

“THE FALSIFICATION OF HISTORY, ESPECIALLY IN REFERENCE TO THE REFORMATION AND THE CHARACTERS OF THE REFORMERS, AS PERTINACIOUSLY REPEATED BY THE ADVOCATES OF RITUALISM.”

Church Association Tract 12

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“WOE unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. . . Woe unto them . . . which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.”

What darkness is like the darkness of bewildering falsehood, and what light is like the truth? Once One walked this earth who called Himself “*The Truth*.” Brightly beamed the full-orbed face of that Eternal Truth on the world’s darkness. But around Him surged the legions of that opposite who is called “the father of lies;” the traitor practised his treason; and “false witness was sought to put Him to death.” Calm and silent the august face of the Truth gleamed through the falsehood. But the gathering lies prevailed. Affixed to the accursed cross, the Truth Himself expired, and all was dark. “The sun was darkened,” and “there was darkness over all the earth.”

And so He who was the Truth was laid in the tomb, and the power of falsehood prevailed in its final triumph. Nay! this was the very victory of the Truth of God! The blood did but seal the covenant. “Every promise of God was now yea and amen in Christ Jesus.” “A testament is of force after men are dead,” and now no power of Satan’s utmost lie can break the bond. When He who is the Truth died, He broke the power of the lie which no other force could have shattered.

And so the living Truth arose; He ascended to the realms of light, to prepare that city which lieth four square, and one of whose precious securities is this, that “without is whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” And meanwhile of His people it is said that they are “of the truth,” and “walk in light;” and that they enjoy the presence of Him who is the Spirit of Truth, and who “shall guide them into all the Truth,” not, “all truth,” but “all the Truth.”

But did the Power of Falsehood retire baffled and ruined? Did the fair face of Truth shine forth, clear, radiant, unclouded for ever? No, not yet! It shall be so. But not yet. Darker than ever gathered the cloud of lies over the early Church. Here, settling like a mist obscuring the outlines of precious saving truths. There, like some deceptive fog refracting the rays of truth till mock suns seemed to shine in the firmament, and rainbows of false hopes pledged covenants with no word of God for their sanction.

Oh, if the prophet of old could weep over the “refuges of lies” which Israel sought. – If the Baal, the Nebo, the Osiris, the Zeus, the Mars were lies dark as hell itself, what shall we say to the cloud of falsehood that gathers around us as we take our sad way down the darkened pages of the History of the Church of Christ? False miracle, spurious legend, filth and squalor for the bright purity of sanctity, tyranny for the rule of love, these and more dismay and distract by turns, till we ask, Where is Christ? Where is truth?

But I have to plough, if it may be, one straight furrow through this wide field of falsity. Let us take, then, the one master lie round which others circle, and to the growth of which they contribute. Take the Papacy. See, as you pass down the centuries, layer after layer of untruth deposited, until the column of falsehood touches the very skies, and upbears the Man of Sin, at length "a God confessed." See the last effort, the infallible man, that mockery of mockeries, that contradiction of nature, that crowning falsehood. Let us, then, trace down in rapid review those "falsifications of history" which have had such an outcome, and are the root of most of the others under which we labour.

Eight centuries had passed over the Church at the time when we first take up the dark history of fraud. During that period the bishops of Rome, partly by successful policy, partly by the force of circumstances, had won for themselves a high but a very ill-defined position in the Western Church. They received much deference, they exercised considerable sway, but the bounds of these no man well knew. There was a blank in the ecclesiastical annals of Rome which invited the work of the forger. Few but students of ecclesiastical history know how scanty are the actual records of the first three centuries. Few are aware how singularly obscure is the Roman episcopate during the first four centuries and a half. The African, the Egyptian, the Syrian, nay, the Gallican Churches gave their critics, their apologists, their divines, their historians, to the cause of Christianity. The Roman Church gave none. After Clement's brief epistle the Roman bishops were almost silent for centuries. The energy of a Cyprian, or some foreign brother, might draw from one of them a letter which remains on record, but the name of no Roman bishop, nay, scarcely of a Roman (for Jerome was a Dalmatian) appears on the roll of the early Fathers. In the middle of the eighth century appeared, no man can say precisely whence, the great, the audacious, yet "clumsy" forgery, known as the Decretals of Isidore. They contained what purported to be about 100 decrees of the earliest Popes, together with some other documents. They laid down the following propositions at which the Nicene Fathers would have stood aghast. First, the decrees of Councils require confirmation from the Pope; second, the Pope is bishop of the universal Church, and the other bishops are his servants. There was infallibility in the shell; we have lived to see it hatched. A Pope equal to the occasion sat in the Roman chair. Nicholas I. assured doubting prelates, to whom these things were new, that these documents had been long preserved in the Roman archives.

