

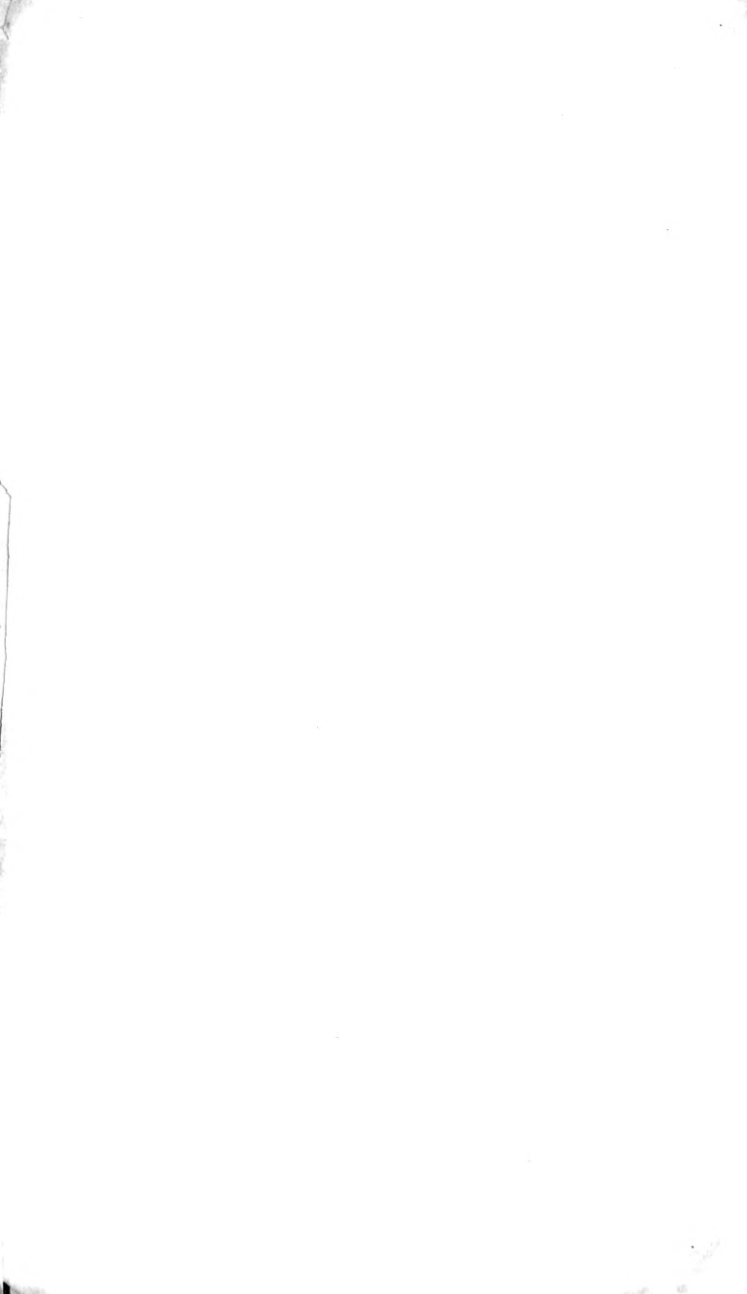


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BISHOP HUGHES CONFUTED.

R E P L Y

TO THE

RT. REV. JOHN HUGHES,

ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF NEW-YORK.

BY

K I R W A N .

NEW-YORK :

LEAVITT, TROW & CO., 191 BROADWAY.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

WHEN I ended my First Series of letters to Bishop Hughes, I hoped and thought that my part in the Romish controversy was also ended. Appeals, however, were made to me that I could not resist, for a new series, in the manner and spirit of the first. I yielded; and hence the Second Series. Pledging myself not to reply to any attacks made upon my letters, save by him to whom they were addressed, and feeling, for reasons stated, that he would not reply, I again supposed my work ended. But contrary to my expectations, the bishop twice attempted a reply, and with what spirit and success I need not inform the public. His first letters are as feeble as could be desired; his second are in the very worst spirit even of Popery, whose very best spirit has but little to recommend it. The feebleness of the first letters to Dear Reader, and the low personalities, not to say vulgarities of those addressed to Kirwan, reveal the true character of the author. They might be published by Protestants in a separate volume, which might be truly entitled, "BISHOP HUGHES UNMASKED." Those letters are reviewed in the following pages.

My objections to the system of Popery are stated in my first and second series. They have not been answered; nor will they soon be. The bishop's reasons for adherence to the Catholic Church are reviewed and confuted in the present series. The present series pulls up the Upas tree by the roots; the former series lopped off its baleful branches; together they lay down the rootless, branchless trunk upon the earth to rot.

The arguments of these letters are not, of course, new. All that I have attempted to do is to strip the controversy of its learned heaviness; by recasting and simplifying, to bring it down to the comprehension of the common mind, and thus to prepare a Manual on the subject adapted to universal circulation. Such a manual, unless I mistake, was greatly needed by Papists and Protestants.

I commit these letters to the kind care of God. May His Spirit accompany their circulation, and render them instrumental "in lifting up from the world one of its heaviest curses."

KIRWAN.

New-York, September, 1848.

KIRWAN'S REPLY

TO THE

RIGHT REV. JOHN HUGHES,

BISHOP OF NEW-YORK.

LETTER I.

Introduction—Free discussion important—Bp. Hughes commencing answering before reading Kirwan—Excuse for the charge of insincerity—Other accounts settled—Controversy on Romanism among the people—Object of these letters.

MY DEAR SIR,—Contrary to all my expectations, and in the face of the excuses which I made for your silence, you have resolved, at length, to notice the “Letters” which I have addressed to you. The fact gives me unfeigned pleasure. It is hailed by all those interested in the development of truth, and in the exposure of error and imposture, as an omen of good. Had *you* been silent on the subject of those letters so would I have been. They were assailed by some of your papers and priests throughout the country, in a manner at once low and rude; but I made no reply. I was pledged to suffer the assaults of such assailants to pass unnoticed. You, sir, well

know that by multitudes who wear the garments of religion, there are no manifestations of its grace,—that many, in religious controversy, esteem vulgar weapons the most effectual; and that many treat an opponent whose arguments they cannot refute, as did the Jews the Saviour in the palace of the High Priest, who “spit in his face, and buffeted him, and smote him with the palms of their hands.” In arguments like these, your priests, especially those imported from Ireland, are well versed. Nor would it be any serious disadvantage to the cause of Protestantism if such arguments were confined to them. Separating yourself from the priests over whom you flourish your crook as chief shepherd, I stated in one of my letters that should you reply, you “would reply as a scholar and a gentleman.” In the same letter I also stated to you, that if you could secure time enough from your varied occupations to reply to some of my objections which forbid my return to your church, “there was one at least that would read your reply with great pleasure.” And whilst disappointed at the want of scholar-like and gentlemanly bearing of your letters, I have yet hailed them and read them with pleasure.

The history of the world, and of the progress of truth, clearly prove the exceeding importance of *free* discussion. From such discussion, conducted in a right spirit, nothing can suffer but error and imposture. This Protestantism courts, and Popery condemns where the power is in her hands. If you and

I, sir, lived in Austria, Spain, Sicily, or in the States of the Church, your reply to my letters might come, not in the Freeman's Journal, but in the way of a warrant through the civil magistrate for my imprisonment or banishment as a heretic. But here we can have free discussion to the full ; and however you or your people may feel on the subject, I am persuaded that Protestants are resolved to use their privilege. And could your people think, and read, and believe, and act for themselves, without any of the terrors or trammels which your system casts around them, I feel persuaded that two generations would reduce the spiritual power of the pope your master to a yet lower point than that to which his temporal power has fallen. Hence I hail your letters as an advance toward free discussion, which has ever been the desire of Protestants, because of its tendency to the development of truth.

Permit me, in the briefest manner, and before I proceed to other statements, to allude to a few things in your introductory letter. Some of them to me, and to many of your readers, appear singular enough.

You begin by saying that you have "seen a certain work announced and much lauded in the papers, entitled "Kirwan's Letters to Bishop Hughes. I have not read these letters, though I have twice attempted to do so." And yet in the subsequent paragraphs of this letter you seem to know that Kirwan has treated you with personal respect—that

he imputes to you a want of sincerity in the profession of the Catholic faith—that his letters have attracted attention “by a sprightliness of style in assailing the doctrines of the Catholic Church, which renders them a pleasing contrast to the filthy volumes that have been written on the same side, and on the same subject,”—you seem to know “the great topics which Kirwan has discussed,” and that “he has published reasons for having left the Catholic Church and for refusing to return.” And for these letters, which you so well understand without having ever read them, you resolve to put forth an antidote! Now, sir, you either read Kirwan’s Letters, or you did not read them; if you read them why deny it? if you did not read them, how came you by such an accurate knowledge of their contents, and of their spirit? And has the world ever heard or read of a man seriously undertaking to reply to a book which he has not read? For your own sake, sir, I wish all your assumed carelessness here had more of an air of truthfulness; for there is not a man in or out of your church who reads your letter who will not say that you either read Kirwan’s Letters, or that you had them read to you. And there was no need of exposing yourself to such an imputation for the unworthy purpose of expressing your contempt. I disclaim every thing personally offensive to yourself when I say that, as to truthfulness, papal priests have but little capital on which to trade, and that they should be very spar-

ing of what they have. They are already trembling on the verge of bankruptcy.

You also complain that I do you great injustice by imputing to you a want of sincerity in your profession of belief in the Catholic faith. I felt when I made it, and now feel, that the imputation is a serious one. And yet I knew not how to withhold it ; nor do I know now how to withdraw it. I can make vast allowances for ignorance ; but you are not an ignorant man. So I can make great allowance for the prejudices of early training, and for the influences of a narrow and bigoted education when so conducted as to fill the mind, not with knowledge, but with error and superstition. But thus, unless I am misinformed, you have not been trained or educated. I can also make allowance for well educated and well disciplined minds that have always been excluded from contact with minds holding opposite sentiments ; and that are unaccustomed to hear questioned the truth of their opinions ; but this is not your case. You are no stranger to polite society—to the company of educated men. You well know that the doctrines peculiar to your church are rejected as not only unscriptural, but as unreasonable, and as absurd, by the great mass of the educated mind of our world. And how to account for your professed belief in them I knew not, and now know not. The thing came up before my mind in this wise : Does Bishop Hughes believe that a mass mumbled over, for half a dollar, will

avail in getting a soul out of purgatory ? does he believe that a little wafer made of flour is converted into the real body and blood of Christ, by his consecration of it ? Does he believe that he can send a man to heaven by rubbing him with a little olive oil when dying ? If he believes in these things he is a dunce ; but he is not a dunce ; therefore he does not believe them. This, sir, I frankly tell you, was the train of thought which led me to the conclusion of which you complain as an injurious imputation. There was no alternative for me but to question your sense or your sincerity ; and I preferred the latter as on the whole the most pleasing to yourself. I do not know that there is a living man who would not prefer to be called a knave rather than a fool. The first simply implies a sinful misdirection of his sense, and may be the imputation of selfishness or malice ; the other is a denial that he has any sense. So that the imputation, instead of “betraying the evil effects of my Presbyterian training,” exhibits rather “the generous instincts of my Irish nature” in making for you the best apology that the case would admit.

I think, sir, your friends will regret the whole tone of your introductory letter, considering the courtesy which I observed towards you. It exhibits a spirit unworthy of a bishop. You could continue in silence without any one having a right to impugn your motives ; but when you came forward to reply you should have exhibited less irritation.

I am sorry that my letters vexed if they failed to convert you. Your conjecture and mistake, as to my name, might have been omitted. Your regrets over my Irish birth are ludicrous; your saying that you would rather I had been any body else's countryman than yours is probably among the truest things you have said. You know not why I directed my letters to you; this is owing to the fact that you commenced answering before reading them. You assert, as far as you know, that the public never asked for my reasons for leaving your church. Had I recently gone to confession to you, you might think differently. You say it is a matter of the least importance to Catholics whether I return or not. It is very likely that the sun would rise and set without either of us; it certainly did so before we were born, and may continue to do so after we are dead. It is not wise, even for a bishop, to indulge the conceit that the sun^e rises in his mouth and sets at his feet. But all this, sir, is aside from the great object of my letters; it is the *argumentum ad invidiam*, and is unworthy of you and of me. If my object in my letters to you—or your object in the letters of which you make mine the occasion—or the object of these letters in reply to yours, is obtained, we must omit personalities, and seek solely and only the truth. The truth only is worthy the pursuit of high-minded and Christian men.

You say, and truly, that the public mind is

awake to the relative positions of the Catholic and Protestant churches. This is emphatically so. Controversies which hitherto have been confined to universities and ecclesiastics are now down among the people. Even the Italian mind, which the evil influences of your church have almost extinguished, is questioning the truth of your dogmas and forms, and is breathing after emancipation from them. Catholic Germany is in agitation, and the aid of princes is invoked to prevent the people from becoming Protestant. The entire Catholic world is in commotion, seeking to break the fetters with which your popes and priests have bound it for ages. In this land of our adoption all minds are using the privilege of thinking freely secured to them; and where there is one Protestant that passes over to your church, there are fifty Papists who become Protestants. Your people begin to feel that they have permitted their mercenary priests to think for them long enough; they now commence thinking for themselves. And I am pleased to inform you that even Kirwan's Letters have been eagerly sought for by many of them, and have been blessed to the hopeful conversion of not a few. You say the Catholic religion is now looked upon with less disfavor than formerly. I am persuaded, sir, that you mistake upon this subject. Controversy has assumed a kinder tone, and efforts are put forth in a more quiet and Christian way than formerly; but the mind of the world and

its piety were never more intently engaged for the overthrow of Popery, than at the present hour. You, sir, are regarded as at the head of a political party—you are regarded as carrying the vote of the papal Irish in your pocket. Papists, *even here*, are regarded as so wedded to the pope, as to be willing to cast their vote for the party that praises him loudest. These, sir, are the reasons why you misread the attentions which are paid yourself, and the eulogies which are pronounced on the pope. Some of the very men that flatter you in public, and that applaud the pope in the Tabernacle, condemn you in their hearts, and pray at their family altars that popish superstition may come to a perpetual end. And you well know it all.

