

Northwest Review

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REV. A. A. CHERRIER,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

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SATURDAY, JUNE 18th, 1904.

Calendar for Next Week.

JUNE.

- 19—Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. St. Juliana Falconieri, Virgin.
- 20—Monday—Votive Office of the Holy Angels.
- 21—Tuesday—St. Aloysius Gonzaga, Patron of Youth.
- 22—Wednesday—Votive Office of St. Joseph.
- 23—Thursday—Votive Office of the Blessed Sacrament. Vigil.
- 24—Friday—The Nativity of St. John the Baptist.
- 25—Saturday—St. William, Abbott.

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ABLY DEFENDED.

Rev. Father O'Dwyer Replies to Mr. J. M. Niven's Criticism.

(Free Press Bulletin.)

Speaking at St. Mary's Church on Sunday evening, Rev. Father O'Dwyer considered at length statements regarding the Catholic Church recently made by Mr. J. M. Niven, in the course of a sermon delivered by him in one of the Presbyterian churches of the city, and fully reported in the Free Press. Basing his remarks on the words "The Charity of Christ presses us," I Corinthians, 5th chapter, 14th verse, Father O'Dwyer first explained that he had no desire for controversy, but an opportunity was here presented of explaining some points regarding the Catholic faith and church, and it seemed to be an opportunity that it might be well to take advantage of. Mr. Niven's first charge was that "in the Catholic church it is authority that is supreme and the Holy Scriptures are subordinate thereto, whereas the Bible is the rule of faith of the Protestant." This, said Father O'Dwyer was one of the very few correct statements made by Mr. Niven. No body of Christians in the world have a greater respect or veneration for the Bible than Catholics have, because they believe that all that is contained in that book is the inspired word of God. But they believe also that the Bible does not contain the whole of God's revelation to man, and as evidence that it does not, he quoted the last words of St. John's gospel. Catholics believe also in tradition, or the unwritten word of God—revelation that came from God and has been continually taught and kept alive by a body of men divinely appointed in succession, and who have been assisted by God Himself in faithfully handing down the trust committed to them. The word of God whether written or unwritten, is of equal authority, and is equally binding. The Catholic Church is the divinely constituted teacher of God's word to men. "Go forth and teach all nations." They should

mark that word teach; it constituted the church, the divinely appointed interpreter of God's revelation to men, the interpreter of both scripture and tradition. The authority of the church is supreme and the Bible is subordinated to the authority of the church because the church is the divinely appointed teacher of the revelation contained in the Bible. The church existed for years before there was any Bible; it taught the doctrine of Christ and converted millions before some parts of the Bible were written. The first gospel was not written until eight years after the Ascension, the apocryph of St. John not until sixty-five years after; and it was not until after the end of the fourth century that the true church of Christ sat in judgment on the Bible, rejected many spurious gospels and epistles, and forever decided which books were canonical and which were not. It was the Catholic Church that did this, and in the meantime, during those 400 years the Catholic church had been carrying on its work in the world and no thought had arisen in any mind that a Bible was required to prove the existence of the church. And then for many centuries after, there was no body of Christians in the world who had the Bible to be their rule of faith. If all the Bibles in the world were to disappear the church of Christ would still go on to the end of time teaching the true doctrine of Christ; but on the other hand, the Bible has every need of the Church, and it is only on the authority of the church alone that anyone, Catholic or non-Catholic, can be sure that their Bible is the word of God. It is quite true that Catholics can prove the church from the Bible, but this is not arguing in a circle, as Mr. Niven claims, because when they wanted to make this proof they simply began by considering the Bible for the purpose of this argument, not as the inspired word of God, but as a well authenticated history. Having further developed this argument, Father O'Dwyer went on to consider Mr. Niven's declaration regarding the dogma of the infallibility of the pope.

THE VATICAN COUNCIL.

