

Northwest Review

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY.
WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL
AUTHORITY
AT WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

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

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SATURDAY, JULY 2, 1904.

MR. NIVEN'S QUOTATION.

Before giving his promised instruction on Indulgences Sunday before last at St. Mary's, Father Drummond refuted one by one all the erroneous statements in the letter from Mr. J. M. Niven which had appeared in the Tribune of the previous Friday. In that letter, which was, on the whole, a very weak defence of an untenable position by a man who was leaving the city that day or the next, there was only one startling passage. We quote it entire, merely premising that we do not for a moment think that Mr. Niven ever saw the work from which he quotes; else he would never have had the hardihood to print in a public newspaper a charge that could so easily be refuted, in other words, had he seen Cardinal Wiseman's "Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church," he would never have been so egregiously silly as to say: "Cardinal Wiseman knew that the Bible is antagonistic to Roman Catholicism," nor would he have quoted, as the Cardinal's own opinion, what His Eminence gives as the ordinary story told by perverts from Catholicism. It is clear that Mr. Niven got his quotation second hand from some Protestant tract or treatise against the Catholic Church. That quotation, as we shall presently show, and as Father Drummond proved conclusively last Sunday, is wrenched from the context which when restored, gives it a diametrically opposite meaning.

This is how the passage was introduced and quoted by Mr. Niven in the Tribune of June 17:

"Cardinal Wiseman knew that the Bible is antagonistic to Roman Catholicism when he said that there were many influences at work to convert Protestants to Roman Catholicism; but that when the causes of conversion of Raman Catholics to Protestantism were inquired into they were invariably found the same, namely this, 'that the individual, by some chance or other, probably through the ministry of some pious person, became possessed of the Word of God, of the Bible, that he perused the Book; that he could not find in it transubstantiation or auricular confession; that he could not discover in it one word of purgatory or of worshipping of images. He, perhaps, goes to the priest and tells him that he cannot find these doctrines in the Bible. His priest argues with him, and endeavors to convince him that he should shut up the book that is leading him astray, he perseveres, he abandons the communion of the Church of Rome—that is, as it is commonly expressed, the errors of that Church—and becomes a Protestant." (Cardinal Wiseman, in the Moorfield "Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church" introduction, pp. 18 and 19).

The way in which this quotation was received by both clergy and laity here affords a striking proof of the unity of Catholic belief. Every Catholic immediately affirmed without hesitation that this could not possibly be Cardinal Wiseman's own belief, and a search was instituted for the book itself. A Winnipeg Catholic gentleman produced a copy bearing this title-

page: "Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church by His Eminence Cardinal Wiseman." Complete in one volume. Dublin: James Duffy, 15 Wellington Quay, and London: 22 Paternoster Row, 1867. Even to this day these famous lectures, first delivered in 1835, remain the standard work on all the questions treated therein. We shall now re-establish, as Father Drummond did, the context of Mr. Niven's quotation which, although utterly misleading as a whole, is correctly rendered with the exception of the one word "worshipping," which he uses, instead of "venerating" images. Cardinal Wiseman is contrasting the history of conversions to Catholicism with the perversions therefrom. In the former series of cases there is an infinite variety of motives, in the latter series there is always the same old, threadbare story, and that story is what Mr. Niven takes to be the Cardinal's own view. Our quotation from the original and complete text must necessarily be long, but it is absolutely requisite for the proper understanding of Mr. Niven's quotation, which, it will be observed, occupies hardly a fourth of the entire passage.

But now, says the Cardinal, allow me to contrast with the examples of conversion which I have just given you, others of a different class.

I have told you that in perusing the words of men who have within these few years become members of the Catholic Church—men of talent and erudition—we shall hardly find two of them agree upon the grounds which they record, as having induced them to embrace the Catholic religion. But, you may also read similar works on the other side, purporting to give the grounds upon which individuals have abandoned the Catholic Church and become members of some Protestant communion. It is indeed, very seldom that men of any considerable ability, or at all known to the public for their learning, have written such treatises; but still, such as they are, they have been, in general, widely disseminated. It has been thought useful to throw them in a cheap form, among the public, and particularly among the lower orders, that they may see examples of conversion from the Catholic religion. Now, I have read such of these as have fallen in my way, and have noted that instead of the rich variety of motives which have brought learned men to the Catholic Church, there is a sad meagreness of reasoning in them; indeed, that they all, without exception, give me but one argument. The history in every case, is simply this that the individual—by some chance or other, probably through the ministry of some pious person—became possessed of the Word of God, of the Bible; that he perused this Book; that he could not find in it transubstantiation or auricular confession, that he could not discover in it one word of purgatory, or venerating images. He perhaps goes to the priest, and tells him that he cannot find these doctrines in the Bible; his priest argues with him, and endeavors to convince him that he should shut up the book that is leading him astray; he perseveres, he abandons the communion of the Church of Rome—or, as it is commonly expressed, the "errors" of that Church—and becomes a Protestant. Now through all this process, the man was a Protestant; from the beginning he started with the principle, that whatever is not in that book, cannot be true in religion, or an article of faith—and that is the principle of Protestantism. He took Protestantism, therefore, for granted, before he began to examine the Catholic doctrine. He set out with the supposition, that whatever is not in the Bible, is no part of God's truth; 'he does not find certain things in the Bible, and he concludes that, therefore, the religion that holds these is not the true religion of Christ. The work was done before; it is not an instance of conversion; it is only a case of one, who has lately, perhaps unconsciously, had his breast filled with Protestant principles, com-

ing openly to declare them. The ground on which the inquiry should have been conducted was, manifestly, not to assume, in the first instance, that there is no truth but what is expressly contained in the Bible; but to examine whether that is the only rule of faith, or whether there are not other means also of arriving at a knowledge of God's revelation."

Thus, instead of being a help to Mr. Niven, this quotation cuts the ground from under his feet. We have seldom seen a better example of a man hoist with his own petard.

One word, and Mr. Niven may continue to fly "off into space." He all the while assumes that Catholic tradition is antagonistic to Scripture. Now this is the exact contrary of the truth. Last Sunday, as the Tribune reporter well points out, Father Drummond insisted that no tradition could become Catholic doctrine unless it was conformable to the Bible and logically deducible from the sacred text.

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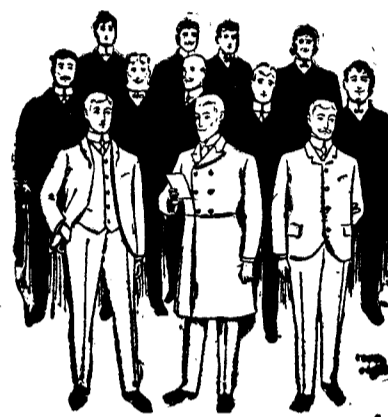


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