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THE
FOUNDATIONS
OF
CATHOLICISM

BY

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**A Searchlight on the lives and
iniquities of the Popes.**

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FOREWORD

During the last century progress of a material character has taken place on an enormous scale, but there has been but little progress in the realms of intellect and thought. The human race still deludes itself with fatuous and childish beliefs. Ludicrous religions still afflict the world and effectively bar the way to mental emancipation; life is still a grand panorama of humbugs and charlatans, an epic wherein the hero is the Demon of the Absurd. Mental development and emancipation must, however, prove a slow and painful process when regard be had to the numerous obstacles which confront humanity in its efforts to free itself from the shackles of myths, superstitions, false beliefs and outworn creeds. The two greatest illusions are to be found in religious and political beliefs which are the supreme illusions of the human race. The role of Chief Illusionist is played by the Church aided and abetted by humbugging politicians and the press, and so long as these three specialists in the art of administering mental dope are allowed to reign supreme, so long will mental development remain in abeyance. Humanity is hoodwinked and grossly deceived by a great Tapestry of Lies, cunningly woven by the arch-impostors who dominate the Church, the Press and political life, and, if the greatest deception is that practised by the Church, the most insidious form of that deception is that which is known to the world as Roman Catholicism—the dope of dopes.

The Roman Catholic Church is unfortunately by far the most widespread, numerous and powerful of all the christian communions. At the head of this dope institution we have the Pope, who is regarded by Catholics as the centre and source of all authority and the interpreter of what the credulous are pleased to term 'the Divine Will'. His pronouncements, however stupid, are deemed to be infallible, he has extraordinary powers being able to grant indulgences, give dispensations and canonise saints; his morals and personal character are presumed to be beyond reproach. He decides what books Catholics may or may not read, he makes ex-cathedra

pronouncements on all manner of subjects and always with the definite object of obstructing thought and placing barriers in the way of intellectual development. The respect given by Catholics to Papal piffle would be a subject for ribald laughter were it not so tragic. If the Pope would but confine his activities to canonising saints there would be no need to perturb ourselves about him but that is one of his minor jobs. He is for ever dabbling in politics, fomenting strife between peoples, intriguing here, there and everywhere, and he is always without exception on the side of the forces of retrogression and reaction. He is the enemy of any and every movement designed to enlighten and uplift humanity, and he is a staunch supporter of every phase of activity whose object is to preserve ignorance and stupidity which are so essential to his continued domination. In the great game of humbugging humanity the part which has been played in the past by occupants of the papal throne has been tremendous; papal aspirations are still of an extremely ambitious character, and there are spheres where the influence of the Pope is actually on the increase, striking proof, if any be needed, of the truth of the statement postulated in the first sentence of this Preface.

In all these circumstances a brief resume of the lives and misdeeds of some of these papal and impeccable gentlemen who have occupied the Chair at the Vatican at different times may serve the useful purpose of removing the mental cobwebs of a few of the faithful dupes. The lives of many of the popes cannot withstand the searchlight of history and fact, and it is desirable that those who are under the influence of catholic chloroform should be enlightened as to the iniquities, criminalities and degrading debaucheries of the real founders of the Church. The record of these founders is such that one may legitimately ask how in the face thereof could anything but an ignoble institution spring from such vile origins; that this institution has to-day so many millions of faithful adherents is but a sad commentary on humanity's intelligence.

E. N. Armstrong,
London, 1933.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF CATHOLICISM

It is the contention of the Roman Catholic Church that Christ constituted St. Peter the first head of the Church of Rome appointing the apostle his personal representative with the words "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church". The authority thus alleged to have been conferred upon Peter is held up by the Roman Catholics to be permanently vested in the Pope.

It is a beautiful little story but, unfortunately for the Catholics, it will not bear a moment's investigation. Like so many of the so called historical features of their Church it is pure legend. The proof offered is, like so many Roman Catholic proofs, no proof at all but merely unadulterated forgery. The early heads and dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church were all past masters in the sublime art of forgery.

