



"AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM."

THE ONLY CATHOLIC PAPER PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH IN NORTH-WESTERN CANADA.

VOL. XIII, No. 24.

ST. BONIFACE, MANITOBA, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1897.

\$2.00 per year.
Single Copies, 5 cents.

A Merry Christmas

— AND —

A Happy New Year.

Bible Reading.

Rev. Father Drummond

REPLIES

To Ven. Archdeacon Fortin's
Remarks on his First Sermon

ON HOLY SCRIPTURE.

On Sunday, Dec. 19th, a large congregation assembled in the Church of the Immaculate Conception to hear the second of the series of sermons on The Bible. Before beginning that second sermon, Father Drummond said he would reply to some remarks made by Venerable Archdeacon Fortin. The details of the reply were so instructive and extended over so long a time that they ultimately took the place of the sermon announced, which was postponed till the 16th of next January. Father Drummond said:—

Before continuing the series of sermons on Holy Scripture, I wish to reply to some strictures made by Venerable Archdeacon Fortin of this city. Though he does not mention my name it is clear that he is girding at me all the time. As my first sermon of this series was preached on Nov. 21st, and the Ven. Archdeacon preached on December 5th, he had a fortnight to put his thoughts in order. I take the report of them as it appeared in the Winnipeg Tribune of December 7th. Had this been the work of a reporter, it would have appeared the day after the sermon; the fact that the sermon is published two days after its delivery points to careful supervision by the author. I am thus justified in accepting the Tribune's version as correct. The Ven. Archdeacon, taking for his text Ps. 119, 105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my foot and a light to my path,"

pointed out that it was not a little strange that in the face of such words men are still found who discourage the reading of the scriptures on the ground that they are obscure and contain an element of danger especially to the unlearned and simple-minded.

I appeal to those who heard my first sermon to say if I discouraged the reading of the Scriptures. I did no such thing. I exhorted everybody to read the Bible, but with care and proper guidance.

FORTIN: Much is made of the text in St. Peter's second epistle where the apostle speaks of passages of difficult interpretation which the ignorant and unstable wrest to their own perdition.

DRUMMOND: Yes, much is made of this text because St. Peter's language is indeed very strong and not easy to explain away. Catholics have an inconvenient habit of making much of important texts.

FORTIN: The inference is drawn that it is much wiser to remove the bible from the common people and let them have it only secondhand through the clergy.

DRUMMOND: No such inference was drawn by me. The inference I drew was that the Scriptures should be read by the common people with the help of explanatory notes by men who understand the text.

FORTIN: To him it seemed almost sacrilegious to hold that the oracles of God are like a poison which must be handled only by experts.

DRUMMOND: Yet, to speak of certain passages as a dangerous poison is very like what St. Peter says about "wresting the Scriptures unto their own destruction." Poison, properly administered, often saves life, and is therefore extremely precious.

FORTIN: Surely, when Christ, speaking to a mixed multitude, said "Search the Scrip-

tures," he did not command them to do what should prove fatal to their soul's salvation.

DRUMMOND: In the first place, Christ was not speaking to a mixed multitude. Read the context of John V., 39, whence the text is taken. I will quote from the Protestant Authorized Version. "The Jews," to whom he is speaking are not the common people; they are fault-finders, who seek to kill him (John V., 18) they are the Scribes and Pharisees, whom he answers and reproves—he never reproves a mixed multitude—and shows them by the testimony of His Father, of John the Baptist, of his works and of the Scriptures, who He is. In the second place, the word which, in the original Greek, represents "search" is *ereteate*, which is either the second person plural indicative present or the second person plural imperative, and may therefore be translated either "you search" or "search (ye)." The context proves that "you (or ye) search" is the more probable meaning and this has been adopted by the Revised Edition which gives "Ye search the Scriptures" in the text and relegates the imperative form to the margin. Let me read the context, beginning by the preceding (the 38th) verse: "And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." Evidently as Bishop Challoner's annotation to the Douay Bible says, "it is not a command for all to read the scriptures; but a reproach to the Pharisees, that reading the scriptures as they did, and thinking to find everlasting life in them, they would not ever give him, to whom all those scriptures gave testimony, and through whom alone they could have that true life." At any rate, it is quite clear this first text quoted as a proof by Ven. Archdeacon Fortin does not prove that Christ commanded a mixed multitude to search the scriptures.