Yet, sir, there is an excitement on the public mind which will secure a reading for what you or I may say, kindly and intelligently, as to Popery or Protestantism. I have stated my objections to your church. It is a matter of public regret that you have not resolved to meet and obviate them. You have marked out, however, your own course; you have attempted to show the reasons why no Catholic should forsake his church, and why all Protestants should seek her communion as soon as possible. It will be my pleasure to follow you step by step, and to show the utter truthlessness of every argument you have adduced to show that yours is the one, holy, catholic and apostolical church, out of whose communion there is no salvation. **This**

no man has ever yet succeeded in doing. Can you hope to be successful where others, more learned, more acute, and less burdened with duties, have failed?

My objections to your church are before the world. They stand there, abused, but unanswered. This is one point gained. It will be gaining another if I can show the baselessness of every argument you use to bind your people to it, and to induce others to enter it. To do this will be my object in the following letters.

Yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER II.

Bishop Hughes' letters characterized—Coolness of their statements—Their argument one enforcing despotism—The principle that the Bible has no authority but what the church gives it, and that it must be understood as the church interprets it, examined.

MY DEAR SIR,—I now proceed to the examination of the letters which you have addressed to a “Dear Reader,” and of which mine to you have been the occasion. I have taken the stand point outside your church which you requested your “Reader” to take, and there I have considered and inwardly digested them. My views in reference to them I will now frankly and candidly give to you and to the public. And if a word or sentiment shall escape me, not essential to my main object, that will give you pain, I beg you to charge it to the account of that frailty of our common natures from which alas! neither Peter nor his successors were, or are exempt.

These letters give the old statement about the papal being the only true church, and in the old way; a statement which has been better made very many times. There is an utter absence from it of freshness; it is a mere distillation from other

minds wonderfully weakened in the process. Out of the old beaten track of Christ appointing apostles and making Peter their pope—of giving to them, and especially to him, the keys of the kingdom, you seem unable to take a step. And you present the argument, if it can be so called, in the weakest and dullest form that I have yet seen it. How to account for this—whether on the ground of an over-estimate of your talents, or that you are reasoning against your own interior convictions—I know not. Although comparatively unknown, and with but little general reputation at stake, I would not be the author of them for your crook, keys, and mitre.

A remarkable feature of these letters is the coolness and confidence with which their statements are made. These statements have been logically and theologically refuted very many times; and yet you reproduce them with as much composure as if they were the utterance of the divine Spirit; as if they were not the merest, and some of them the most foolish assumptions. The argument of assertion is one in which your church is very powerful, because with a certain order of mind it is so potent. With many it is sufficient to know that the pope, the bishop or the priest says so. And it is difficult to conjecture what those may not say who affirm that they can change a little wafer made of flour into the real body and blood of Christ. But you, sir, should know that you live not in the age

of Thomas Aquinas, and that you are read by increasing multitudes in your own church, with whom assertion is simply assertion.

The argument of these letters is one maintaining and enforcing ecclesiastical despotism. Christ appointed apostles—over the twelve he placed Peter as pope—to these and their successors he gave the government of the church in all ages and countries;—and the power of the keys to admit or to exclude, to bind or to loose, as they might deem meet. And all who submit not to this external arrangement which you call “the body of the Church,” must be both to God and to the church as heathen and publicans. If this argument is true then there is not a man on earth who can be saved, however he may submit to the yoke of Christ, unless, in addition, he puts on the yoke of the pope. And yet the gospel is called a “law of liberty;” and the generous and warm-hearted Peter, who, although according to your showing the first pope, yet wore no shackles, declares, “of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.” Sir, the monstrous conclusion to which it leads proves your argument to be a monstrous one; and that argument is put forth at a time when the divine right of kings and priests to enslave the nations, civilly and spiritually, is passing away like the foam upon the waters, before the indignant scorn of the world! The fate of the doctrine

of divine right to hold in bondage the bodies and souls of men, as held by kings and papal priests, reached this country about the commencement of last Lent, when your letters died. I have sometimes thought that a coroner's jury empaneled to investigate the cause of the death of your letters would render the following verdict: "Died because of the gracious visitation of Almighty God upon the doctrine of divine right, as held by kings and popes and bishops and other inferior clergy, which has recently taken place in Europe."

But I pass from the general impressions made by the perusal of your letters to the consideration of their statements. You will remember that my work is not to prove any thing save the utter truthlessness of your positions. Your numbered paragraphs are like stones in a pile, in contact, but without any logical arrangement or connection. I will cull from them your main principles, and will seek to show you that they are the merest papal assumptions. In doing this I will not confine myself to your arrangement, nor yet to your language or method of argumentation. I will even give to your principles the advantage of the better statement made of them by standard papal authors; as I truly believe that nothing is finally lost by fairness.

1. *You assert that the Bible has no authority save what your church gives it, and that it must be understood and received as your church interprets it. And you flout private interpretation as the root of all*

heresy, and of all evil. Although this is not among your first postulates, I select it as the first for examination, because of its fundamental importance. If I have no right to read, or interpret the Bible, or to deduce from a single passage of it a meaning differing from that which your church puts upon it, then controversy is ended. I am shut up either to return to holy mother or to go to hell. Now, sir, as by the grace of God I intend to do neither the one or the other, I will show you that the principle above asserted is a false assumption. To be sure it is not yours, nor Milner's, nor Hay's merely, it is asserted by the Council of Trent, and all are cursed who refuse to receive it.

The first question I wish to ask is, where is the authority you claim for your church, given her? Upon this point I must have proof beyond question. Do you assert the need of an infallible interpreter of the will of God? Such an one would be convenient;—but where is such need asserted?—where is such an interpreter appointed? If you point me to a passage of Scripture you admit, my right of private interpretation, for I must exercise my judgment to decide whether it is or is not to the point. If you tell me that uniform tradition asserts the possession of this authority by the church, how do I know that your tradition is true? Your church has corrupted the written words;—hence I may infer, that if there is any such thing as unwritten tradition she has corrupted that also.

The Scriptures, you say (No. 10), owe to your church their character for authenticity and inspiration. How is this? The Old Testament was completed, and was in use hundreds of years before the coming of Christ;—the Evangelists and Apostles who wrote the New Testament were inspired so to do by the Holy Ghost. These things are capable of the fullest proof—nor would their proof be weakened a hair, if the whole papal church were swallowed up with the company of “Core.” Why is the Bible more than any other ancient book indebted to your church for its character? Do we not prove the Apocryphal books uninspired which your church places in the Canon?—and with equal facility could we not prove the Epistles of Paul to be inspired if your church had taught otherwise? Do we not, with the utmost facility, show all your corruptions of Christianity and of the Scriptures, and separate the false from the true as easily as does the husbandman the chaff from the wheat?

The Scriptures, as we possess them, existed before the rise of your church—before a general council ever commenced—before a declaration was ever made by a council as to the canon of Scripture. Any such declaration must be founded on antecedent evidence. And unless such evidence existed previous to the declaration of it—the declaration itself is a falsehood. Let it then be granted that we have no evidence of the truth of Scripture save what the Church of Rome gives us, and the whole fabric

of Christianity totters to its base. Are you prepared for this result? or would you rather sustain Popery than Christianity?

Truth is the great object proposed by God to our belief. Religious differs from other truth only in its superior importance. All truths in the universe are connected together, and make an harmonious whole. They strengthen and fortify each other. And as God proposes truth to our belief, he has endowed us with minds capable of examining the claims of all things soliciting our belief, and has surrounded us with motives ever impelling us to seek and to love the truth. We have in the works of God the evidences of his eternal power and Godhead—we have in his word the more full revelation of his will. And he has so formed us that we cannot believe without proof, and that we cannot reject with. At least I know of no way of doing otherwise save by turning Papist. Now why should the Bible be exempted from the general law which rules my acceptance of all truth? Whilst permitted to think for myself on all other subjects, why should I be forbidden to investigate the Scriptures for myself? Why bound up to believe them only as your church interprets them? Sir, there must be some priestly device at the bottom of all this. As reasonably might your church forbid me to believe any thing in astronomy, or in physical or moral philosophy, contrary to her teaching, as forbid me to receive the Bible save in the sense which she gives it. And

you remember she sent Galileo to prison for teaching that the earth moves around the sun.

I must believe the Scriptures only in the sense of your church—"holy mother!" But who is she? where is her residence? You define her, in a controversy with a late distinguished divine, to be "the visible society of Christians, composed of the people who are taught and the pastors who teach, by virtue of a certain divine commission recorded in the 28th of Matthew, addressed to the Apostles and their legitimate successors until the end of the world." So that the people and their pastors constitute "holy mother church;" and "holy mother" is the rule of faith. So that "holy mother" is the rule of "holy mother;" that is, the venerable and fretful old lady wills as she wishes, and does as she wills! Has not this been very much so?

But *the people and their pastors* form the church, and the church is the rule of faith! And yet the people and their true pastors, those who daily labor among them, visiting their sick, and burying their dead, have nothing to do with the rule. The authoritative meaning of Scripture is declared by your bishops, and even of these not one in ten has any thing to do with it. What, for instance, have you to do with it? Practically it is in the hands of the pope and his cardinals. So that "*holy mother*," the rule of faith, is made up of a few *holy fathers*, many of whom as to sense are the merest drivellers, and as to morals the merest debauchees! Now, sir, if

I go to these *holy fathers*, who, individually, are men, but who, unitedly, are "*holy mother*," for the sense of Scripture, must not my religion be based upon man? And from building upon such men I am compelled to cry out in the language of the Litany, "may the good Lord deliver me."

But admitting, for the sake of the argument, that I am bound to receive the Scriptures as your church interprets them, then will you answer me a few questions? How am I to obtain her sense of them? On the greater part of the Scriptures she has given forth no binding interpretation. At what period of the life of holy mother am I most likely to get a true interpretation? Is it when she was Arian with Pope Liberius? or when she was pagan with Marcellinus? or when she was Pelagian with Pope Clement XI? or when she was infidel with Leo X? or when strumpets were her waiting maids with John XII and Alexander? or is it when she was drunk with the blood of the martyrs? or when rival popes were tearing out each other's bowels? or is it when in the height of her charity she was thundering her curses from Trent against all who refused to say Amen to her decisions? These, sir, are very important questions to be answered, as I may be Arian, Pelagian, or infidel, a Calvinist, or an Arminian, according to the time I seek from holy mother her interpretations of the word of God. Perhaps my reverence for the venerable old lady, now in her wrinkles and dotage, might be greater than it is,

were it not for my sense of her dissolute and change-ful life.

But I find I have finished a letter without finishing my analysis of the principle under examination. I will resume it in my next.

Yours, &c.,

KIRWAN.

LETTER III.

Examination of Church interpretation continued.

MY DEAR SIR,—In my last letter I commenced, without concluding, an examination of the principle, *that the Bible has no authority save what your church gives it, and that it must be understood and received as your church interprets it.* Upon this principle, sufficiently disproved by the considerations already presented, I have a few things more to say.

I must receive the Scriptures in the sense and meaning which your church gives them! God is *my* father, and Jesus Christ is *my* Saviour as well as yours. His word is a revelation of his will to *me* as well as to you, or as to any body of men upon earth. “God at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past to the prophets, and in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.” So that notwithstanding the puerile distinction, unworthy of a man of sense, you make (No. 40), God does speak to *me* through the prophets, and his Son, in his word. And yet I must not hear him,—nor consider his sayings as possessing any authority or meaning, until holy mother gives his sayings to me authority and meaning! That is, I must hear God only when he

uses the lips of holy mother ; lips which have blistered under the curses which she has been pronouncing against me for ages ! Holy mother, sir, in the bloom of her youth, and in the maturity of her years, "lived deliciously and courted kings to her couch." But hers has been a dissolute life. She has made the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication. And although in her wrinkles and dotage, you now tell me that I can hear God only through her ; and that I must bow my ear to the stream of her fetid breath, and at the risk of all your curses, learn God's will only as she expounds it ! If such a claim, calmly put forth, is not a proof of dotage, what can be ? Bishop Hughes, how old are you ?

But why bind me to receive the Scriptures only in the sense which your church gives them ? How can I know that she gives them a correct sense ? Or must I take this for granted ? The popes are admitted to be infallible. So are the bishops ; and so are general councils. Pope has contradicted pope—bishop, bishop—and council, council. How then can I confide in their interpretation of Scripture ? How can I be infallibly assured that any other man, or body of men, is infallibly qualified to guide me into the meaning of the Scriptures ? If I, Kirwan, reject my own prayerfully received sense of Scripture for yours, John Hughes, then are not you above the Scriptures to me ? And do not I virtually reject what God says, for what you say, who can now and

then turn a sharp corner and leave the truth behind you? And if this is not infidelity, what is it?

But to this you reply that I must not look to your interpretation, but, as says the creed of Pius IV, to "the unanimous consent of the Fathers." But here again, the "private reasoner" has some important questions to ask. Who are the Fathers? Where or with whom do they begin or end? This is an unsettled question. Were they not uninspired men and fallible? This is admitted. Origen, among other errors, taught Universalism. Augustine retracted his errors. Tertullian was a Montanist. And can fallible men make an infallible rule?

