

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

APRIL, 1845.

No. II.

ART. I.—*The Life of Isaac Milner, D. D., F. R. S., Dean of Carlisle, President of Queen's College, and Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge, &c.* By his niece, Mary Milner, author of the "Christian Mother." Second Edition abridged. London. 1844.

DR. JOHNSON once observed, in conversation, 'that no man is so important to society, that his death makes a chasm which cannot be filled up.' This sentiment is so far true, that affairs of the world never cease to go forward in some way, however many important persons are taken away; but it is not true that the space occupied by some men can immediately be filled by others. Dr. Johnson, himself, left no man behind him who entirely filled his place. The same may be said of our Washington and also of our Franklin. The same is true of Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, and others. Dr. Milner, we think, is another example of a man who left a great chasm in the literary and religious society, with which he was connected, which has not been filled to this day.

The writer of the life of this eminent man, makes an apology for the length of time which had elapsed after the death of her uncle, before this biography appeared; but she makes this sensible remark, "That the value which may be reasonably supposed to belong to a faithful Memoir of the Life and Character, of the late ISAAC MILNER, is by

Jesus continue to be known and remembered, not only the writings but the history of Pascal may expect to live. These crude suggestions, while they may possibly afford a partial explanation of the high rank universally accorded to that celebrated name, must also furnish our apology for filling a few pages with a notice of this new and creditable effort to rescue his remains from the confused and mutilated state to which the kindness of mistaken friends and the ignorance or negligence of others had consigned them.

Chas. F. Dodge.

ART. V.—*The Arguments of Romanists from the Infallibility of the Church and Testimony of the Fathers in behalf of the Apocrypha, discussed and refuted*, By James H. Thornwell, Professor of Sacred Literature and Evidences of Christianity in the South Carolina College. New York: Leavitt, Trow & Company. Robert Carter. Boston: Charles Tappan, &c. &c. &c., 1845. pp. 417

IN 1841, Mr. Thornwell published in the "Spirit of the Nineteenth Century," an essay on the claims of the Apocrypha to divine inspiration. In reply to that essay the Rev. Dr. Lynch, a Romish clergyman of Charleston, S. C., addressed to him a series of letters, to which the present volume is an answer, and a very complete one. It is, as to its form and manner, as well as to thoroughness, a specimen of the old fashioned mode of controversy. The arguments of his opponent are given at length, and then submitted to the torture of a remorseless logic, until the confession of unsoundness is extorted. In this way Dr. Lynch is tracked step by step until he is hunted out of every hiding place, and is seen by others, however he may regard himself, to be completely run down. As a refutation, this work of Mr. Thornwell, is complete. There is much in this book that reminds us of Chillingworth. There is a good deal of the acumen, the perspicuity, and logic of that great master of sentences. There is the same untiring following up of an opponent, giving him the benefit first of one then of another hypothesis, until he has nothing left on which to hang an argument. This mode of discussion, while it has many advantages, has some inconveniences. It is difficult, in such cases, for the respondent to prevent his book assuming more

the character of a refutation of a particular author, than of a discussion of a subject. His antagonist's arguments give form to his reply; and the reader feels that he is listening to a debate between two disputants, rather than to a continuous exhibition of the point in controversy. This disadvantage every one must feel to be a very serious one, in the writings of Chillingworth. Their value would, to the present generation at least, be greatly enhanced, had he made it more his object to exhibit the whole truth on the subjects on which he wrote, than to pull to pieces the sophistries of his antagonists. Mr. Thornwell has not entirely avoided this inconvenience, though in his case it is not a very serious one, and is less felt in the latter than in the earlier portions of his work. The book exhibits distinguished ability and diligent research, and is not only a valuable accession to our theological literature, but welcome as a specimen of what the church may expect from its author.

Among the blemishes of the work is the profusion of the mere technicalities of logic. The words, major, and minor proposition, middle term, and the like, are of too frequent occurrence. It adds nothing to the perspicuity of the argument, to say that one proposition is of that peculiar species, that the removal of the consequent is a removal of the antecedent; or that another "is a destructive disjunctive conditional" We do not wish to see in a painting, the pencil marks protruding through the colouring; nor is it desirable to have brought constantly to view in actual discussion, the formulas by which reasoning as an art is taught in the schools. When a man comes to fight, it is easy to see whether he has learned to fence, without his exclaiming at every thrust or feint, *prime, tierce, quart*; and Professor Thornwell's skill in logic would be quite as apparent, and more effective, if he could forget, as we doubt not he soon will do, its technical terms.