FORTIN: Surely, if Christ thought there was danger, he would have said "Don't read the scriptures, for you cannot understand them; but receive all religious instruction at the hands of your priests, lawyers and scribes."

DRUMMOND: No, that is not the logical inference. Danger need not always be shunned; it must often be faced but with proper warning such as that which St. Peter, Christ's lieutenant, gives (2 Peter, III., 16). Besides, Our Lord insists far more on obedience to Church-guides than on the reading of Scripture. "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man" (Matt. XVIII., 17). The very last verses of St. Matthew's Gospel, summing up Christ's last instruction, say "go... and teach... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," but they say not a word about the open Bible. In the tenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel we find Christ saying to the seventy disciples, who were to be Christian priests: "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me." On the evening of the Last Supper, when Our Lord is speaking to his apostles, not to the laity, he says not a word, in that wonderful sermon, about reading the Scriptures; but he does say that "the Comforter shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," thus insisting not on the written word but on oral tradition. In the last chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul says (v. 7): Remember them which have the rule over you... whose faith follow, and (v. 17), "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." Curiously enough, even the Authorized

Version recognizes this truth, for it puts as the heading of the fourth chapter of St. John's first epistle these words: "He warneth them not to believe all teachers, who boast of the Spirit, but to try them by the rules of the Catholic faith," with especial reference to the sixth verse of that chapter, which reads: "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us"—precisely what we Catholic priests still affirm.

FORTIN: But the tone of the Bible is altogether different. It is a free book, addressed to all the sons of men and not to privileged classes merely. In the Old Testament every householder is bidden to instruct his family (Deut. VI., 7, 8) diligently in the Scriptures. No words could more fully describe the scripture atmosphere that was to pervade the entire country.

DRUMMOND: Let us look at these words. I confess to a weakness for the context. I do not believe in quoting Scripture on the "top-knot come down" system. You know the story, how a clergyman, wishing to preach against the fashion prevalent among ladies a couple of generations ago, of wearing their front hair in a sort of top-knot, announced his text as "Top-knot come down." On referring to Matt. XXIV., 17, the whole sentence read: "Let him which is on the housetop not come down." Texts must not be wrenched from their contexts.

The two verses quoted by Archdeacon Fortin are taken from the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, which is an exhortation to the observance of the ten commandments repeated in the fifth or preceding chapter. Archdeacon Fortin quotes the seventh and eighth verses as showing that "every householder is bidden to instruct his family diligently in the scriptures"; but these verses have not the remotest reference to the whole Bible what they really refer to is the ten commandments and especially the love of God. Let me read you the three verses immediately preceding, viz., the fourth, fifth and sixth: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart." Immediately after come the two verses quoted by Archdeacon Fortin: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." The meaning is evidently metaphorical. It is as if the Jews were told to keep the commandments and especially the law of love before the eyes of their minds. Gradually however the Pharisaical Jews came to take these words literally and they wrote the ten commandments on narrow strips of parchment which are called phylacteries and which they wore on their foreheads or on the left wrist. This extreme literalness proves that the verses in question cannot possibly refer to the scriptures in general, but only to a short passage on the ten commandments or a still shorter one on the great commandment of loving God. The spirit of this injunction is nowhere so well observed as in the Catholic Church, where pious persons recite the act of love of God and the ten commandments every day.

FORTIN: And in the New Testament the same spirit prevails. Every encouragement is given to the study of the scriptures.

