

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE.

ALTHOUGH the question of the Infallibility of the Pope is that with which I am directly concerned in this course of Lectures, yet in treating of the matter historically I have found it necessary, before entering on the discussion of it, to trace the growth of Roman supremacy; because the claim to Infallibility was the last stage in the progress of Roman ambition. First, there was but the readily acknowledged claim to honourable precedence among Churches: then there was the claim to command, first over neighbouring Churches, afterwards over more distant ones; last of all came the idea of Infallibility. It did not necessarily arise out of the claim to sovereignty, for the most rightful of human rulers is not exempt from occasional errors; but the notion was suggested by the exemption which Rome seemed to enjoy from the calamities which befel other principal sees. At the third general council the bishop of Constantinople was deposed for heresy; at the fourth the bishop of Alexandria. Other sees were, in like manner, at times occupied by men whom the later Church repudiated as heretics. Probably the true explanation why it was long before the name of heretic permanently attached itself to any bishop of Rome is, that the side supported by the powerful influence of Rome always had the best chance of triumphing, and so of escaping the stigma of heresy which the defeated party incurred. At one time, indeed, it seemed for a moment that things might turn out differently; for on the temporary triumph of Eutychianism at the Robber Synod of A.D. 429, the bishop of Rome was excommunicated as a heretic; but by the opportune

death of the emperor the cloud blew over, and this piece of impudence was regarded as only aggravating the guilt of the Alexandrian. Thus, then, it was not until after some five centuries, during which the 'Chair of Peter' escaped any permanent stain of heresy, that the idea suggested itself that this exemption was a privilege conferred in answer to our Saviour's prayer that Peter's faith should not fail. We have now to inquire how far the belief in such a privilege is justified by facts ; and we must also examine whether the bishop of Rome has really discharged the office of teacher and guide to the Church, which it is imagined was conferred on him.

I have already (p. 390) spoken of the charge of heresy brought by Hippolytus against Zephyrinus and Callistus. Döllinger's is the only way of meeting that case which saves the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. An attempted proof that the accused bishops were really orthodox would leave it still open to reply that, at least Hippolytus regarded it, as a possible thing that the bishop of Rome might be a heretic. But if Hippolytus did not regard Callistus as bishop of Rome, no use can be made of the case in the present controversy.

I pass over minor matters and come at once to the great Arian controversy. I have already remarked that Constantine clearly knew nothing of the idea that the bishop of Rome was the appointed teacher and guide of the Church ; for if that had been the accepted belief of the Church of the day, the emperor could not but have heard of it ; and, being most anxious to suppress controversy, and to give peace to the Church, he would not have adopted the costly expedient of a council, but would have used the simpler method of obtaining a ruling from the bishop of Rome, if he had any reason to think that the Church would accept that ruling as decisive. But the history of these Arian disputes affords a painful proof that this controversy, at least, was not settled by the bishop of Rome. I allude to the fall of Liberius. The case being a celebrated one, it may be well to delay a little on it, and to state without exaggeration what the real amount of this fall was.

Liberius, to his credit, made at first a noble resistance to

the pressure put on him by the Arian Emperor Constantius.* He defied his threats and submitted to exile; but in his banishment he was purposely insulated from other confessors. His Church at Rome was committed to another, Felix, who was consecrated by three Arian bishops. And it was this which seems more than anything else to have wrought on the constancy of Liberius—the being separated from his see, and knowing that his place there was occupied by another. After two years' banishment he seems willing to submit to anything in order to obtain restoration. St. Jerome tells us that Fortunatian, bishop of Aquileia, who had lapsed into Arianism, seduced him and constrained him to the subscription of heresy. He became the bearer of the letter of Liberius to the emperor. The heretical creed was offered to Liberius by Demophilus of Constantinople, one of the worst of the Arians. Liberius writes to the Arians as his most beloved brethren the presbyters and his fellow-bishops, the bishops of the East. He apologizes to the bishops for ever having defended Athanasius, on the ground that bishop Julius, his predecessor, had so done; 'but having learned,' he says, 'when it pleased God, that you have condemned him justly, I assented to your sentence. So, then, Athanasius being removed from the communion of us all, so that I am not even to receive his letters, I say that I am quite at peace and concord with you all, and with all the Eastern bishops throughout the provinces. But that you may know better that in this letter I speak in true faith the same as my common lord and brother, Demophilus, who was so good as to vouchsafe to exhibit your Catholic creed, which at Sirmium was by many of our brethren and fellow-bishops considered, set forth, and received by all present: this I received with willing mind, contradicted in nothing. To it I gave my assent: this I follow; this is held by me.' St. Hilary interrupts the account thrice with the words, 'This is Arian faithlessness;' 'anathema, I say to thee, Liberius and thy associates;' 'again, and a third time, anathema to the