About two centuries again passed away. At the time of our Norman Conquest came the moment when Europe was ripe for the full development of the Papal system, and when Hildebrand was the man who knew that the hour was come. Then were the forgeries of Isidore drafted into a code of Papal law, fresh inventions were added, historical facts were tampered with, and now the Pope of the eleventh century stood forth armed with forgery upon forgery, claiming to be infallible, supreme, inviolable, sacred, the giver of crowns, the deposer of monarchs. Another hundred years rolls away. In the middle of the 12th century Gratian compiled his famous Decretum, which became thenceforth the code of Canon Law for Europe. To the mass of former forgeries lie added his own fabrications, and now in this third stage of development the Pope was declared to stand above all laws since they derive all force from him alone. And now heresy was proclaimed a capital offence, and all who spoke against a Papal decision or doctrine, were pronounced heretics.

But we have not yet done. The Decretals implied false history. It was needful that history should not contradict them. For this purpose history must be re-written, and accordingly it was re-written. But leaving these and passing on yet another 100 years, we come to one of the most audacious fabrications of all. In the course of the Crusades, the real object of which on the part of the Pope was to subject the Eastern Church to his sway, the Papal emissaries found that their forged decretals and Roman decisions were simply regarded with amazement by the Greeks, who (whatever their faults) had at least a genuine and ancient Christian literature. A Greek would demand to know, as we should, what the Basils, and Gregories, and Cyrils, and Chrysostoms of old said en these points. A Latin theologian was not wanting to the occasion. He produced in the middle of the thirteenth century a collection of spurious passages from these venerable Greek fathers and from Greek Councils, all bearing out the Papal pretensions. The infallible Pope Urban

IV. accepted the document, and sent it to the great contemporary theologian, Thomas Aquinas. He, ignorant of Greek, adopted the whole, and thenceforward, not only in the Canon Law, but in the scholastic system which the Universities taught, the Papal infallibility with its momentous consequences prevailed.

One hundred years more, and in the middle of the 15th century Constantinople fell, the Greek empire was dissolved, but Greek learning fled into Western Europe, the printing press threw open the gates of knowledge, the advancing tide of learning was surging against the Roman gates. Yet half a century more, and the Reformation, a blended movement of statesmanship, of popular feeling, of learning, and of religion, changed the face of the world.

What then, became of the colossal forgeries? They simply collapsed. The Reformers themselves were astounded to discover the rottenness of the basis of the Papal power. Yet, as Gibbon says, "by the same fortune which has attended the decretals and the Sibylline oracles, the edifice has subsisted after the foundations have been undermined." Banished from the sphere of genuine learning, the canon law of Rome still perpetuates the lie of the decretals, and the catechism of the Council of Trent, "edited by the command of our most illustrious Lord Pius the Fifth," bases its proof of the seven sacraments on the forged decretals.

Falsification on the ancient scale, since the revival of learning, and the existence of a powerful Protestant body, has been impossible. But the spirit of falsehood has neither departed nor slept.

If history cannot be manufactured, it can be incrustated with an aggregation of lies, facts can be distorted, character and motive misrepresented, until that which you read, is as worthless in point of history as a mere romance. This has been the weapon against the Reformation from the first. Jewel begins his Apology for the Church of England with bitter complaints of the falsehoods industriously circulated against the cause of the Reformation.

Writing in the early years of Elizabeth, he thus utters his complaint.

"They cry out that we are all heretics; that we have invented new, and revived old heresies from hell itself; that we are torn by dissension; that we have impiously made war with God Himself; that we live without care or worship of God; that we scorn all good deeds; that we use no discipline of virtue, no laws, no good morals; that we care not for justice, equity or right; that we give the reins to every crime, and incite the people to every kind of license and lust. . . . And these things are not talked over in corners, but men possessing considerable eloquence and not destitute of learning are engaged by the Popes to handle these topics copiously and with adornments of style. . . . Now of these things brought against us, part are manifestly false; part, though likewise false, bear some show and likeness of truth so that the incautious reader is readily caught by them; part, though they may be called crimes, we acknowledge and own as most righteous deeds. . . . This is the power of darkness. But we thank God that our cause is one on which no reproach can be cast which may not be hurled against the holy fathers, against the prophets, the apostles, against Christ Himself."

