

THE POPE AND THE INDIES.

The following is a full text of the letter of our Holy Father on the establishment of clerical Seminaries in the East Indies.

POPE LEO XIII.

To our Venerable Brethren the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Ordinaries, having peace and communion with the Apostolic See.

VENERABLE BRETHREN, HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BLESSING.

The shores of the far East, explored by the good fortune and the gallant efforts of the Portuguese, where so many at this day seek riches in the paths of commerce, have occupied our own mind and thoughts even from the first days of our Pontificate, though with views and purposes very much more serious. We dwell with emotion on those wide regions of India, in which for so many ages the preachers of the Gospel have laboured. We recall first the Apostle St. Thomas, who is rightly considered the leader of those who brought thither the Gospel; and next St. Francis Xavier, who, many years later, gave himself to the same holy work, and who, with incredible perseverance and charity, succeeded in converting hundreds of thousands of the Indian people from the errors, the superstition, and the impurity of Brahminism to true religion and the Catholic faith. And after this most holy man came many others, both Seculars and Regulars, sent by the Apostolic See, and acting under its authority, who endeavoured, and do endeavour to this day, to keep up and to spread those Christian teachings and institutions which Thomas introduced and Xavier revived. But alas! what wide regions and what multitudes of souls are still far from the truth—still plunged in the darkness of pitiable superstition! What a vast field, more especially towards the North, is still utterly untouched by even a remote preparation for the reception of the seed of the Gospel!

As we reflect on these things, we do indeed place our utmost confidence in the kindness and mercy of God our Saviour, Who alone knows the times and seasons for making His light to shine, and whose way it is to urge the minds of men to seek the paths of salvation by impulses of grace which are secret and hidden. But as far as it depends upon ourselves, it is our desire and our duty to do all that is possible in order that so extensive a region of the world may share to some extent in our watchfulness. With this view, having earnestly considered by what means Christianity in the East Indies could be best organized and propagated, we have succeeded in making certain arrangements which will prove to be useful and advantageous to Catholicism. First, we have made a suitable treaty, binding on both sides, with the most faithful King of Portugal and Algarve, concerning the administration of the Portuguese "Padroado" in India. As a consequence of this, the grave dissensions which had so long distracted the minds of Christians have ceased to exist, the causes of dispute having been removed. Moreover, we have considered it to be opportune and salutary to form the various Christian communities, which before were subject to Vicars-Apostolic, into dioceses proper, which should each have its Bishop and should be administered by the ordinary law. Wherefore, by the Apostolic Letters *Humanae Salutis*, of September 1, 1886, there was constituted in those regions a new Hierarchy, made up of eight Ecclesiastical Provinces—namely, Goa (with the honorary title of Patriarch), Agra, Bombay, Verapoly, Calcutta, Madras, Pondicherry, and Colombo. And we constantly and earnestly endeavour, through our Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, to carry out whatever we

perceive to be useful to salvation or profitable to faith and piety in those countries.

But there is one other thing on which the spiritual welfare of India very importantly depends; and to this, Venerable Brethren, we desire that you, and all who love humanity and Christianity, should give greater attention. The Catholic faith among the races of India must always continue to be insecure and to make very uncertain progress, as long as there is no clergy formed of the natives themselves and duly prepared for the work of the Priesthood; a clergy who shall not only assist the foreign missionaries, but shall themselves be able to undertake the administration of Christianity among their own people. It is known from history that this was the opinion of St. Francis Xavier. He is related to have been accustomed to say that Christianity could never take firm root in India without the assistance of a pious and earnest native priesthood. How much reason he had for thinking so it is not difficult to understand. For the Apostolic work of the European missionaries is subject to many hindrances, the chief among which are their ignorance of the native language (which is difficult to acquire quickly), and the novelty of the manners and customs of the country, to which it takes a long time to become habituated; so that European priests must always live in India as in a foreign land. Wherefore, since it is not easy for foreigners to acquire the confidence of the population, it is evident that the labours of a native clergy would prove far more efficacious. Such a clergy would be acquainted with the ideas, the dispositions, and the customs of their countrymen; they would know when to speak and when to be silent; and being Indians themselves, they would dwell among their fellow-Indians without suspicion or aversion—a matter, as it need not be said, of the greatest importance, especially in times of danger.

In the next place, it must be observed that missionaries imported from abroad must always be too few in number to suffice for the necessities of the existing Christian communities. This is clearly evident from the statistics of the missions, and from the fact that the Indian Missions cease not to beg and implore, from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, more and more preachers of the Gospel. Now, if the priests from abroad are at this moment unequal to the task of the ministry, what will happen in the future when the Christians have increased in number? For there is no prospect that the supply sent from Europe will grow in proportion. If, therefore, we would consult for the salvation of India, and would establish in those far-stretching regions a Christianity that will last and flourish, men who, after careful preparation, may be invested with the character and the duties of the Priesthood must be provided from the native races themselves.

In the third place, it must be borne in mind that there is, not indeed a probability, but certainly a possibility, that circumstances may arise in Europe or Asia which will entirely put a stop to the supply of external priests for India. In that case, if there be no native clergy, how will Holy Religion continue to exist, without ministers of the Sacraments or teachers of doctrine? The answer to this may be gathered from the history of China, Japan, and Ethiopia. It has more than once happened in Japan and China, that, when hatred and violence have burst out against Christianity, the enemy have put to death or driven into exile the foreign priests, but spared those of native birth, and the latter, speaking the language and knowing the customs of the people, and helped by their friends and relations, have been able not only to

remain with impunity in the country, but to continue without hindrance the discharge of their sacred duties and the administration of their flocks throughout every province. In Ethiopia, on the other hand, although there were not less than 200,000 Christians, yet because there were no native priests, when a sudden storm of persecution arose and the European clergy were slain or expelled, the fruits of long years of labor were completely destroyed.