The point in which the work before is most open to criticism, is its want of unity. It is really the discussion of a single question; Are the Apocrypha a part of the inspired writings? So much prominence, however, is given to the consideration of the infallibility of the church, as to exalt it into a separate question. As Romanists rely mainly on the authority of the church in their arguments in behalf of the Apocrypha, the competency of the church, in their sense of the term, authoritatively to decide the question, is unavoidably brought into the discussion. But still it is a subordi-

nate question, in the present instance, and should be made to appear so. We think the unity, and of course the force of Mr. Thornwell's argument, would be increased by treating the infallibility of the church, not so distinctly as he has done, but in strict subordination to his main purpose.

We also regret that he has made so little use of the internal character of the Apocrypha, as an argument against their inspiration. In his original essay this topic is adverted to; we are surprised, therefore, not to see it brought forward in this larger work. It is after all one of the soundest, and of all others perhaps the most effective argument, in the minds of ordinary Christians, against the divine origin of these writings. Believers will find it impossible to transfer the reverence they feel for the true word of God, commending itself as it does to their reason, heart, and conscience, to writings replete with silly stories and gross contradictions. We advert the more readily to what we regard defects in this work, because we think it will become a standard book, likely to be often reprinted; we therefore wish to see it as perfect as may be.

The question whether the Apocrypha are inspired, suggests the wider question; How are we to tell whether any book is inspired; or on what ground does the Christian world admit that the authors of the Christian scriptures spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? This question is, in many respects, analogous to the question, How do we know there is a God? or that He is holy, just and good? How do we know that we are bound to obey him, or that the moral law is an expression of his will? If these questions were asked different persons, they would probably give very different answers, and those answers might all of them be correct, though not all adequate. Various as these answers might be, they would all resolve themselves into a statement in some form, of the self-evidencing light of the truths affirmed. We believe there is a God, because the idea of such a being is so congruous to our moral nature; so necessary as a solution of the facts of our own consciousness, that when once clearly presented, we can never rid ourselves of the conviction of its truth; nor can we shake off our sense of allegiance to him or deny our dependence. This conviction exists in the minds of thousands who have never analysed it, nor inquired into its origin or its legitimacy. And when that inquiry is started, they refer their belief to different sources, some appealing

to the evidence afforded of the being of God in the works of nature; others to the logical necessity of assuming the existence of an intelligent first cause, and others to their sense of dependence, or to other facts of their moral nature; but after all, it is apparent that the conviction exists and is influential, before any such examination of the grounds on which it rests, and is really independent of the specific reasons that may be assigned to account for it.

The same is true with regard to moral obligation. The fact that we are bound to conform to the moral law; that we ought to love God, and do good to men, is admitted and cannot be denied. Why we are thus bound, few men take the trouble to enquire, and if they did, might be puzzled to give an answer, and no answer they could devise or that any philosopher could suggest, would increase the sense of obligation. Some answers, and those among the most common, would really weaken it, and the best could only render it more enlightened, by bringing into the view of the understanding, facts and principles already existing and operating, undetected or unnamed, in our own consciousness.

It is much the same with regard to the Bible. That sacred volume passes among tens of thousands for the word of God, without their ever thinking of asking on what grounds they so regard it. And if called upon to give answer to such a question, unless accustomed to the work of self inspection, they would hardly know what to say. This hesitation however would be no decisive evidence, either that they did not really believe, or that their faith was irrational, or merely hereditary. They would find the same difficulty in answering either of the other questions to which we have referred, How do we know there is a God? or How do we know that his law is binding? It is very possible that the mind may see a thing to be true, without being able to prove its truth, or to make any satisfactory exhibition of the grounds of its belief. If a man who had never heard of the Bible, should meet with a copy of the sacred volume, and address himself to its perusal, it cannot be denied that it would address him in the same tone of authority, which it uses towards those born in the bosom of the Christian church. He would be called upon to believe its doctrines, to confide in its promises, to obey its precepts. He would be morally guilty in the sight of God, if he did not; and he would be regarded as a wise and good man if he did. Beyond controversy then the book must contain its