* In the following I abridge the story as told in Pusey's *Councils of the Church*, p. 168.

prevaricator Liberius.' Time compels me to omit another letter of Liberius, still more miserable, in which he puts himself expressly in communion with the whole Arian and semi-Arian party in the East and West, even with the worst of the Arians, out of communion with all who rejected the Arians, speaks of Athanasius as one who *was* bishop of Alexandria, and entreats his own restoration to Rome through the heads of the persecuting Arian party.*

There has been some dispute as to which of the three creeds known as Sirmian it was that Liberius signed. For myself, I think that it is of no importance which he signed, and that his signing means no more than communicating with the Arians, which it is certain he did. You will remember that the Arians were struggling for comprehension, and that they were willing to use extremely high language concerning our Lord's dignity. The worst of their formulæ did not assert anything untrue, but merely omitted the phrases which the orthodox used to exclude the Arians. For instance, if Liberius signed the worst of the Sirmian formulæ, he would only have had to say that we do not worship two gods; that our Lord said, 'My Father is greater than I,' and that the word 'homoöusios' is not in Scripture.

* A fine specimen of controversial courage was exhibited by the Jesuit Stilling, who (Bolland. *AA. SS.*, *Sept.* vi., 598 *seq.*) did not scruple to deny the fall of Liberius, condemning as forgeries all the passages of early writers which asserted it. However, he has not succeeded in convincing candid men of his own communion; and Hefele, for example (*History of Councils*, v. 81), satisfactorily disposes of the difficulties raised by Stilling against accepting the testimony of Athanasius (*Hist. Arian. ad Monachos*, c. 41, *Apolog. cont. Arian.* c. 89) and of Jerome, who, in his chronicle, has 'Liberius tædio victus exilii et in heretica pravitate subscribens Romam quasi victor intraverat,' and in his *Catalogue* condemns Fortunatian because 'Liberium Romanæ urbis episcopum, pro fide ad exilium pergentem, primus sollicitavit, ac fregit, et ad subscriptionem hæreseos compulit.' Hefele makes no doubt that Liberius agreed to the two things on which the Emperor insisted, namely, that he should join in the condemnation of Athanasius, and that he should enter into communion with the bishops who refused the Homoöusion. But he rejects the letters of Liberius, transcribed by Hilary, from which I have given an extract in the text. The question of the genuineness of these letters is a very subordinate one, affecting as it does, not the question of the fall of Liberius, but only the amount of humiliation with which that fall was attended. However, I believe them to be genuine. The fragments of Hilary which contain them are accepted as genuine by the best Roman Catholic critics, Tillemont, Fleury, Ceillier, Montfaucon, Möhler, &c. The arguments for

Imagine that the anti-supernaturalist party got complete ascendancy over the English Crown and Parliament; that they struck out of the English Prayerbook every assertion of the divinity of our Lord; that they made bishops of Mr. Voysey and some of the leading Unitarians; deposed and imprisoned the most formidable of the orthodox bishops, not on a charge of heresy, but of riot and sedition; that they put the archbishop of Canterbury into prison, and required his subscription to the Unitarian creed; suppose that after a couple of years' imprisonment, finding that a leading Broad Church clergyman was about to be permanently fixed in his see, he yielded so far as to acknowledge Voysey as his dear brother bishop, and to disavow all connexion with the orthodox bishop who had been deposed; would it make much difference more or less whether he at the same time signed a formula declaring that our Lord was perfect man, that his life had been a model of excellence, and his doctrines unsurpassed in purity—but saying nothing about his divinity?