So spoke Jewel—so we may say, spoke the Church of England three hundred years ago. For, as we may see from Strype's account of the Apology, (Annals, c. 25) Jewel was regarded as the spokesman of the Church and State of England in this work, and in this light his work was received by the Council of Trent and the foreign divines generally.

Now I feel in a great difficulty; here is the flood, the universal deluge of misrepresentation spreading before me and beyond me, how shall I find any main current down which I may direct my adventurous bark, and avoid losing myself and my audience in a weary discursiveness?

I am tempted to follow one line of illustration opened by the answer of the Romish pervert, Harding, to the charge made by Jewel, that so many thousands of our Protestant brethren had been painfully tortured and destroyed. Thus retorts Harding, "This is the chief argument ye make in all

that huge dunghill of your stinking martyrs, which ye have entitled, 'Acts and Monuments.'" For this will enable us to follow the truly diabolical succession of reviling of the martyrs of our faith down to our own times.

Harding, in those words, singles out the famous 'Acts and Monuments' of John Foxe; a work which at once invited the attacks of every Roman champion, and which, from that day to this, has been made the target of countless arrows. The first edition was published only five years after the death of Mary, whilst (so to speak) the embers of Smithfield were still warm. If ever book challenged and received enquiry, whilst men's memories were vibrating with keenest tension to the stroke of the terrible events recorded, it was this. It was received, with enthusiasm in England. When a second edition was published in 1571, the Convocation of Canterbury, the same which finally confirmed the Thirty-nine Articles passed a resolution that a copy of the Acts and Monuments should be placed in the churches, and in the halls and houses of the Bishops, Archdeacons, and others, to be read and studied by their own families or those who might resort thither. What would the Convocation of 1871 say to a similar proposition? But if ever book had Church of England authorization it was this, at least as we are accustomed now-a-days to hear Church authorization defined. But now for the succession of those who have assailed this great work—unique in our language.

We can only select a few of the chief.

In Foxe's days it was immediately assailed by Harpsfield, one of the most learned and consistent papists of Henry's and Mary's reigns. He published a reply to the first edition of Foxe 1566. The well known Jesuit Parsons, who was a Protestant pervert, and one of the most active conspirators against Elizabeth about the time of the Spanish Armada, published a reply to Foxe in five volumes in 1603. Now if it had been possible to overthrow the credit of Foxe as a careful and accurate historian, these men possessed the ability, the means of information, and the will to do it. That they call him a liar again and again is notorious, but I need only refer to the careful analysis of their works made by the late Prebendary Townsend to show that they have scarcely in the slightest degree shaken any of his *facts*. After these, Heylyn and Jeremy Collier in the 17th century criticized Foxe somewhat severely, from the point of view of an English High Churchman, but they attack his opinions and his taste, but do not shake his credit as a historian. The present century has seen a more formidable onslaught made on the venerable writer. It will suffice to name the late learned but eccentric S. R. Maitland among names of acknowledged credit, as that of one who wrote with great vehemence, and brought great critical acumen to bear, against Foxe's work. The result of Townsend's careful analysis of Maitland's assault, is this. "He had discovered innumerable misprints, blunders, and various readings. He has detected the results of imperfect transcriptions. He has proved that the character of John Foxe was weak, though pious; and that many of his conclusions and opinions were of questionable value; but he has not overthrown one material fact recorded. . . . He has left untouched the great mass of facts which constituted the chief value of Foxe's labours. . . . He has utterly failed, therefore, in his attempts to prove that our fathers were fools for their admiration of Foxe, or that his pages are unworthy of the attention of their sons."

We take it, therefore, as proved by the confession of failure, that good old Foxe is a true historian, and that we may *primâ facie*, accept as a fact the record which we find in his pages. I presume we should not expect every date, every conversation, all the minutiae of a work so marvellous for its details, to be in all cases accurate. I presume we shall not expect to find that editors have given us a very perfect text. I presume that no one will consider us bound to accept all the good old man's opinions, whether about doctrine, or Church, or State. I presume that we shall not be pledged to admire or approve all the amenities of style in which the writer, of the 16th century indulged. But the truthfulness of John Foxe, and his credit as a historian, subject to the allowances we make in reading all histories, and especially contemporary history, written before different accounts can be fully compared and completely vindicated.

