

easy to believe that, while Protestants are constantly giving liberal donations and bequests to institutions of learning, wealthy Catholics are utterly indifferent. They cannot be so different from their Protestant neighbors that they cannot be interested in education. The subject is one beyond the limits of this paper, and it is introduced merely as noting a field in which converts of education and experience as teachers may be employed to advantage.

THE ALLEGED FALL OF POPE LIBERIUS.

De Hebræorum et Christianorum sacra monarchia et de infallibili in utraque magisterio. Per Professorem Aloisium Vincenzi. Romæ—ex typographia Vaticana, 1875.

Erreurs et mensonges historiques. Par M. Ch. Barthélemy. Paris. Bleriot ed., 1875.

AMONG the many great historical puzzles that have engaged the attention or stimulated the diligence of the learned for centuries, that furnished by the alleged fall of the saintly Liberius stands forth prominent, almost unique. Two schools of thought have been occupied at intervals during fifteen centuries in the vain task of unravelling the threads of this provokingly entangled snare; the one to vindicate the name of a Pope whose memory has been embalmed in the eloquence of St. Ambrose, and the other to brand it with deepest infamy, to bury it beneath a mountain of malignant opprobrium. To the latter school belonged many historians, or dabblers in ancient story, of the last of the seventeenth century. For those who took their creed and inspiration from the modern Mahomet, Martin Luther, it was a labor of love to justify the rebellion of their master against what they called the dynastic despotism, which had lain like a terrible nightmare on the slumbering breast of Christendom for over a thousand years. What cared they if, in rejecting the Papacy, they would infect the religion and the order established by the man-God? They argued then that the Papacy was fallen from grace, and this as early as the fourth century. Look, say they, at Liberius! He subscribed an Arian formula, or creed, and in his delirious haste to regain his darling Roman See, delivered Christendom over to the sect which railed at the divinity of Jesus Christ! If, then, the Roman. See,

the centre of your boasted unity, became heretic as early as the fourth century, what corruption may we not look for in more recent times?

When, through political intrigue and bad faith, the party of the "Gallican liberties" appeared in France, at its head were found some men who, like Bossuet, shone like stars of the first magnitude in the literary as well as in the ecclesiastical firmament; men who, by virtue of their own principles, were urged, perhaps unwillingly, into an attitude hostile to the indefectibility of the Holy See. In his "Defensio," as we shall see further on, the eminent Bossuet, who undoubtedly had read all that appeared in evidence for and against Liberius at his day, was betrayed into arguments and forced to conclusions from which, it is certain, his noble faith recoiled. What wonder, then, that lesser lights were bedimmed, or that scholars without the Church's pale would with impunity point their shafts against the memory of the calumniated Pontiff? But, alas for human words and human works, modern criticism has inserted a wedge into the knotty trunk of Arian forgery, and the Sundered parts reveal to astonished eyes the "true inwardness" of the forgers. In this article it will be convenient, 1st. To sketch, *currente calamo*, the history of the times in which Liberius lived and suffered. 2d. To present the main arguments used to prove his fall; and 3d. To refute these arguments, and thereby establish his innocence. It was during the reign of Constantine that Arius, a man of stately figure and apparently ascetic habits, began to preach to the people of Alexandria that the Saviour who had redeemed them was not, as the Christian world believed, really and substantially the Son of God. The novelty of the doctrine, the eloquence of the preacher, and the disaffection of a certain number of courtiers, gave the error an impulse which not even its inventors had foreseen or expected. In vain did the patriarch, St. Alexander, endeavor to recall the ambitious and erring priest. The very patriarchal throne whence issued the fatherly invitations to retract his blasphemy was the prize coveted by the heresiarch, and the disappointment occasioned by his failure to secure it drove him to the sacrifice of his faith and his salvation. Mildness and entreaty failing, the Patriarch convened a council to pronounce upon the errors of Arius. The heresiarch refused to retract them, and was excommunicated. The secretary of the Patriarch at this council was a young deacon, famous for his prudence, piety, and learning; and for him Arius conceived a particular hatred, which he seems to have transmitted to his children in heresy. The deacon was *Athanasius*, in whose defence our Liberius suffered so much, forty years afterwards. Retiring into Palestine, Arius won golden opinions among the Emperor's wretched courtiers, among whom were Eusebius, a bishop in

name only, and Constantia, the Emperor's sister. Many other Eastern bishops also supported the cause of Arius. He composed verses in which he embodied the poison of his doctrines, and distributed them among the common people. Set to the airs of the obscene songs of the day, they "took," as we say nowadays, and in a few months the blasphemies of an excommunicated renegade became the faith of thousands. Nor need we be astonished at this rapid popular lapse into heresy. Only a few years had elapsed since Constantine, victorious over Maxentius and Licinius, became sole master of the Roman commonwealth and put an end to the persecutions. For three centuries, in fact, the wave of persecution had swelled high, and, therefore, religious instruction was given to the Catholic masses under very great difficulty and amid constant dangers. Even many of the clergy had not the science their state required. Since the conversion of Constantine, though no edicts were pressed against the pagans, yet these felt that favors would be best obtained by believing or affecting to believe as the Emperor. Doubtless, then, of the vast numbers who joined the Christian Church at this period, many were prompted by interest, others were allured by fashion, and comparatively few were urged by conviction. Instruction in the necessary articles of faith was all that could be dispensed—and these but superficially—at such a time; but the Christian spirit very, very few seemed to have grasped, even in a low degree. It is a miracle in the moral order that any Christianity was left at all when the persecutions temporarily ended; and if, with Gibbon and the so-called philosophic school, we reject the vision of the cross seen by Constantine in the heavens, it seems somewhat more than a prodigy that he and so many others exchanged the religion of their glorious ancestors, for that of an ignoble and crucified "Galilean." But to return to our subject. For five long years the doctrinal war continued, the athletes on both sides deploying their utmost abilities, exerting every influence that could be brought to bear upon their adversaries, and exhausting the ammunition of the Greek tongue in subtleties and distinctions, which that elegant language, of all others, is capable of expressing. Constantine is interviewed by the friends of Arius, he is besieged by the tears and entreaties of his sister, and fawned upon by unworthy ecclesiastics. Finally, with the concurrence of Pope Sylvester and some others, he assembles the famous Council of Nice. Three hundred and eighteen bishops there assembled proclaimed the ancient belief to be a dogma of faith. Jesus is the *λογος*, the Eternal Word of God, uncreated and (*δμουδσιος*) consubstantial with the Father. Whether we ascribe it to pure malice, or to ignorance of the binding force of a solemn decree made by the Church in council, or in fine to a hope that the fallen might return to the fold, certain is it that many of the Eastern