Finally, let us look back to the history of the Church, and religiously follow the salutary proscription of our fathers. It was the custom and the institution of the Apostles, in the discharge of their Apostolic office, first to instruct the multitude in the doctrines of Christ, and, next, to choose out from among the people certain persons to be ordained to the Priesthood, and to be promoted to the Episcopate itself. The Roman Pontiffs, following their example, have always been accustomed to charge and direct Apostolic missionaries that, wherever there was gathered together a Christian community sufficiently numerous, they should proceed to form a native clergy. In order, then, that due provision may be made for the safety and the propagation of Christianity in India, natives of the country must be prepared for the Priesthood, that so, whatever may come to pass, there may be at hand sacred ministers charged with the care of holy religion, and capable of directing their Christian countrymen.

For these reasons the Prefects of the Indian Missions, by the advice and encouragement of the Apostolic See, have established Colleges of clergy wherever it was possible to do so. Nay, farther it was decreed in the synods of Colombo, of Bangalore, and Allahabad, held at the beginning of the year 1887, that each diocese should have its seminary for the training of native clergy; and that if any of the suffragan Bishops were prevented by poverty from having his own, he should maintain his subjects at his own expense in the seminary of the Metropolitan See. These most useful decrees the Bishops are endeavouring, to the best of their power, to put into execution. But their excellent desires and intentions are hampered by the want of means and the deficiency of priests fitted to conduct a course of studies and to carry out discipline. Hence there hardly exists as yet a seminary in which the students can obtain a complete and finished training; and this at a time when civil governments and Protestants in large numbers are sparing neither expense nor labour in order to provide young men with an education of the higher class.

It is clear and evident, therefore, how useful to the public welfare it is to establish in the East Indies colleges wherein native young men, on whom the Church's future so much depends, may be trained in all liberal culture, and in those virtues without which the sacred ministry cannot be exercised either usefully or devoutly. Having had the happiness to see the causes of dissension removed by suitable treaties, and the administration of the dioceses regulated by an ecclesiastical hierarchy, could we but provide as we propose for the training of the clergy, we should esteem our work to be so far complete. For if once there were seminaries of Church students, there would be the strongest reason to hope for an ample supply thereafter of suitable priests, who would spread widely the light of piety and doctrine, and would devote themselves in large measure to the learned dissemination of the truths of the Gospel. To a work so worthy and so intimately bound up with the welfare of vast numbers of people it is right and fitting that Europeans should lend their assistance, the more so that we

ourselves must be quite unable to provide for the considerable expenditure required. It is the part of a Christian to consider all men, all the world over, in the light of brethren, and to exclude no one from the duty of charity; and this is more especially true of those matters which concern our neighbour's eternal salvation. Wherefore, we most earnestly beg of you, Venerable Brethren, to be so good as to help us in these our designs and attempts. Do what you can to make known everywhere the condition of Catholicism in these distant countries; impress upon the public that something must be done for India; and bring this home especially to those who consider that the greatest privilege of wealth is the power of doing good. We are firmly convinced that we do not appeal in vain to the charity and bounty of your people. If the contributions should prove to be larger in amount than is required for the colleges of which we speak, we will take care that whatever is over shall be expended on other works of piety and utility which have been begun.

As a pledge of the gifts of Heaven and an earnest of our affections, we most lovingly bestow upon you, Venerable Brethren, and upon your clergy and flocks, the Apostolic Blessing.

Given at St. Peter's, at Rome, on the twenty-fourth day of June, 1888, the sixteenth year of our Pontificate.

POPE LEO XIII.

Coventry Patmore's Literary Work.

Coventry Patmore, the early friend of Dante G. Rossetti, says the *London Literary World*, is best known by that fine poem of wedded life, *The Angel in the House*, written in honor of his wife and thus dedicated: "To the memory of her by whom and for whom I became a Poet." The angel—a daughter, by the way, of the Rev. Dr. Andrews, of Beresford Chapel, Waltham, where young Ruskin occasionally attended—lies in the church-yard at Hendon, where one may read the simple and only inscription: "Emily, wife of Coventry Patmore."

Mr. Patmore is English on the father's side and Scotch on the mother's, while one of his great-great-grandfathers was a Prussian. He was born at Woodford, Essex, in 1823, and published his first volume of verse when he was only twenty. For twenty-two years he was an assistant librarian at the British Museum, but he now lives quietly at Hastings, where the Catholic Church of St. Mary, was built mainly at his expense. *The Angel in the House* met with a good deal of hostile criticism when first published in 1864, and it was this that prompted Ruskin to write the memorable defense of the poet. Mr. Patmore's other works, such as *The Unknown Eros*, *A Garland of Poems*, and *Amelias*, are less well known, but hardly less deserving of recognition.

A Costly Present.

The steamship *La Bretagne* brought lately an ostensorium of solid silver. It was ordered two years ago from Lyons, France, by the League of the Sacred Heart for the use of St. Patrick's Cathedral, N. Y. It is of the finest quality of silver, heavily gilded. The ostensorium weighs eighty-five pounds and stands five feet high. It costs \$10,000, not including the jewels used on it. Its entire cost was contributed by members of the League of the Sacred Heart.

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Some lyric genius should take the refrain, "Is it not enough for you?" and compose a tropical song.