DRUMMOND: This is a general proposition which I heartily endorse, though it is very hard to find any texts to support it. By all means, let every encouragement be given to the reverent study of the scriptures. However, Archdeacon Fortin has discovered in the New Testament one text in his favor.

FORTIN: "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy" (Rev. I., 3). This is said of Revelation the most difficult book in the entire canon, and if a blessing rest upon the study of this book surely the gospels and epistles cannot be excluded.

DRUMMOND: The very form of this text implies that there is one who reads with authority and a multitude who listen with respect. By calling Revelation or The Apocalypse "the most difficult book in the entire canon," Archdeacon Fortin implicitly admits that there are other difficult books, in fact, that there are quite a number of difficulties, since this is the greatest one "in the entire canon";

all which amounts to an agreement with St. Peter's opinion about those who wrest the scriptures to their own destruction. "If a blessing rests upon the study of this book," says the Archdeacon, "surely the gospels and epistles cannot be excluded." Pray, who ever proposed to exclude them? Surely not any Catholic, since the gospels and epistles are read every Sunday in the vernacular during mass, and the best Catholic prayer-books for the laity contain all these gospels and epistles in English. But to return to the text itself; its meaning is explained by the words that immediately follow it; "and keep those things which are written therein." Blessed are they, who hearing the prophecy, observe its practical lessons. For, though the greater part of the Apocalypse is most difficult to explain, the first three chapters contain many practical instructions of which the meaning is quite clear. And, after all, the blessedness attaching to the reading of any part of the Scriptures is stoutly maintained by every Catholic. It is a blessing to read even the most difficult passages, because they are the word of God.

FORTIN: St. Paul commended the Bereans for their diligence in the study of the scriptures. He said that they were more noble than those of Thessalonica in that they received the word with all a fineness of mind and search the scriptures daily whether these things were so. (Acts XVII. 11). Here the right of private judgment is conceded.

DRUMMOND: The Archdeacon is not quite accurate here. If he were to read the context more carefully he would see that it is not St. Paul, but the author of the Acts, St. Luke, who commended the Bereans. And they are commended not for exercising their private judgment according to Protestant principles, but for their eagerly embracing the truth, and searching the scriptures, to find out the texts alleged by the apostle: which was a far more generous proceeding than that of their countrymen at Thessalonica, who persecuted the preachers of the Gospel, without examining the grounds they alleged for what they taught (Challoner's note in Douay Bible). The Archdeacon altogether misunderstands the Catholic doctrine as to private judgment. Not all private judgment of Scripture passages is condemned, but only such private judgment as is contrary to the traditional interpretation of the Church. Moreover, the law as to private judgment binds only those who have become Catholic Christians. A man must use his private judgment to find out the true Church. When once he has found it, the sphere of his private judgment is circumscribed by the circle of acquired knowledge. Every accession of knowledge circumscribes one's liberty. This is why the more ignorant a man is the freer he is to make a fool of himself. If a stranger visits Winnipeg without first consulting a friend or a map, he has to exercise a great deal of private judgment to find out how the streets run in neighborhood of the City Hall; but if he has a map with him, his private judgment is greatly circumscribed. This is a blessing, not a misfortune, and he who keeps on looking for the truth after he has found it betrays a lack of mental balance.

FORTIN: Every one must assure himself by private examination of the foundations of his faith. It is an intelligent worship that God demands. He speaks to every child of man, and in a way to be understood.

DRUMMOND: The proposition that every one must assure himself by private examination of the foundations of his faith is not to be found in the Bible. Nor is it true. Those who belong to the true Church need no such private examination. The Church is to them "the pillar and ground of the truth." It is this foundation that makes their worship intelligent. However, though there is no strict obligation for all, the Church does encourage her children to examine the foundations of their faith, that they may be strengthened therein. That God "speaks to every child of man, and in way to be understood" is quite true; but He thus speaks to every man, not necessarily and always by the Holy Scriptures, but especially through the Holy Scriptures, of each one. Therefore this is one of those vague generalities that have no special bearing on the question of Bible reading, which is the point at issue just now.

