

Jesus said to his disciples. Whom do you say that I am?

Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I shall give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven. S. Matthew xvi. 15-19.



Was anything conceded from Peter, who was styled the Rock on which the Church was built, who received the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the power of loosing and binding in Heaven and on earth?"—TERTULLIAN Prescrip. xlii.

"There is one God, and one Church, and one Chair founded by the voice of the Lord upon Peter. That any other Altar be erected, or a new Priesthood established, besides that one Altar, and one Priesthood, is impossible. Whosoever gathers elsewhere, scatters. Whatever is devised by human frenzy, in violation of the Divine Ordinance, is adulterous, impious, sacrilegious."—St. Cyprian Ep. 43 ad plebem.

"All of them remaining silent, for the doctrine was beyond the reach of man, Peter the Prince of the Apostles and the supreme herald of the Church, not following his own inventions, nor persuaded by human reasoning, but, enlightened by the Father, says to him: Thou art Christ, and not this alone, but the Son of the living God.—St. Cyril of Jerus. Cat. xi. 1.

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Calendar.

August 27—Sunday—XI after Pent, V Aug
St Joseph Calasancius C Doub.
" 28—Monday—St Augustin, B C and
Doct Doub com, &c.
" 29—Tuesday—Decollation of St John
Baptist G Doub com, &c.
" 30—Wednesday—St Rosa of Lima Virg
Doub com, &c.
" 31—Thursday—St Raymond Nonnatus
C Doub.
SEPT. 1—Friday—St Lewis King C Semin.
in Brev 26th Aug.
" 2—Saturday—St Stephen King C Sem-
mid.

[From the N. York Freeman's Journal.]

BISHOP HUGHES' LETTERS

In reply to "Kirwan," alias the Rev. Nicholas Murray, D.D., of Elizabethtown, New Jersey.

LETTER V.

DEAR SIR—

It is deeply to be regretted that the serpent of infidelity was ever permitted to nestle in your bosom, for when I consider that you reduce the standard of revelation to the test of common sense—when I consider the looseness of your moral principles, so far forth as they are exhibited by your own pen—when I behold the spirit of Voltaire and Thomas Paine in the profanity and ribaldry with which you treat every sacred subject which your common sense does not approve, I am compelled to say that even on the supposition that infidelity had been expelled from your breast before the writing of your letters, still,

"The trail of the serpent is over them all."

Your moral principles, as set forth by yourself, even in my regard, are much more in keeping with what might be expected from a sceptic of the world than from a clergyman of any Christian denomination. You have the grossness to impute to me that I am consciously a deceiver of my fellow-creatures, and yet you do not hesitate to express respect for my character. Is this a principle of Presbyterian inculcation? Or has it shot up through the Confession of faith from the older and deeper root of your early infidelity?

Again, you urge me to renounce the Catholic religion, in which, you suppose, I do not believe; and yet with that loose morality, which would better become a professed infidel, you implicitly urge me to persevere in carrying on the supposed villainy of deception! The reader would hardly believe this statement possible, so I shall quote your own words to prove it. You say: "And since in the maturity of my judgment I have examined this matter, I have greatly commended your wisdom in withholding the Bible from the people. If I were a Bishop or a Priest of your church I would do the same." Page 29. So then, dear Kirwan, you have the candour to avow on principle, and in the "maturity of your judgment," that if your lot had been cast among villains, you would be as great a villain as any of them. Is this avowal worthy of even an infidel?

That you should be where and what you are is easily accounted for—by the ignorance of your youth which you have described. Ignorance and poverty are mysterious dispensations of God's providence. And, on that account, I would treat with indulgence whatever errors in your early life are to be ascribed to either. But for the deliberate conclusions, uttered in your recent letters, and in the "maturity of your judgment" in which you avow yourself ready to

act an evident part with Bishops and Priests, on the mere condition of your having been one of them, I cannot but hold you responsible.

Thank God, however, you are neither a Bishop nor a Priest; and your once having been talked of as a candidate for Maynooth, was happily for the Church, only "talk" after all. You are a Presbyterian minister in Elizabethtown, where your ministry can do no harm;—for, if your creed be true, those who are foreordained to eternal life, will be saved with as well as without your offices.