Besides, the early fathers wrote but little in the way of Scriptural interpretation. If any thing, we have scarcely any thing from the Fathers before the middle of the second century; and but little, save fragments, of the first three centuries, and these corrupted. And what we have from those early times serves no purpose in settling the points in controversy. They differed widely among themselves,—some of them condemn your Apocrypha—some of them your absurd doctrine of transubstantiation. And yet whilst these fathers were fallible, and differed among themselves—whilst they pointedly condemn in some things the teachings of your church, and wrote but little in the way of Scriptural interpretation, yet we must receive the Scriptures "according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers." Is not this prepos-

terous? Have you not excommunicated your common sense and reason?

But, for the sake of the argument, let us admit that these erring and contending fathers were unanimous in their support of the distinguishing doctrines of your church. What, then, does this avail? If unanimous in teaching what the Scriptures do not, their teaching cannot be received; if in what the Scriptures do teach, we receive that without them. Nor is unity any evidence of truth, in itself. Men in multitudes have been united, for ages, in supporting a lie. And union is in the inverse ratio of knowledge. The more perfect the ignorance, other things being equal, the more perfect the union. When the blind lead the blind they cling very close together. Individuals in full vision often select different roads to the same place; but the blind crowd along the same road, and cling to one another like swarming bees, even on the brink of the precipice. Hence the proverb, "if the blind lead the blind both will fall into the ditch." And if the successors of Moses, who sat in his seat, and boasted that they were his ecclesiastical descendants, were blind leaders of the blind; may it not be possible that the same may be the case as to the descendants of Peter? Your letters, now before me, give the plainest evidence that the eyes of your mind stand in great need of couching. O that you might apply to them the eye-salve spoken of in Revelation.

But you reply, this is forbidden by the fact that

your bishops are the descendants of Peter, and that they have the promise of divine guidance. But they are no more the descendants of Peter, than were the Jewish priests the descendants of Moses and Aaron. So that reasoning from the one to the other this plea avails nothing. "We be Abraham's seed," said the Jews. "If ye were Abraham's children ye would do his works," replied the Saviour. "We be Moses' disciples," cried the Pharisees. "Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me," says Christ. And it is surprising that a man, like you, professing to be a master in Israel, and a chief pastor in the church of God, could for a moment lose sight of the palpable truth that the true evidence of apostolical succession is apostolical faith and practice. In your fourth letter, (No. 41,) you speak of Joanna Southcote, Joe Smith, and father Miller with a sneer; but, sir, the most absurd absurdity of Joe Smith was clever sense when compared with your principle of making fallible men infallible expounders of God's revealed will, and sending all to perdition who do not receive their unanimous consent as its true meaning, when no such consent was ever given, or can be found! Sir, Joe Smith was much more of a pope than you imagine. He damned, as unblushingly as you or holy mother, all that did not deem him and his cardinals infallible, and that rejected his Mormon tradition. And if as a "private reasoner" I were compelled to select Joe Smith or John Hughes as my chief Rabbi, notwithstanding

“the sympathies of my Irish nature,” I would not long hesitate between them. I have no great relish for the nonsense of either of you, but I could swallow his with far less difficulty and grimace, than I could yours; and I would sooner get through. My throat would not have to be stretched, almost to the cracking of its skin, every day of my life, for the purpose of taking down some monstrous absurdity.

But you plead the need of receiving the Scriptures in the sense given them by your church, to save the church and the world from the divisions and schisms which are the necessary result of private interpretation. It is to be regretted, on the whole, that those who reject church interpretation are so much divided among themselves. But it is difficult to form any machinery, however perfect, without some friction. Like all other good things, the right of private judgment has been abused. But what, sir, has been so awfully abused as the doctrines of church interpretation and sacramental grace, two of the prime doctrines of holy mother? Diversity of opinion is necessarily connected with the exercise of the right of private judgment; as God has no more made minds to think alike than he has faces to look alike, or temperaments to act alike. God and nature abhor dead levels. Uniformity with diversity seems to be the great law of Jehovah. And whether to surrender our right of private judgment in religious things for the sake of a level uniformity, or to retain it with the variety of opinions

which may spring from it, is the question which here divides the Papist from the Protestant. To my mind it is like the question whether we shall have a free open sea, with its ceaseless sounding, its ever heaving bosom, and its billows occasionally rolled to the sky by the tempest, or a sea bound in fetters, with an unruffled bosom, stagnating by day and by night, and sending over earth and air its putrid exhalations.

Whilst I deplore the divisions among Protestants and feel that they are unnecessary, evincing less forbearance than passion, yet, sir, does holy mother exclude them from her pale by her stringent rule of church interpretation? Has she had no schisms in her bosom? Among her numerous progeny have there been no Mother Ann Lees, no Joe Smiths, no Father Millers? Perhaps, sir, you forget that the fathers of Protestantism have contended, in every age, with all forms of fanaticism; and have used all weapons against them, save those potent ones of your church, fire and faggot. Has your church done so? Has not your priesthood, in every age, fostered fanaticism and absurdity? Liberius patronized Arianism, a branch of Socinianism. Montanus, more than a rival for Swedenborg, was patronized by his cotemporary pope. And the fanaticism of Mother Lee, and of Joanna, go out as do the stars amid the effulgence of the sun, when compared with the fanaticism of Beata of Cuenza, who, teaching that her body was transubstantiated into our Lord's

body, was conducted with processions to the churches where she was adored, as you now adore the host ; or with that of Clara of Madrid, who claimed, and was allowed, to be a prophetess ; or of sister Nativité, who saw on one occasion in the hands of the officiating priest, at the consecration of the wafer, a little child, living and clothed with light. The child, eager to be eaten, spoke with an infantile voice and desired to be swallowed ! And you, sir, a bishop in a church whose history is crowded with the feats of such fanatics, and whose bishops and popes have been their patrons, will quote against Protestants the examples of a few fanatics that we have ever opposed, to prove to us the mischief of interpreting the Bible for ourselves ! Bishop Hughes ! Bishop Hughes !! O Bishop Hughes !!!

Nor is this all. You dwell upon our divisions and schisms as proof to demonstration against our private interpretation ; forgetting that if strong against us, it is equally strong against church interpretation. Have you never read of, or have you conveniently forgotten, the western schism which rent the bosom of holy mother ? Have you forgotten the feuds between the Jansenists and the Jesuits, and those caused by the Augustines and the Dominicans ? Have you never read of the Scotists and Thomists—of the war about the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary between the Franciscans and Dominicans—of the feud between the Franciscans and Pope John ? Through every century of

her existence the bosom of holy mother has been rent by internal feuds such as have never cursed the Protestant world. And at this very hour her bosom is like the bowels of Etna when on the eve of an eruption.

Sir, it would have been well for you had you made yourself better acquainted with the annals of Popery and Protestantism, to use your own classical and dignified language, "before you had launched your shallow bark on the ocean of ecclesiastical history."

I will recur again to this subject in my next.

Yours, &c.

KIRWAN.

LETTER IV.

Examination of Church interpretation continued—Its destructive consequences—It is a monstrous assumption.

MY DEAR SIR,—At the close of my last letter I was considering your argument for church interpretation drawn from the divisions and schisms which prevail among Protestants. Although I have shown that the argument against private, is equally strong against church interpretation, I have a few things more to say in reference to it. As it is your *taking* argument with weak minds, it requires more attention than its merits deserve. Like almost all *taking* arguments, it is a weak one.

I have already shown how grievously, in every age, your church has been rent by schism, and disgraced by fanaticism. I would now ask why the distinction you set up between *doctrine*, and *discipline* and *morals*? The church is infallible in doctrine, but not in discipline or morals! And when we compare the things in which she is infallible, with those in which she is not, the latter far outnumber the former. Now why the distinction? The few things in which you agree are called doctrine; and the many in which you do not agree are called discipline and morals! So

that the distinction is made to excuse the infinite diversity of opinion that exists among you; and also to excuse the shocking enormities committed by your church as mere matters of discipline and morals! And yet, singular to state, your church pronounces equally heavy curses against those who reject her discipline and morals, on which she has made no infallible decision, as against those who reject her doctrines, on which she has!

Now, sir, if the above distinction between doctrines, and discipline and morals, is a true one, which I utterly deny;—if a people may be considered a unity who unite in a few radical doctrines however they may disagree on things pertaining to discipline and morals, I am prepared to show that the unity of the Protestant world far, very far surpasses that of the Papal. The things in which we agree are more numerous and more important than are your infallible doctrines, and the things in which we disagree are less numerous and less important than are your matters of discipline and morals. And yet you come near waxing eloquent, and becoming interesting on our diversity, when contrasted with your unity! But, I suppose we must excuse you on the ground that you are writing for Roman Catholics, who, poor creatures, are excluded from the ranks of “private” or public “reasoners.” Nothing saves this argument from derision, but my unwillingness to offend against decorum.

“The church gives authority and meaning to the Scriptures, and we must receive them as the church interprets them.” The Scriptures, the Apocrypha, the unanimous consent of the fathers, the sacred canons, the decisions of councils, and oral traditions, form your rule of faith. And as these, like the Bible, which you seem as much disposed to ridicule as to eulogize, are made up of paper, types and ink, and are silent when you ask them any questions, they need a living interpreter. And to avail, he or she must be infallible. This living, infallible interpreter is your church. That is, as I have already shown, the church is the rule of the church. To him who is infallible all faith and practice are equally true. The truth of principles changes as he changes. Infallibility prevents the correction of error—makes principles however opposite equally true—obliges the infallible one when he goes wrong to defend the wrong, and to stay wrong for ever. Thus, as your church has been on all sides of almost all questions, because infallible, she makes the opposite sides equally true; and thus lays the axe at the root of all true principles and of all true morals. And the facts in the case prove the truth of my inference. What truer sons of your church has the earth ever borne than the Jesuits? And what class of men have so undermined the foundations of all true principles and morals! Have you read Pascal's Letters? So that it may be laid down as a principle equally true of men and of

nations, the more entirely papal, the more entire the absence of sound principles and sound morals. The maximum of the one is always in connection with the minimum of the other.

I think, sir, that if you do not, all "private reasoners" will agree that I have shown your principle, that "the Bible has no authority but what your church gives it, and that we must receive it as your church interprets it," is the merest assumption. It is a principle unworthy of you as a man; more unworthy of you as a minister of the God of truth; and deserving only the scornful rejection of all intelligent and thinking men. But as the destinies of this ruined world and of the true church of God are bound up in the principle, let us look at its effects when carried out.

"The interpretation of the church;" this is your great principle, and your catholicon for all divisions and heresies. The Jewish church was infallible, as your chief writers assert. And the Jewish people were bound to receive the Scriptures as interpreted by those who sat in Moses' seat. And yet this infallible church, by its infallible teachers, put to death the Lord of glory. Jesus Christ, then, fell a victim to the very principle which you assert—the principle of church interpretation. And how many of the most devoted followers of Jesus Christ have fallen victims to the same principle, we are not to know until the day of final revealing.

Church interpretation is exclusive of private judg-

ment. If true it would have forever prevented the erection of the Christian church. It would have bound all Jews to remain Jews forever, and all other men to become Jews in belief, in order to enter heaven. Like your church the Jewish made void the law of God by traditions. Their traditions and church interpretation of the Scriptures were all against Jesus Christ ; how then, on your principles, could the foundations of the church of Christ be laid ? They never could be. How were they laid ? By those who rejected church interpretation, and who for themselves examined the Scriptures, and considered the evidences which proved to them that Jesus was the Messiah. You, sir, as a minister, owe your standing in the church of Jesus Christ to the rejection of the very principle which you assert, and, with so much flimsy sophistry, enforce ; and to the adoption of the principle of private interpretation which, in seeking to vilify, you only expose yourself to scorn. Your argument is contemptible, and makes you ridiculous.

Nor is this all. If we carry out your principles how can you expect us to return to your church ? Let me make the case my own to give point and directness to what I say. I am an unbeliever, but sincerely inquiring after the true church ; and I go to your residence to have my inquiries answered. You state to me the marks of the true church, beginning with that of *unity*, and quote some Scripture in confirmation. But what must I do ? for I am for-

bidden the exercise of my private judgment. If I say the mark is a true one, and is based on Scripture, that is a private judgment which I have no right to exercise ; if I deny it, and the relevancy of the texts quoted, it is again a rejection of your principle. You pass on to the next mark, *sanctity*, and dwell upon your holiness of doctrine. To be satisfied of this being a true mark, I must compare your doctrines with those of the Scriptures ; if I come to the conclusion the mark is a true one, I reject your rule ; if to the opposite conclusion I yet reject it. Our conversation ends, and I retire either impressed by your arguments, or bewildered by your sophistry. In a few days I return, saying, “ Well, Bishop Hughes, I have deeply considered your statements, and I have concluded that they are true, and that yours is the true church ; and I wish to connect myself with it.” Would you receive me ? Gladly. And yet by receiving me you deny the truth of your own rule, and admit that a man on his private judgment can “ make an act of faith.” If converts cannot be made in this way to Popery how can they be ? If made in this way where is the force or the truth of your denunciations of private judgment ? If men have no right to read or to judge of the Scriptures for themselves—no right to form an opinion as to the clashing claims for the true church, why the series of letters before me, in which bold assertion, a little truth, much sophistry, perverted texts of Scripture, and no little arrogance, are mixed

and mingled together to prove that yours is the true church, and to induce all to flee to her fold who wish to escape perdition? Sir, your doctrine is a suicidal one; your church cannot live with it, nor can it live without. It is gotten up for babes in intellect, and not for men.

