

# THE NEW ENGLAND GELATIN PILLS.

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## KIRWAN'S REPLY TO BISHOP HUGHES.

NO. IV.  
TO THE RIGHT REV. JOHN HUGHES, D. D., ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF NEW-YORK.

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

I have already shown how grievously, in every age, your church has been torn by schisms, and divided by factions. I do not mean to say, 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 outweigh the former. Now why the distinction? The things in which she is infallible, are called doctrine; and the things in which she is not 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 more matters of discipline and morals, yet, sinners to wit, your church pronounces equally heretics, who against those who reject her discipline and morals on which she has made no infallible decision, or against those who reject her doctrines, on which she has!

Now, sir, if the above distinction between doctrine and discipline and morals is a true one, which I utterly deny, if a people may, why 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 they 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 waving eloquent, and becoming interesting on our diversity, when contradicted 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, which are the property of all, are made the property of the few, the sacerdotal class, the decisions of councils, and the oral traditions form your rule of faith. And as those, like the Bible, which you seem so much disposed to ridicule as to be made up of paper, type and ink, and are silent when you wish to read the Scriptures, they need a living interpreter, who, as you say, is the church. But, to be infallible, the church must be infallible in doctrine, and the things in which she is infallible are called doctrine. This is, as I have already shown, the rule of the church. To him who is infallible in faith and practice are equally true. The truth of principles changes as he changes. Infallibility prevents the correction of error, and makes principles however or equally true, obliges the infallible one when he goes wrong to defend the wrong, and to stay wrong forever. 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 fact is, that the more the truth of my infallible church, the more the truth of my infallible church has the earth ever borne than the Jesuits!

I think, Sir, that if you do not, all "private reasoners" will agree that I have shown that your "church" is the Bible has no authority. But, that your church gives it, and that we must receive it, as your church interprets it, is the necessary assumption. It is a necessary assumption of your assent, 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 his kind are bound up in the true church of God are bound up in the principle, let us look at its effects when carried out.

The interpretations of the church; this is your great principle, and your catholicism for all divisions and heresies. The Jewish church was infallible as your church writers assert. And the Jewish people were bound to receive the Scriptures as interpreted by the church who sat in Moses' seat. And yet this infallible church by its infallible teachers, put to death the Lord of glory, Jesus Christ, then, 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, and are not to know until the day of final revealing.

Church interpretation is exclusive of private judgment. 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, and to take 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 thousands of years, examined the Scriptures, and considered the evidences which proved to them that Jesus was the Messiah! You, sir, as a minister one 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 the adoption of the principle of private interpretation, which, in seeking to vilify you, you expose yourself to scorn. Your argument is contemptible, and makes you ridiculous.

Now, sir, if I 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 can say

## LETTERS TO YOUNG MEN.

BY DR. WM. A. ALCOOTT.  
I.—PRELIMINARIES.

In addressing young men as a class, it is difficult to fix the mind's eye on any particular age. There is a period—and it arrives sooner in the lives of some, and later in those of others—when they may be said to begin to act for themselves, and in the common, but not inappropriate language of the day, to form their own character. They are indeed forming character by every act of every day of their lives, whether that act be the voluntary or the involuntary. When, however, in these paragraphs, I shall speak of forming your own character, or of educating yourselves, reference will be had principally to those acts which seem to be almost, if not quite without the pale of the family, and beyond parental control; those acts in which and by which every young man practically says, "I take the responsibility."

The prevailing custom of singing out young men and addressing them, has not originated in the belief that they arrive earlier or with less experience at the period of life of which I have been speaking than formerly—though this may very probably be the fact—but rather from the conviction that their responsibilities, when they are assumed, are more weighty. They are also believed to be more exposed to temptation than formerly, both physically and morally. Besides, the world is at last learning—though even now, very slowly—the vast superiority of prevention, wherever and wherever it can be applied, to correction or cure.

Young men are ever inexperienced—it must be so in the nature of things—and therefore ever apt to be thoughtless. And with them, when they do think, the golden age stands out in the future, not as with old men, in the past. It is indeed well that should be. The world is certainly not more advanced in wisdom, than it is in folly. My counsel to the young, then, always is: expect great things in the future. It is necessary to aim high, were it only to accomplish a little. But no young man has a right to try to satisfy the desires of an immortal mind, and the requirements of society and of God, by merely expecting to accomplish a little. He is bound to expect much, and attempt much. So, my young men, have done this in every age. It is those alone who have thus expected and acted, who have shone as lights in the world. And what young men have done in the past young men do in the present and future.

But if these counsels are adapted to young men generally, they are peculiarly so to those of our country. It is not too much to say, that at every period of our history as a republic the young have held in their own hands, at least prospectively, the destinies. Besides, in no other country is the known world—the world past or present—have the "counsels" of old men so early required the "activities" of the young as in the United States. In this respect it is, that under the genius of civil institutions like our own, the young may be said to be the rulers of the land, and to be the future of the world.

