

## INTERESTING HISTORY

### Something About the Roman Church Which Is Not Generally Known.

#### How the Decree of Infallibility Was Carried—Liberations Lives of Some of the Popes.

(Translated from the Swedish of Carl Skog by Carl M. Helgren.)

Up to the year 1870 the fundamental doctrine of Romanism was that of the one baptizing, infallible church. They maintain, however, that in that year, by some divine revelation, the infallibility of the church was transferred to the pope, and from that time the doctrine of the pope's infallibility must be regarded as the very sum and substance of the Roman Catholic system of belief.

This revelation was imparted as follows: Pope Pius IX. convoked, after many preparatory negotiations, a diet at Rome.

Seven hundred and sixty-four bishops assembled at this meeting. A large part of these, however, were only traveling missionaries, who had been summoned from their distant fields, besides which the pope had appointed a large number of titular bishops in order to increase the number of votes for the coming resolutions. About 300 of the delegates were provided with board and lodging by the pope himself, and these were solemnly reminded, through the pope's official organ, the Jesuit paper, *Civiltà Cattolica*, not to forget that which gratitude imposed on them towards their exalted host, as regards the matter under discussion at the meeting. Many other wise provisions had been made by the cunning Jesuits to insure the proper direction to the revelation. Among others, the intentionally chosen hall was so arranged that from certain parts thereof a speaker could only be heard with the greatest difficulty. Those whom the pope suspected of belonging to the opposition were mostly placed here, so that it went with particular ease to effect that which the papal majority had already decided. For the sake of further certainty, the pope had taken it upon himself to decide the order of business, and also the right to pronounce the final decisive word.

Those that expected a free meeting with free discussion were therefore thoroughly undeceived. The doctrine of infallibility was contested by 150 delegates, the most learned, and, as regards influence, the most powerful of those present. But their protests were in vain. In vain were their arguments, however profound and learned. Either the leaders of the opposition could not be heard, or they were interrupted by the chairman's bell, or they were received by the pope's majority with irrelevancies. When, finally, everything had thus been pre-arranged, every warning voice of truth hushed, and all opposition broken, the divine revelation was at last imparted, was proclaimed by the holy father in the following words: "It is a divinely revealed truth, that the pope, when he speaks from the pulpit (*ex-cathedra*) as the shepherd and teacher of all Christians, and sanctions provisions for faith and customs, that shall be followed by the whole church, by virtue of the divine assistance promised through St. Peter, enjoins and commands with that infallibility with which the Lord has desired his church to be endowed for the confirmation of doctrines of faith and customs, and that therefore the pope's doctrinal provisions are irrefragable by virtue of themselves" (*ex sese irrefragabiles*)—*Constit. Pastor eternus*). This was followed by thundering "placet" (applause) from the pope's boarders, missionaries, titular bishops, and—the divine revelation was made, the anticipation of centuries of popes crowned with the most brilliant success, the pope was (to quote Martensen) exalted as "vice-God of the world."

Most of the opposition, discouraged and desperate at the papal-jesuitical conspiracy for the suppression of liberty of speech, had left the meeting, and the few remaining could accomplish nothing. The whole came, however, to an unexpectedly ignominious conclusion. The intention was to celebrate the conferred revelation with a grand illumination, but a violent thunder storm with rain made this impossible. Only a few "bravos" and little applause was heard, and a few nuns beat their breast and emotionally sobbed forth "papa mio" (my pope). "No further demonstrations were made," remarked Martensen sarcastically.

A storm of indignation from the

depths of injured Christian consciousness gave vent in protests and refutations from both Catholics and Protestants, when the prodigious "revelation" was announced to the world. It was asked: Is it an exhibition of mad folly, or is it a premeditated act of human presumption and pride? And it was only by placing the strongest constraint on their loudly uttered convictions, that a very large part of both the higher and lower Catholic clergy were induced to submit to the resolution of infallibility. "On peut tout contre la raison et le droit avec la force du nombre" (with the help of the majority anything can be accomplished against reason and justice), said the archbishop of Paris, and—signed.