It was not until the year 400 A.D. when the Vandals and Goths broke upon the Roman Empire that the Roman Catholic Church established itself as the sole religion of Europe, and once so established it spent the next 50 years in destroying the last traces of all other western religions. With the growth of Roman Catholic power and Papal domination the civilisation of Europe steadily sank until by the tenth century it was positively barbaric.

We will, however, revert to St. Peter but before dealing with him it may not be out of place if a few observations are offered on Christ from whom Peter is alleged to have received his authority. George Brandes, the erudite and celebrated Danish critic, having made a very careful investigation of the group of minor writings which in accordance with Mark have been given the strange collective title of the New Testament came to one very definite conclusion, namely, that the Jesus of the New Testament was a myth, that he never lived at all and that the only fascinating question anent Christ was how did the myth and legend anent his life take shape. For more than six hundred years the average man in Switzerland and elsewhere never doubted that William Tell was a farmer from Burglen, in

the Canton of Uri, and a son-in-law of Walter Furst, likewise from Uri. For more than six hundred years the average man in Switzerland and elsewhere never doubted the story of Tell shooting an apple from the head of his son, and thereafter bringing freedom to the Swiss in the great battle of Morgarten. There are in Switzerland several Tell Chapels including a chapel decorated with scenes out of the life of Tell. The spot where the house used to stand in which he lived is commemorated; there is the rock (Tell Platte) from which Tell made his great leap to safety, and there is no lack of evidence, all spurious and manufactured, designed to convince the credulous that Tell was at one time a living being. It is now well-known that William Tell never lived at all. That the whole story of William Tell is pure legend has been irrefutably proved; but a great deal of trouble and patient investigation was necessary before the real truth of the matter received acknowledgement, and even to-day there are thousands of people in Switzerland and elsewhere who firmly believe the Tell legend. To such an extent has Tell become identified with the Swiss State that for a long time his image appeared on the postage stamps of Switzerland. The fact that he never existed made no difference whatever. The legend has been built up and he is and will remain an active ideal, and as a model he still rules the minds of men. This wonderful legend relating to William Tell was built up in the short space of a few hundred years; small wonder, therefore, that it has been possible to build up a far greater legend, one that has exercised a far greater and wider influence, when the time allowed has not been a mere 600 years but nineteen hundred. In the last analysis it is of small importance what Christ is alleged to have said and done whilst on this earth; we are not in any way concerned with his alleged miraculous birth, but we are most definitely concerned with the question of whether he ever lived at all, and in this connection it is well to remark that there is no proper and reliable evidence that he ever did live. Theologians for centuries have devoted their lives to building up a case confirmatory of his life and have made frantic struggles to obtain evidence accordingly, but they have failed lamentably and in reality the only fascinating question about Christ is not his life but how the myth and legend anent his life took shape and grew to the proportions we now

behold: Like the legend of William Tell the legend of Christ can be classified as *ben trovato*.

Before, therefore, the Roman Catholic Church tells us its lovely fairy tale about how St. Peter was appointed first Pope by Christ the least it can do is to give us some reliable evidence of the existence of Christ himself and that it has always failed to do simply because the task is impossible.

The early fabricators of the legend of Christ and Christian origins were an ignorant lot and made a ghastly mess of their job, frequently going all astray in matters of chronology and geography; they invented tortures, invented martyrs, spread rumours of miracles and flooded Europe with bogus relics. In fact a whole relic trade was carried on at that time. Greeks and Jews did a great trade in the sale of "relics". It was a sordid but lucrative trade. The manufacture of relics and legends went on at a great pace. Every church had a relic of some sort but the favourite was a piece of the true cross on which Christ was alleged to have been crucified, and if all the pieces of the true cross had been gathered together they would have produced sufficient wood wherewith to build a ship.