bishops communicated *in divinis* with the now *formal* heretics just as they had done previously. Whatever the cause, many prevaricated, and neither the threats of the Emperor nor the voice of conscience brought back to a full acquiescence in the decrees of Nice a large portion of the clergy and people of the East. For more than thirty years from this time until the reign of Julian, the Christian world presents a scene of wild confusion led by the Arian emperors, the sons and successors of Constantine. Athanasius is several times driven from his see of Alexandria, in which he succeeded St. Alexander; now on the charge of murder, sacrilege, and other nameless crimes, now on the charge of stopping the supplies of wheat—and every student of history knows how serious such a charge must appear, since Egypt was the great granary of the Roman world. Driven away at one time by the imperial troops, at another he is rescued by them from the murderous frenzy of the Arian bishops and their creatures. Council after council is summoned and disbanded with no end other than to gratify the whim of an imperial theologian, or the spleen of a usurping ecclesiastic. Creed follows fast upon creed, and one scarcely overtakes and devours its predecessor, when itself is overtaken and devoured by a new one. In all some fifty creeds, Arian, semi-Arian, and nondescript, welled up from the copious fountain of heretical impiety, and the people looked in vain out into the doctrinal mist for a gleam of hopeful light, and groped about for something solid in the ever-darkening clouds of heterodoxy which enveloped them and their teachers. The fickle Constantine banished Arius and recalled him, silenced Alexander, then gave him a hearing, expelled Athanasius and restored him, sat in silence and awe before the assembled Fathers at Nice, and yet, probably delaying his baptism till, at death's portal, he received it at the hands of Eusebius, whose faith was as uncertain as his conduct was blame-worthy. Constantius, the son of Constantine, was an avowed Arian and a coward besides, and every coward is cruel when he has power. In the battle of Mursa 54,000 of Rome's best soldiers fell victims of his ambition, and while the Cæsar Julian kept in check the barbarians of the North, this emperor took all the credit to himself. Instead of attending to the decaying finances, or winning fame by checking the anti-Christian persecution of Sapor, the Persian, and guarding the outposts of the empire against invasion, this theologaster squandered his time in disputations with the divines of his party, and in persecuting those of his subjects who dared to believe otherwise than their whimsical master.

The See of Rome, however, remained unshaken amid these stormy scenes. In a surging and angry ocean strewn with the wrecks of many creeds and philosophies, flashed one beacon light which never ceased for an instant to mark the harbor of infallible

doctrine ; it came from "the house built on the rock." To Peter's successor, where his brethren so often betrayed him, the persecuted but ever active Athanasius turned his face ; for even in this early age the East acknowledged in the Pope a primacy over all other bishops—awkward as the fact is for the sects. Julius I., then in the chair, indicted a council to examine the cause of the struggling bishop ; he justifies him and condemns as irregular the proceedings of those who drove him from his see. Ursacius and Valens, two unworthy bishops, who, instead of residing in their own sees, followed continually at the heels of the Emperor, were among the deadly enemies of Athanasius, and they sought every opportunity to vilify him before their royal patron, little listing Papal decisions. Their repeated and calumnious charges, supported by specious forgeries, enraged the Emperor to an extent that perhaps extenuates the malice of his subsequent acts of violence, while the real instigators of his crimes have become objects of contempt to every succeeding age. On a charge that Athanasius was a supporter of the usurper Magnentius, these creatures urged the Emperor to annul his former letters of reconciliation with the Patriarch, and to solicit his condemnation by Liberius, who had succeeded Julius in the Roman See. Constantius understood well the importance and even the necessity of such a sentence—it would have ended the controversy forthwith—and he determined to obtain it by blandishments or by threats. It was in the first year of the Pontificate of Liberius (352) that the demand was made. To the son of Constantine was due some respect ; and to this, rather than to any suspicion of the guilt of the accused, it may be owing that the persecuted bishop was again put on trial. A council meets at Rome ; on one side are the unsupported charges of the Emperor ; on the other the letters of the Egyptian bishops, together with the acts of their council testifying to the innocence of their Patriarch. Only one verdict was, under the circumstances, possible ; and by the chair of truth that verdict was rendered. The faith of Athanasius was that of the Church ; his sufferings for that faith had made him a confessor, almost a martyr, whose acquittal by the Pope was hailed with acclamations of joy by the Catholic world, while it stung like a barbed arrow the imperial accuser, and maddened him beyond control. He decreed exile against all who would not subscribe to the condemnation of Athanasius. The Pope sent two legates to him, Vincent of Capua and the veteran Osius, with the hope of appeasing his wrath, and solicited him to convene a general synod. While the legates were on their mission, Vincent was inveigled, by some Arian bishops into a condemnation of Athanasius—a fact which the Pope deplores in a letter to Osius. Another embassy of three bishops

waited on Constantius and presented a letter from Liberius, in which he expressed great grief in view of the Emperor's injustice, disclaimed any desire to increase the prerogatives of his see, but maintained the inviolability of those already possessed by it; he declared that he was resolved to guard the faith of his predecessors, and once more asked him to convene a council to settle their interminable disputes. Constantius agrees and names Milan as the place for the meeting of the council, to which the Pope sends his legates, Lucifer of Cagliari, Pancratius, a priest, and Hilary, then a deacon. The synod opened under unfavorable auspices, the Emperor in person being there. From the outset violence reigned supreme, and the spirit of party triumphed where the spirit of peace should rule.

