

del, says, that he feels quite assured, that if the man would "abstain from open sin, and pray daily to his Maker to lead him into the truth, he would soon become a sincere Christian." How comes it then, that the same means did not preserve Mr. White from leaving Christianity? Probably he found that it is not enough to abstain from open sin; if he even did so much. The grace of God is too fatally lost by secret sins, which do not openly appear to men, but are avenged by Him "who searcheth the reins and the heart."

To extenuate his own apostacy, Mr. White would have it believed that a great portion of the Spanish clergy are unbelievers in their hearts. There was a Judas among the Apostles; and it is no wonder if there are bad priests among the clergy of any country. It is in the economy of Providence to suffer tares among his corn, and to "let both grow till the harvest;" but it will not be believed on the testimony of an apostate, that a great portion of the clergy are tainted with infidelity. The assertion only shews what kind of company Mr. White kept in Spain.

But it is time to examine what were the weighty arguments which overturned the belief of Mr. Blanco White. The Catholic will be surprised and amused to find, that the grave and important reasoning which shook this writer was the old worn-out falsehood, so often objected to Catholics by the name of the vicious circle. And Mr. W. pretends that it was the spontaneous suggestion of his own mind. Certainly no proof of mental vigor is exhibited in such a discovery. "I believe," says Mr. W., "that the reasoning is not new in theological controversy." Not new, indeed; for every course of divinity exposes the falsehood, and Mr. W. must have met with it many times over before he took his degrees in theology. "I believed," says he, "the infallibility of the Church, because the scripture said she was infallible; while I had no better proof that the scripture said so, than the assertion of the Church that she could not mistake the scripture. In vain did I endeavor to evade the force of this argument; indeed, I still believe it unanswerable." What an acknowledgment for a Licentiate in Divinity! To be staggered by a fallacy which any student in logic can detect. This only proves more clearly that Mr. W. did not then possess the unclouded rectitude of mind which ever accompanies a spotless life.

Now, to reply to this unanswerable argument:—it is easily shewn that Catholics do not reason in a circle. To constitute a vicious circle, there must be two propositions, equally unknown, mutually used to prove each other against the same opponents, and in the same way of demonstration. But the authority of scripture, and the authority of the Church, are not equally unknown; for we are persuaded, first of the authority of the Church by motives of credibility; and next, the Church thus known to us proposes the scripture as the word of God, and the scripture manifestly confirms the authority of the Church. Nor are the authority of scripture and that of the Church used against the same opponents; for against infidels the scripture

is proved from the Church, which is known to them by other motives of credibility; and against heretics the Church is proved by an *argumentum ad hominem* from the scripture, which they admit.—Nor are these authorities used in the same way of demonstration; for the authority of scripture is proved *a posteriori*, the cause from the effect, by the authority of the Church; and the authority of the Church is proved *a priori*, the effect from the cause, by that of the scripture. Such a method of proving is quite common: the existence of God is proved from the existence of bodies, and the existence of bodies is proved from the existence of God. The skill of a physician is proved by the cure of diseases, and the cure of diseases by the skill of a good physician. If we have to deal with one who denies both the authority of scripture, and that of the Church; we first prove the authenticity of the Bible in the same way as that of any other book; and secondly, demonstrate that the writers of it must have been inspired: in the third place, we shew from the scripture that Christ instituted a Church, and promised that it should not err. When this is done, we propose the truth and canonicity of the scriptures to be believed now with divine faith, from the authority of the Church, which we have found. Where is there a vicious circle in this argumentation?

It is somewhat strange that Protestants should charge us with a circle, when they themselves cannot avoid falling into one by their own method. For when we ask them why they believe this or that book to be canonical, they reply, because their own private examination has convinced them of it; and when we further ask, how they know that their own private examination is a sure way of distinguishing between books canonical and apocryphal, they reply that the scripture expressly tells them that it is. Thus they believe their private judgment sufficient, because the scripture says it is sufficient; while they have no better proof that the scripture says so, than their own private judgment that they cannot mistake the scriptures. Let Mr. White compare this with his own grand argument quoted above, and see where the vicious circle lies.

The Catholic Church has a double authority: one as an illustrious society, and the Church of Christ: another, as being by his promise infallible in points of Faith. But if he had not given her this privilege, she would yet have been the most illustrious society upon earth; because she would have had a lawful mission and succession from the Apostles, with many thousand martyrs, holy doctors, and unquestionable miracles. Her testimony would even so have been evidence enough to make us believe what she proposed as revealed truths; though no authority but that of God could be the proper motive of divine Faith. Our Saviour gave testimony to St. John Baptist, and St. John gave testimony to our Saviour: but such as knew Christ first might, upon his word, believe St. John; and such as first knew St. John might, upon St. John's word believe in Christ. So those who know the Church, by the marks it would have had although the scripture had never been written, may believe

the scripture, because the Church bids them; and those who believe the scripture, before they know the true Church, may believe the Church because the scripture bids them. "For," says Augustine, "there are not so many heresies against the Church, as there are texts of scripture for it."

Mr. White confesses that such was the powerful effect of this grand argument upon him, that from the moment he believed that the Roman Catholic religion was false, he had no religion at all, and lived without God in the world. (Preservative, page 9.) The reader, with whom he holds the supposed dialogue, says he might at least have tried some other Church before he became an Infidel. Mr. White's reply deserves particular notice. "You forget," he says, "that I was in a country where the Roman Catholic religion played its accustomed game of Christ with the Pope, or no Christ. The first thing that a true Roman Catholic teaches those who grow under his care, is that either all that the Church of Rome believes is true, or all that is contained in the scripture is false. To believe that the Church of Rome can be, or is wrong in one single article of her creed, is, according to that Church, the same as to disbelieve the whole Gospel." It appears then that ten years of infidelity have made Mr. White forget, among other things, that the great St. Augustine said: "For my part, I would not believe the Gospel, unless the authority of the Catholic Church induced me to it. If you forbid me to believe the Catholics, you take an ill course to bring me over to your persuasion by the gospel; because I believed the gospel itself upon the recommendation of the Catholics." In the judgment of St. Augustine, to reject the authority of the Catholic Church, is to overthrow Christianity. Let Mr. White remember that the Church of England professes to venerate the writings of the early fathers, and if he has any sincerity left, let him not talk of Catholics playing their "accustomed game," lest he be found to ridicule the most illustrious doctor of the Church.

To be continued.

THE BIBLE AND RELIGIOUS TRACT MANIA.

Continued from Page 32.

"These collectors take all the money they can get down to one cent; when the last cent is extorted from man, woman, and child, they then demand goods of any sort, made or unmade, old clothes, even down to old rags for making paper. But they do not stop here—cellars, pantry's, and smoke-houses, are put in requisition, nothing comes amiss to those beggars of beggars; when all fails, work is demanded, and silly women cheated out of their senses, are clapt to work, so fond are they of those priests, they make up clothes, fancy goods, and every thing that needle and thread can accomplish; children are not exempt, I have seen them plaiting little matts out of common straw, to set tea cups on, piecing up old calico into bed-quilts. Thus no scheme is untried, every means is resorted to, however vile and unprincipled; we have laws to punish land and sea robbers, and have we no redress for this sweeping calamity?