Now a step further. In the regions of credible and creditable controversy the question stands as we have stated it. But there is another class of writers who have revived in our own century the accusations, and have worded them in the offensive language, used by the opponents of our Reformers in Elizabeth's days. Some of these are Romanists. One (I do not know what to call him, but he sold the relics of Tom Paine) was William Cobbett. Some are professed members of our own Church. I do not know why I should name the former unless because the latter seem to have drawn their inspiration from them.

One Eusebius Andrews, a Roman Catholic bookseller, between 40 and 50 years ago, published a series of letters intended as a popular antidote to Foxe, in which Foxe is held up to execration as a liar. As this word *liar* is so freely used, let us take this opportunity of illustrating its use. Quoting from Parsons, Andrews refers to "A note of more than 120 lies uttered by John Foxe, in less than three leaves of his Acts and Monuments." A terrible catalogue indeed! We turn with curiosity to discover what these are. The lies do not relate to facts but doctrines—and they are thus enumerated: "Four lies about justification; one about the conditions of salvation, which might be made ten; one about distrust of salvation; five about Rome and charity; two about God's law; a heap of lies about good works;"—and so on until he makes up more than six score lies, which, says he, "is more than I promised."

If all controversialists who differ in opinion about doctrine may brand their opponents thus, it will fare with us worse than with David, who only said in his haste that "all men are liars."

To Eusebius Andrews we must add the infamous work by William Cobbett, entitled a History of the Reformation. The book is so vile and shameful in its language, and so mad in its disregard of the plain facts of history as to be beneath criticism. It is only worth notice because it is largely circulated among the lower orders at the low price of sixpence by Romanist publishers, and is calculated to sow sedition and irreligion broadcast among the multitude. It has been answered (as the members of this Association are aware) very fully and ably by Mr. Collette. But who can follow out the lie whithersoever it goeth? Who can undo the mischief it has wrought? And how shall we induce the ignorant mind that has taken in the broad sarcasm and the ribald jest, to read or understand the true history?

But not for Eusebius Andrews or William Cobbett have we noted their names here. Amongst those who still profess adherence to our Church are those who have taken up their parable, and seem, as far as we may judge from their works, to have used the same materials.

Prominent among these Dr. Littledale. His name has been long before the public in connection with those unhappy opinions about the Reformation which are working such mischief. Nor is there any writer who has at least the merit of setting forth so boldly and distinctly his opinions without hesitation or inuendo. Nor can it be doubted that in this he is the spokesman and representative of a very active and prominent, if not very numerous party. I have declined to quote the epithets which Cobbett launches against the Reformers, but I am compelled to cite the words of Dr. Littledale, which, as far as I am aware, none of his party have repudiated.

1. "Such a set of miscreants as the leading English and Scottish Reformers."

2. Having spoken of Robespierre and his fellows of the French Revolution, he says, "they merit quite as much admiration and respect as Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, and the others who happened to have the ill-luck to be worsted in a struggle wherein they meant to serve their adversaries as they were served themselves."

3. "Two mendacious partizans, the infamous Foxe, and the not much more respectable Burnet, have so overlaid all the history of the Reformation with falsehood, that it has been well nigh impossible for ordinary readers to get at the facts."

4. "Every fresh find (of documents) establishes more clearly the utter scoundrelism of the Reformers."
5. "We should have been burnt for refusing a new and immoral creed if that young tiger-cub Edward VI. had lived, and Cranmer had not been arrested in his wicked career by Divine vengeance."
6. "Ridley was perhaps the least disreputable of the Reformers in England."
7. "That magazine of lying bigotry Foxe's Acts and Monuments, a book which no educated man now living, possessed of any self-respect or honesty, does otherwise than repudiate with contempt and aversion."