The Arian faction, with the state to support it, insulted and banished the Papal legates, and scourged one of them, Hilary, the most outspoken against the irregular proceedings. The other bishops present at the council, overawed by civil and military violence, signed the condemnation of Athanasius. Liberius sent to his glorious legates, now in exile, letters of condolence and encouragement, wherein he regrets his inability to suffer with them. Now a fresh difficulty arose for the Arian party. Though the condemnation of Athanasius was signed by many bishops, and the Papal legates were disposed of, yet Liberius was unconquered. How approach him? Eusebius, one of the eunuchs, a class, by the way, which was transplanted from the East at the decline of Roman greatness, was commissioned with the task. He approached the Pontiff with bribes, and was repulsed; and the bribe-money, which he placed as a gift on the tomb of the Apostles, was thrown into the street by the Pope's order. Threats were equally vain. "Let the Emperor," said the Pope, "replace Athanasius in his see and revoke his cruel edicts, and then we shall call a council, away from court influence; we will first anathematize Arianism, and then inquire into the charges against Athanasius." The Emperor then ordered the Pope to be brought to Milan, where, after a fruitless interview, he exiled him into Thrace. Such are in the main the circumstances which led to the alleged fall of Liberius; such is a glimpse of the troublous period of about a quarter of century. On inquiry we find the masses ignorant, many of the clergy little better than intruders, intriguers, and courtiers, who put their livings above their faith. We hear of wars in the North and East, of seditions in every city, often excited by factious bishops and their asseclæ, of exorbitant taxation and dishonest officials, of calumnies made and retracted, and then repeated, of forged documents and letters unscrupulously circulated. We find one Emperor a Pontifex Maximus while professing Christianity, and another an Arian and

a quack theologian. Add to this that the means of rapid communication, so familiar to us of the XIXth century, were then unknown, and we have the outlines of the IVth century.

II. We now come to the arguments used by those who regard Liberius as a heretic. The narrative given above of the part played by this Pope in the Athanasian difficulty is disputed by no one, so far as we know. When the eunuch Eusebius failed to extort by threats as well as by bribes the signature of the Pontiff in condemnation of the Alexandrian bishop, he retired to his imperial master at Milan. We have seen above how the Pope was sent for, interviewed and exiled to Beræa, in Thrace. After two years passed in misery he was permitted to return to Rome, where he ended his days peaceably. How, it is asked, did he obtain leave to return? An Emperor would certainly never yield to a bishop; and it is, therefore, obvious that the Pope yielded at length to the pressure put upon him, subscribed the condemnation, and in one word abjured the faith of Nice. Furthermore, he adopted as his own the creed of Sirmium, and thereby became formally an Arian. This is the substance of the charge. We shall proceed to quote from a few of the chief authors who make the charge, this being the fairest way to present our opponents' case. Gibbon, a historian of the skeptical school, and one who betrays peculiar fondness for Protestant historians, always preferring their opinions to those of Catholics when the honor of Rome is involved, expresses his opinion concerning the Liberius question in these few words: "When he was banished to Beræa, in Thrace, he sent back a large sum which had been offered for the accommodation of his journey, and *insulted* the court of Milan by the haughty remark that the Emperor and his eunuchs might want that gold to pay their soldiers and their bishops. The resolution of Liberius and Osius was at length subdued by the hardships of exile and confinement. The Roman Pontiff *purchased his return by some criminal compliances*, and afterwards expiated his guilt by a seasonable repentance." (Italics ours.) Decline and Fall, vol. ii., p. 345. Milman's. Such is the view taken by Protestants and infidels generally, and certainly it is jauntily enough expressed by the author quoted, who is esteemed by many the greatest and most lucid of modern historians.¹ As Bossuet, the author of the charming treatise or discourse on universal history, is so well known, and his opinions on controverted points of great weight, his presentation of the case against Liberius will probably appear the strongest exposition of adverse opinion we

¹ We may remark here, by the way, that Gibbon must have had in his mind the fictitious history of Pope Marcellinus and his repentance after his fall, with all the poetic accompaniments of tears and a council of edified clerics! For there is nowhere on record a "seasonable repentance," nor anything approaching it, in the career of Liberius.

can choose. It is not necessary here to give all the circumstances which brought out the famous "Defensio;" let it suffice to say, that when in A.D. 1682 the clergy of France ventured to assert their spiritual independence of Rome, Bossuet was chosen to draw up an exposition and a defence of their principles and position, and one of the grounds of the argument was, that the Roman See was not what it professed to be, infallible in matters of doctrinal teaching. After mentioning the repugnance he experiences in undertaking this work, he continues: "For my part I lean to the opinion that, of all these various formulas (the Arian or semi-Arian creeds of Sirmium), that which Liberius subscribed was the most innocent. But it is no less certain that Liberius acted very badly, since, knowing the artifices and the treachery of the Arians, he subscribed a profession of faith which dissembled the consubstantiality of Christ. . . . After this subscription Liberius did not hesitate, in letters as shameful as miserable, to take sides with the Arians and to banish Athanasius from his communion and from that of the Roman Church. But at this epoch, the communion of Athanasius was the Catholic communion. The conduct of Liberius justifies fully the anathema with which St. Hilary branded the memory of this Pope. St. Jerome says formally that Liberius subscribed an heretical formula. On his return, therefore, the Romans considered him only as a traitor who had deserted the cause of the faith, who had sullied himself with Arian filth, and who had communicated with the sectaries in everything except the question of second baptism. These are the very words of the *Liber Pontificalis*." Here is a terrible indictment, well presented, strongly supported, and if the authorities were but trustworthy, victoriously sustained. But the error lies in the evidence, not in Bossuet's logic. In his *Universal History*, he trips over this great historic problem in these few words: "The orthodox bishops were driven from their sees; the whole Church was filled with confusion and trouble; the constancy of Pope Liberius yields to the hardship of exile, and Osius, formerly the prop of the Church, is vanquished by suffering." The proofs for the double accusation of perfidy and apostasy the learned bishop finds in the *Fragments* of Hilary, in the words of Jerome, in the *acts* of Eusebius, and in the *Liber Pontificalis*. We shall dissect these authorities later on. Fleury, a historian of the rank Gallican school, who endeavors to pull down the reputation of the Popes wherever he meets them, after detailing the undisputed facts about the persecution of Liberius, says: "The bishop of Beræa when Liberius was in exile presented to him the Sirmium profession of faith, that is to say, according to the most probable opinion, the first proposed against Photinus at a council held in the year 351, at which Demophilus had assisted. It suppressed the terms