Thus did Christianity and the legend of Christ receive its send off at the hands of forgers, tricksters, and charlatans.

On such evidence as this are we called upon to believe that Christ lived. Next we are called upon to believe that Peter lived. Again there is no proper and reliable evidence of this. If there were, you may rest assured it would have been produced long ago.

Even if we accept the statement that Peter did live there is very considerable doubt whether he was ever in Rome—certainly there is no proof that he was. In one of the Epistles of doubtful authenticity there is some reference to Babylon and this, by some strange process of reasoning peculiar to matters theological, has been interpreted as meaning Rome.

It is on such dubious foundations as these that the Roman Catholic Church has stood for centuries. That the superstructure which has been erected on these shoddy foundations is completely rotten should cause no astonishment whatever. The one and only reason that the whole fabric has failed to collapse long ago is that there is no limit to human credulity. Legends are generally more pleasant than facts, and they are extremely

difficult to demolish. The numerous legends of the Rhine present a greater appeal than do the actual facts. Humanity lives on myth and the production of fairy tales has always been a lucrative occupation.

Every religion this world has ever seen affords striking confirmation of the vast extent of human credulity. All beliefs rest wholly on this fundamental instinct. Races, Worlds and Constellations have all been carried along in the breasts of Belief and Chimera. The very first essential of the study of any human belief is the study of psychology of human credulity. The metaphysical kernel of the religious injunction 'Believe and you will be saved' is nothing more than credulity. And Credulity is merely the Paramour of Illusion.

The Roman Catholic Church imposes a severe strain on the credulity of man and the mere fact that this Church has so many millions of unquestioning adherents throughout the world proves conclusively that deception of the multitudes is but a simple matter and there was a great deal of wisdom in the aphorism of the American showman who remarked that there is a fool born every minute. He ought to have been more meticulous and used the word second instead of a minute.

If reason governed humanity then obviously the heads of the Roman Catholic Church would be called upon to afford satisfactory and reliable proof of the essential fundamentals of their Church as before mentioned, and, until such evidence were forth-coming, the vast edifice they have erected on shoddy foundations would be treated with contempt. Fortunately for the ecclesiastics reason does not govern humanity and proof is the very last thing which religious dupes demand; indeed many of them would go on believing the balderdash even if they were confronted with the most convincing proof that their beliefs were ill-founded.

A further claim of this preposterous church is that Christ having appointed St. Peter Number One in the line of Popes, all papal successors of Peter are both infallible and sanctified, a claim which is, of course, a ludicrous non-sequitur. But this is the sort of drivel which passes for reason with Catholics and which they accept without question. Catholic reasoning processes have no affinity whatever to the rules of logic. As to the suggestion of sanctity in the Popes there is an element of grim

humour in this. For over fifteen hundred years a succession of scoundrels, blackguards, forgers, murderers, torturers, sadists and downright villains occupied the papal throne. But perchance the Catholic conception of the word 'sanctity' is not the generally accepted definition of the term.

What is the real truth about this St. Peter, this alleged pioneer of the Popes? Assuming that he lived at all (and this is by no means certain) he was but a poor fisherman on the Lake of Galilee, a Jew who hated the gentiles, among whom he is supposed to have founded a Christian Church! The whole story is not only farcical but a positive insult to the intellect and the fact that such drivelling balderdash is accepted as truth by Roman Catholics is irrefutable evidence of their absolute lack of intelligence.

The real rock on which the Roman Catholic Church was founded was the rock of superstition and ignorance and, with these edifying foundations, there was started the most barbarous institution and the greatest imposture known to history. The people were terrified into belief by false prophets, charlatans and liars; idiotic and outrageous theories and fanciful legends developed into facts and facts became so distorted that ultimately truth was hardly discernable. The early Catholics anticipated Mark Twain for they seem to have realised very clearly that a lie can get half way round the world before truth gets its trousers on. Vile cruelties were practised on anyone who dared to question the monstrous dogmas of the Church so that opposition and criticism were effectually stifled.

