

SECRET ROYAL REVIEW. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN. CCCCXIV.

The Springfield Republican correspondent, after having expressed his indignation...

Here we have the workings of the old hereditary Protestant antipathy against this remarkable Pope. I do not imagine that this writer is concerned with the old Imperialist charges against the private character of Gregory VII.

Our writer, however, although not involving himself in any such pool of calumnious infamy, plainly means us to regard Hildebrand as in some way or other so great a criminal as to make it impossible that instructed Christians should believe that he was divinely commissioned to teach and govern the Church.

I do not see how he makes out his argument, if addressed to Christians is a question which he leaves rather hazy even if Gregory VII. were as great a culprit as he seems to intimate.

But was Gregory VII. really an unworthy Pope? A very different judgment is given by a very much more eminent man than either this correspondent or myself, and one very far removed from Catholic ways of thinking, namely, John Fiske.

He treats the great monk of Clugny as a benefactor of mankind. The enthusiastic Protestant historian, Dr. David Miller, after portraying the ignominious decline of the Church in the tenth century, describes how a great and lasting moral revival came to bear under the policy of the noble minded German and Italian Popes whom the monk Hildebrand supported.

It is a very petty and commonplace way of thinking to treat the Middle Ages, and their great characters and movements, as worthy of our reprobation because we seldom find in them the established morality which we expect to find in a perfect English or French or Italian gentleman.

What gives Protestants most offense in the policy of Gregory VII. is the peremptory harshness with which he carried through the requirement of celibacy for the priesthood.

We must bear in mind, of course, that this requirement was not introduced by St. Gregory VII. For 450 years even subdeacons, though probably not a sacramental order, had been required by the canons to abstain from marriage.

Hildebrand, therefore, (whose great personality still insists on our often distinguishing him from lesser Gregories by his baptismal name) simply did his duty in enforcing a law which public sentiment, of clergy and laity, thoroughly approved, and which he, too, thoroughly approved.

True, had no special emergency required at that time a searching application of this law, it might well have been asked that it should be enforced indifferently on the younger than on the elder priests, since the latter, although too often passionately called concubinaries, were not yet such, but sacra-

mentally married men. Bellarmine points out that although the marriage even of subdeacons had long been forbidden, it was not until the Second Lateran, in 1139, that the marriage of men in Holy Orders was prohibited.

Therefore, had Hildebrand enforced this law so energetically, no special crime of the Church regarding it, he might very well have been accused of immoderate rigor, although it is true, special consideration of private feelings and interests was hardly characteristic of the Middle Ages, even in their mildest representatives.

It seems to be now the common judgment, not of Catholic Church historians only, but of Protestant, that the Church then trembled on the very verge of sinking into abject dependence on the kings and nobles, and laity generally, and on the least spiritual of the laity. The hereditary instinct was so strong in Feudalism that the priesthood too seemed likely to become a mere hereditary caste, as it has long been in Russia.

We must remember, also, that there was not then, as now, a large body of pious and enlightened laity, warmly supporting the clergy in the advocacy of moral and spiritual interests. Not but that there were many great men and women of the laity of illustrious descent, as Alfred, a St. Edward, a St. Heri, a St. David, a St. Margaret, a Good Queen Matilda, a Blanche of Castile, and above all a St. Louis. Yet we may safely say that the bulk of the laity was then either brutal or passive, wholly incompetent to stem the tide of regal and noble ambition and rude worldliness.

THE TRINE CHURCH. The Communion of Saints is one of the tenderest and most consoling doctrines of the Catholic Church.

And about this matter of conversion I will say a few words, with reference not to Protestants, but to careless and negligent Catholics. A Catholic who is negligent of his duties has, it is true, if he keeps his faith, a resource which he does not possess if he renounces it.

THE MESS. All the visible rites employed in and about the sacrifice of the Mass tend to instruction, and to the commemoration of the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, in communion with His own command.

THE MONTH OF THE ROSARY. October is the month especially given to the devotion of the Rosary, and as devotion to the Rosary and the Sacred Heart are so closely entwined, it is a month particularly dear to the heart of every League member.

Tobacco and Liquor Habits. Dr. McFargar's tobacco remedy removes all desire for the weed in a few days. A vegetable medicine, and only requires taking the tongue with it occasionally.

OUR DEPENDENCE ON GOD. Human life is a voyage, but our heavenly Father does not give us the control of the weather.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON. Twenty-Third Sunday After Pentecost. MILD MARRIAGES. From the simplest lessons of experience, my dear brethren, I think it ought to be plain enough to every one that a thing a mixed marriage is likely to be.

IMITATION OF CHRIST. OF THE DIGNITY OF ETERNAL LIFE AND HOW GREAT THINGS ARE PROMISED TO THEM THAT FIGHT. For it is not by their own thought or endeavor that they attain to this, but only by the favor of God's grace.

THE MASS. All the visible rites employed in and about the sacrifice of the Mass tend to instruction, and to the commemoration of the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, in communion with His own command.

Thought For Today. Nothing makes us love the rosary like saying it. To those who are unaccustomed to it, it seems long and tedious, but by saying it, the devotion has become dear to thousands of men and women who now find it not long or tedious, but the easiest and most fruitful way of honoring God's dear Mother.

A WEAK HEART. The interesting experience of a St. Catharine's Man. HAD SUFFERED FOR TWELVE YEARS AND WAS ULTIMATELY CURED THROUGH THE ADVICE OF A FRIEND.

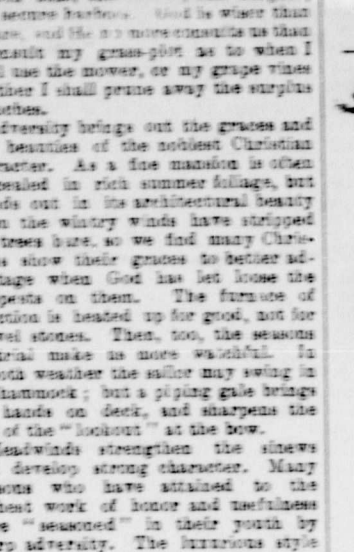
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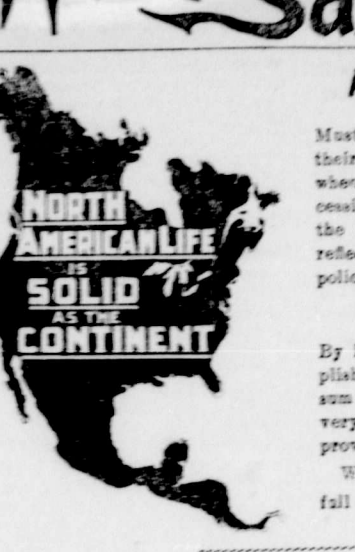
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