

affection and most importunate urgency. A detailed account of the ministerial life and labours of this excellent and devoted young man, by any one intimately acquainted with the circumstances, would throw light on the state and progress of evangelical religion in this city.

Montreal, March 10, 1839.

INFALLIBILITY.

[If it were not a well-authenticated fact, it would be scarcely credible, that any man, or set of men, should claim absolute infallibility of judgment, and assume the power of dictating to others, equally acute and sagacious with themselves, what they shall believe, and how they shall mould their thoughts. That such a claim is made, and that such a power is exercised, by the Roman Catholic Church is well known to all our readers. The following masterly refutation of this arrogant claim is part of a *Fragment on Popery*, found among the manuscripts of the late Robert Hall, and printed in the new edition of his Works. To attack by argument any of the errors and absurdities of the system, as transubstantiation, or purgatory, would be a vain and useless labour—as much so as for a new Canadian settler to think of clearing his ground by mounting the lofty trees which grow upon it, and lopping off their decayed branches. The Romanist would take refuge in the infallibility of his church, and say—“I am not concerned with your reasonings; the church has declared such doctrines to be true, and I have nothing to do but to believe them on her authority.” It is well to see, therefore, how this matter really stands.]

“The fundamental principle of the Catholic system is the supposed infallibility of the Church of Rome.

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That the church is infallible is

not a self-evident proposition; it is not one of those truths which are acknowledged the moment they are announced, like the assertion that two and two are four. It must therefore be *proved*: nor can it be proved by her own assertion; because it is just as easy for any other community to declare itself infallible as for the Church of Rome. To allow her a prerogative so extraordinary merely because she claims it would legitimate the boldest imposture. As little can it be proved by any appeal to the principles of reason: the possession of infallibility by an individual, or by a number of individuals, is a matter of fact whose truth must be evinced in the same manner as other facts. Hence it necessarily follows, that the pretensions to infallibility assumed by the Catholic church must solely rest on the testimony of Scripture. For this purpose it is alleged that St. Peter was constituted the prince of the apostles, the foundation on which the church was to be built; that to him were primarily and chiefly given the keys of the kingdom of heaven; that as Jesus Christ prayed for him that his faith should not fail, he possessed a guarantee for the truth of his doctrines and the infallibility of his decisions: and that, having established his episcopal throne at Rome, he transmitted his immunities and prerogatives unimpaired to his successors in that see.

Such, for substance, is the argument deduced from Scripture in support of this extraordinary pretension. To this are added other considerations of the nature of probabilities, in favour of this assumed infallibility: such as the pretended necessity of some living standard of appeal, some visible judge of controversies, together with the error, confusion, and uncertainty to which it is asserted the church must be for ever abandoned, in the absence of some such living oracle. If Christians are left to in-