The Roman Catholic Church with these disgusting origins is simply an illustration of the force of Lies, Forgeries and Fraud and a further illustration of humanity's abysmal stupidity and gullibility. The fact that it is to-day one of the most powerful forces in the world is a conclusive answer to the theories of Leibniz. How can the Roman Catholic Church be explained on the principle that everything that exists has its reason and therefore everything is necessary? However as Leibniz invented the calculus we can afford to be charitable and overlook his philosophical mistakes in the spheres of optimism.

What in fact is the Roman Catholic Church (or indeed Christainity itself) but a preposterous sham and a swindle? But after all the human race would appear to revel in sham

and folly.

Erasmus, one of the greatest of sixteenth century humanists, gave us a clear recital of the various traits in human beings which are due to folly when he offered the world his work 'In praise of folly' a piece of literature especially daring in its day when Catholic tyranny ruled Europe. The lives of the multitude can be interpreted only in the light of their faithful allegiance to Folly as their guide and Master in all things.

Human folly alone, however, did not and could not give the Roman Catholic Church its power. Founded on lies and ignorance it proceeded with unremitting zeal to ensconce itself by barbarities and atrocities, cruelties, tortures, massacres and appalling crimes. Early papal history, in fact, is nothing but a long, lurid and weary record of atrocities and it would require volumes to give anything like a complete description of the revolting deeds of this Church. We must content ourselves in the circumstances with a synopsis of the fiendish barbarities of this nauseating Church. Some of the papal deeds attained stages of such revolting cruelty that they were almost beyond belief, the stomach is sickened and the imagination positively staggered at many of the atrocities of the Vatican Tyrants.

We will not trouble about the countless massacres and religious wars this institution fomented though they were wicked enough and caused untold misery. We will record but a few of the innumerable barbarities of the heads of this monstrous organisation. There is a vast literature giving a detailed history of the papacy and the person who is concerned to know further facts as to the methods by which catholicism established itself can refer to the works of Hallam, Bryce, Joseph McCabe, La Chatre, Draper, Mosheim and many others wherein the subject receives the extensive treatment it deserves. Catholic apologists are of course very anxious at all times to obscure these facts and with regard thereto their policy is chiefly one of concealment for they are only too well aware of the fact that their explanations are worthless.

Of what does the papacy consist? A long line of murderous scoundrels and human fiends varied occasionally by a pope not quite such a blackguard as the rest and a small sprinkling of comparatively decent men.

Many of the occupants of the papal throne who did not

themselves resort to murder specialised in roasting people alive, gouging out eyes and other vile mutilations. In fact when a decent man reads of the deeds of some of these arch-villains he must feel ashamed to be a member of the human race. How any man with the slightest pretensions to mind and intellect, humane and decent feelings, can take office in this church passes comprehension. The most charitable explanation of the circumstance is that so far as the majority of the Catholic priests are concerned they are not knaves but simply ignorant fools; as to the leading dignitaries from the Pope downwards there is little doubt however that they are well steeped in knavery and fully cognisant of the colossal fraud which their church represents.

I do not care what defence Catholic apologists may offer, I do not care what good the Catholic Church may have done (and I see little evidence of any good at all from that quarter) nor do I care whether some of its priests and dignitaries have been really virtuous and high-minded men. That Church can never expiate its crimes and by its crimes it stands condemned. I know full well that crimes can be laid at the doors of other churches, but no church has a record in this respect to equal that of the Roman Catholic Institution and it is with that record which we are now concerned.

This Church built on such rotten foundations and established by deeds of unspeakable violence is the Church which for centuries held domination in Europe and carried through its iniquitous intrigues and ambitions relentlessly. The ominous and immense policy of the Church trailed through all the events of history. In the middle ages the papacy was, perhaps, the greatest financial institution and, during the fifteenth century, this state of things was responsible for the most appalling abuses.