own evidence of being the word of God ; it must prove its own inspiration, just as the moral law proves its own authority, or the being of God reveals itself to every open heart. There is nothing mystical, enthusiastic, or even extraordinary in this. A mathematical work contains in itself the evidence of whatever truth belongs to its reasonings or conclusions. All that one man can do for another, in producing conviction of its truth, is to aid him in understanding it, enabling him to see the evidence that is in the book itself. The same may be said of any work of art, or of any production of genius. Its truthfulness, its claims to admiration, its power to refine or please, are all inherent qualities, which must be perceived, in order to be really believed. So too of any work which treats of our moral obligations ; no matter who wrote it, if it contains truth, we assent to it, if it includes error, we reject it. This is not a thing which, in the proper sense of the word, admits of proof. The only possible proof of the correctness of a moral doctrine, is to make us see its truth ; its accordance with the law of God, the supreme standard, and with that law as written in our own hearts. Thus in the case, which we have supposed, of a man's reading the Bible without knowing whence it came, he would, if properly and naturally affected, be convinced of all, and judged of all, and thus the secrets of his heart being made manifest, falling down on his face, he would worship God, and report that of a truth, that book is not the word of man, but the word of God.

He would find, in reading the scriptures, the existence of God as the creator and governor of all things, always presented ; his perfections, as infinitely wise, powerful, and good, held up for his adoration and confidence. All this, no matter, whence the book came, is so holy, so true, so consonant to right reason and right feeling, that he cannot doubt its truth. He finds, further, a law therein revealed as obligatory on man, which is holy, just and good ; all whose requirements as soon as understood, assert an authority over his conscience, which he feels to be legitimate and supreme. In comparing himself with that standard of excellence, he finds, that in all things he has come short, that not only in innumerable particular acts, but in the inward, habitual state of his heart, he is unholy. This conviction is unavoidably attended with a sense of guilt ; he feels that he deserves to be punished, nay, that a moral necessity exists for such punishment ; he would gladly punish himself, could he do it

satisfactorily, or so as to still his conscience. This sense of inward pollution and exposure to punishment, prompts to strenuous and continued efforts to change his heart, and to conform his life, to the high standard of excellence presented in the wonderful book, which has revealed him to himself, that has made him know what he is, and in what relation he stands to God. All his efforts however vigorous or however long sustained, fail of success. The power of evil and the guilty conscience continue; and he sinks down into a state of hopeless despondency. In reading further, he finds that this book, tells him just what he has found in his own experience to be true; that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; that there is none righteous, no not one; that no man can come unto God except the Father draw him; that we must be made new creatures, born not of the will of man but of God; that by the deeds of the law, by our own obedience to the rule of duty, no man can be just with God; that without the shedding of blood, that is, without an atonement, there is no remission of sins. All these things are true, true in themselves, true independently of the assertion of them in the word of God. They are truths which have their foundation in our nature and in our relation to God. Here then, the existence and perfections of God; the demands of the moral law; the sinfulness and helplessness of men; the necessity of holiness and of an atonement, are all taught in this book, and when so taught as to be understood, they so commend themselves to the conscience that they cannot be denied. They are, therefore, received without any external testimony of any kind, to authenticate them as matters of divine revelation. Convinced of these truths, our supposed reader of the Bible, finds that in every part of it, provision is made for these two great necessities of man, holiness and atonement; they are everywhere represented as necessary, and the way in which they are attained is more or less distinctly unfolded. The Son of God is revealed as coming in the flesh, dying for our sins, reconciling us to God, securing the gift of the Holy Ghost, and offering eternal life to all who come unto God by Him. There is in the character, the conduct, the doctrines, the claims, the promises, of the Redeemer, such majesty, such excellence, such authority over the heart and conscience, such a divine glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth, that every one who apprehends that glory,