We will now pass on to a short exposition of the contents and meaning of the doctrine of infallibility.

The doctrinal clause in question possesses the advantage of being composed with all desirable clearness and perspicuity; its wording excludes all doubt and all subtle controversy concerning its real meaning.

It is as follows: Mistakes in the doctrine of salvation are as impossible for the pope as for the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Himself.

The pope's teachings of faith and ethics from the pulpit constitute nothing but pure and unadulterated divine truth, so that no improvement can be

made on them. Therefore, the papal teachings possess the same obligatory power as all of God's word, both in the old and new testaments; aye, stands even above the divine word, as the pope has the power of dispensation—can release from any divine commandment, whatsoever. In summa: Blind faith in the pope constitute the whole religion, obedience to him the whole morality. Blessed be he, who in everything believes and obeys the pope; eternally damned be he who shows disobedience and unbelief towards him.

"For the farmer that plows his field, for the sovereign that sits on his throne, for the legislator that makes laws for kingdoms—for all am I the only, the last and highest judge, of what is right or wrong," are the words that Cardinal Manning, in a lecture, puts in the proud mouth of the pope. "When the pope meditates," his organ, *Civiltà Cattolica*, tells us, "God thinks in him," and the archbishop of Avignon declared in a sermon during the "infallibility year" that God's incarnation occurred three times, "in the manger at Bethlehem, on the Catholic mass-altar, and in the Vatican," (viz., in the pope). An English ecclesiastical declares, in a published article, the sovereign pope to be *Christ's third visible presence* among us and accordingly informs us, that "devotion to the pope" (*devotion au pape*) constitutes an essential part of Christian piety.

In the Vatican, therefore, stands that divine throne, before which all shall bend their knees; there sits the "three-fold incarnate God," the last, the only and highest judge over humanity. His statements demand blind faith and blind obedience. "In order that we may, in everything," says Loyola, "reach the true belief and in no respect miss the right way, we must at all times, as an irrevocable axiom adhere

to this: That what we see to be white we should believe to be black, if the church's highest authority declares that it be black." Gregory exhorts: "May we, if the holy church demand it, sacrifice our knowledge, our intelligence, the brilliant dreams of our imagination, and the noblest gifts of the human mind!" He who would see on the one hand the most blasphemous and abominable man-dedication, on the other an equally abominable and debasing spiritual slavery, he need only consider these clauses. Before the papal-god on the throne of the Vatican all humanity shall sacrifice conscience, knowledge and intelligence, the Bible and scientific inquiry, and humbly kneel in obedience. But still another side of infallibility needs to be taken into consideration—the political. The popes still continue, as stubbornly as in the middle ages, with their pretensions on the guardianship over sovereigns and nations, their claim still is: "The throne shall stand at the foot of the altar." The papal church invests itself with the right of promulgating its plans by violence, possesses in the Jesuits a formidable body-guard, besides which the popes still claim the power to annul constitutions, depose sovereigns and release subjects from their oath of allegiance. With such teachings and expedients the divinely infallible popes are still

Martenson and some of the popes, consider the rock consisting of Peter's firm faith and confession, or—we, with Bengel, Pfaff, Crusius, Meyer and other interpreters, by the rock understand Peter himself, by whose preaching the church was to be founded, we stand just as far from the founding of any infallible papacy with Peter as cornerstone. All other interpretations are not considered, they fall upon their own absurdity. The Lord speaks, in the cited verse, of Peter himself, but not a word about either real or pretended "successors" to him. Besides, the popes have never been proved to be the successors of Peter, but it is on the contrary, incontestably proved that they are NOT, as we shall see further on. They may make the most strenuous exertions, but never will they be able to so prevent the words of the Savior, that a thinking man will in them find any foundation for infallible papacy. It was, however, but small consolation for the Catholics, even if Peter were their first pope, for as he once made such a mistake, or rather yielded from weakness, as to endanger the gospel road to salvation, and Paul was compelled to publicly reprimand him (Gal. 2), infallibility totters on its very foundation. Although Paul was caught up to the third heaven, where, to our knowledge, no pope has yet been elevated, he declares, that we know in