consubstantial and *like in substance*, but could otherwise be defended, as, in fact, it has been, by St. Hilary. Liberius approved of it and subscribed it as Catholic; he renounced the communion of Athanasius and embraced that of the Easterns, that is, of the Arians." Fleury here admits that the formula signed has an orthodox interpretation, but otherwise the tenor of his opinion is, that Liberius became a heretic, openly and scandalously. Perhaps the good Gaul did not see the patent contradiction in his words. Mosheim, the Lutheran historian, is at least no harder on the Pope than Fleury. He says in his church history: "The Emperor's (Constantius) attachment to the Arians animated him against their adversaries, whom he involved in various troubles and calamities, and obliged many of them by threats and punishment to come over to the sect which he esteemed and protected. Among these *forced* proselytes was Liberius, the Roman Pontiff, who was compelled to embrace Arianism, Anno 357." Respecting the original documents upon which these historians based their opinions, we may say that on their face they go strongly against Liberius, and it is only more modern and skilful criticism that has stripped them of their fictitious importance. The *Fragments* of Hilary, for instance, represent the Pope writing thus to the Eastern bishops: "To the most beloved priests and bishops of the East health. . . . As the law says, 'justa judicate filii hominum,' I do not defend Athanasius, . . . but when I saw . . . that you had condemned him justly, I joined in your judgment and sent letters . . . to Constantius. Having removed Athanasius, therefore, from the communion of all of us, . . . I say that I am at peace and concord with you all and with the Oriental bishops."¹

Further on, he says he accepts (*libente animo suscepi*) fully the Sirmian formula, etc. This is but a sample of the *Fragmenta*. Jerome says in his *Chronicles*: Liberius, overcome by the miseries of exile, subscribed the Arian heresy and entered Rome in triumph. The *Acta Eusebii* represent Liberius, after his return from exile, persecuting his former flock, publicly teaching Arianism, and joining with the Emperor to put the priest Eusebius to death. Even Bossuet dissents from the latter portion of this statement of the "Acts;" but altogether he regards them as good enough authority for his case, particularly as their contents agree strikingly with

¹ Here is the original quoted by Vincenzi, to whom we are greatly indebted for the materials of this article: "Dilectissimis fratribus presbyteris et episcopis orientalibus salutem . . . sicut lex loquitur 'justa judicate filii hominum' ego Athanasium non defendo. . . . At ubi cognovi, quando Deo placuit juste vos illum condemnasse, mox consensum commodavi sententiis vestris, litterasque super nomine ejus . . . dedi perferendas ad imperatorem Constantium. Itaque amoto Athanasio a communione omnium nostrum . . . dico me cum omnibus vobis et cum universis orientalibus episcopis pacem et unanimitatem habere."

the words of the *Liber Pontificalis*. Here, it is said, is testimony sufficient, if history may at all be trusted, to establish the treason of Liberius against religion and justice. True, he was made to suffer, but he yielded, and there is the proof of the fact! Add to these the doubt of Rufinus about the innocence of Liberius, his bitter condemnation by his successor, Damasus, and the hard accusation of the outraged Athanasius in his history to the monks, and what more proof do we want that the unfortunate Pope ceased to confirm his brethren?

III. Having heard fully the case against Liberius, it is now in order to show its weakness; and this we shall do, 1st, by establishing the presumption of the Pope's innocence; 2d, by giving on historic authority the true explanation of his return to Rome; 3d, by showing the documents used by our opponents to be valueless. Liberius was of Roman birth and became Pope, A.D. 352, a stormy period in the Church's history, when anarchy was beginning to prevail in the government, and heresy to grow strong apace. From his youth up Liberius had manifested great piety, and his humility caused him to shun the highest office on earth and to resist his appointment. This resistance will, of course, be set down by those ninnyes who measure all men by the rule of their own inclinations, as affected or "convenient;" but it is not in our power to scan and decipher men's intentions. His contemporaries, at least, thought his humility sincere. Up to the time of his reputed fall, his words, his letters, and all his acts were redolent of apostolic virtue; and after his restoration to his See, the same zeal to combat error, to denounce heresy, and to confirm his brethren by word and example, was ever manifest. In proof of this we may point to the tone of his letters regretting the fall of his legate Lucifer; his replies to the eunuch Eusebius; his rejection of the bribes offered him privately; his defiant tone to the Emperor himself; his refusal to take money for his journey from the Empress; his pathetic epistles to his legates in exile; his wish to suffer with them; his actual long-suffering in his cruel exile in Thrace. His expressed wish to suffer with the exiled bishops was, therefore, no bravado, but genuine, as the result proves. From these facts, which few deny, it is clear that the presumption of Liberius's innocence is very strong, so strong, in fact that to prove his fall demands evidence of the most positive and irrefragable kind. In his case we have not merely that legal presumption which shields the accused in every criminal case, "*nemo præsumitur malus*," but we have in his favor a chain of circumstances which preclude all probability of a fall. There are those who contend¹ that though Liberius signed an Arian

¹ Among them Natalis Alexander, vol. viii., 135, and in fact many Catholic writers and annalists, down to the last century. The fact that Liberius had signed a formula

formula, he did not become a heretic; for, they say, the formula he signed was really defensible, though it omits the "consubstantial." Now, granted for the moment that he did sign a formula, it is admitted that he signed it *under violent pressure* at the hands of imperial jailers; but such an act would be practically valueless. Secondly, the act, therefore, could not be interpreted to imply a wish to so teach the Church, in which case alone the Pope is declared infallible. Thirdly, since the creed said to have been *probably* signed by Liberius contained nothing positive against the faith, and only *omitted* an important word, even if intentionally, it would be interesting to know by what process of judicial interpretation his merely signing it could be called heretical *teaching*. Admitting, then, for argument's sake the fact of the signature of a Sirmian formula by Liberius, he cannot be said, as universal doctor of the Church, to have taught heresy. But we deny the fact of the signature absolutely. We are not called upon here to prove a negative; but as the alleged fact rests on the historic value of certain documents, we would have only to show that these documents are untrustworthy, in order to make clear the character of the accused. But we will not rest here. The presumption in favor of Liberius is strengthened by the favorable testimony of his contemporaries and immediate successors. We quote a few: St. Basil, in his Epistle 263, calls him "the most blessed bishop," and says that his faith and authority never failed. St. Ambrose, in the third book *de Virginibus*, calls him "beatæ memoriæ," of blessed memory—a term which he repeats frequently throughout the work. Pope Damasus, writing to the Illyrian bishops concerning the assent to be given the Nicene definition, says expressly that, though the council of Ariminum (Rimini) had decreed otherwise, "the Roman bishop Liberius, whose judgment must be sought before all others, gave no consent to its decrees." How could Damasus use this language, or enforce his own authority by the example of his predecessor, if there had been even a doubt of the latter's integrity? The inference is plain. Siricius, too, his second successor, cites the authority of Liberius adversely to re-baptism, and calls him "my predecessor of venerable memory." This is bitter irony if Liberius is not innocent. Athanasius, in his *Apologia*, thus relates the fall of Osius (or Hosius) of Cordova: (He signed the condemnation), "not because he thought us guilty, but because he was unable, by reason of his age and weakness, to bear his torture," No. 89. But there is not a word about the fall of Liberius, who was likewise in exile. Elsewhere he says that Liberius and Osius were witnesses who had preferred death to betrayal of the truth. If, however,