feels that he is bound to honour the Son even as he honours the Father ; that the same confidence, the same obedience, the same love are due to the Son as to God, for he is God manifested in the flesh. If it is absurd to say that no man believes in God, who has not comprehended some philosophical argument for his existence, it is no less absurd to say that no man can rationally believe in Christ, who has not been instructed in the historical arguments which confirm his mission, or who has not been told by others that he is the Son of God. We believe in Christ, for the same reason that we believe in God. His character and claims have been exhibited to us, and we assent to them ; we see his glory and we recognise it as the glory of God. This exhibition is made in the gospel ; it is made to every reader of the word. And when such a reader, though he had never before heard of the Bible, finds this glorious personage, ratifying all those truths which were latent in his own consciousness, and needed only to be stated to be recognised as truths ; and when he hears him say that he came to give his life a ransom for many, that whosoever believeth on him shall never perish, but have eternal life ; he confides in him with humble and entire confidence. And when he further hears him speak of a future state of blessedness, for which, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, men are prepared, he understands some of the deepest mysteries of his nature, the obscure apprehension of immortality, the strange mixture of longing and dread in reference to a future state, of which he was conscious but could not understand. Such a man believes the gospel on the highest possible evidence ; the testimony of God himself with and by the truth to his own heart ; making him see and feel that it is truth. The more the Bible is thus studied, the more it is understood ; the more the relation of its several parts, the excellence of its precepts, the suitableness of its doctrines and promises, the correspondence of the experience, which it details or demands, with the exercises of our own hearts, are appreciated, the more firm and enlightened does the conviction become that it is indeed the word of God.

Of this evidence to the inspiration of the scriptures, which is contained in the scriptures themselves, and which by the Spirit of God is revealed and applied to the hearts of the devout readers of the Bible, it may be remarked, in the first place, that it is of itself perfectly adequate as the foundation of a rational and saving faith, and that it applies to

all parts of the sacred volume ; partly because, it is found in all parts, and partly because the different portions of the Bible, the historical, doctrinal, devotional and preceptive are so connected, that they mutually imply each other, so that one cannot be rejected without doing violence more or less to the whole. In the second place, this evidence, is in fact the ground of the faith of all the true people of God, whether learned or unlearned. Whatever other evidence they may have, and which in argument they may properly adduce, they still are believers, in the true sense of that term, only so far as their faith rests on this inward testimony of God with the truth, revealing and applying it as truth to the heart. In the third place, this is the evidence on which the scriptures challenge universal faith and obedience. It is the ground on which they rest their claim, and on which they pronounce a sentence of condemnation on all who do not believe, as not of God, for if they were of God, they would know of the doctrine whether it was his or not. In the fourth place, it is obvious that this evidence, in all its fulness and force, may be exhibited to a man, who knew nothing from others of the origin of the scriptures, even to one who should read them for the first time in a desert island. Such a man being convinced by this evidence that the scriptures were the word of God ; or finding that the writers who propounded these truths, and who exhibited such moral excellence as to secure his entire confidence, declared themselves to be inspired, constantly disclaimed being the discoverers or authors of the doctrines which they taught ; when he hears them always speaking in the name and by the authority of God, as his messengers, he receives their declaration with full credence. How indeed could it be otherwise. How could they know of themselves all they teach, and how could men who were so obviously sincere and holy, be false witnesses and imposters ? Without going therefore beyond the Bible itself, the conviction may be rationally, arrived at, and is in fact in multitudes of cases, without doubt entertained, that its authors spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Let us suppose that a man thus convinced, should have the opportunity of learning the history of the Bible ; of tracing it up with certainty to the times of the apostles ; of proving with historic accuracy, that the books composing the New Testament, were written by the apostles of Christ ; that to these men their divine master expressly promised

the gift of inspiration ; that they uniformly claimed that gift, saying, He that is of God heareth us, and he that is not of God, heareth not us ; that this claim was authenticated by God himself bearing them witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost ; that effects followed their ministry, which admit of no rational solution, but their being the messengers of God ; that all they did, all the facts they announced, all the effects which they produced, or which attended the introduction of Christianity, had been predicted centuries before, in books which can be proved to have existed at that antecedent period ; nay that the predictions in those books, and in the New Testament itself, are in some cases, in the course of fulfilment before our own eyes ; and finally, that the claim of these messengers to inspiration, was recognised by all who received their doctrines, and who by their faith were made new creatures in Christ Jesus ; suppose all this to be proved historically, as it has been proved a thousand times, it may be that the faith of the supposed believer, might not be really thereby strengthened ; he would however be furnished with an answer to all gainsayers, and would be able to say, in the spirit of our Lord's own remonstrance, *If ye believe not the gospel for its own sake, at least believe it for these works sake.*

