

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.
CXXCVI.

We have seen how our friend the correspondent, on very insufficient grounds, has expressed his horror over the claims advanced for "the Church of Damascus and Hildebrand." We will now consider how far he is entitled to speak of "the culpable Innocents."

There have been thirteen Popes of this name. Of course it is to Protestant judgment that the writer appeals. This would have no result in giving to him Innocent IV. and Innocent VIII., although the latter is praised by Bishop Creighton for his helpfulness in settling English consciences after the final victory of Henry VII. in the long and wearisome contest over the crown.

How now as to the eleven remaining Innocents? Our great Protestant encyclopedia of Herzog Plitt has nothing to allege against the personal worth of Innocent the First (reigning from 1024 to 1042) or against his pastoral faithfulness. It sets him forth as neglecting no fair opportunity of advancing the authority of the Roman See, but as this is simply no exemplification of the maxim of law: *Boni iudices est ampliare jurisdictionem*: "It appertains to a good judge to enlarge his jurisdiction," of course it gives no occasion for attaching the odious epithet "culpable" to his name. Besides that thorough-going Protestant, Dean Milman, expresses serious doubts whether Christianity could have survived through the Middle Ages, at least in any energy worthy the name, had not the Popes resolutely and unflinchingly taken on themselves the supreme guardianship of its interests.

Innocent II. (1130-1143) was chosen by a minority of the cardinals, moved, says Herzog, by his purity of life, and by their consciousness of the selfish ambition of his competitor Anacletus. It has always been allowed in the Church that "the sounder part," in an election, "is to be preferred to the major part," provided the moral difference is clearly made out, as it was in this case. Certain it is that the high-minded, disinterestedness of St. Bernard at once took ground for Innocent as the true Pope, and was followed by France, by England, by the Empire, and at last by Italy. Innocent's great endeavor, after securing the See, was to heal the wounds of the schism. In behalf of this he faced a renewed rebellion of the Romans which was still flaming at his death. Certainly we have no "culpable Innocent" here.

Innocent the Third (1198-1216) has been to Protestants the traditional scarecrow, in some respects more an object of horror to them than Hildebrand himself. Probably the mind of the writer is specially fixed on Innocent III. as the peculiarly "culpable" Pope of this name. However, this style of speaking and thinking has become permanent. Herzog Plitt, energetic as its Protestantism is, will not give into it in the least. It remarks that all through his life, Innocent III. makes evident his longing for rest and seclusion, where he could meditate thoughts of God, and that his firm and certain tread through all the infinite perplexities of his eighteen years' pontificate (beginning at thirty-seven and ending at fifty-five) is not that of a soul swayed by petty interests and selfish ambitions, but of one which is inwardly yielded, in simplicity of aim, to the guidance of God. His one purpose was, in an age of rude force, to affirm the supremacy of moral and spiritual interests, and there was never in him any shrinking from his high calling before the face of the great. He could affirm in all sincerity that God had said to him what He said to Jeremiah: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." Are aims that take hold on eternity really so slight a thing that Christians—I do not mean this writer, but Christians—should be ashamed to own their satisfaction that once at least in the history of the world, they have been crowned with open and evident success?

As to his policy toward the Albigenses, I have but to repeat once more the words of Paul Sabatier, who is certainly far enough from Catholicity, and who is not a lover of this Pope, that Rome, in an age when harshness was the rule, had little time to choose her weapons, and that if rational society has survived upon the earth, it was because the Catholic Church, and Innocent the Third, were determined that at any cost it should survive.

Innocent V. (1270) was a learned and able theological writer, whose worthiness of his office is implied by Herzog Plitt. Reigning only five months, he could do little, but his great aim was to promote peace in Christendom. There is no "culpable Innocent" to be found in him.