seemed to them established; but they took different views of the morality and significance of his act

both these heroes fell, historic accuracy requires that the whole truth be told. In his work, *De fuga sua*, No. 4, Athanasius informs us that while the Church was in peace, and the congregation at prayers, many bishops, and among them Liberius, a *herald of the truth*, were torn away and driven into exile for no other cause than their opposition to Arianism; that, furthermore, they did not subscribe the calumnies which were uttered against him (Athanasius). This was written after the return of Liberius to Rome; but, if he had, as alleged, departed from the Nicene faith, of what use would his testimony be, or what weight would his name add to the cause of Athanasius? Would not the latter, on the contrary, have mentioned the unfortunate fall of the one who, *up to a certain time*, had defended him? And if he was, by the subscription of the Pope, cut off from the communion of Rome, would he not have mentioned the fact? This is no doubt the view taken by the forgers of the "history of Arianism" attributed to Athanasius, wherein the fall is related at length. It has been contended by some editors that the last numbers of the *Apologia* above mentioned are not authentic; but the learned Vincenzi maintains that the reason given by those editors in support of their opinion—viz., that the *Apologia* was completed *before* the exile of Liberius—is of no force; and he shows that the work, which would be incomplete without Nos. 89 and 90, must, therefore, have been written after the return of Liberius to Rome, because it speaks of the exile. But this is not the place to reproduce the arguments this learned writer employs. In Sulpicius Severus, *Historia*, lib. iv., c. 12, is preserved an encyclical of Liberius, published after the Council of Rimini, in which he anathematizes Arianism and exhorts all who fell, whether by weakness or by violence, to return at once to the bosom of the Church. But in the *Fragmenta* several such letters are extant bearing the name of Liberius; these are all heretical in tone, while the former is orthodox in every particular. All, however, admit the authenticity of the orthodox letter. How, then, could Liberius have the audacity, had he written the *heretical* letters, to set himself up as a teacher, and a reprover of the fallen, without at least retracting his former words, and apologizing for the scandal he had given? No apology appears; on the contrary, the tone is commanding and, therefore, indicative of the authority of innocence. Had he himself been guilty and among those who "suffered detriment to their faith by force or fraud," the world must have known it. If Rome became Arian all the bishops knew it; and before the chief bishop could command their respect, he owed the Catholic world an apology for this greatest of scandals.

Let us go a step further, and assert that, had he fallen, volumes of episcopal reproaches and countless decrees of protesting councils

would have deluged his fated throne, and plunged him into a sea of disgrace,—the roar of whose waves would at this distant day deafen our ears, and make a defence of Liberius impossible. Two inferences follow,—first, Liberius did not, could not, have fallen by subscribing the Sirmian formula and the condemnation of Athanasius; secondly, all letters which bear the name of Liberius, and represent him favoring the Arians, are forgeries. Another circumstance strengthens these conclusions. After the restoration of Liberius a council was convened by the Emperor at Seleucia, and another simultaneously at Rimini. The Bishop of Rome was not invited, and therefore neither he nor his legates had any part in it. Had he been an Arian, as claimed, this would have been the time to exhibit him on the “ministerial benches.” After these unfortunate councils this Pope, who, we are told, had yielded to the Emperor, who had condemned Athanasius, and signed away his faith to regain his See, and eat his mess of pottage amid the seven hills, started suddenly into opposition, and anathematized the acts of the Emperor’s council. Strange independence of a fallen and servile Pope! *Iniquitas mentita est sibi.*

Again, Lucifer Calaritanus (of Cagliari), in his book against Constantius, Faustinus and Marcellinus, in their work presented to Valentinian and Arcadius, mention the exile of Osius and of Liberius. They state that Osius yielded to the persecution, but not a word have they about the Bishop of Rome. Strange omission!

Sulpicius Severus, too, *Historia*, lib. ii., No. 39, says: “Liberius of Rome and Hilary are sent into exile But Liberius is restored shortly after to Rome (Urbi) on account of the sedition there.” Farther on he states that Osius, then a dotting centenarian, probably yielded; but he says nothing of the kind about Liberius. How could these authors all conspire, as it were, to conceal from history the crime of Liberius, the *greater* sinner, and to parade the defection of the *lesser* light? Ammianus Marcellinus, a pagan historian of this era, in lib. xv., chap. vii., after epitomizing the great quarrel between the Emperor and Athanasius, states that the former’s will to banish the latter was opposed by the Bishop of the “Eternal City,” who, because he would not yield, was with great difficulty carried off at night against the will of the people, who loved him dearly.¹ This well-informed historian lays great stress

¹ The author’s words are: “Athanasium epum eo tempore apud Alexandriam altius se efferentem, ut prodidere rumores assidui cætus (synodus ut appellant), removit a sacramento. Hunc per subscriptionem abjicere sede sacerdotali, paria sentiens cæteris, jubente principe, Liberius monitus perseveranter renitebatur, nec visum hominem nec auditum damnare, nefas ultimum sæpe exclamans, aperte scilicet recalcitrans imperatoris arbitrio. Id enim ille, Athanasio semper infestus, licet sciret impletum, tamen auctoritate quoque *potiore* æternæ Urbis Episcopi *firmari*, desiderio nitebatur ardenti; *quo non impetrato*, Liberius ægre populi metu, qui ejus amore flagrabat, cum magna difficultate noctis medio potuit abportari.”