This consideration that the fault of Liberius was not so much the '*assertio falsi*' as the '*suppressio veri*,' demolishes

the genuineness urged by the Benedictine editors seem to me quite convincing, and dispose by anticipation of the very weak objections raised by Hefele. There remains the question, may not Hilary have been mistaken, and been imposed on by Arian forgeries in the name of Liberius? I do not think this likely; and it appears to me that Jerome also accepted the letters as genuine; for I believe that it was from one of them he learned the share taken by Fortunatian in the lapse of Liberius. But I believe that if these letters had been Arian forgeries they would have claimed far more countenance from Liberius than these letters give. They only represent him as signing the first Sirmian creed, a formula so near orthodoxy that the difficulty is, if this were all that Liberius had done, why should Hilary be so angry with him for doing what he treats tenderly in the case of others? But to this the Benedictine editors make a perfectly good answer, viz. that we judge very differently of the same words if spoken by an adversary who seems to be approaching the truth, and if spoken by a former defender of the truth who now seems to be making defection from it. The letters in question though they give a humiliating picture of the broken courage of Liberius, yet do not represent him as doing anything that a man orthodox in heart might not under pressure bring himself to. The formula he signed stated nothing false; and the guilt or innocence of Athanasius, he might persuade himself, was a merely personal question. I take it that it was in consequence of the letters written from Berœa announcing the willingness of Liberius to comply with the conditions insisted on by the emperor, that Liberius was summoned to what is called the third Sirmian Council.

at once one of the apologies made for his prevarication, namely, that he erred only as a private doctor, and not as the teacher of the Church. Exactly the opposite I believe to be the case. I do not think there is any evidence to lead us to think that in his private capacity he thought less highly of our Lord than any of us do. In his heart, I doubt not, he condemned Arianism. It was in his official letters, addressed to all the bishops of the East, and intended for publication by them, that he gave to Arianism all the weight of his official position, treating the questions that had been raised about our Saviour's person as matters on which different opinions might be held without necessitating any breach of communion. Take, however, the most favourable view of his conduct, and it is plain that in the Arian dispute it was not the bishop of Rome who was the teacher and guide of the Church: that duty was performed by Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria.

This schism between Felix and Liberius has introduced a good deal of perplexity into Church history. Notwithstanding the bad auspices under which Felix was introduced, he appears to have been a good man, and to have had a considerable following. He had been archdeacon, and it was usually the archdeacon who succeeded to the bishopric. After the death of Liberius, the ultra-orthodox refused to accept anyone as bishop who had taken the side of Felix; and this one of the candidates, Damasus, had done, the candidate who was ultimately successful, and to whom Jerome addresses the most highflown language as to the dignity of his see. He was opposed by Ursinus, and the scenes of riot were so great as to surpass anything we now know of in the most stormy election contest. One Sunday over a hundred dead bodies were taken out of the church where a contest had been going on. With the success of the party of Damasus the memory of Felix became gradually purified from the taint of heresy. The series of Roman pontiffs now includes a Felix II., who is honoured as a saint and martyr. How to fit in his history has puzzled historians; but the most learned believe that he is no other than the antagonist of Liberius.

We come down now a little later, to the Pelagian controversy, and have to inquire whether it was the bishop of Rome who, on the questions then at issue, taught the Church how to believe. She had much need of guidance, for she had been perplexed by contrary decisions. An African council had condemned Pelagius ; but he had been pronounced orthodox by another council at Diospolis in Palestine. The African bishops appealed to Rome, and obtained Pope Innocent's approval of their decisions. But a letter and confession of faith, which Pelagius sent to Rome, did not arrive until after Innocent's death, and the question came for further hearing before his successor, Zosimus. Cælestius, the doctrinal ally of Pelagius, appeared in person at Rome, and, having made his profession of faith, was carefully cross-examined by the Pope. It is possible that there may have been something in the early training of Zosimus to dispose him favourably to the accused ; for his Greek name suggests that he may have been of Eastern extraction ; and the Fathers of the Eastern Church have always accentuated man's freewill more strongly than St. Augustine taught the West to do. Whether this be so or not, Zosimus arrived at the conclusion that Cælestius and Pelagius had been unjustly accused ; and he wrote to the African bishops two letters expressing this opinion—the first after his interview with Cælestius, the other after receiving the letter of Pelagius. He strongly censures the two bishops, Heros and Lazarus, who had played the part of accusers, describing them as turbulent mischiefmakers, whose own election to the episcopate had been annulled, and whom he had excommunicated. He lectures the African bishops on the duty of not being hasty in believing evil of their neighbours : he tells them that they need be no more ashamed of retracting a condemnation hastily pronounced than those who had condemned the chaste Susanna were of acquitting her after her innocence had been established by Daniel : that if there was joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, there ought to be still more joy on discovering that one who had been supposed to have sinned had not sinned at all. He only wishes they could have been present to hear the professions of Cælestius and Pelagius. Those who had been there had