But let us admit the full truth of the doctrine, and that it is binding on every mortal; what follows? I must give up my Bible and lock up my private judgment. Wishing to know what meaning the church gives John 5:39, I apply to my neighboring priest. But he has not read the fathers, nor the canon law, nor the decrees of councils, nor the bulls of the pope, nor the Scriptures. He applies to you his bishop; nor have you read them. You apply to the archbishop; nor has he read them. He applies to the cardinals; nor have they read them. They apply to the pope; nor has he read them. I here venture the assertion that there is not a living man who has read your rule of faith. How can I know then what the church teaches? Even if her teachings were harmonious, there is no knowing. But, for the argument, I grant that the pope and his cardinals, who virtually compose "holy mother," do know the rule. They tell the archbishop, he tells you, you tell the priest, and the priest tells me. And however my common sense revolts against it, I must receive it, as a good son of the church!

See then the position to which your doctrine reduces every thinking and thoughtless man. It

brings us all on our knees before your priests, multitudes of whom are as unprincipled and wicked as they are ignorant; deprives us of the right of private judgment, and compels us to open our minds and souls to whatever nonsense, concocted in Italy, they might see fit to ladle into them.

These, sir, are the considerations which prove the principle I have been considering not only a mere but a monstrous assumption; a principle which, whether true or untrue, is equally fatal to the claims of your church. I deeply regret that any clever son of old Ireland, after breathing so long the air of freedom, should lend himself to the support of such a monstrous principle. The logical power which you display in its support gives you high claims to the chair of logic in the university of Heliopolis!

How pleasant it is to turn from such a rule to the simple and pure word of God, given to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths. If with that lamp, we wander from the way, the fault is in ourselves. It is not because of the obscurity with which God has revealed his will, but because our foolish minds are darkened by reason of sin. But I must not forget that my only object is to show the utter fallacy of your principles.

Yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER V.

The Papal Church theory—A mistake in selecting Peter for the tiara—The prayer of Christ for Peter realized, for him and all his successors—The question, Was Peter pope? examined.

MY DEAR SIR,—In my last letter I concluded my analysis of the principle you assert, that the Bible has no authority save what your church gives it, and that it must be understood and received as your church interprets it. A principle more untrue, more absurd, more suicidal, has never been asserted. It cannot be more absurd, but it is infinitely more dangerous, than your doctrine of transubstantiation. Although the refutation of that principle saps the foundation of all that you have written, yet there are other principles mixed up with your postulates that require notice. Among these is *the principle involved in your theory of the church*. As the paragraph which you mark 5, contains the great outline of your church theory, I will here quote it entire.

“5. But *twelve* Apostles, invested with *equal* authority, might disturb the order and defeat the object, which their Lord had appointed them to establish and secure. *His* kingdom was to be *one*; united in itself. *His* sheep were to be comprised

in ‘*one fold,*’ under ‘*one shepherd,*’ and not under *twelve*. Accordingly, out of the twelve, being all Apostles, and as such equal in dignity and authority, He selected *one*, Peter; and in addition to the Apostleship, which he enjoyed like the others, conferred on him *special, singular, and individual* prerogative and power, which had not been conferred on the other eleven, either singularly or collectively; and, as our Lord had said many things to the multitude, at large, and some things to the Apostles alone, so, also, He addressed many instructions to the Apostles as such, *including Peter*, and *some things to Peter alone*, in which the others had no *direct* lot or part. Satan, he said, desired them (all), that he might sift them as wheat, but He prayed for Peter, that *his* faith might not fail; and that he, being once converted, should confirm his brethren. The efficacy of this prayer of the Man-God, has been realized in His church, from the days of Cephias himself, through the whole line of his successors, down to the exercise of the *chief Apostleship*, in our own times, by the great and illustrious Pius IX.”

The great papal idea here asserted is the placing of Peter over the other Apostles as their superior, and as the “Vicar of Christ,” and as the head of the church, and the perpetuation of this office in his successors, down to the present day. Do you not know, sir, that these claims set up in behalf of Peter have been proven, very many times, to be without the shadow of a foundation? And yet you assert them as confidently as if they had never been questioned, and quote Scripture to prove them, just

as if we had a right to form any opinion adverse to yours on the subject! Before attempting to show, what has been so often shown before, that poor Peter was never made pope, there are one or two ideas I wish to suggest just here.

Do you not think that your church made a mistake in selecting Peter for the tiara? Would you not have succeeded better with some of the other Apostles, one of the "sons of thunder," for instance? And how papal would be the idea,—a son of thunder, "thundering from the Vatican!" Would you not have succeeded with John better than with Peter? You could have urged in his behalf that he was the beloved disciple—that he was often in the bosom of his Lord—that Peter on a certain occasion sent him to ask of the Saviour a question which he feared to ask himself—that he did higher service to the church by his writings, which form so large a part of the New Testament—that he outran Peter, and reached first the sepulchre—that he outlived all the other Apostles! And this would save you all questions about John the beloved disciple, the inspired Apostle, the lovely evangelist, being subject to a successor of Peter who probably had never seen Christ, nor, perhaps, Peter. If John were your candidate you could not say so much about "this rock," nor about "the keys;" but then you would not be as pressed as now about "get thee behind me, Satan," about Peter's swearing so, and denying his Master. My opinion is, but I am a

“private reasoner,” that you would have succeeded better with John. I would advise you to correct tradition, *for I have no doubt she has erred*, and substitute John for Peter. You will find it a wonderful relief.

The use you make of the text you quote in the above paragraph strikes me very singularly. Satan desired the Apostles, as he once did Job, that he might sift them as wheat. Knowing Peter to be most in danger of them all, he prayed especially for him ; and from this passage, whose only object is to show that poor Peter was more in danger of falling under the influence of the devil than any of his brethren, you deduce an argument for his supremacy ! I have no doubt, if hard pressed, that like some astute critics of former days, you could find the history of the children of Israel in the Iliad of Homer ! What bounds can confine the power of a man who can create God out of a wafer ?

Consider well the following sentence in the above paragraph ; “the efficacy of this prayer of the Man-God, has been realized in his church, from the days of Cephas himself, through the whole line of his successors . . . down to the great and illustrious Pius IX.” Considering all things this is a most extraordinary assertion. That is, Peter’s faith never failed ; nor has the faith of a single pope from Peter to Pius ! Notwithstanding the prayer of his Master, Satan sifted Peter. In the hour of severe trial his faith failed. When accused in the

palace of Pilate of being one of the disciples, "he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man." And is it in this way that the efficacy of that prayer "has been realized through the whole line of his successors?" And yet, sir, Peter, cursing and swearing, was an angel, in comparison with many in "the line of his successors." I know not how you could make an assertion more historically false; and the truth of which your own writers, yes, and John Hughes himself, deny.

But the question returns, Was Peter made pope, to exercise supreme authority in the church; and was the power thus conferred upon him hereditary, to descend to all his successors in the See of Rome? This is a doctrine, or principle, with which your church stands or falls. The pope is the centre of unity, and to be separated from him, according to your showing, is to be cast out among heathens and publicans. This principle, involving the existence of your church, and my salvation, I deny, and put you on the proof.

If called to prove this principle in a court of justice, how would you proceed? Would you call upon tradition to give her testimony? But tradition has been in the keeping of the pope; and this would be like calling upon the pope to testify to his own supremacy, which, in view of the power and emoluments of his office, I have no doubt he would be willing to do. But would his testimony be received? Would you invoke the aid of the Scrip-

tures? But this would be giving up one of your fundamental principles; as the Scriptures to us have no sense but what the church, which is virtually the pope, gives them. This would be again calling on the pope to testify to his own supremacy, which could not be admitted. But supposing you admit the common sense meaning of the Scriptures to bear on the case, which every body not a Papist is willing to do, where would you commence?

Would you cite the very pertinent passage in Luke (xxii. 24—30), where the Saviour so sharply rebukes his disciples, because there was a strife amongst them as to which of them should be greatest? or that of Mark (ix. 34), where, again reproving them for their contention about pre-eminence, he says: "If any man desire to be the first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all." Would not the judge say, "Bishop Hughes, these texts are not to the point; for if Peter were placed over the disciples, why contention amongst them for pre-eminence? Would not Christ have settled the matter at once, and say, contend no more, I have made Peter your pope?"

Driven thence, would you next cite the passage in Ephesians (iv. 11), where Paul enumerates the various kinds of teachers which Christ on his ascension gave to the church, as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers for the perfecting of the saints,—and the parallel passage in 1 Corinthians (xii. 28)? Would not the judge again say,

“Bishop Hughes, these are not to the point, as they say nothing about a pope, nor a word about the supremacy of Peter.”

Foiled again here, would you next cite the passage (1 Cor. i. 12) which informs us of pastors in the church of Corinth, one claiming to be of Paul, another of Apollos, and another of Peter? and then would you turn to the passage in Galatians (ii. 14), where Paul most sharply rebukes Peter for his dissimulation? Would not the judge reply, “Bishop Hughes, what do you mean? If Peter were pope, why did he not excommunicate the parties of Paul and Apollos at Corinth, those early protestants against his supremacy? If he were pope, why for a moment permit Paul at Antioch to dispute his right to dissemble when circumstances required him so to do? These passages, sir, are against you, instead of proving the position you assert.”

Foiled again, would you cite the passage in Acts (viii. 14), where the apostles in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaria to assist in carrying on the good work there; and that other passage in the 15th chapter of Acts, where James declares the decision of the council at Jerusalem, called to consider some ceremonial questions started among the churches of the Gentiles by Judaizing teachers? The judge would again reply, “These passages are not to the point; for if Peter were pope, would he bear to be *sent* by those beneath him to Samaria? Would he permit James to preside in Jerusalem, at

that first council, and to declare its will ; duties which devolved on him by right of office ? These passages, sir, are sadly against you."

You now, with some little excitement created by these repulses, quote the passage in Matthew (xvi. 18, 19) : " Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I build my church ; I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." This you do with an air of assurance, feeling that you have trapped the judge at last. But he replies, being at once a Christian and a sound lawyer, " Bishop Hughes, these are disputed texts as to their true import ; and the point that you wish to establish, being one of transcendent importance, should have something to sustain it besides texts of controverted meaning. You so explain this text as to make Peter the foundation of the church ; but Peter himself denies this, by asserting that Christ is its foundation (1 Peter, 2d chap). Paul also denies it when he says that Christ Jesus is the only foundation that has been, or can be laid (1 Cor. iii. 11) ; and when he represents Jesus Christ himself as the chief corner-stone (Eph. ii. 20). And Jerome, Chrysostom, Origen, Cyril, Hilary, Augustine, make " the rock " to mean, not Peter, but the faith, or confession of Peter. And as to the gift of the keys, that avails you nothing as to the supremacy of Peter, for they were given equally to the other apostles as to him. And besides, I do not see what could be gained by placing the church upon Peter ; as, for all interests concerned, it is better that it should be built upon Christ."

Thus repulsed on every hand, I hear you ask, in an excited tone, rather warm for a bishop, "If these evidences are rejected, what will your honor admit as bearing upon the point?" With the calmness becoming a judge, he replies, "Bishop Hughes, I want proof, beyond question, that Jesus Christ made Peter pope. I want clear proof of the fact that he ever exercised the power of the pope in any one case. I want proof that ever one of the apostles or any other contemporary ever referred to him, or applied to him as pope. And as your object is to prove the perpetuity of the popedom, if you prove that Peter was invested with supremacy over the other apostles, I want you then to prove that that supremacy was not to end with his death, but that it was to be held in fee for his successor for ever. When, sir, these points are proved, and not before, you may look for a decision in your favor. Have you proof as to these points?"

Looking upon a judge with disdain who thus requires you to make brick without straw, and to prove what so many ages have taken for granted, you collect your papers and make your exit.

Sir, your assertion of the supremacy of Cephas is the merest assumption, and I think you must see it to be so. You would not claim the possession of an acre of land in an Irish bog if you could advance no better claim to it than you put forth for the supremacy of Peter. But the end is not yet.

Yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER VI.

Was Peter pope ? examination continued—But two arguments that cannot be answered—Tillotson's opinion.

MY DEAR SIR,—In my last letter I entered upon an examination of the claims of the pope to supremacy without concluding it. I showed you that in the testing of these claims, the testimony of tradition was inadmissible ; and that the teaching, the facts, and the tenor of the New Testament, are directly in opposition to them. But as a man of spirit, greatly unwilling that a mere “ private reasoner ” should have even the appearance of victory over you, you appear again in court to prove, by other evidence, that Peter was clothed by Christ with supremacy, and that he was first pope of Rome. The judge having already decided against the testimony adduced to prove the first point, and having called for evidence which you cannot adduce, you address yourself to the second, to prove that Peter was the first pope of Rome. You state the point, and his honor calls for the testimony. And with an air of triumph you adduce the early records of the church, from its foundation to the fifth century, among which are the books of the New Testament. The judge

says, "Well, Bishop Hughes, we will commence with these documents, and examine them in their order." The proposition is a fair one, and you consent.

"Mark," says the judge, "was a friend and follower of Peter. He wrote his gospel at Rome, about thirty years after the ascension of Christ. Some of the fathers even say that it was revised by Peter. Does he say any thing about Peter being pope of Rome?" You reply, "No, Mark is silent on the subject." So that document is laid aside.

"Here are Peter's own letters," says the judge, "written but a short time previous to his death, thirty years at least after his alleged investiture with the supremacy. Do *they* say any thing upon the subject?" "No," you reply, "it would not be modest in him to say any thing about the matter." So these are laid aside, the judge remarking in an under tone, "It would have been well if the successors of Peter had imitated his modesty, who, after being nearly forty years pope, in two letters to the churches says not a word about his supremacy."