on the opposition shown by Liberius to the will of Constantius, but he does not say that the opposition at any time *ceased*, which cessation, had it ever taken place, the historian should and would necessarily have noted to make the narrative complete. Socrates says distinctly, lib. ii., c. xxxvii., that Liberius recovered his See shortly after his return (from exile); "for the Roman people, having become seditious, expelled Felix from the Church; and the Emperor, *though unwilling*, gave his assent." How could the Emperor be unwilling to restore Liberius to his See if the latter had fulfilled all his behests? It were inexplicable. Athanasius gives a full account of the trial made by Constantius to win over Liberius. When Eusebius, the eunuch sent by the Emperor to tempt the Pope with gold, received no better reception than Simon Magus, who tempted Peter, he resorted to threats. The interview thereupon ended, and the Pope replied to the threats by letter as follows: "You think to force me to subscribe to the condemnation of the Patriarch of Alexandria. How can I? Three consecutive councils, one of which represented the universal episcopate, have recognized, verified, and proclaimed the innocence of Athanasius. He was present. . . . We ourselves have heard all the calumnies with which they would crush him peremptorily refuted. We have admitted him to our communion. . . . We have pledged him the most tender affection; and now that he is absent, persecuted, proscribed, are we to hurl an anathema against him? No! such is not the rule of the ecclesiastical canons, nor the *tradition* of the blessed and great Apostle Peter, which our predecessors have transmitted to us. The Emperor, you say, wishes for peace; . . . let him commence by recalling the cruel edicts he has launched against the Patriarch; let him set Athanasius at liberty, and place him firmly in his See." *Hist. Arian.*, No. 36. Language like this was not calculated to appease an Emperor. The *Gesta Liberii*, a scroll lately discovered, tells us that for a time the Pontiff retired to the catacomb of Noella, in the Via Salaria, a voluntary exile; but his retreat was discovered, and he was led to Milan, where the Emperor held the following dialogue with him, reported in substance both by Athanasius and Theodoret. Said the Emperor: "As you are Bishop of our city, . . . we exhort you to reject the communion of Athanasius. The world has judged him," etc.

Liberius: "Sir, ecclesiastical judgments must be just. Establish a tribunal, . . . and, if he be found guilty, judgment will be pronounced. . . . We cannot condemn a man who has not been tried."

Emperor: "The world has condemned his impiety."

Liberius: "Those who subscribed his condemnation have not

seen all that passed. The glory you promise them, or the punishment you threaten, has influenced them."

Emperor: "What do you mean by the words glory and punishment?"

Liberius: "Those who love not the glory of God, and prefer your favors, have condemned him without trial. This is unworthy of Christians."

Emperor: "He has been judged by the Council of Tyre, where he was present."

Liberius: "Not in his presence, but after his withdrawal." (Here a bishop, who was by, put in that Liberius wished to boast, on his return to Rome, that he had baffled the Emperor.)

Emperor: "What do you account yourself in the world, to raise yourself alone to disturb the earth?"

Liberius: "Even if I were alone, the cause of the faith would not fall."

Emperor: "What has been once decreed cannot be reversed. The judgment of the majority of the bishops must decide, and you are the only one attached to this wretch."

Liberius: "Sir, we have never heard that, in the absence of the accused, a judge would consider him a wretch, as if he were his particular enemy."

Emperor: "He has offended the world in general, me in particular. I will send you back to Rome if you embrace the communion of the Churches. Yield for peace sake; subscribe, and return to Rome?"

Liberius: "I have already bid adieu to my brethren in Rome."

Emperor: "You will have three days to consider," etc.

Liberius: "Three days nor three months will not change my resolution. Send me where you like."

Here is language worthy of a Pope. Who can imagine this hero yielding cringingly afterwards to this very Emperor and retracting these sublime words? But if the Pope had prevaricated and condemned Athanasius, of what use would it have been for the latter to publish this interview? Both Athanasius and the Arian faction, and the whole world, in fact, knew the importance of having the Roman Bishop on their side. Hence the efforts made all around to secure his subscription. Hence the forgeries of the Arians, so unjust to Liberius. Hence, too, the *History* and other works written by the Bishop of Alexandria. It would, therefore, have been doubly absurd for Athanasius to hope for favor by claiming the Bishop of Rome's suffrage, if that suffrage had been reversed, and himself cut off from the Pope's communion.

But Theodoret, in lib. ii., c. 15, *et seq.*, of his *Ecclesiastical History*, accounts fully for the return of Liberius to Rome after his long

exile, and once for all settles the question at issue. Could any doubt remain after the evidence given above, the following account must dispel it: "The glorious athlete of the truth, Liberius, went into Thrace, as ordered; but after two years Constantius set out for Rome. The wives of the senators and nobility besought their husbands to approach the prince and ask him to restore the shepherd to his flock; adding that, if this were refused, they would leave their homes and migrate to their great shepherd. Their consorts said they feared the anger of the prince. 'He will, perhaps,' said they, 'not pardon us men; but if you ask him he will, doubtless, spare you. One, then, of two things will happen; he will either hear your prayers, or, if he refuse, he will at least send you away unhurt.' These most excellent women followed the advice, and approached the Emperor clad in elegant style, so as to insure a respectful reception on his recognizing them as nobles. Having come thus adorned before the Emperor, they suppliantly asked him to take pity on so great a city deprived of its shepherd and exposed to the fury of wolves. But he answered the matrons that the city did not want a second shepherd, having already a fit one to look after it; for, after the departure of the great Liberius, one of his deacons, Felix by name, was ordained. He, indeed, kept whole and inviolate the formula of faith expounded by the Fathers of Nice; but he communicated freely with those who had sullied it, and for this reason *none of the Roman citizens would enter the church while he was there.* This, too, the matrons made known to the Emperor. Yielding, therefore, the Emperor ordered *that illustrious man, worthy of all praise,* to return from exile."

Theodoret informs us, further on, that the sources of his information were "pious men still living." With evidence like this before him, it seems incomprehensible that any one could conceive the fall of Liberius to be other than a calumny of the blackest dye.

