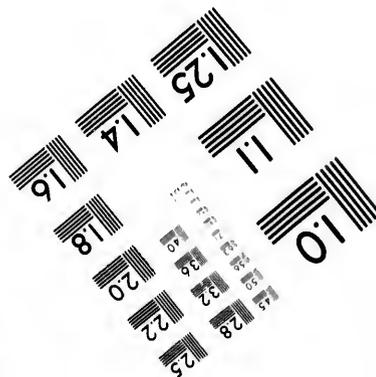
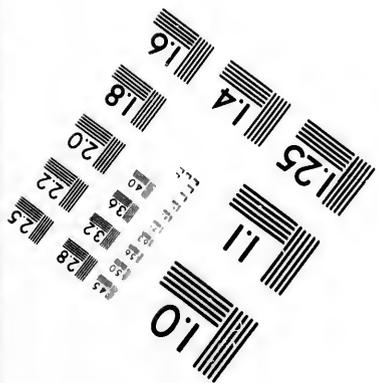
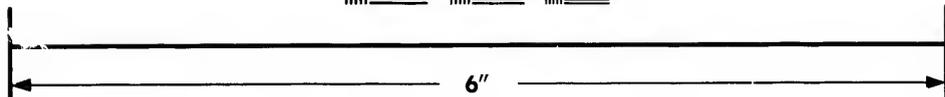
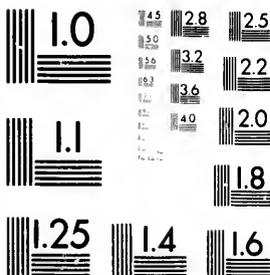
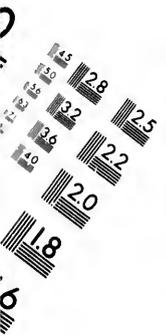


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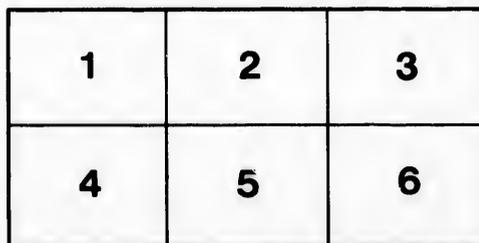
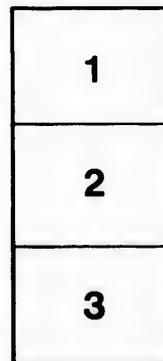
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REPLY

—TO—

THE REV. WM. STEPHENSON,

—OR—

An Enquiry into the Reason Given,

“WHY I AM A PROTESTANT,”

—BY THE—

REV. JOHN L. O'CONNOR, D.D.

“I am a Protestant, secondly : *Because I hold the Holy Scriptures a sufficient rule of my faith, and myself responsible for searching them.*” Rev. Wm. Stephenson's Sermon.

OTTAWA :

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1872.



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THE BIBLE, THE SOLE RULE OF THE PROTESTANT'S BELIEF.

"The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants."—Such is the fundamental rule of Protestants.*

The great and important principle of the sufficient and exclusive authority of the Scriptures, to be respected, as the unerring guide in all matters of faith, and religious institution, was the leading star, which conducted our Reformers to the discovery and acknowledgement of the truth.—Dr. Gray, Brampt Lect.

"Our incomparable Chillingworth and some others established, for ever, the old principle, that the Bible and that only, interpreted by our best reason, is the religion of Protestants."—Bishop Hurd—Study of Proph.

We must indeed, as Protestants, ever maintain this principle, or we cannot justify our having emancipated ourselves from the bondage of the Church of Rome.—Bishop Tomline.

* Ex. Bible Quest. Fairly Test.

THE PROTESTANT RULE OF FAITH.

"Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. . . . They are of the world; therefore of the world they speak, and the world heareth them. We are of God. He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not; by this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."—I Ep. St. John, iv : 1. 5. 6.

In a pamphlet published on the 23rd ult., appears a "Verbatim report of a Sermon delivered by the Rev. Wm. Stephenson, in the M. E. Church, Ottawa, January 14th," on the subject: "Why I am a Protestant." This Sermon purports to be a reply to the lecture of the Rev. Father Damen, Jesuit Missionary, delivered on the evenings of December 14th and 18th, in the Catholic Cathedral of this city, on the subject: The Protestant and Catholic Rules of Faith, or the means ordained by Christ whereby men may learn, without fear of being led astray, without the possibility of mistake or error, the true religion, the religion taught by Jesus Christ. Father Damen, in considering the subject, clearly and distinctly stated his proofs and arguments and logically reasoned them out against the Protestant Rule of Faith. Does Mr. Stephenson, as a fair and logical debator, take them up, one by one, and disprove them? He does not: he simply satisfies himself by shying clear of them, or at most, by only firing a few random shots at them in *globo*, and then retiring under the cover of a cloud of dust, which he has laboured to create, by quoting a few texts of Scripture which may dazzle the unwary, but which prove nothing conclusive to the point. Let us see what Father Damen said, and what great value there is in that rule of faith which holds the Rev. Mr. Stephenson in the Protestant religion. "I am a Protestant," he says, "because I hold the Holy Scriptures a sufficient rule of my faith, and myself responsible for searching them." (See page 6.) He gives other reasons also; but the rule of faith being the main question at issue, the subject on which Father Damen lectured, I will strictly confine my remarks to it; and my readers, at the close of this pamphlet, will be able to say, whether I have fulfilled my promise, or wandered off, like the