The historical foundation of the papacy is composed of a legend, which makes Peter the first pope of Rome and all following popes his successors, equipped with equally divine infallibility and authority. It is claimed that the Apostle Peter founded the first Christian church at Rome, that he was its first bishop, that he occupied the Episcopal chair twenty-five years, and that he, shortly before his death, transferred his papal power to all succeeding bishops of Rome. By means of the most learned investigations we find however, first, that Peter did NOT found the Christian church at Rome; second, that he NEVER WAS bishop of Rome for either twenty-five years or shorter time; third, that consequently the bishops of Rome are as little the successors of Peter as, for example, the bishops of Lund, Linköping, or Upsala, etc. Briefly, the whole story has been proved to be a pure fabrication, invented in order to invest the papal power with that historical foundation which it felt was necessary. Many Catholic theologians (Feilmoser, Stengel, Kloe, etc.) have for this reason felt compelled to abandon the use of the legend in question.

But this was not Rome's only interpretation of history in the interest of the papacy; this counterfeiting is committed systematically. We will here only mention the so-called pseudo-

passed at meetings were never, to make them legal, submitted to their examination and sanction. Christian antiquity has never adjudged any infallibility to the Roman bishops, and it was, during the middle ages, when papacy was at its zenith, the common teaching that a pope could be deposed for heresy (error in doctrine). Even the mighty pope, Innocent III., has acknowledged this teaching, and also declared that a pope could fall into heresy, the most complete opposite to infallibility.

But history also shows that many popes really have gone astray in doctrine; aye, one—Honorius I.—has solemnly been condemned as heretic in open diet. It is evident that heresy and infallibility in doctrine exclude each other, so that where one is the other cannot be; heresy excludes infallibility, and vice versa.

Many Catholic bishops were therefore mightily surprised, on their return from the Vatican council, when they found that infallibility concerned only Pius IX. with his successors, includes ALL PRECEDING popes as well. They found that they had received torrid facts for which to answer, they never before had suspected. Even Pius IX. himself felt his newly acquired infallibility shaken by a published article of the learned Helgen on Pope Honorius I., his heresy and ex-communication, and commanded

certain professor delegate to the Jesuit Liberator to remove everything from the church's history's treatment of Honorius I., which was repugnant to the theory of infallibility. The papal church manipulates history as follows: "She lays her dation with lies and builds the upon with deception." The expressive axiom holds: "Dogmas before history." It is evident that with an historical conscience of such quality deeds could be accomplished in the writing of history, and also occurs in the papal church.

When, during forty years, 1378-1418, Christendom was edified by the spectacle of two, sometimes three, popes, who strove for the honor of being "pope of Christ" and damned each other as chiefs of heresy and anti-Christians, while each one claimed to be the right pope, viz., according to the resolution of the Vatican council, the "infallible" supreme head of Christendom, good reasons undeniably exist to doubt infallibility in all. Each one of them had one or two equally infallible opponents, who anathematized him as heretic and anti-Christ.

Infallibility was scarcely better verified by Urban VIII., before whose tribunal the celebrated astronomer, Galileo, on his knees with his hand on the Bible, was compelled to declare that he renounced, damned, and abominated the heretic theory of the earth's movement about the sun. Before this a pope, [Cicilius III.] had placed Halley's great comet, which crossed the heavens in 1456, under the ban of the church and let ring in all the church bells of Christendom to frighten the monster away, whose tail was believed to "shake down sickness, pestilence and war over the earth."

In order to rightly understand infallibility, we must also take into consideration another side of the history of the papacy. This is so much more necessary, as voices have already arisen to declare the popes morally infallible, or sinless, and that in the future it is just as possible that a diet will manufacture a revelation for the sinlessness of the popes, as it did for their infallibility in doctrine. It may even be considered certain that, in the future, for the sake of consistency, an effort will be made in that direction, since it must always be considered a great deficiency to be infallible in one point and fallible in another. We will, however, in this respect be brief.