With regard to the Old Testament, much the same course of remark might be pursued. The writers of its several books claimed to be the messengers of God ; they authenticated that claim, (with few, if any, exceptions) by miracles or prophecy ; they taught the truth—truth as far above that contained in any uninspired writings, as the heavens are above the earth ; the predictions which they contain, scattered over the whole volume, given in detached parts, and at long intervals, yet all concentrating in one great system, have been fulfilled and are still fulfilling. And besides all this, every part of the Jewish scriptures, were in every form recognised as the word of God, as infallible, incapable of being broken, more certain of accomplishment than heaven and earth of continuance, by our Lord and his apostles of whose divine authority, or divine inspiration, we have such abundant evidence.

Such is a very cursory view of the grounds on which Protestants are accustomed to rest their faith in the inspiration of the books which they recognise as the word of God. If we apply these principles to the Apocrypha, what is the

result? In the first place, their authors do not claim to be inspired; they do not come before the people as the messengers of God, claiming faith and obedience, on pain of the divine displeasure, and confirming that claim by personal holiness or by mighty works. On the contrary, they disclaim any such authority, or speak in terms utterly incompatible with it. Then, in the second place, there is nothing in the contents of these writings, which leads to the assumption of their being inspired. Some of them are historical, some of them are moral essays of a more or less philosophical cast; some of them are fables. They differ very much in value in all respects, but there is nothing in any of them, which might not be expected from Jews living either in Palestine, or Egypt, whose opinions had been more or less modified by a knowledge of the Oriental or Grecian systems of philosophy. They are just such books as uninspired men, under their circumstances might be expected to write. Then, on the other hand, they often contradict the universally recognised books of the Old Testament, or are at variance with themselves; they contain false doctrines or false principles of morals; or, in many cases, absurd stories. How can such books be received as the word of God? In the third place, there is not the slightest evidence of their having been received as inspired by the contemporaries of their authors, but abundant evidence that they were not so received. This is admitted by the Romanists themselves, who concede that they formed no part of the Jewish canon. In the fourth place, they were not recognised by Christ and his apostles as part of the word of God. They are never quoted as of authority, never referred to as "scripture," or as the words of the Spirit, in the New Testament. To this point the tenth letter in Professor Thornwell's book is devoted, where it is most satisfactorily demonstrated, that there are no passages in the New Testament, which need be assumed to refer to any corresponding passage in the apocrypha; and that if there were, it would no more prove their inspiration, than the inspiration of the heathen poets can be proved from Paul's use of their language, or the inspiration of Philo from the coincidences between his writings and the language of the apostle John. In the fifth place, the apocrypha were not recognised as inspired by the Christians of the first four centuries. To the proof of this point Mr. Thornwell has devoted five letters, from the fourteenth to the eighteenth both included.

In these letters the reader will find a laborious and accurate examination of all the passages quoted from the early Fathers in support of the authority of the apocrypha; wherein it is clearly shown that nothing can be adduced from that source, which would not prove the inspiration of books, which the church of Rome rejects. It need hardly be remarked that even if some, or even all the early Fathers, regarded the writings in controversy as part of the sacred canon, it would be no sufficient proof of their inspiration. That they received the books of the New Testament as of divine authority, is a valid argument in their behalf, because it affords satisfactory evidence that those books were written by the men whose names they bear, of whose inspiration we have abundant proof, and their testimony that the apocrypha were written by their reputed authors would have a certain historic value; but could not prove the inspiration of those writings, unless we knew from other sources that those authors were inspired. But the Fathers' thinking the Apocrypha to be inspired is no proof that the apostles so regarded them. The apostles are not to be responsible for all the doctrines, the Fathers entertained. This testimony in behalf of the apocrypha, unsatisfactory as it would be, cannot be adduced, for the real testimony of the early church is strongly against the inspiration of the writings in question. In proof of this point, we refer our readers to Mr. Thornwell's concluding letter, in which it is proved that these books "are not included in the catalogues given by Melito, bishop of Sardis, who flourished in the second century, of Origen, Athanasius, Hilary, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ephiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen, Ruffin and others; neither are they mentioned among the canonical books recognised by the council of Laodicea."