But let us return to the Popes, and, in dealing with them let us never forget that throughout history their one object, has been and still is to get hold of money, jewels, property and treasure and, of course, temporal power, and in so doing, to be quite unscrupulous in their methods. Saving souls or saving the world has never been their business.

In the early days of the Church there were many fierce fights among the Bishops and other claimants for the papal

throne which offered such excellent facilities for graft and theft. Thus we find Jerusalem, Carthage, Constantinople and Alexandria all made pretensions to being the headquarters of the Church. After fighting lustily and excommunicating each other on a reciprocal basis for about three centuries the survivors of this internecine strife finally decided to have their head-office in Rome a matter they settled at a conference held between the years 492 and 496. The title Pontiff (bridge builder) was first used by Damascus (366-384). At this time and during the early days of development of the Church there was a veritable epidemic of lying, forgery, and falsification no degree of dishonesty and trickery being too shameful to achieve the desired end of maintaining the supremacy of Rome. History and documents were forged to an amazing extent by the avaricious popes of the period. Official catholic history is nothing but a charming chronicle of events which never happened.

When Damascus was elected Pope in 366 his election was marked by violence for he had a rival for the office in the form of Ursinicus. Ursinicus pressed his claim so forcibly that he became a nuisance and in the ensuing fight the friends of Damascus succeeded in rounding up a number of the adherents of Ursinicus in a Church whither they had fled for safety. The supposed sanctity of the building was a matter of no importance to Damascus and his devotees and about one hundred and sixty people were captured in the Church and slaughtered in cold blood. Damascus became a saint! Damascus died of fever and many Roman Catholic fever sufferers still invoke the name of this murderer on the assumption that this fourth century ghost can cure typhoid! These are the true facts of Damascus Number One who reigned in Rome from 366 to 384 but the apologists for the Roman Catholic Church represent the murderer as a splendid fellow who occupied his life stoutly maintaining the Catholic faith against the prevalent heresies especially Arianism and Apollinarianism, as one conspicuous for his zeal in building and restoring churches. The scoundrel wrote several hymns which were preserved and since his canonisation his Feast is still observed in the Roman Catholic Church on the 11th December in every year. It is recorded in Roman Catholic books that this pope was a great friend of St. Jerome

which would seem to indicate that Jerome was not particular about the characters of those with whom he kept company.

In the year 440 Leo 'the great' (why 'the great' is not by any means clear) arrived on the scene as Pope and held that office for 21 years. During that time he managed to preserve the tradition of the office and perform his quota of 'good' work. He encouraged the massacre of the Priscillianists, a Spanish sect regarded as heretical, and invented numerous lies about their tenets and convictions. Catholic apologists tell us that this pope's chief care was the promotion of the unity of the Church by the extirpation of heresies, and by the maintenance of the papal supremacy over the whole Church. It is quite true that he was very busy suppressing heretics. First of all he dealt with Pelagianism then prevalent in Aquileia, and then he tried his hand at crushing Manichaeism the penalties imposed on adherents of the religion being severe in the extreme. After a career of murder and torture, brutality and violence this gentleman died in November 461 and of course became a Saint his feast being held in the west on the 11th April.

After frightful bloodshed and slaughter Symmachus became Pope in 498. He was a vile and flagrant criminal and was later convicted of abominable villainy. The year 511 saw the end of his power.

Hormisdas arrived on the throne in the year 514 and did a lot of good work encouraging persecution and cruelties.

Boniface the Second appeared in 530 but he had a short reign of about two years. He had a rival for the office in the form of Dioscorus on whom he launched a post-mortem curse for of course Dioscorus was dead when Boniface took office.

Silverius had a shorter reign than Boniface the Second. He arrived in 536 and was kicked out the next year. His expulsion and deposition was based on a charge of treason.

Vigilius thereupon bribed his friends to procure the office for him and they succeeded. He killed his secretary in a fit of rage and beat one of his nephews to death. For eighteen years this gentleman ruled the roost.