been moved almost to tears that men of such perfect orthodoxy ('*absolutæ fidei*') should have been so unjustly defamed. Notwithstanding, the African bishops stood firm, and in full council passed canons condemning anew the Pelagian errors. Nor did they rely on spiritual weapons only; for an interference of the civil power was obtained, subjecting Pelagius and his adherents to severe penalties, including that of banishment. Then the Pope gave way, and by timely yielding has escaped the stigma of heresy. The accepted Roman Catholic theory is that Zosimus was an orthodox man who, although he fancied he had fully examined into the question, had allowed his simplicity to be imposed on by the cunning of the heretics, until the clear-sighted African bishops set him straight. Suppose we accept this view, yet still we must ask the question, Who then fulfilled the office of guide to the Church? Was it the pope who taught the African bishops, or they who taught him? When I observe how they refused to accept the voice of the oracle until the oracle had given the answer they desired, I am reminded of having heard of a man who never trusted his judgment when he had to make a practical decision, but always tossed up. If the result agreed with his own inclinations he acted on it confidently, feeling that he was not gratifying his own wishes, but obeying the guidance of the lot. If the result was not what he liked, he tossed again.

The only one of the great controversies in which the pope really did his part in teaching Christians what to believe was the Eutychian controversy. Leo the Great, instead of waiting, as popes usually do, till the question was settled, published his sentiments at the beginning, and his letter to Flavian was adopted at the Council of Chalcedon. This is what would have always happened if God had really made the pope the guide to the Church; but this case is quite exceptional, resulting from the accident that Leo was a good theologian, besides being a man of great vigour of character. No similar influence was exercised either by his predecessors or his successors; and I have already remarked that Leo failed to settle the question. In the West, indeed, his authority was decisive; but in the East his opinion was accepted only by those who

had been of the same opinion before ; and Chalcedon and Leo's letter enjoyed only a precarious and fluctuating ascendancy.

If the pope appears to advantage in the history of the fourth general council, there is a lamentable downfall when we come to that of the fifth. I have already remarked that there was a reversal of parts between the third and fourth councils, several, such as Theodoret, who had narrowly escaped condemnation as Nestorians taking a leading part at Chalcedon. What may be called the rationalistic section was defeated at the former and triumphed at the latter. This was very shocking to the Alexandrians. I referred before to attempts made to unite the Monophysites with the Eastern Church, by making an entirely new statement of orthodox doctrine, and throwing overboard Chalcedon and Leo's letter altogether. That such attempts should be made, and with some apparent hopes of success, shows how little the infallibility of pope or council was believed in in the East. The popes naturally resisted these attempts, and, being politically independent of the Eastern empire, were able to make their opposition effectual ; but in the sixth century the Eastern Emperor Justinian made himself master of Italy ; and what followed may lead us to judge how little the dream of Roman Infallibility would have been likely to have arisen, if it had not been for the removal of the seat of empire to Constantinople, which left the pope for centuries to reign at Rome without rival or superior. Justinian imagined that he might be able to reconcile the Monophysites by condemning, not indeed Chalcedon, but some of those leading divines whose orthodoxy Chalcedon had admitted, but who were specially obnoxious to the Monophysite party. It was naturally disliked in the West that the verdict of the great council which they accepted should be reviewed and reversed, even though the point in question were not the general statement of doctrine, but only the pronouncing on the orthodoxy of individuals. The African bishops stoutly resisted. The pope showed the greatest reluctance to join, but, under the powerful pressure which the emperor put on him, he wriggled and twisted in the most humiliating way, trying to please both parties—

the emperor and his Western brethren—and with the usual result of pleasing neither. It was not until after his name had been struck out of the diptychs by the council that he yielded a tardy and undignified assent. I have so little sympathy with the trial of men for heresy a hundred years after their death that I have never cared to form an opinion of my own whether the writings condemned by the fifth council deserved the censure passed on them. But as the acts of the council received the confirmation of the pope, and are now recognized by the Roman Church, we must assume that the council was in the right all through. What respect can we have then for Vigilius, as guide to the Church, who resisted the council as long as resistance was possible; who held the same relation to it of late and reluctant assent as Eusebius of Cæsarea held to the Council of Nicæa, or Theodoret to that of Ephesus?