How, then, it will be asked, are we to account for the testimony of the *Liber Pontificalis*, of the *Fragmenta* of Hilary, or of St. Jerome, etc.? We might answer in general terms that, as the character of the Pope has been unanswerably vindicated, these so-called testimonies can be of no weight. But, to answer in detail, we say, 1st, as to the *Liber Pontificalis*. This is the journal of the Pope, so to speak, not compiled (as some have thought) by one person, but written up by many hands from a very remote period. This work informs us that Liberius was treated with by Ursatius and Valeus (his bitter enemies!), and recalled to Rome by the Emperor; but that, on his arrival there, he dared not enter, and besought the Emperor's cousin, Constantia, to intercede with the Emperor for him; that Felix was then expelled violently; that Liberius communicated freely with the Arians, and joined in a per-

secution of the clergy, who refused to receive him; that Felix died in peace, etc. Now this chapter is so full of contradictions that it at once reveals its origin. Firstly, Liberius is said to have come to terms with Constantius, and is recalled; yet he dares not enter Rome until he mollifies the Emperor through Constantia!—a glaring contradiction. Next, rebaptism is made to appear the theological difficulty between the Pope and the Emperor, though the question was not dreamt of at the time. Again, Liberius and Constantius are reported meeting in a council at Rome at a time (359) when the Emperor was in Pannonia warring with the Sarmatians and the Quadi. Fourthly, Felix was, we know, a *martyr*; yet, according to this book, he died naturally! As regards the persecutions at Rome, Liberius suffered with his clergy at the hands of the Arians. This self-contradictory chapter of the “Liber P.” is, therefore, a forgery in the interest of the Arians, most probably written while that faction were in the ascendant at Rome.¹

The *Fragments*, ascribed to St. Hilary, which accuse Liberius of signing an Arian formula, and of condemning Athanasius, are another forgery. St. Jerome knew nothing of them; for, in his enumeration of Hilary's works, he makes no mention of them. Next, they contradict the well-known convictions of Hilary, so oft repeated in his authentic works.

Rufinus, in his Church history, lib. i., speaking of the works of Hilary, is also ignorant of the *Fragmenta*. This author says that he is in doubt about the supposed fall of Liberius; but if he had read or heard of these *Fragments* (and he would if they existed), which so unhesitatingly record it, the authority of their author would have left no doubt in the mind of Rufinus, and he would have said simply, “Liberius fell.” Furthermore, while the *Fragments* give all those letters which represent Liberius as an abettor of Arianism, they studiously omit mention of the famous orthodox epistle of this Pope. The Arian compiler was very cunning, but overreached himself. Either, then, the *Fragmenta* are spurious, or the other reputed works of Hilary must be considered unauthentic. The latter proposition is preposterous, “a lame and impotent conclusion,” as all critics admit. The *Fragmenta* are, therefore, of no value, and the charge they support falls to the ground. In fact, the very existence of these forgeries over the renowned signature of Hilary would establish, in default of other evidence, the innocence of the man they accuse so boldly; for, the weaker and the more perverse the charge, the greater the desire of its inventors to father it on some great personage. 2d.

¹ Many chronologists, among them Muratori, are of opinion that the compilation of the Liber Pontificalis was not begun until somewhere in the eighth century. If this opinion is of any weight, the testimony of the work, as against Liberius, is nil.

The "Acta Enebii," discovered, in A. D. 1479, by Mombricitus, and reproduced in his *Miscellanea* by Baluze in the seventeenth century, seemed for a time to establish the guilt of Liberius, and were relied on as genuine by Bossuet.¹

They tell of a "man of God," Eusebius, who suffered martyrdom at the hands or with the complicity of Liberius, who had joined the Arians, etc. In a word, they are of the same tenor as the "Liber P." notice of Liberius; and betray the same spirit, if not the same hand. We know, contrary to these "Acta," that Pope Damasus praised the memory of his predecessor. We know, too, that the dialogue said to have taken place in Rome between the Pope and the Emperor in 359 is a fiction, yet the "Acts" record it.

Constantius never saw Rome after his month's stay in 358. These "Acts," or portions of them, are therefore self-confessed forgeries. 3d. We have the positive testimony of Jerome, who says that Liberius, "overcome with the hardships of exile, subscribed an heretical formula, and entered Rome as a conqueror." How shall we meet this? St. Jerome wrote far from the scenes he chronicled—in fact, in the Holy Land; and no doubt (unless the words be, as some contend, an interpolation) he wrote what he heard noised about him, some thirty years after the events, unsuspecting of the injury done a Pope by this horrid Arian slander. He alone, of all the Catholic writers of antiquity, asserts the guilt of Liberius, and he stands contradicted by the collective evidence of others so situated as better to know the truth. Like that of Bossuet, the dictum of Jerome, if genuine, was based on evidence regarded by him as *bona fide*, but which, in point of fact, was just the reverse. The opinion, that the sentence given from Jerome's *Chronicle* is also an Arian interpolation, has very strong arguments in its favor. We know that the works of Origen were tampered with, even during the lifetime of the author, by sectaries desirous of having the support of so great a name. He reclaimed, but in vain, and history has misjudged him. Athanasius and others complained of a like grievance. The wholesale forgeries of the Arians give us a presumption that this faction would secure Jerome's name, if possible. Besides, it is admitted that the *Chronicle* has, in fact, been interpolated, or otherwise disfigured; and Menochius (quoted by Barthélemy, *Errors and Historic Lies*) says, in this connection, that "there is not a trace of the fall of Liberius in the manuscript of the *Chronicles* of St. Jerome preserved in the Vatican, and given the Pope by the Queen of Sweden. This manuscript is

¹ Several other critics, even of that date, such as Pétan, Labbe, and Tillemont, either rejected the Acta, as fabrications of the Arians, or, at best, as very suspicious documents.

argued by Holstenius to be very ancient, and the learned believe it to have been written in the sixth or seventh century."