"Next are the letters of Paul," says the judge, "written from Rome, and to the Romans; do they bear any testimony to the point to be proved? His letter to the Romans was written several years after Peter was made Pope there; does he say any thing about pope Peter? At the close of the letter he sends his affectionate salutations to upwards of twenty persons; does he mention pope Peter? When, according to your showing, Peter was in

the plenitude of his power at Rome, Paul was taken there as a prisoner. Whilst there he wrote several of these epistles; is Peter alluded to in them as pope? is he named at all? If he was there, Bishop Hughes, how do you account for what Paul writes to Timothy (2d Tim. iv. 16), "At my first answer . . . all men forsook me?" Does Peter play again, in the court of Cæsar, the part he played in the palace of Pilate? Could Paul be a prisoner in Rome for two or more years, and pope Peter never do him any kindness? Could he have done him any kindness, and yet Paul never speak of it to his friends? How is all this?"

Vexed to the quick by these questions, for even bishops have feelings, and plainly perceiving that his honor is a "private reasoner," you reply, "we will lay aside, if you please, those documents which form the New Testament, and pass on to the next in order. They have always been wrested by 'private reasoners' to their own destruction, who are incapable of 'making an act of faith.'" "But before we lay them aside," says the judge, "do you admit, bishop, that they give no testimony to the point before the court?" You give a reluctant assent. He again asks, "How do you account for the fact that they give no testimony, considering the peculiar circumstances under which they were written?" You bite your lips, but are speechless.

After waiting a few minutes for a reply, the judge says, "We will proceed to the next document; what

is it? what does it say?" "Here," you say, "is Jerome, who says that Peter went to Rome in the second year of Claudius, and was bishop there twenty-five years." "But," says the judge, "Jerome wrote about the year 400, and how did he know? where did he get the fact? In the 12th year of Claudius, Paul went to Jerusalem and found Peter there. Did he run away from Rome? Do popes now go from Rome to Jerusalem? or was he like some bishops in our day, who love the fleece more than the flock, a non-resident? In the reign of Nero, who succeeded Claudius, Paul went to Rome, and found the people there quite uninformed as to the faith of Christ (Acts xxviii. 17-24). If Peter was pope there for so many years previous, what was he about? Besides, the apostles were ministers at large; their duty was, not to abide in any city, not to demit their general for a local authority, but to go into all the earth, and preach the gospel to every creature. So that if these documents are true, they show that Peter, at least, was disobedient to the ascending command of his Lord, by locating himself at Rome, instead of laboring to extend the gospel to every creature. So that if these papers are true, and if they establish the point you press so earnestly, they will simply prove the unfaithfulness of Peter. If not true, your cause is lost; if true, Peter was a disobedient apostle, and ought to be condemned, instead of being followed and eulogized, for seeking his own ease instead of obeying his Master's command."

As the judge, seeking only the truth, places you in this sad dilemma, I see your Irish heart swelling with emotions. You seize your crook and your keys, and glance a wrathful look at the "private reasoner," so unfit to wear the ermine. But your sober second thoughts return, and you ask, with a tone of smothered indignation, "What proof does your honor want that Peter was bishop of Rome? What proof will you admit that the popes of our church are his true successors?"

His honor replies calmly but decidedly, "Bishop Hughes, the point you wish to prove is one of vital importance. It is the hinge upon which many grave questions turn, which deeply concern the destinies of our race. So you and I believe. To prove it I demand of you, not old wives' fables, but testimony so clear and direct, as to place it beyond a doubt. As to his being bishop of Rome, or being ever at Rome, the Scriptures are silent; and that they are silent, to you must be very embarrassing. And not only so, but upon this vital point the apostolic men who conversed with the apostles are equally silent as the Scriptures. Clemens, Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, say not a word upon the subject. At about the close of the second century Irenæus records it as a tradition received from one Papias, and is followed by your other authorities. But who Papias was, whilst there are various conjectures, nobody knows. And Eusebius speaks of the matter as a doubtful tradition. Here,

sir, is the amount of your testimony ; it resolves itself into the truth or falsehood of a prattling Papias, who told Irenæus that somebody told him that Peter was pope at Rome !”

“ Now, sir, the evidence I require is, first, that he was ever at Rome ; and secondly, that if there, he was pope of the universal church. And upon these points I will admit the testimony of the Scriptures, the apostles, or any competent cotemporary. If you have any such testimony produce it.” You reply, “ This is asking too much of an infallible church, whose unwritten tradition is of equal authority with the written word.” His honor replies, “ Bishop Hughes, it is asking a little too much to ask us to believe without evidence.”

“ You ask,” continues the judge, “ what evidence I will admit to prove that the popes are the successors of Peter ? I want you, first, to prove that Peter was pope ; if he was not he has no successors. If he was pope, I then wish you to explain why he was made pope, whilst he was set apart as the Apostle of the circumcision. You send him to the Gentiles whilst his peculiar vocation was to the Jews. I wish you also to explain, why make him pope of Rome, instead of Antioch, where we know he labored with great success ; or instead of Jerusalem, where the Spirit was poured out, and where he preached with such remarkable power ? Is it not probable that tradition has again misled you as to the location of the chair of Saint Peter.”

“When you have proved and explained these things, then I wish you to tell by what body of men Peter was made pope at Rome, and how he was elected; for his successors must be so appointed and elected. I wish you to state how Peter was inaugurated at Rome, and what were the limits of his authority; for so his successors must be inaugurated and limited. I wish you to prove the duties devolved upon Peter, and his manner of discharging them; for such are the duties of his successors, and such must be their manner of discharging them. I wish you to prove the doctrines and morals preached and practised by Peter; as his successors must preach and practice the same doctrines and morals. Peter had a wife; have your popes? Peter called himself an elder; do your popes? Peter exercised no temporal power; is it so as to your popes? Peter devoted himself to preaching the gospel; do your popes? Peter was a man of no parade, though impulsive, and never asked any mortal to kiss his foot or his toe; is it so with your popes?”

Swelling with indignation you rise, and interrupting the judge, you exclaim, “Enough, enough; I see that your honor is a ‘private reasoner,’ incapable of ‘making an act of faith,’ and of course no better than a heathen or a publican. You are unfitted to sit upon such questions or to decide upon them.” And collecting again your papers you leave the court, muttering in an under tone as you go, that if you had his Honor in Italy under the shadow of

the sceptre of the illustrious Pius IX, you would teach him what was the true evidence a judge should require upon such points.

Thus, sir, in the form of a judicial investigation I have examined the testimony which your church adduces to prove that Peter was clothed by Jesus Christ with supremacy over the apostles—that he was the first pope of Rome—and that the popes of Rome are his legitimate successors. There is not a particle of reliable proof as to either of these positions—whilst the evidence is overwhelming that they are the merest and silliest papal assumptions. And yet upon assumptions based upon clouds which disappear before the light of investigation, you base the very existence and perpetuity of the church of God ! It seems incredible that a man of sense, and an Irishman too, should suspend my salvation upon my church connection with men called popes, whose ignorance, and profligacy, and cruelty, and falsehood, have stamped their name with infamy—and tell me that my submission to God and his Son is of no avail unless I submit to these men, some of whom were devils in canonicals.

There are two items of proof in favor of the supremacy of Peter adduced by your church to which I have not alluded ; I will state them to note my omission and for the information of our readers. The first is the passage in Luke (5 : 3-10), where Jesus entered into the ship of Peter, in preference to that of James and John, and taught the people

out of it. In the view of Milner it is a strong proof of the supremacy of Peter !! The other is the story about Simon Magus, the magician. By his juggling miracles he made many followers, and greatly prejudiced the people against the gospel. He proclaimed that at Rome he was going to fly in the air ; and Peter was there to oppose him. By the aid of the devil he absolutely got up in the air ; but Peter knelt down and prayed so earnestly that the devil fled away and left poor Simon to shift for himself—he fell to the earth and broke both his legs. And the impressions of the apostle's knees upon the stones in Rome are shown to this day ! These are the most unanswerable arguments upon the subject which I have seen. I could get round all the others, but these I give up !

“ The pope's supremacy,” said Tillotson, “ is not only an indefensible, but also an impudent cause ; there is not one tolerable argument for it, and there are a thousand invincible reasons against it.”

I have now, sir, sapped two of your main principles ; the supremacy of Peter and his successors, and that the Bible must be understood and received as your church interprets it. The taking away of these two principles brings your whole superstructure tumbling around you. Here I might leave you striving to escape from the falling masses ; but “ the sympathies of my Irish nature ” compel me to say, the end is not yet.

Yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER VII.

Papal claim to infallibility examined, and refuted.

MY DEAR SIR,—Although the *infallibility* of your church is involved and confuted in my previous letters; yet as you place so much stress upon it, and make it one of your fundamental principles, I have supposed it worthy of a separate and independent consideration. I will subject it to examination in the present letter.

In letter III, chap. 25, you say, “The Author of revelation identified Himself with his appointed witness, the church, in such a manner that the authority of the one is essentially implied and exercised in the authority of the other.” That is, the church has the same authority and infallibility that Christ had. This is a plain, though bold assertion.

In letter V, chap. 54, you say, “Whether the words had ever been put on record or not (that is, whether the Scriptures had ever been written or not) she (the church) would have been equally in possession of that prerogative, namely, the vicarious authority to teach unerringly . . . until the end of the world, the doctrines of Christ What

is the meaning of those passages if it be not to invest the official teachers of the Christian religion with the necessary portion of in-errancy, in other words, of infallibility, by its Divine author."

But there is no need of calling evidence to convict you of teaching the dogma, the infallibility of the papal church. It is one which your church has ever boldly and strenuously asserted; but the maximum of her bold and confident assertion is always in connection with the minimum of truth. To expose the utter truthlessness of the claim a few considerations will suffice.

1. How do you prove her infallibility? Tradition is inadmissible; because that has been, you say, in her keeping. It is, then, either a bribed, corrupted, or partial witness. The Scriptures, on your ground, are inadmissible, because the church must give them meaning; and a meaning which we are bound to receive. The church, you say, was before the Scriptures, and gives them credibility and meaning. Where is, then, the testimony to her infallibility? It is simply and only *her own assertion of it*.

2. But where is the seat of her infallibility? Is it in the pope? But this some popes deny, as Galasius, Innocent, Eugenius, Adrian, and Paul; whilst it is asserted by others. And those who assert it differ as to its extent. Whilst some popes deny their infallibility, the Jesuits say that "the pope is as unerring as the Son of God." Is this, sir, less than blasphemy, when you consider who some of your popes were?

Is it in a general council? Such is the system of the French school, and of some popes, and of some councils, as of Constance, Pisa, and Basil, which deposed some popes for high crimes. But in this the council of Lateran contradicts that of Basil.

Is it in a general council headed by the pope? This some positively affirm. But this is opposed by the two former parties, because denying the principle of each.

Is it in the church universal, consisting of pastors and people? So some assert, and among them, Panormitan and Mirandula. "Ecclesia universalis non potest errare," says Panormitan. This however is a small party opposing all, and opposed by all the others.

Now, sir, when you differ about the seat of infallibility so widely and bitterly, what can you expect better from a "private reasoner" than that he should ask you the impertinent questions, If your church is infallible, why does she not determine where her infallibility is located? What is her infallibility worth, if she never knows where to find it?

3. The infallibility of your church is too limited in extent. Because she has no tradition upon them, she gives no interpretation to many portions of the Scripture; and she forbids me interpreting them for myself! What are these portions worth? Might they not be as well omitted? She has no tradition

and *cannot* interpret them, and I *must* not ! Here is a large portion of the Bible shut up from the world, as if never revealed ! And yet Paul tells me that “*all Scripture* is profitable.” Can that be an infallible church that knows nothing, and will permit me to know nothing, about a large portion of God’s word ?

Her infallibility covers only the field of *doctrine* and *morals*, and extends not to *discipline* and *opinions*. Now a list of the doctrines and morals on which she infallibly decides, and of the discipline and opinions on which she makes no such decision, and a narrative of her conduct in reference to them, would be a most curious paper. Will you favor the world with it, if you can ? In matters of doctrine, in which your church is infallible, a man may believe as he desires, if he only clings to holy mother ; but in matters of discipline and opinion, on which she has made no decision, if he acts out his honest convictions, he will have emptied on him the seven vials of papal wrath. For instance, the celibacy of the clergy, communion in one kind, are matters of discipline, and yet if you, Bishop Hughes, like Peter, should marry a wife—and a good one would be a great comfort to you, and would entitle you more fully to the title of bishop—or if after the example of Christ you should administer the supper in the way it was instituted, you would soon be cast out as an apostate. Practically her infallible doctrines are minor matters, whilst those embraced

under discipline and opinions are matters on which she has covered the earth with the blood and bones of murdered men. What is the judge worth who is unable to decide on all questions fairly brought before him arising under the laws?—and what is the infallibility of your church worth when unable to decide on the simplest questions as to discipline and opinions, and when she yet sends to perdition all those who deviate from her practice in these things? Paley tells us of a fish which, when pursued by its enemy, casts forth a liquid that muddles the water and blinds the eyes of its pursuer;—such is the object of your distinction between doctrines and discipline, but it has not the effect of screening your absurd dogma from being hunted down as an impertinent and wicked assumption.

4. If pope contradicted pope, council, council, if your church has taught and denied in one age what were denied and taught in another, as has been shown a thousand times, and as you may see in Barrow, Faber, and Edgar, where is her infallibility? But let me ask your attention to a few considerations bearing on the reasonableness of the thing.

Man in his best estate is fallible. The history of your own church teaches this beyond any other uninspired history extant. How can you make the fallible infallible? Can a whole be greater than its parts? Does the coming together of three hundred fallible men make them infallible?

