

## CHRISTIAN HERALD.

EDITOR:

J. F. FLOYD.

FRIDAY, FEB. 23, 1883.

## Infallibility Again.

Hitherto we have allowed the *Catholic Sentinel* to have pretty much his own way in discussing the infallibility of the Pope and his Church. This we did in order to draw him out by degrees, allow him to fully define himself and thus take a firm stand in the advocacy and defence of the doctrines and dogmas of the Catholic Church. We have now about located him so far as our present purpose is concerned; but as we are satisfied that he intends no such thing as fair and honorable controversy with us

or any one else, nor even a respectable defense of the inconsistencies and absurdities of Romanism, we now notify him that this skip, hop and jump business on his part must be stopped. The days of this kind of controversy are numbered, and the time of its doom draweth nigh. If we consent for him to have this controversy all to himself we suppose he will be able to make out a very plausible case of infallibility for the Pope; but he will please remember that this is a game that requires two to play, and we propose from this on to play our part. There is but one point before us and either *this* must be discussed or nothing. The *Sentinel* affirms that the Pope of Rome and the Catholic Church are *infallible*. We positively deny it. Here is a square issue; now let him prove what he affirms and leave his side-shows to care for themselves. This is business; nothing else is worth our notice. In order to make out a case he draws a distinction between infallibility and impeccability. The Pope and the Church are *infallible* but *not* impeccable. This is a surrender of the whole question of infallibility; for if the Pope and the Church are peccable they are also fallible, inasmuch as infallibility includes impeccability. If this is not true, then when we say God is infallible it follows that he *may* be peccable. But everyone knows that the infallibility of God absolutely precludes all possibility of sin. Imagine an infallible sinning Pope or Church! Now if he simply means that the official and doctrinal utterances of the Pope are infallible because the words of the

infallible *Spirit of God* speaking through him at such times, then let him say so plainly. The *Sentinel* says:

We had asked: "Will the 'Herald' please tell us whether Matthew, etc., were infallible when they wrote their gospels?" The editor of the "Herald" turns this question thus: "But the *Sentinel* wishes to know if we believe that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were infallible *men*? We do not." Where is your candor, brother? Do you think us to be boobies to such an extent as not to see how unceremoniously you twist our question from its natural meaning to a meaning we never intended?

Where is the "twisting," "brother?" When you asked us if Matthew, etc., were infallible we supposed you regarded these writers as *men*, hence it was perfectly natural for us to write men instead of something else. We naturally supposed in all our simplicity that if *Matthew* was infallible, that he was an infallible *man*, unless it should turn out that he is not a man at all! Hence we denied that any of the writers of the Testament were infallible. If he had asked us if the *Spirit* that guided and controlled their speaking and writing was infallible, he would have received quite a different answer. The *Sentinel* further says:

We hold that they were inspired, that the Divine Spirit suggested to them what to write and how to write it, and that the Holy Ghost watched over the words they used in writing, so as to preserve them from lapsing into error. This preservation from error, coming from the Holy Ghost, not from the natural endowments of the evangelists, is a necessary consequence of their inspiration, and that is the infallibility we claim for Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, "when they wrote their gospels."

Very well. Then Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were not infallible at all; it was the "*Holy Ghost*" that possessed the infallibility. Yet he asks in his previous article, "Can not God communicate His attributes to his creatures?" We replied that if He did to the same extent that He possesses them, His creatures would be equal to Himself. If He did not, then He would fail to impart infallibility, for we deny infallibility to any one except God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. The *Sentinel* tries to ridicule this dilemma by declaring that they are not guilty of equaling the Pope to God. Then do not attribute to the Pope an attribute which belongs to God only, for in doing this you *do* make him equal to God

whether you intend it or not. Hence, we repeat, it is blasphemy to attribute infallibility to a mere man.

Now we propose to meet the *Sentinel* on his own definition of infallibility. He is astonished when we ask if the Pope can perform miracles, etc. Yet, if we understand him he claims that the Pope is infallible in the same sense as the writers of the New Testament, that is, not by any "natural endowments, but the Holy Spirit watches over the Pope as over the gospel writers and prevents him from falling into doctrinal errors, etc. Now he knows that these writers were *inspired* by the Spirit of God, and that in consequence of this some of them *did* perform miracles, etc. If the Pope is inspired, why can he not do these things?

If he is not inspired as were the apostles, how are we to know that the Spirit guides him at all?

The *Sentinel* tries to show that Paul was infallible by quoting him as follows: "For, we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth," and asks, "Is not this infallibility?" We reply that if this means that Paul is free from all sin "and cannot commit it, then it is impeccability," according to the *Sentinel* himself. But if it has reference to the doctrine he preached, then it was the *Spirit* by which he spake that was infallible and not Paul. Still, the true interpretation of the text is left untouched. Let him show that the Spirit guides the Pope as he did Paul. Remember the question is not whether Paul, Matthew or John were infallible, but *is the Pope of Rome infallible?* Let us have no more dodging the question. Produce the proof, not from tradition, but from the word of God, and we will accept it. If a "fallible church is an absurd thing, tell us how we can have an infallible one? Because the truth is unchangeable and immutable, does it *therefore* follow that the church holding it is infallible? The truth must be understood and obeyed? Who is to do this interpreting? If *all the members* of the Church are not infallible, how can the infallibility of the Pope help the matter? Has not the Church one infallible Head, Jesus Christ? Why have another head? Can we not understand Him as well as the Pope? Or is the Pope wiser than He? Let our friend of the *Sentinel* apply himself to the question in hand

and he will find but little time to write about irrelevant matters. He has a good deal to learn yet, and the sooner he opens his eyes to a realization of the fact, the better it will be for him.

## Christian Influence.

If all Christian people could only realize the extent of their influence it would be a blessing to themselves and to the world-at-large. The great difficulty is to see ourselves as others see us. Every man, good or bad, not only has an influence, but his influence presents two sides to the world. There is not a day nor an hour of his life that this influence is not felt either for good or evil on those by whom he is surrounded. Each man's influence, like the rain drop that fills its place in the Pacific ocean and assists in swelling it to its mighty proportions, is a necessary element in the great moral and spiritual universe of God. The influence of men, like the presence of God, is seen and felt everywhere on one another. It is through this influence that the Christian is enabled to do good to himself, his neighbor and his God. How careful then should he be in turning it in the right direction. Let us see to it that we so live as to shun the very appearance of evil.

## Selections and Comments.

STOP AT JESUS.—The *Atlantic Missionary* gives the following extract from Spurgeon's Christmas sermon on "The Star":

Once more, the star which God used in this case was a star that *stopped at Jesus*; it went before the wise men till it brought them to Jesus, and then it stood still over the place where the young child was. I admire the manner of this star. There are remarkable stars in the theological sky at the present time; they have led men to Jesus, so they say, and now they lead them into regions beyond, of yet undeveloped thought. The Gospel of the Puritans is "old-fashioned;" these men have discovered that it is unsuitable for the enlarged intellects of the times; and so these stars would guide us further still. To this order of wandering stars I do not belong myself, and I trust I never shall. Progress beyond the gospel I have no desire for. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

According to Baptist theology if these stars have led men to Jesus there is not much danger of losing them in regions beyond, for once in grace *always* in grace you know,