Then came Gregory the First another of the Roman Catholic Saints and a very saintly fellow he was. He publicly glorified the murderer Phocas for killing the Emperor Maurice of

Constantinople. This murder greatly pleased Gregory because Maurice had been flirting with the idea of making Constantinople the head-office of the Church. This is the fellow who conceived the project of converting England and deputed the job to Augustine. Catholic history books paint a beautiful picture of this sadist. We are told that he had wonderful gifts of management and organisation which he displayed to relieve the needs of refugees thronging Rome. He certainly did a lot of organisation work in the matter of Church Estates (which even at that time were very vast) and grabbed all he could lay his hands on. He struggled like a maniac to uphold and maintain the supremacy of the Papacy and all his life he was in love with temporal power which he did his utmost to increase. Needless to say he became a saint and was canonised immediately after his death in 604. His festival is kept on the 10th March and it is worth while recording that his special emblem in art is a dove, which he must have chosen in one of his cynical moods.

In the year 604 there appeared on the scene Pope Sabinian who must have been the direct ancestor of the speculators on the Chicago Stock Exchange for his chief act was to corner the wheat market and having done this he caused, as he firmly intended to cause, a famine subsequently taking advantage thereof to grab all the available food and sell it at extortionate prices to the starving people. The gentlemen of Wall-Street should make him their patron Saint and a tablet to his memory should appear in every Stock-Exchange and Bourse. He was a master of the art of getting rich quickly and had he lived in the nineteenth century he would have had nothing to learn from the Carnegies, Morgans and Rockefellers.

There is a touch of grim irony about the names of some of these Popes. As an instance Theodorus ('gift of god.') having taken office in 642 revealed the fact that he was indeed a precious gift when he signed the death warrants of heretics with a pen dipped in 'consecrated' wine.

Before coming to the throne in 687 Sergius the First had a very busy time stealing church jewels and ornaments from what is supposed to be St. Peter's tomb. With these he departed to the pawnshop and thus brought his office with the proceeds. Sergius loved the ladies being of a highly erotic disposition and

busied himself a good deal with adultery. There is a miracle associated with the name of Sergius and by this miracle Catholic apologists vindicate the gentleman. It is recorded that when one of his many infants was but one week old and during the course of its baptismal ceremony it exclaimed in a loud and clear voice that Sergius was not its father. Catholics believe this which proves that Catholics like fundamentalists will believe anything.

Constantine reigned for seven years (708 to 715) and during that time he managed to carry on the good work. He persuaded the Emperor Justinian to blind and mutilate the Archbishop of Ravenna for disobedience to papal authority. The Archbishop's tongue was torn out with pincers and his eyes were stabbed out with a pointed iron.

When Stephen the Third came to the throne in 768 he proved himself a staunch believer in precedent and started off by gouging out the eyes of his predecessor and also of several of the latter's adherents, Pascal No 1 who had his innings between 817 and 824 did a lot of tongue removing and also he removed the eyes of many of his critics. Incidentally he was very fond of beheading people with whom he did not agree.

Eugenius No Two (there is grim humour in this fellow's name signifying as it does 'well begotten') had but a three year's reign between 824 and 827 but he managed to do quite a good deal in that short time. He originated many cruel ordeals for testing the endurance of alleged heretics and in fact had quite an inventive mind in this direction.

About fifty years later Adrian the Second became Pope and he also became the confederate of Bazilius the murderer who killed the Emperor Michael. Adrian was succeeded by John the Eighth who held office from 872 to 882. He was especially fond of throat-slitting and thus disposed of the Saracens of Naples and other cities. The Saracens were Arabian or other nomadic tribes on the Syrian borders of the Roman Empire; their presence in Naples was defended as quite harmless by Duke Sergius who by this defence greatly displeased the Bishop Athanasius who ultimately got hold of Sergius. Thereupon the Bishop had the Duke's eyes torn out and this act received the hearty commendation of Pope John the Eighth who gave it his apostolic blessings. This Pope John, so Cath-

olic history books tell us, spent his life in efforts to convert the Slavs and obviate a breach with the Eastern Church. He must have pursued these activities in his spare time when he was not engaged on surgical operations on the throats of his critics and opponents.

