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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1905.

Calendar for Next Week.

- 17—Third Sunday of Advent
- 18 Monday—The feast of Our Lady's Expectation.
- 19—Tuesday—Ferial office.
- 20—Wednesday—Vigil. Ember Day Fast.
- 21—Thursday—St. Thomas, Apostle.
- 22—Friday—Ferial Office. Ember Day Fast.
- 23—Saturday—Ferial Office. Ember Day and Christmas Eve Fast, anticipated on account of the Sunday intervening.

CONSIDERATIONS ON CATHOLICISM BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN

CCLXXXI.

(Sacred Heart Review)

There are some assertions which are so bold and so contemptuous of the facts of history, and of the authority of the greatest historians, that it is very difficult to answer them. There is a degree of effrontery which fairly takes away the breath. This is exemplified in the unrestrainedly bitter accusation which the Springfield "Republican" correspondent brings against the See of Rome, and which I have quoted in my last paper. I will repeat it, that we may have it distinctly before us.

"The Roman Church, for centuries, has been a concentration of the most dangerous and bloody power,—the power over souls by religious conformity—in the hands of a few persons at Rome, who have not scrupled to use their authority, from time to time, to promote war, protect assassination, persecute the weak and pardon the strong for their crimes, when those crimes seemed to promise aid for the oppressor and subsistence for the priests who helped maintain the oppression."

Now what is the meaning of these furious charges, taken in their aggregate and in their mutual dependence? Plainly this, that at some point in the history of Western Europe doubtless, from his tone, long before the Reformation), the Catholic Church ceased to be the chief embodiment of Christianity, and the chief agency of spiritual and moral good, and became the seat of a conspiracy for using every religious and civil force of Europe as the passive instrument of the ambition and cupidity "of a few persons at Rome."

These "few persons," he would have us believe, have agreed,—whether explicitly or by mutual understanding is indifferent—to bend all the doctrines, sacraments, ceremonies, offices, successions, of Catholic Christianity, which before them had been ingenuously serving their avowed purpose of advancing the Christian religion, into the passive, and largely unconscious instruments of serving the diabolical selfishness "of a few persons at Rome."

That this conspiracy of evil might not fail, the successors in it have been insidiously chosen, this man would have us believe, from generation to generation out of those judged, by previous trial, likely to prove serviceable members of this great confederacy of hell. The writer would probably allow that these infernal designs had been covered by the infusion of a certain proportion of unconscious innocents, who have supposed themselves to be serving Christ, when, in reality, they were serving the Prince of Darkness. The clue, however, he would say, has been faithfully kept in the hands of a central succession of intending and conscious promoters of evil.

Let anyone examine Janssen's presentation of the customary language of the Lutherans towards the Roman See in Luther's time and down to the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War, and he will see how much this gentleman's way of speech resembles theirs, allowing, of course, for the great temperateness of style of a somewhat more refined age. To be sure, he does not, like Luther's disciples, choose twenty-two sorcerers in turn to the papal chair, or consent to have any cardinals carried off bodily by the devil. Indeed, I no more suppose that he believes in the existence of Satan than in the Divine authority of Christ. Yet, as we see, his animosity is so great against the Papacy, that it ought not to cost him very much effort to people the Vatican with all the infernal princes of Milton's Pandemonium, each in his proper style and function. However, he has already presented as odious a picture as he has present occasion for.

Note, according to him this diabolical conspiracy still subsists at Rome in full energy of purpose, although at present somewhat lamed in some of its agencies.

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He does not say that the Roman Church was once such a concentration of evil purpose, but that she "has been" this "for centuries." Pius X., according to him, is just as much a servant of the devil as he would describe John XII. as having been, although I dare say he would view the innocent Sarto as a good soul put up, like various Popes before him, as a blind to cover the faces of the malignant conspirators behind.

Observe, the question is not, whether, in nearly two thousand years of Catholic history, there have not been scandals, many and great. Who disputes it? The Christian Church is made up of men and women sinful even when sincere, and all of whom, assuredly are not sincere. Hypocrisy and crime have never been kept out of any office or order, from the Apostolate down. Those timid souls who behave as if the tares were not ever growing with the wheat have justly incurred the derision of Pope Leo XIII., who says there are those who would hardly be willing to own that Judas betrayed his Master, or that Peter denied him.