We hardly know how a stronger case could be made out, than Prof. Thornwell has thus made. Nothing seems to favour the assumption of the apocrypha being inspired; while all the evidence, both internal and external, is against it. But have the Romanists nothing to say in their behalf? Nothing that is of the least weight with a Protestant. They do indeed refer to what they regard as allusions to those writings, in the New Testament, which, if admitted, would only prove their existence at that period, which no one denies. They further refer to the fact that several of the Fathers quote them, and quote them too as 'holy scripture;' but this expression the Fathers often use in the general

sense of religious, as opposed to profane writings, and apply it to books for whose inspiration no one contends. The main dependence of the Romanists is the authority of their own church. The council of Trent has decreed that the apocrypha were written by the inspiration of God, and of course those, and those only, who believe that council to have been infallible, bow to their decision.

This brings up the question of the infallibility of the church; much too wide a subject to be here entered upon. It must suffice to show in a few words, that the authority of the council of Trent, is no sufficient ground of faith in the inspiration of the Apocrypha. The whole doctrine of the Romanists, as to the authority of that council, rests on a series of gratuitous and unscriptural assumptions. The fundamental error of Popery and Puseyism, is transferring to the body of external professors of Christianity, that is, to what is commonly called the visible church, what the scriptures say of the church of God. The body to which the promises and prerogatives of the church belong, according to scripture, antiquity, and the best men even of the Roman communion itself, consists of true believers, of those who are the members of Christ's body and partakers of his Spirit. Christ has indeed promised to preserve his church, that is, his own people, from all fatal error; to lead them into the knowledge of the truth, and to keep them through faith unto eternal life. But how is this promise to preserve and guide his people, a promise to guide those who are not his people? How are promises made to the children of God, promises to the children of the world? How are assurances given to those who are born of the Spirit, who are led by the Spirit, who are the temples of the Holy Ghost, to be applied to the unrenewed, and to those who pertain to the church only in name, or by office? It is only by denying that there is any such thing as regeneration, or spiritual religion, or by merging all that the Bible says of the new birth, of union with Christ, and of a holy life, into descriptions of church-rites and church-ceremonies, that the least plausibility can be given to the Romish theory. The word "church" is always a collective term for the called, the chosen, the true people of God; and what is said of the church and of its prerogatives, belongs only to those who are thus called and sanctified. The promises, therefore, which secure the church from apostacy, and which guaranty her perpetuity, have no reference to those who are not the

true children of God, any more than the promises to Israel, secured the gift of the Holy Spirit to the natural descendants of Abraham.

The first and most fruitful fallacy of Rome, therefore, is founded on the ambiguity of the word church, which, as the recipient of the promises, means the true people of God, though in ordinary language, it is often applied to all who profess to be his people, or call themselves Christians. They err moreover in extending far beyond its scriptural limits, the promise of guidance as made to the church. Christ has promised to purify his church; but that does not secure perfect holiness for all its members, in this life. He has also promised to guide them into the knowledge of the truth, but that does not preserve them from all ignorance or error; it only secures them from failing of that knowledge which is essential to eternal life. The only sense in which even the true church is infallible is, that its members are kept from the rejection of any doctrine essential to their salvation. Rome not satisfied with attributing this infallibility to a body which has no claim to it, extends it to all matters of faith and even, (according to one school,) of fact. A twofold unscriptural and baseless assumption.

But should we admit that the external or visible church has been invested with the prerogative of infallibility, how would that prove the Romish doctrine on this subject? According to the ultramontane doctrine, the pope is the seat and centre of this prerogative; according to the Gallican doctrine, it resides in the prelates. But for either of these assumptions there is not a shadow of claim from scripture. The prelates are not the church, and the pope is not the church. The promise of the Holy Spirit to be with his disciples, to guide them into the knowledge of the truth, was neither made nor fulfilled to the chief officers of the church alone. It was addressed to all the disciples; and it was fulfilled in the apostolic and every subsequent age, to all true believers. Here again is another gratuitous assumption, necessary to make out the arguments of Romanists, in support of the infallibility of the council of Trent.

