

UNREASONABLENESS OF UNBELIEF.

Lecture by Rev. Father Drummond in St. Mary's Cathedral, Hamilton.

The announcement of the lecture by Rev. Father Drummond, S. J., of Winnipeg, on "The Unreasonableness of Unbelief" was sufficient to crowd the church to overflowing. At 20 minutes before the hour for commencing the service there was scarcely a seat to be had in the body of the church, and at 7 o'clock the aisles, choir loft and every bit of standing room was occupied. In an eloquent and thoughtful address of one hour and fifteen minutes' duration the venerated gentleman went closely into the question he had in hand. Following is a synopsis of his remarks:

My dear friends, your presence here in such large numbers is sufficient guarantee that you consider the subject one of importance. I am going to speak to you on the unreasonableness of unbelief, and propose dealing with the subject upon arguments which are admitted by all Christians. Unbelief is one of the great dangers of our age, but we must not magnify the danger. We Christians are accused of giving up our reason for faith, and I am going to show that it is the highest privilege of reason to do so. There are two distinct classes of unbelievers, the dogmatic and aesthetic. The dogmatic unbelievers are those who say "There is no God," and who delight in profaning and ridiculing the Bible. These are the bullies of unbelief. The aesthetic unbelievers I may call the dudes of unbelief. They are the most fashionable of unbelievers, however. But classes are, to use the words of Matthew Arnold, an aesthetic unbeliever, "Devoid of sweet reasonableness." The dogmatic class includes such men as Voltaire, who spent their lives in trying to make people believe that there is no God. This class may sometimes gather great crowds by the loud talk at public meetings where such men as Bob Ingersoll speak, but they are not much to be feared, for their reasoning is not good. Then there is the class which is always questioning and criticizing Providence. One of this class, it is related, felt drowsy and lay down beneath an oak tree, where he reasoned to himself "Why did God put that little acorn on the great oak, and that great pumpkin on the slender vine? If I had made them I would have put the great pumpkin on the great tree and the little acorns on the slender vine." Having thus reasoned he fell asleep, but an acorn fell from the tree and struck him on the nose. He awoke and was compelled to say, "After all God did know; where would I have been if He had put the pumpkin upon the tree?" God thus used the little acorn to teach the unbeliever, and He could, if He chose, bring speedy vengeance upon all blasphemers and unbelievers, but He does not need to. There is more difference between the greatest genius that ever lived and God than the same genius and a common worm of the earth. Yet the greatest genius did not need to crush the worm to show his power. Being almighty and eternal, God can wait, for both the man and the worm must die, but God can never die. Few men now-a-days pay much attention to the dogmatic class, but when that class say, "There is no God," "There is no proof of a God," I would ask how they know. Have they visited all places, the sun, the moon, the stars? If not they cannot assert dogmatically that there is no God, for they do not know that the footsteps of God may be seen in some distant star. My most important dealing to-night, however, will be with the aesthetic class, to which class belong the men who have studied all the "ologies" and therefore say, "There is no God, because they do not know o.e." They call themselves agnostics—an appropriate name, for the word means in the Greek know nothing. Others among the aesthetic class call themselves positivists. They say they do not believe anything that they cannot see, hear, smell, taste or touch. When confronted they will admit they cannot see, hear, smell, taste or touch their own brains, but they say they know they have brains, because their brains produce intelligent thoughts. They then are compelled to reason. My quarrel with the positivists is that they mean to do a great deal for the good of the universe, and they say "Christianity did a great deal of good in its day, but its time is past and we have a greater thing to do." The advancement of the race, they say, will go on until all the race is happy. They

call upon men to deny themselves for the sake of posterity. I would like to see the man who would deny himself for the sake of promoting the happiness of the people who shall live 8,000 years hence. Such a motive will never influence a man to do good. If you want a man to do something beneficial you must promise him some reward—not for posterity, but for himself. Christianity says, do what is right and you will have an unfading and eternal crown. Millions upon millions have found that motive sufficient. There is no such motive in unbelief. Of the agnostics of the present day the leader is Herbert Spencer. The majority of mankind must always be workers, therefore religion must be something intelligible and based upon common sense. Spencer bases his belief upon the theory of evolution, which he defines in a way that can be understood only by the learned, but which means the change of something "nolowish" and "untalkaboutable" into something "lowish" and "talkaboutable." Evolution has always been admitted to a certain extent, but in the last century the idea grew that one species could change into another—that the oyster could change into a fish, the fish into something else and so on until the quadruped was reached, then the quadruped could change into the monkey and the monkey into a man. The only one who had any degree of success in explaining evolution was Darwin, and all that he could do was to say that by careful crossing of pigeons 100 different varieties—always pigeons—had been obtained, and that if varieties could be changed why not species. I have read Darwin's works very carefully, and find that he never made a direct statement of any evolution being possible. He uses such terms as "It seems almost probable," "it seems pretty clear," but he never says "it is clear" or "there is no doubt." The speaker here gave Darwin's theory of how the giraffe may have come from the horse. When we ask for proofs the honest theorist says "There are none; no man can be present at the transformation, as it takes millions of years to accomplish such an evolution." They say, however, that they have so many hints in science that they think evolution may be possible. Even if it were possible evolution does not dispense with the necessity of a creator. Then evolutionists and agnostics say that we Christians believe too easily. That is a case of the pot calling the kettle black, for we Christians have reasons for our beliefs, while they have only guesses to go upon. So, with nothing proven, these unbelievers start out to destroy the church. They believe everything that scientists tell them, quite forgetting that learned men make great mistakes sometimes, and that scientists change their mind and have grave differences of opinion. Even Spencer changed his mind sufficient to admit an "infinite energy from which all things proceed." Dear friends, is not this "infinite energy from which all things proceed" the Christian's God? Then they argue that the human race is always in a state of progress and improvement. If they mean in mechanics we will admit that it is, but the Egyptians over 4,000 years ago had attained a perfection in mechanics that cannot be equalled to-day. If they speak of higher development of mind and moral character we have not advanced, but receded, and that is why so many men take up such ideas as agnosticism. We have made no advancement in logic since the time of Aristotle, 2,100 years ago. There was as clear-headed and deep thinkers 200 years ago as there are now, while in morality, the greatest test of human progress, we are lamentably in rear. We have advanced in railways, in telephones, in telegraph and phonograph, and we have also advanced in murder, theft and fraud. If we adopt agnosticism we would end in savagery, because we would have no sense of duty. We can have no sense of duty unless we believe in a higher power which will reward us if we do right and punish wrong. Duty means obedience, and obedience implies fear, love and wonder, none of which antagonism can have. To have fear you must have an omnipresent power. There can be no love for the universe unless God's hand is in it, nor does the universe afford wonder unless you see the hand of a creator. You see a watch and you know there must have been a watchmaker. You see the wonders of the universe, the marvels of creation, small and great, on this earth; you see the stars, the sun, the moon, and you say it is only reasonable that there must have been a creator with infinite knowledge. There must have been a first cause.