It has been computed, of course rather vaguely, that in the various parts of Christendom one hundred thousand men have sustained the supreme office of Bishop alone, the population of a great city. Give to this man now an approximate clairvoyant knowledge of Church history, and with what delight may we not imagine him prowling about for putrefying gobbets, dragging out for display one example after another of episcopal unworthiness!

The thousands and tens of thousands of bishops who have honestly endeavored to discharge their office, and many of them illustriously, would be to him as if they were not. In this whole long letter, for instance, I can not find one allusion, however casual, to a Roman Catholic worthy. Positively, unless my eye has slipped (and I do not think it has), the nearest approach to this is his mention of Lucretia Borgia, as "a beautiful nonentity," whom, nevertheless he praises for her piety and benevolence during the latter part of her life. We can imagine what his feelings are towards the Catholic Church, when Lucretia Borgia is the nearest approach to a Catholic Saint whom he can prevail on himself to mention.

There is a story told about Mr. Froude, which, I dare say, is substantially true, but which I have ventured to embellish a little. It is said that he was once in the library of Trinity College Dublin, looking over documents bearing on the insurrection of 1641. At last, gathering up a pile of them he handed them to the attendant, saying: "There, take these away. These give evidence mitigating the crimes of the Irish Papists, and I am here to find evidence aggravating them. I am the Devil's Advocate against them." Whether Froude said this or not, it sufficiently describes his way. Now this gentleman, intellectually, is the genuine half-brother of Froude. To be sure, he is too immensely inferior to him to be supposed of the full blood and therefore is happily exempt from

those occasional outbursts of involuntary admiration of the opposing side into which Froude's mental eminence sometimes betrayed him. This gentleman is the Advocatus Diaboli from beginning to end.

Let me again remind the reader that the question is not about the existence of scandals in Catholic history. Nineteen hundred years are a long time, and Europe and South America are a great region, and some ages have been more, some very much less favorable to religion and morality. The brighter the light, the deeper the darkness. Sin in Christendom is more conscious and therefore more aggravated than sin outside. Wickedness in a priest is more hateful than in a layman. These thoughts are common enough in Catholic theology, and these scandals are described, in composed detail, by Catholic scholars, by Dr. Lingard, by Wetzer and Welte, by Dr. Pastor, and in peculiar fulness by Cardinal Baronius.

Of course, by gloating on the worst aspects of Church history, and writing as if the endless instances of moral and religious excellence in Catholic annals did not exist, any one may easily make the Vatican, and indeed the whole Church, appear as if it were the appointed residence of Apollyon. That is the style of this writer. Yet, as we see he is not content with this. He deliberately assures us that the Roman See has been for centuries—doubtless at least since Hildebrand, eight hundred and fifty years—an inveterate and settled confederacy to violate all the principles of righteousness, and all the instincts of mercy, for the one end of advancing the power and the vulgar pomp of a knot of evil men at Rome, continued by a secret and unhallowed succession. With somewhat more decency of speech, this is no less abominably slanderous than the inconceivable brutalities of Luther and the still greater brutalities of his first followers.

Before examining this tissue of contumely in detail, I will first consider how a Catholic of the same temper as this correspondent might, on his principles, deal with Protestantism.

CHARLES C. STARBUCK.
Andover, Mass.

Regina Notes.

After very cold weather for a week there is scarcely enough snow for good sleighing, though sleighs are being much used.

Monday Nov. 20, the Oblate Fathers assisted by the Ladies of St. Mary's Altar Society were "At Home" to the members of the congregation from 4 to 9 p.m. at the Presbytery, Scarth street. This was one of the most enjoyable functions ever held in connection with St. Mary's church. His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor and Madame Forget, accompanied by Mr. Bourget, Private Secretary, called during the afternoon. Mrs. Acastee and Mrs. Hutchison presided over the tea table which was laid in the library and very prettily decorated with flowers, the thoughtful gift of Madame Forget. Misses McCarthy and Seymour assisted in passing refreshments. A very great number of parishioners availed themselves of the opportunity presented of paying their respects to the very popular clergy. Mrs. McCusker and Mrs. McCarthy assisted the Reverend Fathers in receiving the guests. In the evening a very nice programme was given. There were songs and instrumental music. Mr. Lyons sang several songs in his excellent style. Miss M.

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