It might seem that the claims of the pope to be the guide of the Church could hardly fall lower than at the fifth council; but lower they did fall at the sixth. In the acts of that council, after anathematizing other Monothelite heretics, they proceed: 'with these we likewise provide that Honorius, who was bishop of Rome, should be cast forth from the Church of God, and anathematized; because we find by his writings to Sergius that he followed his mind in all things, and confirmed his impious dogmas.' In another part of the proceedings, where the heretics and their patrons are anathematized by name, we have: 'Anathema to the heretic Theodorus: anathema to the heretic Cyrus: anathema to the heretic Honorius;' and this anathema is repeated in two or three other parts of the proceedings. Further, there is an epistle of Pope Leo II. confirming the acts of this general council, in which, after anathematizing Theodore, Cyrus, Sergius, and others, he adds, 'also Honorius, who did not illuminate this apostolic see with the doctrine of apostolic tradition, but permitted her who was undefiled to be polluted by profane teaching.' This condemnation is repeated in the second Council of Nicæa, counted by Roman Catholics as the seventh general; and the adversaries of images are classed with Arius, Macedonius, Apollinarius, Nestorius,

Honorius, and all their pestilent crew. The council reckoned as the eighth general also condemns Honorius. The profession of faith made by the popes on their day of election, from the sixth to the ninth century, contains a profession of assent to the anathema passed by the fathers of the sixth general council on the other Monothelites, and 'on Honorius, who fomented their detestable teaching.'

The condemnation of Honorius was inserted in the Roman breviaries down to the end of the sixteenth century. It has been left out of those published since; but this mere attempt to drop his condemnation out of sight is not enough for the present generation. In our day, when all the villains of history have been whitewashed, it might be expected that some attempt would be made to rehabilitate Pope Honorius, even if his case were not a formidable stumbling-block in the way of a popular theory. The first attempts were somewhat inconsistent with each other. Honorius was never condemned: he was condemned unjustly: he was condemned only as a private doctor: he was censured, not as a heretic, but only as not having been sufficiently energetic in putting down heresy. The letters attributed to him are forged; they are perfectly orthodox.

Of the defences made at the present day by the advocates of Infallibility, the first to be examined is the assertion that the pope, in the letters which have been censured, did not teach *ex cathedra*, inasmuch as it does not appear that these letters had been read in a synod of Italian bishops, nor do they bear marks of being addressed to the universal Church. The point here raised is an important one, and it is not really a digression from the case of Honorius if I delay to give a full discussion of it. Everyone can understand that there is a clear distinction between legal decisions pronounced by a judge on the bench and opinions on points of law which he may have expressed in private conversation. So we readily admit that, supposing the pope to possess the gift of Infallibility, that attribute is not to be expected to attach to things occasionally said by him in his private capacity, and not in that of public teacher of the Church. But this is no justification for a number of arbitrary rules.

which have been invented for distinguishing when the pope speaks *ex cathedra*—rules as to which the advocates of Infallibility have been able to come to no agreement.* And yet it has been necessary to invent such rules, in order to relieve the papal see of the responsibility of a number of decisions which everyone owns to be erroneous. To my mind, the only common-sense view is, that the pope speaks *ex cathedra* whenever he clearly speaks in his official capacity: that is to say, whenever, either spontaneously, or in answer to questions addressed to him as pope, he publishes in writing his decisions on a question of doctrine. If you try beyond this to introduce conditions for *ex cathedra* utterances, these are mere crotchets of theologians. The case is just the same as if a physician set up to be infallible, and, after a number of patients had died under his treatment, you endeavoured to frame a set of rules, distinguishing by the kind of paper they were written on, or the manner in which he had affixed his signature, the prescriptions in which he was to be regarded as speaking as a private person from those which he had given as the infallible physician. I need not speak, then, of arbitrary rules, such as that the decree should be affixed to the door of St. Peter's, or any other, as to the observance of which Christian people in general would have no evidence.