At best, then, the citation is doubtful, and therefore of no weight whatever. No wonder the historians should be so puzzled about which formula was signed, and to fix the date of the alleged fall of Liberius. A lie needs good backing, as liars need good memories. Both Socrates and Sozomen mentioned the matter in their histories, but they failed to mention on what basis they make their statements. They also disagree in their story; and Sozomen, who makes three references to the *fall*, disagrees with himself. Socrates places the exile, saying nothing of the fall, after the Council of Rimini (359). Sozomen, lib. iv., c. xi., says that, when Constantius went to Rome (358), he endeavored in vain to seduce Liberius, and exiled him. In c. xv. he says that the Emperor brought Liberius to Sirmium, and induced him to sign a formula made there (which one?), and that afterwards *rumors were set afloat* by Eudoxius and others that Liberius had condemned the word "consubstantial," and had acknowledged the Son dissimilar to the Father. In c. xix. he states that the Emperor enjoined on all to subscribe to the decrees of Rimini; and that those refusing, among them Liberius, Bishop of Rome, were driven from their sees. This is a sad mixture of dates and places!

But this chaos of forgery, folly, and fanaticism is growing tedious, and we must end somewhere. To recapitulate. 1st. It has been shown that the life of Liberius was irreproachable up to the year 355 or 356; that his letters to the exiled prelates, breathing a desire to suffer with them, his defiant attitude towards the Emperor, his rejection of all bribes, his long suffering in exile, the universal esteem in which his contemporaries held him, and, lastly, his condemnation of the decrees of Rimini, *after* his return from exile, establish the presumption of his innocence of the crimes of injustice, inconstancy, and apostasy. 2d. That the spirit of the Arians was one of lies and forgery, of which they were often convicted; and that the documents we have, accusing Liberius of apostasy, etc., bear evidence, internal and external, of interpolation, or worse. 3d. That whereas the Arian faction, with Constantius at its head, made frantic endeavors to secure the alliance of the Roman Bishop; and whereas such alliance would be of no use to them whatever, unless made known to the whole world by imperial proclamation, nevertheless there is no evidence to show that such a course was adopted; but, on the contrary, that "rumors (of the defection of Liberius) were set afloat," in an underhand way, were industriously circulated in the East, and afterwards wafted westward in documents bearing great names. This fact is the more remarkable, because the fall of Osius was published from the housetops as a

mighty victory. 4th. That, besides the negative and the circumstantial evidence adduced, we have the positive testimony of Sulpicius and of Theodoret that, not any criminal compliancy on the part of Liberius, but *the demand of the Romans*, induced the Emperor, much against his will, to restore the holy Bishop to his See. Is it any wonder, then, that turning to the Greek office we find Liberius catalogued among the saints? In the Greek *Menology* we read, at the 27th September, "The blessed Liberius, defender of the truth, was Bishop of Rome during the reign of Constantius. His zeal made him underake the defence of the great Athanasius. . . . Then Liberius, who fought with his whole strength against the malice of the heretics, was exiled to Beræa in Thrace. But the Romans, who loved and honored him, remained faithful to him, and besought the Emperor to restore him. Liberius returned to Rome, where he died after wisely governing his flock."

The spirit of error has ever been busy among men opposing God's work, but in the end truth shall prevail. The God-man was misrepresented and his death secured by calumny, and His Vicar on earth may expect no better treatment. Man's reason and will are weak, and a divinely constituted authority alone can guide him into truth. Our Lord knew this, and gave us in His Vicar the corner-stone of His Church, this infallible authority. The enemy of our salvation knows it too, and hence his endeavors to pull down the Papacy by impugning its doctrinal infallibility. Had this authority once erred, Christ's promises were vain; His work a fraud or a failure. The Council of the Vatican decreed that the Pope, teaching *ex cathedrâ*, is infallible, which decree insures Catholics that neither Liberius, nor any other occupant of Peter's chair, has ever taught the Church error. Nevertheless, it is highly useful and satisfactory for us to know that the voice of history re-echoes that of authority, and proclaims that no shade of error has ever clouded the brow that wears the Papal crown. As the ruins of ancient greatness, discovered in Egypt and elsewhere, confirm many things related in Scripture, so, as fresh manuscripts and monuments of other days emerge from the dust of centuries, we shall find vindications of many who are now maligned, not because they deserve it, but because they represent Him who said to His followers, "Blessed are you when they shall revile you and persecute you; speak all things evil against you untruly for my sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven." Matt. v. 2.

Here is a Latin translation of the formula supposed to have been signed by Liberius, taken from the *Bullarium Romanum*, vol. iii.:

"Sirmiensis fidei confessio aut formula Semiarianorum a Marco

Arethusio epô græce conscripta, a Liberio subscripta hæc est. Credimus in unum Deum patrem omnipotentem creatorem et factorem omnium, in quo omnis paternitas in cælo est, et in terra nominatur. Et in unigenitum ejus filium Dm. Nm. Jm. Xm. ante omnia sæcula ex patre genitum ex Deo, lumen de lumine per quem omnia in cælis et in terra facta sunt, tam invisibilia quam visibilia; eundemque verbum esse et sapientiam, lucem veram et vitam, et ultimis diebus hominem factum, natumque ex Sancta Virgine, crucifixum, et mortuum et sepultum esse, sedereque ad dexteram patris, venturumque in consummationem sæculi ut judicet vivos et mortuos, reddatque unicuique secundum opera sua. Cujus regnum indesinens permanebit in infinitas ætates. Sedet enim ad dextram patris non solum in hoc sæculo sed et in futuro. Et in spiritum sanctum hoc est paracletum quem promissum Apostolis post ascensum in coelos, misit ut doceret eos et commonefaceret omnium. Per quem omnes animæ quæ in eum sinceriter credunt sanctificantur." (Here follow twenty-six explicative paragraphs or articles.)

THE NEW SOVEREIGNTY.

IN what sense is the new sovereignty a departure from the old sovereignty; or can it be said that there is any new sovereignty at all? The old sovereignty made authority to be the sure guide of duty; it did this because authority was divine in its origin, and divine within the compass of its control. In the old Christian idea,—in the Catholic apprehension,—there was the authority which was known as the supernatural, and the authority which was known as the natural. The supernatural authority was the authority of the Church; that is, the authority of the teaching Church to teach truth, and the authority of the Christian ministry to perform functions. From this major authority, best known as the spiritual, the minor authority, say the social and domestic, derived a character which was something more than merely natural. If the Church could teach truths in the divine sense of truths, and was also mistress of the whole compass of moral theology, she could obviously define the limits as well as generally prescribe the character of her own relations to both the State and the family. But the new sovereignty—which was first begotten of the Reformation, then travestied or developed by the Revolution, then worked out into a speculative system by modern