, and practice. Like the busy work of a great building in its earlier stages, when trenches are dug, and earth removed, and heavy stones are hewn and laid, there was great stir and strife in our American Church about the first principles of 'Evangelical Truth and Apostolic Order,' as the great Bishop Hobart, of this diocese, phrased the watchword of fifty years ago. *How deeply set and widely built on, as acknowledged facts, they are to-day, the Church is Witness everywhere.* This is no time nor place to rake the smouldering embers of old party controversies; what fire is left in them serves now to warm our common love and devotion, and their gray ashes may well be penitential memories of needless misconceptions, violated charity, and mistaken zeal. Yet, in the abstract, one may moralize about them and remember how, from Apostolic times, the treatises and the apologies, the inspired Epistles and the decrees of Councils, alike attest that controversies gather and grow out of the tendency to disproportionate holding of the truth. There is no great and no little doctrine of the faith, as there is no great and no little commandment of the law. But one age will lift into overshadowing importance some single set of beliefs, and the next will strive to lift out of the shadow the complementary teaching which offsets and balances the exclusive holding of a partial and imperfect creed. * * * * *

"Under the gradual uplifting to stronger and higher holding of the ancient faith, one cannot too thankfully own the drawing together of men of divers views, so that such antagonisms and contentions as embittered religious controversy with individual persecution have become impossible. And the fact must not be lost sight of, in measuring the great advance in consistency of teaching and of practice, that it has come about not by the unassimilated absorption of one party into another but by a better understanding among men, by a kindlier construction of motives and beliefs, by a larger charity that does not *tolerate* but claims and rejoices in, the varying opinions where unity in essentials exists, and by the impartation, each to each, of the best and characteristic elements of thought and principle from one body of men to the other."—*Bp. Hopkins.*