One theory made it necessary to an *ex cathedra* utterance that the decree should be made in council. In point of fact, the earliest papal decisions were always so made. The reason of this was that the pope's personal authority was not, in early times, so strong that he could afford not to back it up with the opinion of others. When the pope sent his decision to the East, for instance, he used to summon previously a council of all the bishops within reach, so that he might speak in their name as well as in his own. This conciliar form, belonging to many of the earlier papal

* I remember that at the time of the Vatican Council, one of the opponents of the dogma of the pope's personal infallibility declared himself willing to acknowledge that the pope was infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra*, only he was not convinced that since our Lord's time any pope ever had spoken *ex cathedra*.

utterances, has been imitated in later times by papal allocutions being addressed, in the first instance, to an assembly of cardinals or other bishops. But it is clearly inconsistent with modern ideas of papal infallibility to make the presence of a council necessary. Suppose some of the council should not agree, would the decree be less binding? If the council added nothing to the authority of the decree, why summon them to hear what might in no way concern them?

Another theory made it necessary that the Pope should have duly deliberated about the matter in hand, and have taken the advice of theologians and learned doctors, for it was notorious, it was said, that many popes have been very ignorant, and that without the use of such means their opinions would not be entitled to regard. But it was soon seen that the gift of infallibility would be worthless if any such condition were attached to its exercise. It might be very proper and right that the pope, before announcing his decision, should take advice. Pius IX., I have already told you, did so before defining the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. But, plainly, his authority would be worth nothing if those to whom his decrees were addressed were entitled to inquire whether or not he had used these human means to guide his judgment. Clearly their duty as obedient subjects is to take for granted that he has done everything that is right.

Received Roman Catholic theory does, indeed, recognize one case where the absence of sufficient care deprives papal utterances of the attribute of infallibility: it is held that the 'obiter dicta' in such an utterance may be erroneous. This distinction prevails in our own law courts. Though the judgment of a Court of Appeal binds inferior courts, yet if the judges in pronouncing sentence express an opinion on a subject not immediately before them, that goes for nothing, it being possible that if they had heard the question properly argued they might have changed their sentiments. Thus, Pope Nicolas I. was consulted by the Bulgarians whether a Jew or a Pagan could give valid baptism. He replied in the affirmative, but further volunteered the information that the baptism would be equally good, whether given in the name of

Jesus alone or in that of the Three Persons of the Trinity.* This is now given up as clearly erroneous teaching, but is excused as an 'obiter dictum,' the Pope having gone out of his way to answer a question he had not been asked. It seems to me that the analogy to our law courts does not hold. Judges who decide by human wisdom may go wrong for want of adequate use of human means to guide and inform their judgments. But if the Holy Spirit inspire the sentence He cannot be supposed dependent on these human means; and if information is given which had not been asked for, this surely ought to be attributed to the Holy Spirit's special direction, and to be received with all the more reverence. The Pope's authority would fail to be decisive in disputes if the parties are to be at liberty to pull his sentence to pieces, and decide how much of it they will receive.

Now, as regards this particular case, remember that the Roman Church holds that an unbaptized person cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven, and that baptism in the name of Jesus alone is not valid. It follows that if the Bulgarians accepted the instruction officially given them by the Pope, hundreds of them may have imagined themselves baptized when they really were not, and then, for want of baptism, their souls must have been eternally lost. Now, it seems to me monstrous to imagine that anyone could be damned for following the guidance of him whom Christ had appointed as teacher of the Church. So that if I believed the pope to hold this office, I should find myself constrained to believe that the ruling of Nicolas was right. No evasion as to the form in which the instruction was conveyed will suffice. If the Pope be Christ's vicar, it is incredible that he could be permitted officially to mislead His people into error inconsistent with their salvation.