We remember the period of the so-called "strumpetocracy," when the notorious harlots Theodora, the elder, and her two daughters, Theodora, the younger, and Marozia, placed their paramours and sons on the papal chair. The grandson of Marozia became pope at the age of 19, as John XII. He accepted bribes for ordaining bishops, was convicted of consecrating a ten-year-old boy as bishop, and performing the ceremony in a stable, further, to have lived in incest with one of his father's concubines and transformed the Vatican into a brothel. He had the eyes of a priest put out; he drank immoderately, gambled and swore by the heathen divinities, Jupiter and Venus.

In the year 1033 the papal chair was ascended by Benedict IX., a twelve-year-old boy, who, with divine infallibility, should lead all Christendom on the road to salvation. Through the coarsest dissipation the wretched child was already completely ruined. His after-life was one continuous chain of immorality, adultery, murder and other



RELIGIOUS TREASON, THE RUIN OF THE REPUBLIC.

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part, and we prophesy in part. Would the pope, then, who, according to the testimony of history, have usually confined themselves rather close to the earth, understand perfectly and prophesy perfectly? The Lord says: "If I do not the works of my father, believe me not."

He thereby relinquishes all claims to infallibility and perfection as teacher, if sinful deeds could be found in him. But the bold answer of the papacy is: Although a POPE did the work of the DEVIL, believe HIM still, for HE is nevertheless infallible. One must either be absolutely indifferent or else have "sacrificed his intelligence and the noblest gifts of the human mind" to be satisfied with such prodigious contradictions of the Scriptures. The orthodox Catholic glories, too, in his "intellectual sacrifice" (*sacrificium intellectus*), and feel proud to declare that he has even so far devoted his intellect to obedience of the pope and church, that nothing is impossible for him to believe, if it is taught by the church.

If we listen to the answer of reason to all human pretensions to infallibility it is as short as it is decisive. There exists, so reads its judgement, only one perfect being, exalted above all restrictions, and consequently above every error and imperfection in knowledge, namely, God.

Every other being is imperfect. The only thing that can be said of man in the way of infallibility is that he is infallibly fallible. The highest and greatest spirits of humanity constitute indisputable proofs to this. To make pretensions to infallibility is by reason branded as irrational, absurd. And we occasionally hear of patients in insane asylums suffering from hallucinations of the kind in question.

We now turn to history.

Isidorian decretals. These decretals, probably originating in the ninth century, but falsely ascribed to Isidore of Seville (X 636), were composed of forged letters and documents, that seem to prove the great age of papacy, its divine origin and extensive authority. The deception was made with clumsy hands, but the ignorant middle ages put up with it, and the popes used the collection of decretals as a well-stocked armory, from which they brought their weapons for the erection of the omnipotent papacy of the middle ages. As an example of the rude deception which appeared in the decretals, and of which many "holy fathers" found proper to make use, may be cited, that Pope Victor I., who died in the year 202, is represented as writing to the patriarch Teophilus in Alexandria, who lived about 380, consequently 180 years later than Victor. Pope Melchides, who died in the year 314, is made to refer to resolutions passed at the diet of Nice, which was held eleven years after his death. Fathers of the church in the first century are represented speaking the barbaric Latin of the ninth century, quote a translation of the Bible which appeared long after their deaths, etc. It is now, however, a long time since the deception was discovered. One unclear rag of Roman history counterfeiting, after the other, is produced by science and cast aside. But instead of accepting the truth and doing penance, the most hideous imprecations are poured out by the papal bulls over modern science. As a proof of this one need only read Pius IX's "syllabus errorum," of 1864.

The church history of the earliest Christian times gives incontestable witness, that during the great doctrinal wars the voice of the popes was not considered more infallible than that of others, and also that the resolutions