Innocent VI. (1355-1362) is one of the Avignon Popes, hampered by the neighborhood of France, and by his original allegiance. Against his personal worth Herzog Plitt has nothing to say, nor does it make any complaint of unworthy dependence on France, of which, indeed, after Clement V., there seems to have been but little among the Popes at Avignon, whatever other faults some of them may have had. The great impediment to faithfulness in their office was much less the fear of France than the temptation to Provincial softness and luxury. Of this there appears nothing as Innocent VI. seems to have lived on friendly terms with his native country, but then he was a lover of peace everywhere. He lived in good intelligence with England, with the Empire, and so far as possible with the Italians, who did not much relish a French Pope. Towards Peter the Cruel of Castile, it is true, he was severe, and excommunicated him again and again, to persuade him to put away his concubines and take back his lawful wife. We shall hardly pretend that we find culpability here, unless it were in the judgment of E. C. Steadman, or George Meredith.

In Church administration Innocent

VI. was an energetic reformer. He cashiered numerous commendations, reservations and expectancies, recalled many benefices unsuitably bestowed, and strongly condemned pluralities. He took special care to promote a sound curialistic administration.

Having, as good Protestants, already given over Innocent IV. and Innocent VIII. to the secular arm of the Republic, our correspondent, we have run through 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, without finding another victim to the stern justice of our friend. However, there is hope yet, as there are still six Innocents to be arraigned before the Boston Inquisition.

Innocent VII. (1404-1406) lived in the time of the Great Schism, and had a competitor, the anti-pope Benedict XIII., Peter de Luna. Of course much could not have been expected of him in this embarrassment, during his two years' pontificate.

Herzog Plitt says that Cardinal Cosimo Migliorati was "one of the most influential and highly esteemed personalities in the Roman Curia, his irreproachable life, his rigorous self-discipline, his comprehensive knowledge of the canon law, his administrative capacity, attracted to him the votes of the cardinals; on the 17th of October, 1404, the Cardinal priest of Santa Croce issued from the conclave as Pope Innocent VII." No intrigue or bribery here; the conclave seems to have been as blameless a one as that which chose Pius X. or Leo XIII.

Innocent has undoubtedly a better title than Benedict, whose almost fanatic obstinacy the Church had justly noted by putting his name out of the list of the Popes, and acknowledging a later Benedict XIII. It could hardly have been expected, therefore, that Migliorati should have abdicated, even if de Luna had done so, which, by the way, the stubborn and astute Spaniard had not the least thought of doing. A General Council was a dignified and efficient means of composing the Schism, and Herzog Plitt declares that it was no fault of Innocent VII. that such a one was not convoked, as that of Constance was a few years later, not to speak of the dubious gathering of Pisa.

Innocent VII. therefore figures among the Popes as a pious and virtuous man, of excellent aims, which it was not his fault that he could not accomplish. Another disappointment! Our "culpability" eludes us, from Pope to Pope. However, we have five august culprits still in reserve, whom we will remand to prison, with a modest provision for their pontifical wants, until the meeting of the *Inquisitio papalis pravitatis*, at the Old South, next week.

CHARLES C. STARBUCK.
Andover, Mass.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

IN RELATION TO MY SURRENDERING.

We are apt to speak of the influence which one man exerts over another of as of a power which he can put forth or retain, forgetting that what a large extent we must often influence those around us whether we will it or no. As I pass along the street I may unwittingly alter and qualify the thoughts of many unseen to myself; how much more does my every act and gesture affect those who are in close and continual intercourse with me. Thus do we all live in a state of continual interaction and interdependence, just as we also find ourselves in a set of circumstances which may affect us in one way or another, for good or for ill, but cannot leave us wholly untouched. It is vain to suppose that, by leaving a thing or a person alone, we are free from any effect their presence and action might produce; the web which unites us with one another, and all with the whole, is far too subtle and diffused to be thus evaded. To use a thing will affect us in one way; to leave it will affect us in another; in no case can we be the same as if it were not there at all.

We cannot then consider our last end without having regard to the field in which our action is to be exercised. As we are not responsible for our own existence, so neither are we responsible for the world of circumstances in which we find ourselves unavoidably placed. Some circumstances are of our own making, but the greater number are not; and even those which are, can only be said to be so in the limited sense in which any work of man is ascribed to his own hands. As we cannot give ourselves an end any more than a beginning, but can only find that end in the will and intention of our Creator, so too with all that lies around us. We are free, not as regards our destiny, but as regards the directing of our lives in relation to that destiny. We cannot change our nature, nor the nature of things around us; we cannot pass through the world as though it were non-existent; but we can order ourselves within that realm of activity in which we are placed, and in relation to those other beings with which we are in contact.

