

prove the New Testament from itself? You first receive the book as divine, and then prove its divinity by the book itself? Is not this a vicious circle of the most palpable kind? If it be not, please show me an instance that is. Jesus Christ himself said: "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true;"* and yet, these men but of yesterday, who take it upon themselves to catechize us in logic, make the New Testament bear witness to itself, thereby plainly reversing the maxim of our Lord; and then they cry out about our reasoning in a vicious circle!

10. In short, to sum up all that I have said in two words: if I am arguing with a brother Christian who admits the authority of the New Testament, and denies the authority of the Church, I may logically reason from the former to the latter: if arguing with an infidel who denies the New Testament, I adopt another course altogether; I first prove to him the divine authority of the Church by the self-same arguments by which a Protestant would attempt to prove to him the divine origin and character of Christianity; and then, and not till then, will I attempt to convince him of the divine authority of the New Testament.† In neither case is there even the shadow of a vicious circle.

After this exposition, I leave it to you, My Dear Brethren, to decide whether the vicious circle does not exist in the brain of our adversaries, and in their line of reasoning, much more than in our own argument. And after having thus endeavored to clear away some of the rubbish which our opponents have been for three centuries accumulating around the venerable edifice of Catholic truth, I may proceed at once to point out to you, along with its fair proportions and prominent outlines, the great fundamental principle of Infallibility, which gives strength and unity and durability to this rock-built House of the living God.

* St. John, v: 31.

† In the argument with the infidel, I may also logically use the New Testament, not as an inspired record, but as an *historical book* of undoubted genuineness and great weight of authority.