If any of the bodies for which infallibility is claimed by your church were infallible, how account for their awful wickedness and grievous errors? If it inheres in the pope, were John, Benedict, and Alexander infallible; men born, as it would seem, to show how far human nature may sink in degeneracy? Were the popes raised to the chair of Peter by the courtezans Marozia and Theodora, infallible? Genebrand says that for one hundred and fifty years they were apostatical rather than Apostolical, and yet were they infallible? What say you, Bishop Hughes? Yes, or no.

But perhaps infallibility was in the councils. What does the noble Saint Gregory say of these? He compares their dissension and wrangling to the quarrels of geese and cranes gabbling and contending in confusion—and represents them as démoralizing instead of reforming. That of Byzantine, Nazianzen describes as a cabal of wretches fit for the house of correction. Cardinal Hugo thus addressed the council of Lyons on the withdrawal of the pope; “Friends,” said he, “we have effected a work of great utility and charity in this city. When we came to Lyons we found only three or four brothels in it; we leave at our departure only one; but that extends from the eastern to the western gate of the city.” For other details as to the councils, I refer you to Edgar, where papal authorities for these statements are fully cited. And yet were these councils, canonically convened, infallible? Does

consecration by your church render a ruffian infallible? "The Holy Spirit," said Cardinal Mandrucio at Trent, "will not dwell in men who are vessels of impurity, and from such, therefore, no right judgment can be expected on questions of faith."

Can there be *doctrinal* without *moral* infallibility? Is not *moral* apostasy as culpable as *doctrinal*? Can there be infallibility without inspiration, without the special interposition of heaven in each case? Can it be transferred from pope to pope, from council to council? That your people may not err, does not your doctrine require infallible bishops to explain the decrees of popes or councils—and infallible priests to explain them to the people, and the people to be infallible so as not to misinterpret the priest? Where does the thing find an end? It is vain that councils send forth their decrees unless there is some infallible way of reaching their infallible meaning; and if their meaning is left to be developed by the "private reasoner," what better are you off than if you permitted him to read and to develop the meaning of the Scriptures for himself? Do you not know that Soto, a Dominican, and Vega, a Franciscan, gave contradictory interpretations to the decisions of the Council of Trent on Original Sin, the last council "that blessed the world by its orthodoxy, or cursed it by its nonsense?" Can it be possible that your claim for infallibility can have any thing to sustain it save "old wives' fables?"

The assertion of it would seem to argue either idiocy or insanity ; or a pious knavery which would seek to entrap men by logical meshes woven out of assertion, falsehood, and imposture.

Nor, sir, have we yet reached the bottom of the absurdity. Your infallible church has set itself in opposition to the inspired word of God, and to correct its plainest principles. As I have illustrated this idea in some of my former letters, I can only now allude to it. The Bible makes God the only object of worship ; you set men to worship the Virgin, the host, the cross, relics, pictures, and images. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the only intercessor between God and man ; you make as many intercessors as there are angels, apostles, martyrs, and saints, and send sinners to Mary more frequently than to her Son. The Bible teaches that nothing is sinful but a want of conformity to the law of God ; you make the violation of your ceremonial laws sinful, and damnable, whilst the violation of the laws of God is a venial offence. The Bible teaches that to serve God aright we must be regenerated by the Spirit of God ; you pronounce this a false and accursed doctrine, and teach that we are regenerated by baptism, and kept in a state of salvation by other sacraments and ceremonies which you have instituted. But I will not proceed in the sickening detail which proves, beyond doubt, that your infallible church has devised and is now seeking to propagate the merest caricature of Christian-

rant the private reasoners of any age, whether past or present, to believe that they can be saved, so long as they trust to their own individual opinions for the attainment of the truth, and the means of spiritual life and participation in Christ." And all who now reject the authority of your church which now exercises the precise authority which Christ did whilst upon earth, you denounce as "private reasoners," incapable of faith, and as "necessarily out of the way which leads to eternal life." This, sir, is not speaking in Latin, as you do when you mumble masses; your English is more than usually plain here; and so will mine be, in examining the practical bearing of this cool assumption of your church to think for every body; of this cool exclusion from eternal life of all who will not permit you to think for them, and who dare to think for themselves.

The first idea suggested by all your dribble on the subject through half a dozen of letters is, that you seem to regret that God has endowed any body, save bishops and the inferior clergy, with the faculty of reason. The exercise of it on the subject of religion is denounced by you in every form as leading to schism, heresy, and hell. Now, sir, if the exercise of my reason is abstractedly so dangerous; if, in fact, when exercised, it leads to such awful results, how can you account for it that the Lord has endowed me with reason at all? On your principles would it not be better that I should have been born with a razor in my hand to cut my throat, than

with reason in my mind which compels me *to think* on the subject of religion? Would it not be better for all *your* purposes that I should have no reason? And do you not daily find the simple facts that God has endowed man with reason, and with an awful bias to exercise it, greatly embarrassing to you? Do not these facts give rise to nearly all the difficulties with which you have to contend in the discharge of your apostolical duties? If men never turned “private reasoners,” yours would be an easy and a *most lucrative* task!

With your theory fully carried out, and all “private reasoning” fully suppressed, and all “private reasoners” killed off, after the manner of the extermination of the Huguenots in France, by the authority of your church, earth would present to your rejoicing eyes an Arcadian scene such as the sun has not yet illumined. The people would be all sheep—yes, literal sheep—the pope would be the chief shepherd—you, John Hughes, and your other Right Reverend brethren would be his watch-dogs. If one of the poor sheep should ever think of straying from your stagnant waters after a clear rivulet flowing cool from under the rock at which to quench his thirst, if a bark would not terrify him back to his place, he would be soon torn to pieces as a warning to all the flock not to imitate his example. And then the chief shepherd and his dogs would have all the flock to themselves, from the wool to the fat, and from horn to hoof. And nothing prevents your get-”

rant the private reasoners of any age, whether past or present, to believe that they can be saved, so long as they trust to their own individual opinions for the attainment of the truth, and the means of spiritual life and participation in Christ." And all who now reject the authority of your church which now exercises the precise authority which Christ did whilst upon earth, you denounce as "private reasoners," incapable of faith, and as "necessarily out of the way which leads to eternal life." This, sir, is not speaking in Latin, as you do when you mumble masses; your English is more than usually plain here; and so will mine be, in examining the practical bearing of this cool assumption of your church to think for every body; of this cool exclusion from eternal life of all who will not permit you to think for them, and who dare to think for themselves.

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ting out from such a purgatory of clashing opinions as that in which you are now placed, and rising up to such a paradise as I have here sketched, but that wicked and depraved disposition of men to question your authority, and to use their "private reason." Considering that this abominable abomination "private reason" thus excludes you from the paradise you desire, and shuts you up in a purgatory from which neither the efficacy of masses, nor "all the alms nor suffrages of the faithful" can deliver you, you have by no means sufficiently denounced it. There is no hope for you until it is put down! But I would advise you to strike at the fountain or cause of the evil, which is God, who endowed man with reason and knowledge—who has given him such a depraved disposition to use them, and who has commanded him to give "to every man a reason for the hope that is in him"—and who thus invites all men, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord." Go up, like a man, to the cause of the evil which you deplore, and you are at once in conflict with your Creator.

The next idea suggested by what you say about "private reason" is the utter inutility of the Bible. There are but two principles "authority and reason" by which we can know its meaning. Authority is in the hands of your church to be exercised as she wills: to read the Bible and reason about it leads to hell. Where, then, is the need of the Bible at all, save a few copies for the Bishops and inferior

clergy which they may occasionally consult for the purpose of finding out chapter and verse of such texts as these : "Thou art Peter," "Confess your sins one to another." Sir, on your principles there is no need of it ; and, hence, in purely Catholic countries you dispense with it. Do you⁴ remember how many Bibles Borrow could find in Spain ? How many, think you, could be purchased in the bookstores of Rome ? How many, think you, could be found among the peasantry of Munster and Connaught, who yet wear the yoke of your church ? If all collected, I think they would not add materially to the weight of the bag in which you pack your vestments when going forth on some of your episcopal visitations. You talk about the Protestant translation as false—and as defective. But that is all in the air. The cause of your opposition to the Bible is bound up with your principle—"authority." What men read they will use their private reason about. And if the hidden man of your heart were known, it would be seen that you hate the circulation of the Bible as much as you hate Kirwan's Letters, as the one is the cause of the other. Sir, there is no possibility of sustaining "authority" versus "private reason," with a Bible circulated in whole or in part. So awfully fearful are you upon this point that many of your inferior clergy never see a copy of the Bible, lest they should become "private reasoners." Not long since I received a visit from a priest who acted as curate in Ireland,

and who told me that all of the Bible he ever saw, whilst in your church, were the small portions scattered, like angel's visits, through the Mass Book. Sir, your doctrine of "authority" supersedes the Bible; and its circulation leads to mortal sin because it makes men "private reasoners." What a pity the Bible was ever written! Would not this world of ours be a clover field for your priests, if the Bible, like your traditions, had only been left unwritten and unprinted? No wonder that the thunders of the Vatican are hurled at our Bible Societies, which are so awfully multiplying "private reasoners." But *mere* thunder, though noisy, is harmless.

There is yet another idea connected with what you say about "authority" and "reason," which in this country at least must strike one as singular. I have no doubt it will so strike yourself. When two clever men get into difficulty, they consent to have it fairly adjudicated, and to abide the decision of an impartial tribunal. If one declines such a reference, and insists on having it his own way, the fair inference would be that he was conscious of being in the wrong. Between the intelligent men of our race and your church there is a difficulty. Your church asserts the right of thinking for them, and damns them unless they permit her to do so; they deny that right. How is the question to be settled? They are an interested party, because their civil and spiritual freedom are involved; and

so is your church, because if decided against her, she is ever afterwards deprived of "the alms and suffrages of the faithful." If your claim is true, they are slaves; if false, they are free, and your craft is ended. How is this matter to be decided? Your church replies, "With me is the authority to bind or to loose; it must be referred to me as the only competent authority." But they say, "No; you are an interested party—you have millions at stake—your character and standing before heaven and earth are at stake—your decision must be partial. But we will abide the decision of any tribunal save that which you set up." But your church says, "*No, you must abide by my decision or be damned.*" Sir, were men in conflict but for a dollar, this would wear knavery on the face of it; can it wear less when the points at issue are, whether your priests shall be despots, and the human race their pliant serfs?

There is yet another principle connected with your doctrine of "authority" and "private reason." The man that believes all you tell him "makes an act of faith;" but the poor "private reasoner" that goes to the Bible for himself can form only an "opinion" upon any subject. To illustrate. When you tell a poor papist who believes you, that Christ Jesus is co-equal with the Father, his belief of what you say is "an act of faith;" when I learn the same truth from the Bible and believe it, with me it is only an "opinion!" He believes on "authority" and I

am a "private reasoner." His "act of faith" saves him; my "opinion" damns me; when his belief and mine are the same, with only this difference, he gets his "faith" from you; I, my "opinion" from the Bible! Sir, this is something more than drivelling nonsense. It is contemptible blasphemy.

But let us try this scheme in its application to some texts and truths, that we may see how it works.

"Bishop Hughes," says John Murphy, "what is the meaning of that text (James 5: 16), 'Confess your faults *one to another*, and pray *for one another*.'" "Why, John," you reply, "it means confess your sins to the priest, and ask the priest to pray for you." John believes, and makes an act of faith. I, a little more cautious, look at the text, and thus reason about it. "One to another"—that looks very much like the priest confessing to me, if I confess to the priest, and I praying for the priest, if the priest prays for me. I look a little farther after "one another" or "one to another." I find in Heb. 3: 13, the following words, "exhort one another." Does this mean that the priest must exhort me, but not I the priest? Very well. I find the following words in Eph. 4: 32, "Be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another." Does this mean that the priest must be kind and tender-hearted to me, and not I to the priest? that he must forgive me, but not I him? What say you, Bishop Hughes? Yet John Murphy believes you and makes an act of faith, and goes to confession and pays you and

goes to heaven ; I, a "private reasoner" conclude you pervert the Scriptures to make a gain of godliness, confess my sins to God, and for my opinion go to hell !

John Murphy again asks, "Bishop, what is the meaning of Mat. 26: 26, 27?" You reply, "Why, John, it means, that Christ transubstantiated the bread and the wine into his own body and blood, and that then he multiplied himself into twelve, and that then he gave himself to be eaten to each of the apostles, and after he was thus eaten, he was not eaten ; he was yet alive and spoke to them." With his eyes wonderfully dilated, he asks, "Bishop, is this done now?" "O yes, John," you reply, "daily in the mass." He again asks, "Bishop, why not give the bread and the wine now to the people?" "The reason, John, is," you reply, "that as the wafer is changed into the real body and blood of Christ, there is no need of it, for if we eat the whole body, we of course eat the blood with it." John is satisfied, makes an act of faith, and is saved ; I, looking a little farther into the Scriptures, soon conclude that the passage means, that the broken bread represented his body broken, and the wine in the cup his blood poured out. John Murphy for his act of faith is saved ; and I, poor Kirwan, for my opinion am damned !!

Such, sir, is the way your rule works as to texts. Let us now see how it works as to some important truths.

John Murphy again approaches you and asks, "Bishop, how can I be saved?" "Why, John," you reply, "the church makes that very plain; you must be baptized, and go to mass, and perform penance—you must go regularly to confession; when dying you must receive extreme unction; then you must go to purgatory, from which you are to be delivered by the efficacy of masses, and by the alms and the suffrages of the faithful; and then you go to heaven." Amazed at the process, poor John makes an act of faith and is saved: I turn to the Scriptures, and preferring the word of God to yours, believe that "he that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." John Murphy believes you, and is saved; I believe God and am damned. And so on to the end of the chapter. Why, Bishop Hughes, all this has not even the redeeming quality of being good nonsense; an article in whose production our countrymen are not usually deficient, even when their power as private reasoners is at low water mark.