But supposing we should grant that the prelates are the church, that to them in their collective capacity, the gift of infallibility belongs, still, how does it follow that the council of Trent was infallible? All the prelates were not assembled there; all did not concur in the designation of the members of the council as their representatives; all have

not concurred in the decisions of that body. On the contrary, the council was composed of a mere handful of bishops, a small minority of the prelates of Christendom concurred either in their appointment or in their decisions. Admitting then that infallibility resides in the bishops of the universal church, in their collective capacity, which is the most rational form of the Romish doctrine, we must believe that all the Greek, all the Armenian, all the Syrian, all the British, all the Swedish prelates are out of the church, before we can believe that the council of Trent represented the church, and was the organ of its infallibility. Can this be proved from scripture or from any other source? Can any show of argument be adduced to prove that recognition of the authority of the bishop of Rome over all other bishops and churches, is necessary to union with the church of God? Until this is proved, granting all their principles, the infallibility of the council of Trent cannot be established.

We can afford, however, to be still more generous. We may grant not only that the external church is infallible; that the prelates are the church; and that the church must be in communion with the pope and under his direction, and yet deny that the decisions of that body can possibly be the ground on which we are bound to believe the gospel, or to admit the authority of the word of God. There are two fatal objections to making the authority even of an infallible church, the ground of faith. The first is, that faith founded on that ground cannot be anything more than mere intellectual assent to the truth of a proposition. But such a faith may and does exist in the minds of wicked men, and therefore cannot be that faith which is connected with salvation. If a man comes to me with a sealed book, and assures me that it is inspired, and then produces such credentials, by miracles or otherwise, as command my confidence in his integrity and competency as a witness, I may assent to the proposition that the book is the word of God, but I am not thereby a better man. Unless I know the truth the book contains, perceive it to be true, and receive it in love, I am just the man I was before; may be just as destitute of love to God, and just as unfit for heaven. All that an infallible church could do, would be to act the part of the supposed witness. Even should we admit her authority, and assent to her decisions, such assent having no better foundation than external testi-

mony, can have no moral character, and produce no moral effect. Such a faith the most wicked men that ever lived may have, and in thousands of cases, have had, and therefore it cannot be that faith to which the scriptures promise eternal life.

The second objection to making the authority of the church, the ground of faith, is that it is entirely inadequate. The gospel is addressed to all men; all who hear it, are bound to receive it as soon as it is presented; but how are all men to know that the church is infallible? No man can be required to believe, before the evidence on which his faith is to rest, is presented to his mind. If the infallibility of the church is the ground on which he is to receive certain writings as the word of God, that infallibility must be established before he can be required to believe. But how is this to be done, with regard to the great mass of mankind? How are the unlettered, the young, the heathen, to be rationally convinced that the church is infallible? How are they to know what the church is, or which of the many bodies so called is the true church? The peasants of Sweden, Russia, or England, never heard of any church, other than their own, and yet those bodies, according to Rome, are no part of the church. How are these poor peasants to find that out? Or even take a peasant of Italy or Spain, how does he know that the church is infallible? His priest says so. How is he to know what the church teaches? what his priest tells him. But his priest is not, even according to the Romish theory, inspired; and it is admitted he may be a bad man. Thus this boasted infallibility of the church, which looks so imposing, is, as it is brought in actual contact with the minds of the people, nothing more than the "say so" of a parish priest. The only foundation of faith that Rome will admit, for the great mass of her children, is the testimony of a man who is admitted to be fallible, who is in a majority of cases, ignorant, and often wicked! This is the resting-place of the precious faith of God's elect! To such a miserable conclusion does this mighty figment of an infallible church come at last. This is popery. For bread it gives a stone; and for an egg, a scorpion. To teach that we cannot know the scriptures to be the word of God, except on the testimony of the church, is to teach we cannot see the sun without the help of a candle.