I need not proceed any further with these extracts. This is merely calling names which any unmannerly schoolboy can do. In the Appendix there are notes containing several pages of what professes to be history, bearing out all this evil-speaking. With regard to a track of history so well worn, and trodden by the scholars of three centuries, the only question worth asking is this: Are any new facts disclosed, any of those new documents which were to establish "the scoundrelism of the Reformers"? We pass them in review, and exclaim, Why this is the old ragged regiment that has been so often marched through Coventry. Some of them have had a new feather stuck in their caps, and there have been a few attempts to sew the tatters together, and the drill is a little changed. But we know every knave of the company, for they have been paraded by every assailant these 300 years, from Harding's and Parsons' days down to William Cobbett's. As for Cranmer, we hear that he married when he was a fellow of a college—a grievous atrocity! Then his wife died, and he married again, and that was as bad as polygamy in a priest. Then there is the archiepiscopal oath of allegiance to the Pope. All about the divorce of Katherine and about poor Anne Boleyn, and indeed all the matrimonial affairs of Henry, a large part of it Cranmer's fault. Then we have the death of Cromwell, and the Act of Six Articles, which really we know Cranmer resisted to the last point of possibility. Then there is the share which he had in common with every man of his age, and several generations after, in persecuting acts. With regard to which one word is necessary. It took many a year to unlearn that fatal lesson of persecution which Protestants had learned from Rome. Thank God we have unlearned it. But if nothing else has done it, the decree of infallibility has woven persecution into the very texture of Romanism. The Syllabus of the present Pope notes it as the fatal error of the present age, that the civil power refuses to enforce the law of the Church. It is not therefore, mere recrimination, or the question of Mary's burnings against Elizabeth's hangings. It is the living law of the persecuting Church which we execrate. But to proceed, there is the grievous fall. Cranmer's Recantations after he had been kept face to face with death for two years. We all have been familiar with the sad story from our childhood, and no man of feeling can think or speak of it without great searchings of heart. But for one who uses Cranmer's Prayer-book, and is pledged to Cranmer's Articles, to flout those agonies of mind and body as he sits in his easy chair of the nineteenth century, requires epithets which I will not use.

Then Latimer—"he was a coward—he recanted four times;" (a gross misrepresentation) "he was coarse and profane in his style of preaching."

Ridley "introduced neologian changes into the Prayer Book, and he cast down the altars, and substituted tables."

Hooper "was a pluralist." Aye, a pluralist in wearing labours. And all of them are credited with the avarice of the courtiers, from which they struggled in vain to protect the Church.

It is the old story, just as Jewel said—"Part manifestly false—part, though false, yet with some show of truth—part, though called crimes, yet in truth righteous deeds"—part, we must add, the

failures of holy men, either imperfectly enlightened, or succumbing to difficulties greater than we can estimate.

If this be so, no serious answer is needed to the old array of dislocated facts or misstated history. We know what the general verdict of history is on those terrible times. The precise adjustment of praise and blame to the principal actors in the great convulsion of the Reformation may vary; but the general verdict stands beyond all question, and is not shaken by those passing detractions. We are proud of the Reformation as Englishmen; we are thankful for it as Christians. I tremble to think that mere human beings, should be called to the task of guiding into harbour the vessel of the Church on the crest of so terrible a wave of revolution. I marvel to think that it was ever done. If those hardy navigators on those stormy seas sometimes erred, if their courage in a few instances blanched, could it well have been otherwise? Peter thrice denied his Master; shall human faith and courage be strained to the uttermost through long years of anxiety, and never falter?

But after all, let us remember ours is not a question of men but of principles. Were every infamy heaped on those devoted heads verified—Were their holy memories defiled into the dust with the ashes that consumed their mortal frames, the great principles for which they died would still remain imperishable. The Word of God to guide us and to free us, not the word of man to constrain us and enthrall us. The Sacrament of Christ to bring us into spiritual communion with Him, and not the host of the priestly consecration to bow down to and to worship. These and their kindred truths remain as our heritage. And if by God's blessing on our martyrs' labours we have received the inheritance of a Church of Apostolic order, and of pure doctrine according to God's word, we are not the dolts to forget it, nor the cravens to fail to defend it.

APPENDIX.

AUTHORITIES QUOTED.

“It was difficult to compress any account of some of the more conspicuous falsifications of history within the limits allowed for the foregoing paper. It is still more difficult to produce within a small compass historical statements sufficient to support the assertions in question. Nevertheless, the subjoined quotations it is thought, scanty as they needs must be, may suffice to carry conviction to the intelligent reader, however little versed he may be in the history of the middle ages. We have omitted previous forgeries, and have said nothing of the pretended donation of Constantine, and have commenced (p. 2) with the Decretals of the pretended Isidore. On this subject it may suffice to produce the following quotations from two writers of unquestionable authority.—*Neander*, Vol. VI. p. 102 (Clark's Edition).