He pointed out that Mr. Niven's figures regarding the number of bishops who at the Vatican council opposed the promulgation of the dogma did not agree with other reports; he showed that after the doctrine had been defined only two out of the six hundred and seventy members of the council were opposed to the definition, and the greater portion of the minority who voted against it during the session did so firmly believing the doctrine was right, but doubting merely the time had come to define it. For instance, Newman declared that whilst from the moment he became a Catholic twenty-five years before the Vatican council, he had always believed that the doctrine of papal infallibility was theologically correct yet had he been at the council he would have voted with the minority simply on the ground that the time was not opportune for the definition of the doctrine. The fact that there was a division in the council was no argument as Mr. Niven seems to imagine, against the unity of the church. There never had been a council that was absolutely unanimous—but once a dogma is defined all Catholics accept it—and the Church remains the world over—one in faith, one in sacraments, and one in its government. The definition of a dogma is not an announcement of some new revelation in the words

of the bull in which it is promulgated, it is the definition of a truth revealed to the apostles either by Christ or the Holy Ghost, and handed down through the church.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

With regard to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the blessed Virgin, Mr. Niven said that this dates no further back than December 8, 1854, yet later on in his sermon, Mr. Niven asserts that fourteen years before that date, namely in 1840, the then pope granted an indulgence of one hundred years to whoever recited a prayer commencing, "O Immaculate Queen of Heaven." There was evidently a great inconsistency in these two assertions. To show that the belief in the doctrine was well known in the thirteenth century Father O'Dwyer referred to the discussion regarding it in which a prominent part was taken by the celebrated theologian St. Thomas Aquinas, and he further traced the practice of this devotion in England as early as the 11th century. Mr. Niven might as well have said that the church did not exist before the 4th century whose creed contained belief in the Divinity of Christ, for it was only then that the church condemning the heresy of Arius declared the Divinity of Christ a dogma of faith, yet no one would assert that in making that declaration the church was then at the beginning of the fourth century unveiling a new doctrine. Father O'Dwyer went on to show that it was absolutely false to say that Liguori taught that evil might be done that good may come; he explained lucidly what the theologian does teach regarding the permission of one sin to prevent the commission of a greater one that could not possibly otherwise be prevented; and he further developed Liguori's teaching regarding mental reservation, denying that this involved swearing falsely as was asserted by Mr. Niven. He referred to John VII: 8-10, where Christ Himself made use of a mental reservation, and showed the scriptural basis for the whole of Liguori's moral theology.

With regard to Mr. Niven's charge that the Catholic church suppresses the second commandment and to make up the required number divides the tenth into two, Father O'Dwyer read from a catechism to show that Catholics put into one commandment the first and the second commandments as held by Protestants; there is no suppression whatever, merely a different arrangement, and he defended the Catholic arrangement, as being the correct one, quoting support of this from Archdeacon Paley's "Evidence of Christianity."

PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN.

Father O'Dwyer next took up Mr. Niven's charges regarding prayers to the blessed Virgin and showed that Father Cunningham was fully justified in the sample he gave of ejaculatory prayers. In proof of this he quoted from leaflets distributed amongst Catholics during the recent mission in which seven ejaculatory prayers were recommended, only one of which is addressed to the Blessed Virgin, all the others to Jesus Christ; and on this point he examined exhaustively the service of the church, the holy mass, the benediction of the blessed sacrament, the stations of the cross and ten ejaculatory prayers said at the close of each evening service, seven of which are offered to God and three petitions to Mary asking her to pray for them. He eloquently explained the devotion of the Holy

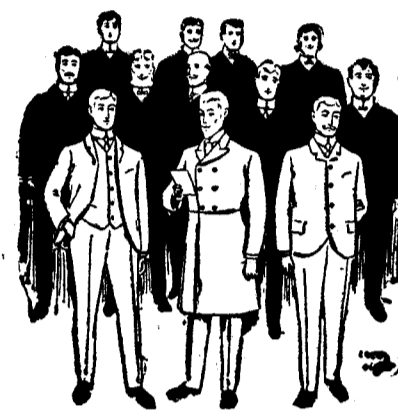


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High Mass, with sermon, 10.30 a.m.
Vespers, with an occasional sermon, 7.15 p.m.
Catechism in the Church, 3 p.m.
N.B.—Sermon in French on first Sunday in the month, 9 a.m. Meeting of the children of Mary 2nd and 4th Sunday in the month, 4 p.m.
WEEK DAYS—Masses at 7 and 7.30 a.m. On first Friday in the month, Mass at 8 a.m. Benediction at 7.30 p.m.
N.B.—Confessions are heard on Saturdays from 3 to 10 p.m., and every day in the morning before Mass.

C. M. B. A.

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