If, then, our end is, as we have seen, to live a life as divine as it is given us, to realize, we have a right to expect that the world in which we find ourselves shall be in some way conducive to this end, that it shall not constitute an insuperable obstacle to its fulfillment.

We are apt, however, in our childishness, to confound God's thoughts with ours and to expect that His wisdom will be tied down to the rule of our own. Hence that false and exaggerated conception of the workings of Divine Providence, according to which God must interpose at each turn of the wheel, lest our spiritual interests suffer from the operation of natural laws. We would subject the entire universe to our growth, and forget the needs of the whole in our over-weening estimate of the value of one particular part. Hence a disposition to quarrel with the circumstances in which we are inevitably placed; hence also a tendency to vain regret for the irreparable consequences of our own free choices in the past. But there is, in fact, no life on earth conceivable which would bring out every one of our possibilities, nor had God ever promised to place us

among those occasions which will be most favorable to our fullest self-development. We may fret at the thought of our own buried capabilities, but it is a consequence of our very greatness, a proof of the nobility of our destiny, that we could do so many other things than those which it is actually given us to accomplish. Economy is not a divine attribute. Of fifty thousand seeds one alone may come to maturity, yet all the others were of like marvellous capacity, each a miracle of wisdom and power, each the possible progenitor of an entire species, that might have increased and multiplied and replenished the earth and subdued it. And, as in the physical world, vital, chemical and mechanical forces are squandered with a recklessness altogether bewildering to our economical minds, so, in the world of souls, God fears not to provide a thousand times more energy and talent than can possibly be turned to account in the limited space and time at our disposal.

The same remarks hold in regard to circumstances more or less of our own choosing. There comes a time when it is incumbent on many to make a choice which will affect the whole of their future; they have to decide on a career, or to choose between single and married life. It is in the nature of things that these matters have to be settled when our experience is almost in its infancy, when our self-knowledge and practical judgment are crude and undisciplined. Hence there is every possibility of our making a mistaken choice, and that the majority of such choices are, in a certain sense, mistaken need not be denied. Here then we may find ourselves in a set of circumstances freely chosen, but not really conducive to the best unfolding of our individual powers as we now understand them. And yet the very well-being of human society demands that such choices should be made on the threshold of life, and that men should stand by their contracts "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer." In all contracts there is usually some risk of loss balance free to recede, when the balance turned against them, there would be an end to all contracts, to all social stability. Most men and women, at fifty or thereabouts, will consistently say: "Had I foreseen at twenty all that I should have to go through I would have chosen otherwise." Of course they would; but had they foreseen the consequences of that other choice, or of any other, they would have chosen nothing at all. It is the very condition of life that the future is veiled from us, and that we must in youth, and often afterwards, take a leap into the dark, and be purged to accept the place in which we alight. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is with the Lord." It matters less than, in our solemn self-importance, we imagine, which lot we choose, or even if, from a relative point of view, we have chosen the wrong one. However important it may be to make such a choice with due care and consistency, to seek our own, now irrevocable, act, or to the dispositions of nature and Providence. God does not fear to leave us subject to the results of our own actions any more than to the workings of natural laws: He has marked us as His own, and the likeness cannot be effaced by any outer influence. After all, nothing matters supremely but to do the right thing in whatever circumstances we find ourselves; to "make the best of a bad job," however relative and seemingly bad that best may be. Men may stone us, and yet God may bid us go in peace.