The Vatican Council of 1870 made what must be regarded as an attempt to answer the long unsettled question, What is the test of an *ex cathedra* utterance? It declared that the pope speaks *ex cathedra* 'when, performing his office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, in virtue of his apostolic authority,

* *Respons. ad consult. Bulg. civ.*, Mansi. xv., 431.

he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the universal Church.' The condition here indicated is derived from Bellarmine, who makes it a condition for an *ex cathedra* decree that it should be addressed to the whole Church, or that it should proclaim a moral law to the whole Church. All these conditions are generally invented in order to save the Church from being bound by some palpably erroneous papal decisions. Thus, Eugenius IV., in his instruction to the Armenians, to be found annexed to the Acts of the Council of Florence, explains the doctrine of the Seven Sacraments. Now, not to speak of other points in which his teaching is now owned to be erroneous, he lays down that the matter and form of the sacrament of Orders is the delivery of the vessels, together with certain words. But as this rite and the words in question were never used in the Church for the first thousand years and more, it would follow, if this were correct, that the Church for so long a time had no valid Orders—a consequence which makes it necessary that the doctrine of Eugenius shall in some way be taken out of the category of *ex cathedra* decisions. Yet it is obviously a most unfair limitation to papal infallibility to maintain that the appointed guide to Christians collectively is unable to conduct them safely if they consult him individually. Really believe that the Pope is an infallible guide, and nothing but the controversial exigency of relieving yourself from assent to certain erroneous papal decisions could induce you to put such a limitation on the office entrusted to him by Christ. But, further, this measure of relief to weak consciences is altogether too sweeping in its application. For over a thousand years of the Church's history no single decree of a pope addressed to the universal Church is known. The Bull, 'Unam Sanctam,' of Pope Boniface VIII., in 1303, is the first addressed to the whole Church. I told you how a Jesuit writer urged it as an unanswerable reply to Dr. Pusey's theory of infallibility, that his condition that the Church should be undivided makes it necessary to maintain that the gift has been dormant for the last 1200 years—that is to say, for two-thirds of the lifetime of the Church. And surely the objection is just as fatal if it was for the *first* 1200 years the gift was

dormant, and if it were only in comparatively modern times that the pope awoke to the exercise of his full powers.

To apply all this to the case of Honorius, if the defence be made for him that his erroneous doctrine was not propounded *ex cathedra*, the only distinction in this matter that I can recognize as rational is that between the pope's official and non-official utterances; and in this Monothelite controversy the pope's sentiments were undoubtedly expressed officially. The Eastern patriarchs would have troubled themselves little about the opinion of a private Italian divine named Honorius; but it was of the utmost importance to know what line would be taken by the bishop of Rome. But we need the less contest this point, as it would pain the papal advocates of the present day to acknowledge that Honorius, even in his private capacity, was a heretic; and they maintain that the letters of Honorius are quite orthodox. Perhaps that may be my own opinion; but not the less do I protest against Dr. Manning and his coadjutors committing such an audacious exercise of private judgment as to approve as orthodox letters which were burnt as heretical by the sixth general council, condemned by the two succeeding councils, and by all the popes for centuries in their solemn profession of faith on their day of installation.

In our times, when so many unfavourable judgments of history are reversed or mitigated, it is only natural that the heretics of old should get the benefit of the same court of appeal. Many of them are only known to us by the writings of their opponents, men often most bitterly prejudiced against them and incapable of giving them what we should count fair play. Often, no doubt, they were made answerable for consequences which, whether truly following from their premisses or not, they themselves repudiated. The subjects in debate were often most abstruse, the terminology most difficult; and it is quite possible that in some cases the differences were only verbal, and that men were counted as heretics who did not really differ from the orthodox so much in faith as in their manner of expressing themselves. I can well believe that some who are counted as bad heretics were worthy, well-meaning men, who had puzzled their heads with bad

metaphysics, on subjects which the human understanding is ill able to grasp. Perhaps a Roman Catholic will say that it is because I am a heretic myself that I am inclined to think not very ill of heretics; and if I feel bound to class Pope Honorius under that denomination, I do not at all think unfavourably of him on the whole, nor am I disposed to deny that, heretic as he was, he may have been a very worthy man and a very good Christian.