(To be continued.)

Mrs. Venton, an English convert, takes Mrs. Geo. Germain's place at the organ of the Immaculate Conception Church.

A Cure and a Conversion at Lourdes.

Ave Maria.
Miss Helen Duval aged thirty years, a native of Lotteville near Rouen, went to Paris as a servant some years ago. Her last place was at No. 186 Avenue Victor Hugo where she was lady's-maid. While in this situation she was attacked by a dangerous illness. Doctor Tison and other medical men termed it inflammation of the peritoneum and of the intestines. Six months ago she entered St. Joseph's Hospital, Plaisance Paris, where every known remedy was tried without effect. The sufferer did not lose hope, however; and according as medical science proved powerless in her case she turned her thoughts heavenward and looked to Lourdes for relief. Far from being discouraged at the verdict of the doctors, she saw in it a sign that she would be cured by supernatural means. She was so convinced of this that she spoke of it constantly to the sick that surrounded her and to the nurses; she also expressed her hope to Dr. Martin, the physician of the ward, from whom she received a certificate previous to going to Lourdes.

As she was being conveyed on a litter out of the hospital, she remarked to a Sister who had accompanied her to the door; "You may dispose of my bed, for I shall be cured." This perfect confidence seemed the more remarkable as, in the natural order of things, there were ten chances to one against her reaching Lourdes alive. At times the poor invalid writhed under violent spasms, that seemed like those of a slow agony.

Stretched on a mattress, she was placed in a hospital car; and, although the latter was specially constructed to convey the sick, she felt every motion as a rough jolt. When deposited at the Gare d'Orleans, Paris, before entering the car in which she was to travel, Madame Nivert, her benefactress, greeted her with words which she recalled later: "You will be a blessing to my train." Like all other sick pilgrims, the patient had to endure all the tediousness of those long hours of travel; but meanwhile she prayed with ever-increasing confidence and fervor. At intervals, in order to sustain her failing strength, some drops of champagne were given to her; it was the only liquid she could retain. At Poitiers a violent crisis alarmed those around her. As a palliative, they had recourse to tincture of codlione.

On arriving at Lourdes, Miss Duval was instantly carried by the *brancardiers* to the Grotto. Here again she suffered violent spasms that seemed to bring her life to a close, and greatly alarmed those who had charge of her. They were obliged to break through the procession of the Blessed Sacrament in order to take her back as speedily as possible to the hospital. She was extremely weak, and it seemed that her last hour was at hand. Nevertheless, she lived on in the same state for two days.

On Monday, the 23rd of August, she, with the other sick and infirm pilgrims waited for the passage of the Blessed Sacrament on the esplanade facing the Church of the Holy Rosary. Just as Pere Picard pronounced the Papal Benediction Helen Duval stretched out her hand to a man near her, who clasped it to help her to rise to her feet. This she did with alacrity; and, to the amazement of the bystanders, walked, or rather ran, toward the Church, and up to the high altar, where she threw herself on her knees in fervent thanksgiving. She had been cured! Her prayers had been answered, her confidence rewarded.

Beside her litter remained a man like one thunderstruck—the man who had seized her hand as she held it out for help. This chance tourist was quite unknown to her; he was an unbeliever, and was travelling merely to dispel the gloom of a recent disappointment. On the morning of the day in question he had been heard to say: "If I were to see with my own eyes a real miracle, I would be converted and believe." He said this with the assurance of the impossibility of such an occurrence. However, he kept his word; and an hour had not elapsed after Helen Duval's cure when he fell at the feet of Pere Marie-Antoine, a well-known Capuchin missionary, and rose purified by the tears of repentance and the balm of abjection—a new man and a fervent Catholic