In my last letter I showed, according to your own account, that the prohibition to eat flesh meat on Fridays and Saturdays was the first practical reason for your change of religion. It was an "unreasonable regulation and you rejected it; and as far as you now remember this was your first step towards light and freedom."—page 32. On the very next page we find you soliloquising in a style of rationalism, which Pagan Greece, or Protestant Germany, could hardly have surpassed. "I thus reasoned with myself; God is a spiritual and intelligent Being, and he requires an intelligent worship. What worship I render Him in the Mass I know not," (of course since you had forgotten your catechism) "my intelligent worship only is acceptable to Him, and is beneficial to me. I am a rational being, and degrade my nature, and insult my Maker, in offering to Him a worship in which neither my reason, nor His intelligence, is consulted."—Page 33. Now, dear Kirwan, when we consider the state of your mind at the period when this pretended soliloquy occurred, "a perfect blank as to all religious instruction," it becomes a grave question which I leave to the decision of casuists in mental philosophy, whether or not, in the higher ordinary sense of the term, you could rightfully call yourself a "rational being."

But I make the quotation for another purpose. The whole passage betrays a strong elective affinity to the spirit of Paine's "Age of Reason." The high contracting parties were God and yourself. Both were intelligent beings—your Maker would be insulted, and your nature would be degraded, if you held the intercourse of worship with Him, except on the principle of reciprocal intelligence. You had just tasted of the forbidden food on the preceding page, and acquired the knowledge of good and evil. You had partaken of Egypt's flesh pots, and the mass had become insipid and distasteful. For your mind there was no "intelligence" in it, and so, very naturally, you gave up the Mass.

But now, the flood-gates of the knowledge of good and evil being once opened, we may expect the mysteries of revelation to be inundated by the deluge of your "intelligence," your "reasons," your "common sense." Accordingly, the adorable mystery of the Christian Eucharist, in treating of which the Fathers of the Church were struck with holy dread and religious awe, is described by you as an "absurdity."—page 35. So it has always appeared to the animal man.

I need scarcely inform you, sir, that the infidels of all ages would have been perfectly satisfied, if they had been allowed to construe the Bible to what they call common sense. In reference to this standard, they and you appear to be perfectly agreed. Thus, you make the Bible and common sense the ultimate tribunals in the decision of religious belief. Thus, in the exercise of common sense, no doubt, you deny the Divinity of Christ implicitly, at least, in calling it "blasphemous" to designate the ever glorious and Blessed Virgin Mary, "as the Mother of God."

If the person of Christ was simply Divine, and Mary was truly his mother, she is, and has been always called, Mother of God, as well as mother of man; and your denial of this can be logically sustained, only by your denial of the Saviour's Divinity. In fact, I suppose your "common sense" has already pronounced against the mystery of the Incarnation. Thus also, you take sides with the Infidels of the Redeemer's age, as well as of our own, and you tell us in spite of the evidence furnished by Him in His human character, that God only can forgive sins—page 67. In the spirit of a true infidel, you describe the Priesthood of the Catholic Church throughout the world, and for eighteen centuries, as having been actuated solely by the love of money—page 70. Again still, in the spirit of the Infidel, you sneer at the History of Religion as counter to your appeal to "common sense," and tell us, that "with you the authority of our Popes and Councils are not worth a penny."—page 70.

The angel Gabriel saluted the blessed Virgin Mary, as the scripture records, "Hail, full of grace;" but you, the angel of Elizabethtown, speak of her as you would of a female selling candies at the corners of the street from whom you had just bought a supply for the young Kirwans, and call her the "good woman" condescendingly.—Page 74. The holy Eucharist under your "common sense, you declare to be so "absurd as to refute itself."—Page 75. You decide that the words, "this is my body," mean that this is not my body, and with that swelling pride peculiar to an evangelical minister who takes "common sense" as his rule for interpreting holy scripture, you exhibit your slight of hand with a puff of self complacency, and call upon us to admire—"just see how a little common sense simplifies everything."—Page 76.