If then life seems at times to be a great failure, it is because we limit our end to the earthly horizon, and accept as a defeat what is only an incident in our spiritual warfare. "Carpe quod est quietem circumstantiis ad laborum?" The end of man is not to play this part or that, but to play well, excellently, nobly, whatever part the Manager of life's stage may allot to him, be it that of prince or beggar. It may be in the character of his part to suffer, to fail and to fall, but his true end is not thereby frustrated. All creation is made to help him in the execution of his life's work, viewed under its eternal aspect; it is not the things in themselves that will help him, but the use he makes of them. In the very strength of his effort lies his true success, which is the reward, not of good fortune and easy circumstances, but of right endeavor. We are sheep "in loco pascuere ejus" in the place of his pasture, and the things which grow in the low-lying meadows, so often that which grows in the crevices of the rocks and on the steep mountain side. We can no more close ourselves in from the influences around us than we can keep our lungs free from the surrounding atmosphere, but we can, in things spiritual, exercise a counteraction which will make everything conducive to our final welfare. "In the head of the book is written of me that I should do Thy will;" here is the one duty in which we need never entirely fail, the one end we can always pursue, for our very obstacles are our stepping stones, and "all things co-operate to the good of him who loves God."—The Soul's Orbit or Man's Journey to God.

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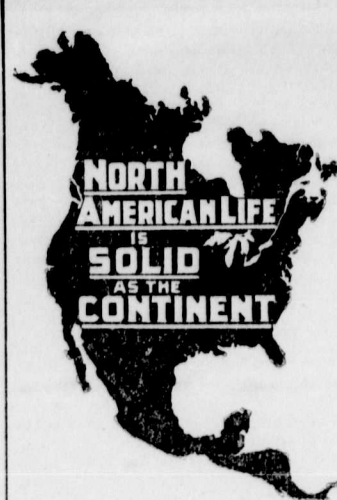
MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS.

Holy souls are the dead who have died in the Lord by being prepared to meet Him and yet not happy souls we must regard them as long as they are separated from Him in the cleansing fires of purgatory. It is for us, their friends, to hasten their release by our prayers. We think much of the dead while their lifeless bodies lie before us, but with their consignment to the grave they are often quite forgotten. We recall every good thing we knew about them and praise them for it; and we crown them with flowers and unite in their last obsequies; but in most cases that is the end of it all. Is this Christian? Do not the pagans do all this and more? What says Holy Church about our Christian duty to the dead, as we see by the teachings of the Fathers.

If we have any faith in our own immortality we must think of those who have gone before us, and have the expectation of meeting them again in the coming life. But as we know ourselves, even the best of us, do we think we are ready to enter into the happiness of Heaven immediately at our death? or do we not think, as Holy Church teaches that there must be for many a purgation for a time when our souls will be cleansed from the dross of this world's delirium and the remains of sin not fully atoned for, before we will be adjudged worthy to enter into the joy of the Lord? Now, if we think this for ourselves, then we must think it for others, and if we would be glad to have our relatives and friends pray for us after our death and hasten our entrance into Heaven, then we ourselves should pray for departed relatives and friends. But alas! this is not the practice with man; before we will be adjudged worthy to be effectively as they might. Of all means of propitiating the divine mercy, surely the Mass is infinitely greater than all others, since it is the offering of the Immaculate Lamb, the Son of God, in Whom the Father is well pleased, and yet how few, comparatively, are the Masses that the faithful have offered for their dear departed ones.

Some few have a Requiem on the funeral day; some have a few Masses said privately then or a little later, but in most cases that is the end of it. They therefore confine their effort for their dead to an occasional remembrance in their prayers. This is contrary to the spirit, the teaching and practice of Holy Church, which is always praying for the souls in purgatory. Every hour of the holy office, as recited by the priests the world over, every public Mass, every devotion, includes prayers for the suffering souls. Now, what is the practice of the Church should be the practice of her children, and so she teaches them. It is not neglect, but thoughtlessness, the failure of so many in having Masses said for the dead. A failure to remember the infinite mystery and glory of God, and how nothing defiled can enter the Kingdom of Heaven, is the reason why the poor, departed, suffering souls in purgatory are so often forgotten. How wisely they act, who, to provide against this forgetfulness, make provision to have Masses said for themselves after they have departed this world!

Nor should it go unmentioned the good for the living that may be done by this effective service to the dead. We do not here speak of the blessings that will come to them from God, Who will reward their charity for the dead as an act done Himself, since He longs to possess these souls, but of the material help that this will come to poor priests of God, struggling in this and still more in foreign lands, building up God's Kingdom amidst the greatest want and privation. Let us, then, have Masses said, and as many and as frequently as we can, if we would really love and do for our dead all that we can. It will be the best way to help them and to help ourselves to bear their loss.



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