In fact I count that there are no heretics better entitled to charitable apologies than the Monothelites. Christianity was at the time fearfully weakened in the East by internal divisions on the question concerning our Lord's twofold nature. If by any mutual explanation union could be restored, undoubtedly the greatest benefit would be conferred on the Church. Now the most orthodox defender of Christ's twofold nature would grant, that in His sinless humanity there was not that conflict of two wills which we experience, but that in His case the 'law of the members' was in complete subjection to 'the law of the mind.' On the other hand, it seemed that all the Monophysites were contending for might be satisfied by an explicit recognition of the perfect harmony between our Lord's two natures. Thus there seemed to be a hopeful prospect of compromise, on the terms that both parties should agree in recognizing in our Lord a single will. The plan appeared for the moment successful; the Monophysites largely assented; the emperor adopted the scheme, and it was agreed to by the patriarchs of the four great sees—Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch. The patriarch of Jerusalem alone held out, and by his strenuous opposition overturned the compromise. Certainly, then, on this occasion it was he, and not the bishop of Rome, who was the teacher of the Church.

The feeling of the present day on the question whether we ought to say that our Lord had a single will or two harmonious wills would be to condemn more strongly the raising of the question than the determining it wrongly. The majority, I imagine, have rather a Carbonarian faith in the Church's doctrine on this subject; and if they had been told that it was the Dithelites whom they were to condemn as heretics,

would have been equally ready to assent. There is a sense in which Monothelism is certainly inconsistent with the truth of our Lord's twofold nature; and we must therefore rejoice that Sophronius of Jerusalem prevented the adoption of a formula which might have tended to undermine the doctrine of the Incarnation; but whether the heretical sense was that in which the doctrine was held by Sergius and other leading Monothelites is more than I will undertake to say. I have no harsh inclination to repel any excuses that may be offered for any of them; but I see no reason for making any special exemption in favour of Honorius, or separating his case from that of other Monothelites. One cannot do so without directly contradicting the sixth general council, which declared that Honorius 'in all things had followed the opinions of Sergius and had sanctioned his impious dogmas.'

But the truth is, we have no interest whatever in debating the personal orthodoxy of Honorius, or in trying him for heresy twelve centuries after his death. The question which has importance for our times is not whether this or that pope was a heretic, but whether it is possible for a pope to be a heretic. The case of Honorius shows that as late as the seventh century no suspicion had entered the mind of the Church that it was not. We need not go behind the acclamations of the council, 'Anathema to the heretic Sergius, anathema to the heretic Honorius.' If these anathemas are not conclusive against the individual, they are conclusive against the pope. They prove to demonstration that whether Honorius personally deserved condemnation or not, his official position was not regarded in men's minds then, either as securing him against the possibility of falling into heresy, or as protecting him against condemnation if he did.

For another reason, the question concerning the personal orthodoxy of Honorius or any other pope is one with which we have the very slightest concern. When it was suggested that we might content ourselves with the guidance of the Holy Scriptures, Romanist advocates have replied, that though the Bible may be infallible it is not an infallible guide: that is to say, it does not protect those who follow it from danger of going wrong. Surely now we may say as much for the pope. Let

him be infallible if you please ; let him be in his heart of the most admirable orthodoxy, still he is not an infallible guide if by his public utterances he leads Christian people wrong. If a guide misconduct us, it is not the least comfort to us to be told that this man has really a most thorough knowledge of the passes, and before being admitted as guide had passed a most brilliant examination. Now, it is beyond controversy that cases have occurred when Christian people would have gone wrong if they followed the guidance of the bishop of Rome. Liberius may in his heart have had infallible knowledge that Athanasius was in the right and his opponents vile heretics ; but the Christian world was not concerned with the thoughts of Liberius but with his acts ; and they who were guided by *them* would find themselves ranged against Athanasius and on the side of his opponents. And not to go through a host of other cases, at which I have glanced already, where the Christian world avoided heresy by following some guidance different from that of the bishop of Rome, Honorius may have had in his heart, if you choose to say so, the most orthodox abhorrence of Monothelism. But all this supposed internal orthodoxy does not alter the fact that in his capacity of guide he did all that in him lay to lead the Christian world into that heresy. So it remains proved that even if it were possible to demonstrate that no bishop of Rome had ever entertained sentiments that were not most rigidly orthodox, still the pope is not an infallible *guide*.