

The Church in China

A Native Clergy Is What Is Needed.

A Dublin priest has received the following letter from the Most Rev. Dr. Fagan... Very Rev. and Dear Father—The question of ecclesiastical vocations among the native Chinese, to be dealt with thoroughly, would involve the consideration of several points into which it is impossible for me to enter. It must suffice, then, if I select the ones that I deem most interesting; and even these I can deal with only in a summary way.

us regards the Faith, only of the first and second generation. In my own vicariate, for instance, the Christians are converts only of some few years. It is plain then, that if we are to carry on the work of the Seminary at all we cannot exclude those who are parents or not Christians for a considerable time. From such a state of things, of course, certain inconveniences inevitably result. It is naturally impossible, I need scarcely assure you that those who are of such recent introduction to the Faith, even when they have gone through seminary life, should imbibe the ecclesiastical spirit, to the same degree of perfection, as do, for the most part, the young Levites of Europe. To my mind, at all events, it would be unreasonable and unfair to exact or expect so much as a general rule. The Christians of Europe derive enormous advantage from the fact that Christianity is so long established in their midst. The ages past have formed for them a spirit, eminently Christian, with which their languages, laws, manners, and customs, are so largely impregnated. Here, on the contrary, the Christians live in a huge desert of paganism where, to put it briefly, everything tells of the devil, of his maxims, of his deceptions. No doubt the training of the Seminary develops in our students the Christian and priestly spirit, but it is none the less true, that it cannot reasonably be expected in their case, what might legitimately be expected in the case of Europeans. In other words, we succeed in training subjects who are truly good priests, virtuous, prudent, and devoted to their work; but, speaking generally, they are, from certain points of view, inferior to what I may call the excellent subjects who come to us from Europe.

Why Catholics are not Permitted to Pray Into Protestant Opinions. An Enquirer writes to the editor of the "Freeman's Journal" as follows:—A Protestant friend asks me the following questions: Why should I answer? Suppose a Catholic father, in his zeal for the spiritual welfare of his children, forbids them to read Protestant controversial literature, to attend a Protestant church service, to listen to a Protestant controversial sermon, or to endeavor to discover religious truth by a careful examination of both sides of the question, telling them that their Church is the true one, and that they need look no further. Is this commendable Catholic spirit? Suppose a Protestant father, in his zeal for the spiritual welfare of his children, forbids them to read Catholic controversial literature, to attend a Catholic church service, to listen to a Catholic controversial sermon, or to endeavor to discover religious truth by a careful examination of both sides of the question, telling them that their Church is the true one, and that they need look no further. Is this bigotry? Does not the cap, whether may be its size, fit either head? Here is Father Lambert's reply:—"No, the cap does not fit either head. The cases are not parallel. The Catholic believes—not opines—that God has established on earth a living organism or corporation—the Church—to teach and interpret His revealed will and truth. From the fact of its establishment and mission he believes this Church to be infallible in her teaching. He believes that revealed truth comes and can come only to us by way of external authority and not by way of the private judgment of the individual. Whether he is right or wrong in his belief is not the question here. It is enough for his mental attitude, that such is his mental attitude. This being the case, it is not clear that logic, consistency, honesty and the duty he owes to God in reference to his children require him to protect them from every error committed by the Church? To have them see the revealed truth, and that by acquiring a knowledge of the Church. Having this knowledge, they are no longer seekers after revealed truth; they are possessors of it. Any teaching, by whomsoever given, that contradicts the teaching of the Church is ipso facto false. And it is his duty to preserve his children from the dangers of false teaching, as it is to prevent them from unknowingly eating death-destriving food. Here again we repeat, the truth or falsity of his convictions is not the question, it is enough that he has such convictions. Having them, his course of conduct must be governed by them if he be a manly man with enough brains to see the logical consequences of his position. "Such is the mental attitude of the Catholic, whose belief is not mere opinion, but the most profound conviction the human mind is capable of. And his objection—call it intolerance if you will—to all forms of what he must believe to be error, under whatsoever name, is logical and necessary. But is this a commendable spirit? It is always commendable to be consistent. "Now, let us take the case of the Protestant father. Is he consistent in forbidding his children to read Catholic controversial literature, hear Catholic sermons and examine both sides? No, he is not consistent, not logical. On the contrary, he is inconsistent and illogical and at war with the fundamental principle of his faith. That principle is the right of private judgment, and every one must read, investigate and rely on his own private judgment and system of belief to suit himself. Now, while holding such a principle, how can a Protestant consistently forbid anyone putting that principle into practice? How can he consistently assume the right to dictate or determine the belief of any one, even his own children? To be consistent with that principle he should not only permit his children to hear Catholic and all other kinds of controversial sermons and read all kinds of controversial literature, but he should be assiduous in teaching and reading them himself. "But as not the Protestant parent bound as strictly as the Catholic parent to save his children from what he believes to be error and instruct them as to what he believes to be the truth? His most certain duty, but to do so he must determine what they are to be taught, and to determine this he throws to the winds his Protestant principle of private judgment and takes his position on Catholic ground. He is face to face with the alternative of neglecting his duty to his children or performing that duty on the Catholic principle of authority. He is bound in conscience to teach his children what, with the light he has, he sincerely believes to be the truth and the law of God. He has the parental authority—divinely given—and he cannot shirk the obligations that authority carries with it. It is for him and for no one else to determine what kind of sermons his children shall hear and what literature they shall read and to forbid them, to hear what he does not approve of. But all this is inconsistent with the Protestant principle of private judgment. "We hope our inquirer will see from what we have said that the conduct of the Catholic who believes in the infallible teaching authority of the Church is radically different from the conduct of the Protestant, who rejects all authority but private judgment."

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Cathedral Burned

Lightning Destroys Grand Rapids Church.

St. Andrew's Catholic cathedral, Grand Rapids, Mich., burned at early hour on Monday last week, as a result of being struck by lightning. The loss is about \$50,000, with only \$20,000 insurance. The entire interior of the building was burned out, and only walls and spire are left standing. The large pipe organ, valued at \$10,000, was utterly ruined. Three altars, numerous statues and other furnishings were destroyed or badly damaged. A mission conducted by the Jesuit Fathers Donohue and O'Connor, was in progress at the cathedral, and less than fifteen minutes before the building was struck by lightning a large crowd was dismissed from evening service. A shower of broken brick fell to the pavement and two young men were shocked by the lightning and thrown to the ground, although not injured. The crashing report that came with the stroke startled the residents of that neighborhood and alarmed some of the priests who had not left the church after the service just closed. Father Gallagher and Father Reid were among these and realizing that the church had been struck by the lightning they hurried upstairs to the gallery, but found nothing amiss. Not content with this, they called upon two young men who climbed into the steeple but found no traces of fire. The priests left the church with the conviction that the bolt had done no more than apparent damage to the outside brickwork. But the flame had been kindled in a space under the roof where it could not be discovered by a climb into the belfry, and it smouldered on into the morning at 2:30 when it broke out.

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