Here, sir, I will close my review of your reasons for adherence to the Roman Catholic church as given in your ten letters to Dear Reader. Never were reasons more baseless, or weaker, presented to the human mind to justify either opinions or conduct. The way in which you state them obviously shows that you never examined them—that you received them as true as a good son of the church, without ever asking why or wherefore in reference

to them. Your reception of them was obviously an act of faith, and not an opinion formed in the usual process of a private reasoner. And to ask me, or any sensible, thinking man, to believe in the Catholic church for the reasons presented in your letters, is on a par with asking me to believe that the little wafer made of flour, which you lay upon the tongue of a papist bowing before your altar, is transubstantiated by a miserably mumbled ceremony into the real body and blood of Christ.

Balaam's ass would never have had a name or a place on the page of history were it not for the whipping which his master gave him; and were it not for that whipping never would hairs from his tail have been preserved amid the sacred relics of Rome. Similar, I fear, will be the effect of this review in bringing up to public notice letters, which have neither sense, truth, wit, logic, or even "clever scurrility" to recommend them, and which if let alone might have reached the very depths of oblivion by the massive weight of their dullness.

But, sir, although through with your ten letters, the end is not yet.

Yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER IX.

The Bishop's six letters to Kirwan, reviewed.

MY DEAR SIR,—I wish in the present epistle to notice, in the briefest way, those last and curious productions of your pen, your six letters to Kirwan. If your papal assumptions and papal logic made your ten letters to “Dear Reader” intolerably dull, you have cast into these so much low personality, so much Episcopal impertinence, and such a strong spice of Irish ill humor, as to make them quite interesting. They are certainly readable productions, and give us new revelations both as to your *fine taste*, and wonderful *good nature*. You cannot expect that I will permit you to raise new issues between you and myself, so as to divert the public mind from the points to which I have solicited its and your attention;—nor can you expect that I could, for a moment, descend to the low level along which in those letters you have seen fit to move. Yet I would respectfully call your attention to a few remarks in reference to them. And this I will do, after the manner of some old preachers, under a few heads.

1. Your letters give us an amusing view of the manner in which you keep your promises. In your first series you say, "I propose to publish a series of letters on the same great topics which Kirwan has discussed." These letters drew "their slow length along," until they reached No. 10, and the "great topics which Kirwan has discussed" were left untouched. Feeling that you could not write such letters upon fish and eggs, you dropped them at the commencement of Lent; they have never since been resumed. In your second series, you say, "Your letters purport to explain the reasons why you left the Roman Catholic Church; . . . the object of mine will be to review those reasons." And yet in your six letters there is not the most remote allusion to "those reasons!" Is this owing, sir, to a want of memory, or to the want of ability? Or is it a sample of the way in which you generally meet your promises? The facts certainly show that you are a most *promising* man.

2. Your letters give us an interesting view of your moral courage. When you commenced your first series we Protestants certainly felt, and said, "Now we are going to have a tract for the times, and worthy of the controversy." But the little spice of the first letter was not found in any other of the series, and they became utterly insipid, and died at the sight of Lent! When the second series commenced, we all said, and the papers, political

and religious, said, "Now we are going to have a racy and manly discussion." Six letters are published without touching a single topic in controversy, and again you retire! And almost before your quill was dry, you were off for Halifax! And when we now inquire after your Right Reverence, the only reply we receive is, "He is gone to Halifax!" If you compare my desertion of the Catholic church when a boy to the desertion of our flag by some of our soldiers in Mexico, to what can we liken your desertion of her in her present exigencies? For a mere stripling recruit to run away in a time of peace, is a small matter; but for the General in Command to flee to Halifax in the very midst of the battle, is a very different affair! I hope you can satisfy "the illustrious Pope Pius IX" as to all this!

3. Your letters furnish a very nice illustration of an easy way of getting out of a difficulty. You expected to make short work of Kirwan's Letters when you commenced answering without reading them. But as you read on, you found the nuts were a little harder to crack than you had anticipated; and you made the commencement of Lent an excuse for dropping them. But this displeased your priests and people, and, as the Freeman's Journal testifies, you were called upon to give to the letters of Kirwan a direct answer. This Papists and Protestants alike desired, and demanded. As there was no way of evasion, in an evil hour

you consented to comply with the demand; and, hence, those six unfortunate letters which have so widely excited a smile at your expense. In these it is obvious that you have read Kirwan. Your temper and your quotations are proof of this. Again you find the nuts too hard to crack; and seeing that instead of crushing them you were covering your own fingers with blood and bruises, you cry out at the close of the sixth letter, "You wish me to dispute with you on matters of general controversy; I must beg leave to decline the proposed honor; I cannot consent to dispute with any man for whom I feel no respect." And after bowing me "for the present, farewell," you are off for Halifax! That is, after laboring through three months of the last winter, and sweltering through six weeks of the present summer, to confute me, in vain, you find out that you have no respect for me, decline further controversy, and flee to Halifax! So that when a man is fairly worsted, he has only to find out that he has no respect for his antagonist, and then he can retire crowned with laurels from the controversy! How easily, according to this rule, could the dastardly Santa Anna have gained a complete victory over the gallant Scott; and even after the Yankees were reveling in the Halls of the Montezumas! He had only to find out that he had no respect for him!!

Now, sir, I shrewdly conjecture that this way of getting out of a difficulty is borrowed from "old

Ireland." Did you ever go to school in Ireland ; or were those awful laws, of which you speak in your last letter, in force, until after your emigration ? Perhaps if you did you may remember that Irish boys are very fond of fighting after school. A very odd scene, which was acted one evening, is now before my mind, as if it transpired but yesterday. There was a large clumsy fellow, that by his boasting and violent gesticulations kept all the boys for some weeks in dread of him ; and there was a thin but muscular boy, who at length resolved to meet him in a fair boxing-match. Those of us in the secret retired to a secluded spot and formed a ring ; and the fight commenced. It was soon apparent, to the joy of us all, that the thin muscular boy was an overmatch for his opponent. In every round he had signally the advantage. After nearly as many rounds as you have written letters to and about Kirwan, the large clumsy fellow, with his eyes swelled up, and his nose and mouth streaming blood, and scarcely able to stand up, thus addressed the boy that almost pounded him to jelly, " You are a mean, dirty blackguard for whom I have no respect, and I will fight no more with you." Feeling this an additional insult, his antagonist bared his arms for another round, but the beaten boy fled blubbering from the ring ; but whither he fled I have no means of knowing. Perhaps your Reverence may find him in Halifax. So you see your way of getting out of a difficulty, although ingenious, is not new. And

both you and the public know it is not the true reason.

4. Your letters reveal what may be regarded as a compound estimate of those which I have addressed to you. In your first series you speak of them as "possessing a sprightliness of style which renders them a pleasing contrast to the filthy volumes that have been written on the same side;"—and not long afterwards you speak of them as containing only "clever scurrility." In your six letters, you say of mine, that "so far as regards the grammatical construction of phrases, and a correct and almost elegant use of Anglo-Saxon words, they are not unworthy of the country which produced a Dean Swift, or a Goldsmith." This, from a competent critic would be high praise; and even from you, it shows that your miserably exclusive and debasing religious system has not suppressed all the generous pulsations of your Irish heart. But then you speak of them afterwards as written in the "true wind-bag style." Now, sir, how to reconcile these things, I know not, save on the ground that the "wind-bag" is yours, and that Kirwan's Letters have pricked it, until it has fallen into a state of collapse beyond the power of a new inflation.

5. They reveal a great dishonesty in evading the point of a statement. The Editor of the Observer has already exposed your miserable and truthless perversion of the scene at the Confessional, and, as you well know, drawn by me to the life. The ex-

posure of that single perversion is enough to brand you for life as an unfair man. I say no more about it. So you evade the point of the statement as to the priest reading a dead list from the altar for so much a head per year to pray them out of purgatory. Do you deny that such *a list is read, and that unless the priest is paid he drops the names?* That is the point of the statement. The fact you deny is, a fact not questioned by me, that *any priest ever decides when any soul leaves purgatory!* I have no doubt they will keep souls there as long as they can get money to say mass for them, if it were until St. Tibb's eve, which is the eve after the final consummation.

So you evade the point of the facts as to the drunken priests. You say, and truly, that such facts form no argument against religion, or any form of it; and that you have seen Protestant ministers in state prison for worse sins than drunkenness. But the point of the statement is, that these drunken worthless wretches, whether deposed or recti in ecclesia, *were miracle workers*, and were daily resorted to for miraculous cures both as to men and cattle, and for which they were paid in money and Irish whisky! That, sir, is the point. Have you ever seen a Protestant minister deposed for drunkenness, or in a state prison for a criminal offence, resorted to by Protestants for miraculous cures, and paid for them in money or whisky? If not, where is the point of your parallel? And so as to "St. John's

Well." You say that you "*know nothing about it,*" and yet you pronounce the story a fabrication! If you know nothing about it, what right have you to say it is untrue, when millions of living witnesses might be collected in Ireland to the truth of the statement—when the well is there to testify for itself! Sir, is the story about St. Patrick's Well in the County Down a fabrication, whose orgies are a disgrace to the civilized world? Are the Seven Stations at or near Athlone a fabrication, where feats of superstition are yearly performed, which cast into the shade those of the Hindoo fakiers? It is no wonder you are ashamed and vexed when the deep degradation to which popery has reduced our unhappy country, is exposed to the indignant scorn of free and intelligent American citizens;—it is no wonder when you seek, *in any way*, to escape from the obloquy to which the upholding of such a system subjects you.

6. Your letters exhibit a great dislike for the *reductio ad absurdum*. And no wonder, when your system offers so many and such strong temptations to use it. And yet, you know, that it is a legitimate way of reasoning. I hope you cannot say of this, as of St. John's Well, that you know nothing about it. I am striving to show the absurdity of literal interpretation as you use it to prove certain papal tenets; and I ask how, *by your rule*, you escape the inference of being a devil whilst upholding the doctrine of clerical celibacy which Paul

pronounces a doctrine of devils? My object is to show the absurdity of your rule, and yet you seem as vexed about it as if the budding horns had already appeared upon your temples! So as to the text, "he that eateth this bread shall never hunger." The object is to show the unspeakable absurdity of your rule. *If that rule is true*, then all that you have to do is to give your wafer to the poor famishing Irish, and they hunger no more. This you pronounce "a horrible pun on the words of the Saviour;" you mistake,—it is a horrible blow at your ridiculous interpretation of "this is my body." And because the blow is so heavy, it is immediately big with "impiety and inhumanity." Now, sir, the way for you to get rid of all that kind of argument is, to withdraw the premises on which it is built; or when you see that your premises lead to such absurd consequences, to reject them. It will do you no good to get vexed about it.

7. Your letters also exhibit wonderfully cogent proofs of my infidelity. True, all we Protestants are pronounced infidels by you because we are unable "to make an act of faith;" but the proofs of my infidelity are extra, and are furnished by my letters. The first is, I appeal to "common sense" very often. The second is, I eat meat on Friday, and think it neither injures the bodies nor the souls of men. The third is, I believe that intelligent worship is only acceptable to God nor beneficial to me. The fourth is, I do not believe that you can

make God out of a flour wafer. The fifth is, I do not believe that Mary was the mother of God. The sixth is, I do not sufficiently reverence Mary, only speaking of her as "a good woman." The seventh is, I do not highly enough value the lubrication of an old sinner, when dying, with olive oil. The eighth is, I believe it is as acceptable an act to God to worship the head of Balaam's ass, as a human skull said to be that of the Apostle Paul. And all these specifications are melted down and moulded into one great and grand charge, "my insult to the mysteries of the Catholic faith." Well, sir, if these are proofs of my infidelity, I plead guilty. But let me inform you that I draw a distinction between Bible and papal mysteries;—the first I receive as inscrutable and adorable; the second I reject as the mysteries of iniquity. Perhaps my letters are too much pervaded by what you are pleased to call "a silvery thread of wit which is unmistakably Irish," but I have long ago concluded that the scaly hide of the Beast was impervious to reason and argumentation, and that the time has come for Wit and Ridicule and Caricature to empty upon the monster their quiver of arrows. There are some things too absurd to waste reason upon; there is a point beyond which to reason is casting pearls before swine, and where we must answer fools according to their folly. I do not wonder that a mind so *seemingly* superstitious as is yours, should pronounce me occasionally

profane ; but perhaps you may remember the story of Diodorus about the Roman who inadvertently killed a cat in Egypt, one of the gods of the land. So exasperated were the populace that they ran in frenzy to his house, and neither the files of soldiers drawn up for his protection, nor the terror of the Roman name could save him from being torn to pieces. In times of famine the Egyptians would kill and eat one another before they would kill an ox, a dog, an ibis, or a cat ! These were their gods, and to treat them otherwise than with the most profound reverence was unpardonable profanity !!

I accept, sir, most cheerfully, the offer which you make to prove one of my statements, which you question, a fabrication, by a formal investigation, on one condition, which I hope you will have the sense and courage to grant. The condition is this. You say that you do transubstantiate a little wafer into the real and true body and blood of Christ, and that you do this whenever and wherever you say mass. Now "I am willing to go to any reasonable expense to prove this a fabrication, if either you or any other bishop or priest have the courage to meet me in a formal investigation." This will incur but little expense—it can be done at St. Patrick's, or at St. Peter's, or at your own house. You can select three out of the five judges. We will first take the wafer and examine it. You may then say high and low mass over it, and take it through all the required

liftings and lowerings needful to transubstantiate it, and if it is not the identical wafer it was when we put it into your hands then we will submit to be branded as blasphemers; but if it is, we will let you off, without any brand, simply as an impostor. The offer which you make would lead to a sea voyage, and would require the raising of the dead, and would lead to some expense; but this can be done in a day, and I will agree to pay the bill.