One might think it enough that power should have passed from the few to the many; from the king and nobility to the subjects and people; but when the crown is not only transferred to the people, but to the young people, it introduces quite a new order of things. Happy the people whose young men are not only coming, at our land, are daily and hourly being educated, and are daily and hourly being qualified to rule in wisdom and in the fear of the Lord; but who to that country, and that people whose young men hearken not to the counsels of the old, nor rise up at their presence, as they may do in a despotic government, and as they do in a republicanism in its worst form; it is republicanism "with a vengeance."

The time has been when our young men were treated with too much reserve, and kept at too great a distance; when, in truth, not a few were treated more like servants and menials than like sons. This is a reproach which should not be forgotten. It is not only a reproach, but a warning. We have now done, to the other extreme, it may be worth while to inquire whether there is not danger of going too far. For what means the claim which has been made in every age, but in our own, with a voice as it were, of authority, that the old were fools, and that only the young were wise? What means the tone of tenacity which is everywhere obvious, not only to the young for action, but for counsel too? Or has there been, of late, some new dispensation which changes the relation of young men and without the pain of acquiring experience, imparts its privileges?

It is said, that old men not only forget that themselves have once been young, but claim superior wisdom at the precise time when they manifest the want of it. Is it not to this to beg the very question in debate? Is it not to assume what the young, of course, cannot prove? Grant that age is not always wise, or even experienced, is not youth, of necessity, without that experience which, if it does not add to your past wisdom, always may do it? And if a few old men who set up their claims for wisdom and experience are mere "errorers," are they all so? Do not some of them sympathize with childhood and youth? And may not the young be wiser than the old? What means the tone of tenacity which is everywhere obvious, not only to the young for action, but for counsel too? Or has there been, of late, some new dispensation which changes the relation of young men and without the pain of acquiring experience, imparts its privileges?

I have said that the responsibilities of young men are more weighty than formerly. Does such a position need any further elucidation? If young men are, prospectively, and indeed in reality, the rulers of our land, and are indeed being so by the rising conviction on the public mind of youthful rulers, the old men, of the present age, at least, are but fools, or mere croakers. Besides, it cannot be overlooked by any young man who takes the pains to read what I have written, that if young men do hold in their hands the destinies of our country, they also hold in their hands, at the same time, the destinies of all our institutions, our literature, and religions. I have said that you are more exposed to temptations, my young friends, than formerly. There are various reasons why this should be so. In the first place, your internal organization is less favourable for the mighty work of resisting temptation, than the organization of young men in past times. This, I must, say, you are now far granted; reserving for the future

## MY FATHER'S AT THE HELM.

The clouds were gathering thick and fast in the western sky, and then ever and anon would burst upon the ear, the reverberations of loud and distant thunder. The twinkling lightnings were darting with rapid speed through the heavens. Presently the clouds began to rise and fly over head in quick succession; the thunder's roar became more loud and deafening; the lightning struck with a brighter glow; all forebode the fact that there was gathering a dreadful storm. A few hours previous to this a large ship might have been seen to sail out from her harbour, and sweep her course for some distant port. She was sailing smoothly and majestically, on the bosom of the mighty deep, and all had look for a peaceful and pleasant voyage, but as the storm gathered, she began to toss to and fro, like an atom in the breeze. She began to rock and reel over the vast profound, while the angry surges dashed her towards the rocks, and the waves of death and destruction to all on board. The heart-sunken mariners were greatly appalled, hurrying to and fro over the vessel in wild confusion; despair had seized upon all; the last faint ray of hope was gone, and soon they expected to find one common grave in the bosom of the deep. Just at this critical period, one of the crew sought refuge from the heart-rending scene that was presented on deck. As he approached the door he beheld a little boy apparently unconscious of the raging tempest without, but perfectly composed, sitting on the floor, amusing himself with great toys by his side. The man addressed him thus, "My son, we are all about to be lost; do you not fear?" At this the little boy raised himself up, and looked him full in the face, and with a sweet and playful smile resting on his cheeks, replied with a great deal of confidence in his speech, "I am not afraid, my father, and yet he knows he must die. If he enjoys the world, he will surely enjoy the next world, as he has not devoured by worms. This knowledge is his fatal prerogative. Other animals have it not. He spends the transient moment of his existence in dishing the morsels which he suffers; in eating the throats of his fellow-creatures for prey; in cheating, and being cheated; in robbing and being robbed; in serving his master, and in repaying all he does. The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a crowd of wretches, equally criminal and unfortunate; and the globe contains ruder carcasses than men. I tremble at the review of this dreadful picture, and find that it contains a lesson against profligacy, vice, and in repenting all he does. This knowledge is his fatal prerogative. Other animals have it not. He spends the transient moment of his existence in dishing the morsels which he suffers; in eating the throats of his fellow-creatures for prey; in cheating, and being cheated; in robbing and being robbed; in serving his master, and in repaying all he does. 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