Formosus became Pope nine years after John the Eighth. He was a past master of treachery and betrayed the country to a German invader; the ghastly carnage which ensued decimated the people.

It is impossible to record even a few of the vile deeds of Pope Sergius the Third and at the same time give any adequate idea of his character. He became Pope in 904 and he is best summed up with the observation that he was addicted to every repulsive vice and was one of the vilest characters known to history.

After Sergius the Third there came along Leo the Fifth, Christopher, John the Tenth, Leo the Sixth, Stephen the Eighth, John the Eleventh and John the Twelfth all fine fellows who held the throne down (with due regards to traditional methods) to the year 965. The whole lot of them indulged in fornication and murder on a substantial scale and John the Twelfth, a vicious fiend, also did a lot of embezzling of church monies which he used for himself, he castrated enemies, raped their women-folk, and cut up his victims into small pieces.

We now come to Pope Benedict who had a short life and a gay one; he was murdered by his successor Boniface the Seventh. Boniface was very light-fingered and stole a vast quantity of Church treasures afterwards decamping to Constantinople. Possibly he concluded that in doing this he was committing no crime seeing that the treasures he purloined were previously stolen by the Church. He stayed in Constantinople for a while and then came back to Rome for the purpose of murdering John the Fourteenth a task which he carried out with professional skill.

Gregory the Fifth became Pope in 996 and had a three years term, not long perhaps, but long enough for him to perform a considerable quantity of surgical work in the way of cutting off noses, tearing out eyes and tongues. In fact his first act on taking office was to have the nose of his rival cut off,

his eyes and his tongue torn out.

It required a brave man in those days to come forward as an aspirant for papal honours. The candidate who failed to obtain office was almost certain to meet with refined treatment at the hands of the winner, and even the successful candidates frequently arrived on the throne bodily incomplete. Once Pope, however, the victor in the struggle for election could enjoy himself to the full by frightful revenge on his opponents.

Benedict the Eighth took office in 1012 and had the Jews beheaded for the purpose of causing a storm to cease.

John the Nineteenth after a lot of bribery became Pope in 1024 but Benedict the Ninth who was a greater expert in this art of corruption, got rid of him in 1033 and thereupon started a graft organisation of his own and did quite a lot of poisoning.

Gregory the Seventh and Pascal the Second had a lot in common. They were both responsible for vast numbers of violent deaths. Their murders are numbered by the thousand.

Adrian the Fourth who took office in 1149 was a thorough villain. His filthy deeds were exposed by Arnold of Brescia and for this Adrian had Arnold burnt alive.

We now arrive at the twelfth century and then began that mad craze for crusades wherein thousands of people were needlessly and brutally massacred.

There were crusades against heretics, crusades against Mohammedans, and crusades against varieties of Christianity which were anathema to Rome. It was in these last named crusades that Pope Innocent the Third did so much good work. He was Pope between 1198 and 1216. This blackguard financed the British King John in his depredations and murders, and instigated John not to sign the Magna Carta at Runnymede in 1215 and when John did sign guaranteed John support if he ignored the Charter. Innocent was very fond of meddling with the affairs of other countries, and after doing a lot of harm in Germany he instigated the appalling massacre of the Albigenses in Southern France; this savage slaughter of harmless people went on for about twenty years. The history of this Albigensian crusade is a fearful record of terror. Whole populations were extirpated and in one town alone namely Beziers over 20,000 men, women and children were hacked to

pieces by papal troops. Hundreds of people had their nostrils slit and their eyes torn out, the towns and villages ran with blood.

