

The Dominion Review.

VOL. II.

JANUARY, 1897.

NO. I.

CAN WE HAVE, DO WE NEED, A DIVINE REVELATION ?

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WHEN the chicken breaks through the imprisoning shell, it enters a new world. So does a man enter into another realm of being when, having become convinced that the opinions imposed upon him by environment are some of them false, he sets about the task of testing his stock of ideas, and organizing them into something like a coherent and consistent whole.

In religious discussions, it is a common thing to hear one of the disputants open with the remark, "You accept the Bible, of course?" meaning thereby, "You believe the Bible to be *all* true." Sometimes this view crops out in even grosser forms. One says, "It is wicked to question the truth of the Bible;" and an intelligent young lady, speaking of a gentleman, once declared, "I hate him, because he is a Democrat and don't believe the Bible!" This ready question, "You accept the Bible?" is regarded as a crucial one. If your reply be "Yes," the expectant sectarian, if logical, has a vision of a railway along which he is to draw you to a predetermined stall in the theological round-house as irresistibly as a locomotive would pull a caboose. If "No," a dynamite cartridge has blown up the road-bed and excavated a chasm usually recognized as impassable by a refusal to talk upon the subject.

That the dogma of Bible infallibility is not one entitled to be accepted as a postulate of Christianity, that it is by no means the self-evident truth implied in the mental attitude of the great mass of professed Christians, and even of clergymen, it will be the purpose of this paper to show.

I. *The antecedent improbability that a man or a book is infallible is exceedingly great.*

Those among us who claim an infallible book point to the Bible as the only one. To set up this extraordinary claim for one book out of the hundreds of thousands, if not several millions, of books which constitute the world-literature of all time, certainly imposes upon the advocates of the doctrine the burden of proof, demands that they should clearly set forth the essential characteristics of an infallible book, and show conclusively that the Bible belongs to that class. Again, many men have been active agents in producing the Bible. It must be shown that these