Writing of the Pseudo Isidorian Decretals, Neander thus speaks:—

“This fraud was so clumsily contrived, and ignorantly executed, that had the age been a little more fitted for, or less disinclined to, critical investigations, and had the deception itself not fallen in with a predominant interest of the Church, it might have been easily detected and exposed. . . . The letters were for the most part made up of passages borrowed from far later ecclesiastical documents, which he took the liberty to alter and mutilate so as to suit his purpose and correspond with his notions, not even giving himself the trouble of removing from them things incongruous to the age in which the letters were said to have been written, and not seldom patching them together without any intelligible connection whatsoever.

These ancient Roman bishops quote Scripture from a Latin translation formed from a mixture of one made by Jerome with another that had been current in earlier times. They refer to relations between the Church and State, which could not possibly have existed in the age when these letters purport to have been written. We meet in them the most extraordinary anachronisms; as, for example, that Victor, bishop of Rome, wrote concerning the contested celebration of Easter to Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, who lived two centuries

later. The Scriptural passages cited as proofs are altered and mutilated with an effrontery and ignorance equally shameful.”

The general result of this may be easily placed before the least critical English reader. It is just as if a letter, supposed to have been written by an English bishop in the time of Richard II. or Henry IV., should refer to the ecclesiastical legislation of Elizabeth, or quote Scripture in a version compounded of Cranmer’s Bible and the present authorized version. It would not take much critical sagacity to discover the fraud. We need not wonder therefore that Baronius the great Roman Ecclesiastical historian, and Bellarmine the famous Jesuit controversialist, abandoned the defence of these Decretals.

If anything more need be added to this, it may be the following extract from the History of Latin Christianity by the late Dean Milman (B. v. Chap. 4):—

“On a sudden was promulgated, unannounced, without preparation, not absolutely unquestioned, but apparently overawing at once all doubt, a new Code, which to the former authentic documents added 59 letters and decrees of the 20 oldest popes, and the donation of Constantine; and in the third part among the decrees of the Popes and of the Councils from Silvester to Gregory II., 39 false decrees, and the acts of several unauthentic councils. In this vast manual of Sacerdotal Christianity the Popes appear from the first, the parents, guardians, legislators of the faith throughout the world. . . . But for the too manifest design, the aggrandizement of the See of Rome, and the aggrandizement of the whole Clergy in subordination to the See of Rome; but for the monstrous ignorance of history, which betrays itself in glaring anachronisms, and in the utter confusion of the order of events and the lives of distinguished men—the former awakening keen and jealous suspicion, the latter making the detection of the spuriousness of the whole easy, clear, irrefragable;—the False Decretals might still have maintained their place in ecclesiastical history. They are now given up by all; not a voice is raised in their favour; the utmost that is done by those who cannot suppress all regret at their explosion, is to palliate the guilt of the forger, to call in question or to weaken the influence which they had in their own day and throughout the later history of Christianity.”

We have next to prove the reception of these false decretals by Pope Nicholas I. We produce a portion of a letter from that Pope to the Bishops of Gaul. It is given by Gieseler, Eccles. History, Vol. II. p. 333:—

“Although he had not appealed to the Apostolic See, yet ye ought not to have transgressed so many and so important decretals, and depose a bishop without consulting us. Far be it that we should not receive with due respect and with the highest distinction the settled decretals, works which the Holy Roman church hath from old times preserved, and committed to us for our custody, and which duly deposited in her archives and ancient memorials she venerates.”

The Pope proceeds to notice that some of the Gallican bishops had questioned the authority of some of the Decretals as not being found in the collection of the Canons. He then declares that “the Decretal epistles of the Roman Pontiffs are to be received, even though they are not contained in the book of the Canons.” In other words, he required the adoption of the new Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals.