Lest I should interpose by venturing to suggest that a thing ought to be received for what our Saviour says it is, you warn me off, and tell me in true wind-bag style that "you will have none of my nonsense about the substance contained under the species."—Page 76. Now, dear Kirwan, I have scriptural authority for what you here call nonsense. The Holy Ghost descended on the apostles under the species of "tongues of fire;" he descended on the Saviour under the species of a dove, and you have decided that the distinction of the Evangelists between the species and the substance is "nonsense;" . . . it is darkening counsel by words without knowledge."—Page 76. I recommend your case to the General Assembly. In fact you have become so enlightened in matters of dogmatic theology, under the inspiration of common sense, that you are almost fit for a residence in Boston, where Theodore Parker will no doubt have the charity to extend to you the right hand of Christian fellowship.

In reference to the Holy Eucharist, your Infidel principle of "common sense" as interpreter of Scripture, prompts you to say that "nothing equals it in absurdity in all paganism."—Page 78. Pray, did it ever come in the way of your extensive reading to have seen a book called the "PRESBYTERIAN CONFESSION OF FAITH, as amended and ratified by the General Assembly at their sessions in 1821, and printed by Tower & Hogan in 1827?" If so, turn to pages 73 and 74, and you will find it ruled that in certain cases men are placed in such a situation, that if they do a thing they "commit a sin against God," and if they do not do it, they "commit a greater sin!" Here is a Presbyterian Doctrine to which you might apply your "common sense" with some advantage to your own brethren. The

rich theme of ridicule which it would furnish for a pen of such profanity as yours, will be obvious to you at a glance.

You tell us that "the manner of our public worship is heathen, and was originally adopted for the seducing of the Heathen to Christianity."—Page 82. This idea would seem to have been derived by you rather from Gibbon, than from Voltaire or Thomas Paine. You have the candour to give a very high antiquity to our manner of worship, when you describe the use to which it was applied in the primitive Church. The conversion of nations has been itself regarded as a proof of the divine origin of Christianity. You, however, have discovered that it was owing to a system of seduction, carried on through our Catholic "manner of worship," by which the poor Heathen were "seduced" into the new Religion! Could any but an Infidel give such utterance to a sentiment!

But detail is unnecessary. The high mysteries of the Christian faith you reduce to the standard of "common sense," on almost every page. Thus: "Extreme unction," you have already pronounced "extreme nonsense."—Page 82.

"How simple and 'common sense' is all this."—S. S. Page 27. "Blessed be God you have got turned your keys on the 'common sense' of the world."—Page 29. Of your infidel ribaldry I will give but one specimen, which I think can hardly be surpassed in the annals of sneering skepticism. "Your daily changing of a wafer into the real body of Christ, and then eating him, heats anything St Fechin ever did. Your preparing an old sinner for heaven by rubbing him with olive oil, and then opening its gates to him by the keys which are only in your possession, far surpasses Fechin's turning acorns to pork. We believe the swine themselves are constantly doing this in our Western woods."—Page 39. You tell us that the respect entertained by Catholics for relics has the true relics for its object—and that, on Catholic principles, "it is all the same" that the object of reverence or respect should be the head of "St. Paul" or the head of "Balaam's Ass;" and you add in your own name, and wit a sneer becoming an infidel, "and I suppose the difference, sir, is very little."—Page 70. So then, Rev. Nicholas Murray, you regard the head of an ass and that of an Apostle with equal respect; for the reason, no doubt, that in your estimation, both are figuratively of the same species, or perhaps that in this instance both are scriptural subjects.

It seems that the Tract Societies and Sunday Schools have adopted your letters, and given them a very extensive circulation. I do not know a shorter method of turning the young "saints" subject to their training, into infidels, than by placing such a book in their hands. Each of them has as good a right to explain the Bible according to what he will call "common sense," as you have had. But they will not be restrained in their blasphemous ribaldry, by the limits which a black coat and a white cravat have prescribed for your pen.

They will apply the arguments of "common sense" which you have wielded against Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, to the antecedent doctrines of original sin, and the atonement, and they will find no "common sense" in either. But we should I moralise for you on such a subject, when I have no evidence to prove that such result has not been the very object of your letters; and that your zeal against Popery, is not merely the gilding of the infidel pill which you would wish to see swallowed by Tract distributors, Sunday school teachers, Sunday school children, and all