The reign of Gregory the ninth (1227 to 1241) synchronised with the Inquisition. This thief extorted monies from Germany, France and Britain for the purpose of his depredations and he ably observed the papal traditions of robbery and murder.

Innocent the Fourth (why any Pope was ever called Innocent is a mystery) held the reins from 1243 to 1254 and during that time he tried to assassinate Frederick of Germany, but his plotting failed. Nevertheless he was able to cause terrible suffering in Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal by war persecution, and the deaths for which he was responsible amount to countless thousands. He was a poisoner on a large scale, abominably corrupt and guilty of innumerable acts of the vilest treachery.

Boniface the Eighth (1294 to 1303) indulged in atrocities galore, and started off by inflicting a lingering death by starvation on his predecessor Celestine. Also he spent a lot of time in causing wars in Europe.

Pope Clement the Fifth (1305 to 1314) roasted alive a number of the leaders of the Knights Templars and then stole their treasures.

John the Twenty-second (1316 to 1343) had a fairly long reign and made good use of it. He indulged in theft on a large scale, burned alive over one thousand people, and he also committed rapes and adulteries galore.

Urban the Sixth (1378 to 1389) had a terrible fight to gain office his rival being Clement the Seventh. Thousands of persons were butchered in the course of this dispute and Urban, a thorough Sadist, enjoyed watching the executioners murdering his victims. He was especially partial to refined tortures, and watched people roasted to death over slow fires. He had a cardinal torn to death by wolves and another cardinal buried up to his neck in quicklime. Also, by way of relief, he had some of his victims sewn up in sacks with snakes or vermin and then thrown from high cliffs into a river or into the sea. Truly a charming Pope and a most holy father.

The chief feature of John the Twenty-third who arrived

on the scene in 1415 was his devotion to incest and poisoning. He poisoned his predecessor (Alexander the Fifth) raped hundreds of nuns and in fact so widespread and nefarious were his outrages that he was ultimately tried by the Council of Constance and deposed. That same Council decreed the death of John Hus, the Bohemian, who by its orders was burned alive in 1415. The Council which deposed John the Twenty-third elected as his successor Martin the Fifth who clung to office till 1431, but it is difficult to see why the Council made this change for Martin was as bloodthirsty a villain as John. Martin burned heretics, poisoned Benedict his rival, and devastated Bohemia and other parts of Europe.

Eugenius the Fourth who succeeded Martin in 1431 was both robber and assassin. For sixteen years he amused himself by murders, tortures, robberies and cruelties.

Paul the Second who appeared in 1464 was another beauty. He caused wars and tortured and slew learned men and intellectuals. Thousands of people perished through his nefarious meddlings.

Sixtus the Fourth had a thirteen years reign and made a lot of money during that time out of a house of prostitution which he maintained in Rome. Apart from his interest in this Bagin he was very busy with murders and starved numbers of people to death.

Innocent the Eighth was no more innocent than his predecessors and did a lot of good work in the way of bribery and corruption, also persecution. He was an absolute pest to both Germany and Bohemia.

Innocent departed in 1492 and then came those delightful people the Borgias, the notorious poisoners, Roderic Borgia changed himself into Pope Alexander the Sixth and had a reign of eleven years ending in 1503. Thieves, bandits and assassins the Borgias' record is too well-known to need any repetition.

We will wind up this record of papal scoundrels with Julius No Two who arrived on the throne in 1503 and for ten years busied himself causing religious wars in Europe.

It will be seen from the foregoing upon what beautiful and edifying foundations the Catholic Church rests. What a commentary on human intellect that a Church with such a record is to-day one of the most powerful organisations of its

kind in the world! Apologists for the Church will, of course, tell us that the enormous power is but a proof of the truth of its teachings and of its divine origin. Fools and simpletons will believe them but I think that all decently minded people who are capable of preserving unbiased minds will feel that a church with such a fearful history is a disgrace and a wart on the breast of time.

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