Our next point will be the further forgeries in the time of Hildebrand (Gregory VII). For this we may most conveniently refer to “the Pope and the Council” by Janus, a work full of that peculiar knowledge which scarcely any one but a Roman Catholic divine can possess, and marked by that accuracy of detail which can be found only in a German scholar—a work which has been railed at abundantly but never answered. “Anselm, of Lucca, compiled the most important work at his (Hildebrand’s) command between 1080 and 1086. Anselm may be called the founder of the new Gregorian system of Church law, first by extracting and putting into convenient working shape everything in the Isidorian forgeries serviceable for the Papal absolutism; next, by altering the law of the Church, through a tissue of fresh inventions and interpolations, in accordance with the requirements of his party and the standpoint of Gregory. . . . In a word, a new history and a new

civil and canon law was required, and both had to be obtained by improving on the Isidorian principles with new forgeries.”

Instances of historical perversions in carrying out these falsifications follow, but are too lengthy for quotation here. The uncritical reader may easily understand that when documents are garbled by words being omitted or inserted—when facts of history are misstated—when Canons are altered and modified—it is not a very difficult process to compare the later form with the earlier and thus to detect the forgery. This is how the case stands with the Hildebrandine or Gregorian alterations.

The next point is the Decretum of Gratian in the twelfth century. Of this there is a compendious description in Janus, p. 142. “In this work the Isidorian forgeries were combined with those of the Gregorian writers, Deusdedit, Anselm, Gregory of Pavia, and with Gratian’s own additions. His work displaced all the older collections of canon law, and became the manual and repertory, not for Canonists only, but for the scholastic theologians, who for the most part derived their knowledge of Fathers and Councils from it. No book has ever come near it in its influence in the Church, although there is scarcely another so chokefull of gross errors, both intentional and unintentional.”

Instances of gross alterations of early documents by Gratian are added, but are again too long for quotation.

The next point in the foregoing paper relates to history fabricated to tally with Gratian and the Decretals. This was done by several writers, of whom we need only name Martin of Troppan, towards the end of the 13th century; of his work, it is said by Janus (p. 279), “This book is, of all historical works of the middle ages, at once the most popular and the most utterly fabulous. Many of its fictions simply evidence the want of any historical sense . . . but many also were invented with deliberate intention.”

Again, we add, instances are too long for quotation in such a note as this. But it will be manifest to an ordinary intelligence that the comparison of the distorted or invented version of a fact with the statements of the older histories is not a difficult process, and the result leaves no doubt upon the mind on the question, forgery or no forgery. Indeed the verdict of the jury of scholars of all opinions has long since been unhesitatingly given.

Our last point is the forgeries from Greek Fathers which were placed in the hands of Thomas Aquinas and accepted by Pope Urban IV. We again quote Janus, p. 265: “A Latin theologian, probably a Dominican, who had resided among the Greeks, composed a catena of spurious passages of Greek Councils and Fathers, St. Chrysostom, the two Cyrils, and a pretended Maximus, containing a dogmatic basis for these novel Papal claims. In 1261 it was laid before Urban IV. . . . Urban, evidently deceived himself, sent the document to St. Thomas Aquinas, who inserted the whole of what concerned the Primacy into his work against the Greeks, without the least suspicion of its not being genuine. . . . St. Thomas, who knew no Greek, and, being educated in the Gregorian system, derived all his knowledge of ecclesiastical antiquity from Gratian, found himself at once in possession of this treasure of most weighty testimonies from the early centuries, which left no doubt in his mind that the great Councils and most influential bishops and theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries had recognized in the Pope an infallible monarch who ruled the whole Church with absolute power . . . The spurious Cyril of Alexandria is his favourite author on this subject, and he constantly quotes him.”

Specimens of these forgeries may be seen in a note, p. 129, Gieseler’s History.

And again we say to the unlearned reader:—Thomas Aquinas was, before the Reformation, the great master of Theology, of whom Pope John XXII. said in a bull, that “he had not written without a special inspiration of the whole Holy Ghost.” These spurious passages stand to this day in the works of Thomas Aquinas, as his proof passages, and they are not to be found in any extant

copies of Cyril, nor anywhere except in these falsified documents of the 13th century. This is intelligible to any understanding.

Lastly, that the spurious Decretals are referred to as authorities in the Catechism of the Council of Trent may be seen by any one who chooses to look at it. But we may produce one instance. Speaking of Confirmation, the Catechism says that by Christ “were also ordained, as St. Fabian, pontiff of Rome, testifieth, the rite of Chrism, and the words which the Catholic Church uses in its administration.’ Fabian was bishop of Rome in the middle of the third century. The above reference is to one of the forged decretals, attributed falsely to him.”