If you reject this form of the condition, I will make another. Your olive oil, blessed on Maunday Thursday, you represent as possessing wonderful efficacy, when rubbed on a dying sinner according to law. "I am willing to go to any reasonable expense to prove this a fabrication;" and that your olive oil, under these circumstances, has not a whit greater efficacy than whale oil, or bear's oil, or goose grease. And again, I will leave to you the selection of three out of five judges. When these offers are accepted, and these questions are settled, then we will make the required arrangements to meet the challenge which you throw out to myself or Mr. Prime. May I hope to hear from you as soon as it will meet your convenience after your return from Halifax?

In case you should resume this controversy, for the third time, permit me, as your friend, to give you a few words of advice.

1. Keep your temper. A bishop should be no brawler. Good nature is the very air of a good

mind, the sign of a large and generous soul, and the soil in which virtue prospers.

2. Remember that rude assaults upon an opponent do not refute his arguments. You grievously complain of them in your own case; can they be right as to me? If I were all you say of me, and as much beyond that as that is beyond the truth, that would not prove true the absurdities of Romanism—that would not prove that you can create God, and forgive sin,—or that your religion is any thing else but a peacock religion, which has nothing useful or attractive about it save its glittering plumage.

3. Remember that what you write may possibly live after you are dead; and that your office as a bishop gives not the weight of a feather to your weak arguments, whilst it renders your vulgarity doubly vulgar. In this country no man is sustained by his station; unless he graces it, he disgraces himself. The person who raises himself to station, name, and influence, is worthy of double honor; but in case such a person should rise from a cabbage garden to a mitre, he ought to know that the line of conduct which would not particularly dishonor the hoe or the spade, would reflect no enduring reputation upon the crook and the crosier.

Adherence to this advice, if it corrects not your principles, will have, at least, a benign influence on your manners. Farewell. May you be brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER X.

AN APPEAL TO ALL ROMAN CATHOLICS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—In closing these letters, as with the two series hitherto published, I turn from Bishop Hughes to you. Many of you have not been uninterested readers of my letters ; nor of the controversy, so far as it has assumed that character, between Bishop Hughes and myself. And whilst the prejudices of education, and your respect for official station, would naturally lead you to take sides with him, I am thankful to know that the generous impulses of many of you, and your desire to know the truth, have led you to resolve that I should have fair play. I have appeared before you with no crosses before my name—with no ecclesiastical titles after it—making no flourish of trumpets from the places of brief authority, and with the one simple desire to unfold before your eyes the religious system which has oppressed your fathers, and which in its ceremonial exactions has become too heavy for the earth any longer to bear. And I am thankful that so many, educated as you and I were in our youth, have been led by these letters to seek the re-

ligion of Christ and of the Bible among Protestants. And whilst there are many of you whose minds, through priestly interferences, have been so imbued with prejudices as to repel all approach to you, however kind, with the lamp of life and light, yet this is by no means the case with you all. To this latter class, the intelligent and candid of your number, who, in this free land, are determined to think for yourselves, I now appeal.

The history of my "Letters to Bishop Hughes" is a very short one. Whilst yet in my minority, and nearly thirty years ago, I left the Roman Catholic Church. Motives that I now need not detail, led me to write those letters in which I have stated the reasons which induced me to give up the religion of the priest for that of the Bible. To these letters Bishop Hughes attempted an indirect reply in ten letters; and broke down in the midst of the discussion at the commencement of last Lent. As these had nothing in them to answer my objections, or to satisfy your inquiries, you asked for something else. Hence the six letters entitled "Kirwan Unmasked," in which, after abuse without stint or sense, and without answering one solitary objection, he again breaks down at the close of the sixth, and flees to Halifax. And this, my third series, which I now bring to a close, is designed as a reply to those addressed by him to "Dear Reader," and to me, Kirwan.

The history of the Bishop in the concern is about

as short. When my letters first appeared, he could not condescend to answer them! He then commenced answering, without reading them! and without meeting an objection stated by me, he broke down with the tenth letter. When goaded by Catholics and Protestants, until he could stand it no longer, he resolved on a direct answer to my objections; and again he broke down at the close of the sixth letter, without answering one of them. Thinking that it would answer all his purposes with *you* to abuse me, he writes his six wonderful letters, which deserve a place in the museum as a specimen of the controversial taste and ability of popish priests, and again breaks down, and flees beyond seas to hide the shame of his wickedness! How high his calculations on the strength of your prejudices, and on the weakness of your common sense! Having usurped the power of thinking for you, he takes for granted that any kind of episcopal nonsense will satisfy you! But he is mistaken; as multitudes of you declare that his silence would be far better than what he has said, and would have inflicted less injury on Popery in this country.

Such being the history of the letters, look for a moment at the state of the controversy. There, in my first and second series, lie my objections to the Roman Catholic Church, abused from Maine to Mexico, but unanswered. *And I defy Bishop Hughes, and all his mitred brethren on this continent, to answer them on Scriptural and common sense prin-*

ciplcs, to the satisfaction of any reasonable man. The bishop has published ten letters giving his reasons for adherence to the Roman Catholic Church, out of whose pale there is no salvation. These reasons I have shown to be mere and miserable assumptions, and utterly insufficient to justify the faith or the practice of any living man. Bishop Hughes would not ask your note for a dollar, had he no stronger reasons for asking it than those which he has given to bind you to the Catholic Church; and if he should so impose upon you as to secure your note for no stronger reasons, you might sue him for taking from you your money under false pretences, and send him, if not to purgatory, at least to state prison, to atone for his crime.

Such, then, is the state of this controversy. There lie my objections to popery unanswered. *Let Bishop Hughes answer them, if he can.* There are his reasons for adherence to the Catholic Church confuted. *Let him reconstruct his argument if he can.* And all that he has yet done is, to abuse me in a way unbecoming a bishop, for first riddling his building, and then taking away its foundations. And because the hopes of his gain are gone, he and his priests, were it in their power, would serve me as Paul and Silas were served in Philippi by the masters of the damsel out of whom they cast the spirit of divination. But we are in a free country.

Roman Catholics, from this man and his miserable system, I now turn to you. Read the ten

letters which I have reviewed, and see how weak are the arguments for popery! Read the six letters addressed to me, and see how low your bishop can descend! If John Hughes is the Achilles of popery in our country, what must the soldiers under him be!! And will you longer sustain a religion the strong objections to which he cannot meet; and the reasons for adherence to which, as given by himself, are not strong enough to hold up the spider's most attenuated web? Behold him twice coming to the rescue of your church, and twice turning his back without even an effort to spike a single gun aimed at its vitals! Can the system which *he* cannot defend be worthy of *your* support? Can the captain who deserts his post in the heat of battle, be worthy of the commission he bears?

Read his ten letters, if their dullness will permit you, and examine their principles. What an argument for a religious despotism of the most grinding and enduring character! The pope is the successor of Peter, and you have no hope of heaven but in connection with the pope! Be as good, as pious, as charitable, as Godlike as you may, you are out of the way of life unless you submit to the pope, and then to all his subalterns! You have no right to form an opinion of your own; the pope, bishops, and priests are appointed to think for you! Without a license, such as they give in Ireland for selling whisky, you have no right to read the Bible; the priests will do that for you, and tell you what

is in it that concerns you ! To God your Father you have no right to go save through a priestly intercessor, who, for a fee to suit your circumstances, will transact all your business at the Court of Heaven ! All you do you must tell the priest ; and thus you give him a power over you by which he can whip you into the traces whenever you dare to think for yourselves ! If the letters of Bishop Hughes are true, then the priests of the papal church are a close corporation with the pope at their head, with the keys of life and death in their hands, and through whom alone God exercises spiritual dominion in our world ! What a fearful despotism is this, infinitely more oppressive than any civil despotism which has ever cursed the world ! It meets you at your entrance into life—it dogs you through every step of your earthly pilgrimage—it stands by you at the bed of death, claiming the power of opening heaven to your soul when it escapes from its clay tabernacle, or of locking it up in hell ! From the cradle to the grave you must only do as it ordains at the risk of all the vials of its wrath ! And this is popery ;—yes, popery as advocated and practised in the city of New-York by Bishop Hughes ! With what noble consistency can he raise his voice in Vauxhall against the oppression of Ireland by England, and subscribe his money to buy a shield for the back of the sham-patriots, who, by their shameful blustering and cowardly conduct, have made Irish

patriotism a subject of merriment throughout the world ;—and then vindicate a code of religious despotism in comparison with which that of Russia is freedom ;—and then filch from the pockets of the poor, ignorant, credulous, but noble-hearted and generous Irish, the money they have earned with the sweat of their brow, to purchase for them chains, and to pay priests for riveting them on their limbs ! Roman Catholics, will you submit to a despotism which thus degrades, dupes, and robs you ? Irish Roman Catholics, so eager to burst the chains with which England has bound the land of our fathers, will you submit to wear a yoke like this ? Sons of noble sires, whose blood and bones fatten and whiten every field in Ireland by struggles to break the British yoke, will you, in a land of light and freedom, like Russian serfs, wear a yoke like this ? Will you permit a close priestly corporation, without any sufficient motive save to increase their corporate property, to assume over you the power of God—and to bind to their girdle the keys of heaven—to enter your family and to regulate your meat and your drink—if a servant in a Protestant family, to place you there as a spy, and to forbid you enjoying its religious privileges—to think for you—on every hand to surround you with infinitely ramified and potent influences, which are sleepless in their efforts to keep around your neck the yoke of servitude, and to prevent your emancipation into that liberty with which Christ

makes his people free? Thousands in this land, and tens of thousands through all the earth, are casting it aside as too heavy longer to be borne; will not all of you do the same? Will you be content to be slaves in a country of freedom,—slaves to papal priests, the most degrading of all slavery—when it is only for you firmly to resolve and you are at once spiritually as you are civilly free? Fling the flag of your spiritual freedom to the free winds of heaven, and let your watchwords be God, the Bible, Liberty, and unborn generations will rise and call you blessed.

Irish Roman Catholics, I am not so destitute of all sympathies with you, and with our fatherland beyond the waves of the Atlantic, as Bishop Hughes would make you believe. I sympathize with you here in that degradation to which the religion of the priest has reduced you. I deeply sympathize with our lovely country at home and our noble countrymen, so deeply degraded, and mainly by the same cause. I renewedly charge upon popery the low social level to which Ireland has been reduced, and the social degradation of her children in all the lands of their dispersion. It is popery that has made her sons and daughters, in so many instances, hewers of wood and drawers of water. And my sympathies with you and for you, more than all other causes, have given existence to these letters. As I early predicted, the bishop rings changes on my apostacy—charges me with desertion—leaves

the argument for the man—and in every way, save by reason and argument, seeks to vilify my name, so as to diminish my influence with you. In this he is joined by his priests. But this is simply the conspiracy of the wolves, ravening the fold to induce the sheep to turn a deaf ear to the voice of the shepherd who sounds the alarm. Their craft is in danger, and hence their wrath. I here assert before heaven and earth, that you are grievously imposed upon by your priests—that for the sake of your money they daily practice upon you impositions such as should brand them as impostors—that they traffic in souls, and make a gain of godliness, and that instead of your veneration they are worthy only of your rejection. And for the evidence of all this I need only point you to the moneys which they draw from you by their senseless masses, by their extreme unctions, by their charms, and relics, and penances, and purgatorial deliverances, and by the thousand and one ways in which they show their sympathy for the sheep by fleecing them of their wool. And hence the hue and cry against me by your priests, because I plainly and fearlessly tell you of these things.

Nor am I, Roman Catholics, the profane infidel which your bishop would make me out to be. If there were no alternative for me but to believe what he teaches, I would be again compelled to shoot the gulf of infidelity, and to build my hopes for the future upon the dim twilight instructions of natural religion. What would I not believe sooner than

that man can create God ! But even were I an infidel, vulgar as Paine, bitter as Voltaire, plausible as Gibbon, would that be any reason why my objections to popery should not be answered ? Did not Porteus answer Paine ? Did not Campbell confute Hume ? And even if an infidel, why should not Bishop Hughes answer my objections ? The reason is not in my infidelity, but in his inability. He is unable to answer them. But I am not an infidel. I believe in the Bible. I believe in the religion of Jesus Christ. It is the source of my comforts here, and the foundation of all my hopes for the future. I believe in the divinity, the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ ; and in the efficacy of that atonement to save all, *without money and without price*, who rest solely upon it. “ He that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ,” if there was not a pope or priest upon earth, “ shall be saved.” This is my faith ; and it is to this simple, efficacious faith—the faith of the prophets, apostles, martyrs, fathers, confessors of all ages and of all countries—of the true Catholic church in all its ministers and members, that, in my soul, I desire to win you.

Truth, and not mitres, crosses, unmeaning ceremonies, priestly vestments, solemn farces, is the only thing worthy of your love and reverence. Buy the truth and sell it not. Dig for it as for hid treasures. This is the pearl of great price ; and, if necessary, sell all that you possess to purchase it. Popery is the religion of children, of low civiliza-

tion—Christianity is the religion of men, and of high civilization, where the virtues and graces most flourish. Dare to be Christians. Your attachment to popery only benefits the priest ; Christianity will enrich yourselves. Dare to be Christians. The night is far spent ; the day is at hand. O be children of the day. Fear God, and then the wrath of the priest inspires no more terror than do the gentle whisperings of the evening zephyr.

Praying with all prayer for your deliverance from the degrading and grinding despotism of popery, and for your full emancipation into the glorious liberty of the gospel, I am, with all the sympathies of my Irish nature,

Yours,

KIRWAN.









Date Due