Rev. Mr. Stephenson, into any number of subjects. If the Rev. Mr. Stephenson's rule of faith is the true one, the one ordained by Christ, then, of course, he has a solid reason in it for being a Protestant and so have all Protestants. But is it so?

Father Damen opened his lecture by a few remarks on the necessity of divine faith. Divine faith, he explained, was different from human faith; the one was faith founded on the authority of God, the other was belief based upon the authority of man. Divine faith, he said, was absolutely necessary to salvation; and consisted in believing on the authority of God, without doubting or hesitating, the truths which God has revealed. Divine faith was necessary; for Christ himself has said that, "He that believeth not shall be condemned," that is damned, (Mark. xvi ch., 16 v.) And St. Paul has declared that "without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. xi ch., 6 v.) Divine faith, then, being necessary to salvation, the next question which naturally presented itself to the mind was: What must we believe that we may be saved? What must we believe that we may not be damned? For, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark. xvi.)

To this question Father Damen answered: We must believe and profess the true religion. And what is the true religion? Father Damen said: It is to believe in Christ, and all the truths which Christ has taught, all that God has revealed. The Rev. Mr. Stephenson says, the true religion, or Christianity in the "essential sense"—by which term I take him to mean that true religion or Christianity which must be believed upon pain of eternal damnation,—is "nothing more, it is certainly nothing less than Christ in the human heart, swaying affection, controlling thought, ruling passions, marshalling actions, and sanctifying all the habits of human life—that is Christianity and that only is Christianity." (Page 2.) But this definition, Mr. Stephenson will permit me to say, is exceedingly general and vague? Will he therefore be good enough to tell me what does he mean by having "Christ in the human heart, &c." He means by it, he says, that we must believe in Jesus, not simply believe in certain truths which He has taught. "When Jesus was here," says Mr. Stephenson, "in the world preaching, he said, 'believe in me,' not simply believe in certain truths that I teach." But what does this exactly mean? If it means that we must not *only* believe in the truths which Christ has taught, but *also* that he was God, "the Word made flesh," the Messiah—truths which He also taught—then I perfectly agree with Mr. Stephenson. But if he means by it, that to be *true* Christians, to hold Christianity in "the essential sense,"—that is, Christianity without belief in which we will be damned,—it is *sufficient* to believe that Christ was God, the Son of God, the Word made flesh, the promised Messiah, and that we *are at liberty* to reject and disregard and

disbelieve *all* the other truths which Christ has taught; "all things" which he commanded his Apostles to preach; then I say, Mr. Stephenson, you are wrong, you do an injury to Christ, you insult common sense, you are not a Christian even in the "essential sense." You are wrong; for Christ has said, that the Holy Ghost would teach his Apostles "*all truth*," (John xvi ch., 13 v.) and Christ himself commissioned these Apostles, imposed the obligation on them, to go into the world and teach this "*all truth*," "*all things which I have commanded you*" to every creature. He must therefore necessarily have, at the same time, imposed on "every creature" the correlative obligation of receiving these "*all things*," "*all truth*," from the Apostles and believing in them.—"He that believeth not shall be condemned."—You do an injury to Christ; for you insult him by refusing to accept His word, His authority in "*all things*," "*all truth*," by rejecting or refusing to accept, some of His teachings, and treating Him with less confidence and respect than you would any gentleman of the world in whose honor, integrity and credibility, you would make profession, and whose word or authority, in consequence, you would find yourself bound, not to rashly call in question. You insult common sense; for common sense tells us that if Christ is God, he is the Eternal, the Infinite Wisdom, and being the Infinite Wisdom, He could not stultify himself by teaching any truth, which would not tend towards the fulfilment of His mission among men, to shew forth and promote the glory of the Eternal Father, and promote and secure the eternal salvation of men's souls; and if *all* His truths or teachings tend to promote these two objects, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that men must believe them, that is—*all* of them; for all men are created with souls to save, and to give honor and glory "to our Father who is in Heaven." You are not a Christian even in "the essential sense," for to be a *true* Christian means to be a *true* follower of Christ, and to be a *true* follower of Christ you must believe, as I have shewn, all truths which Christ has taught, "*all things*" which He has commanded, not simply a few of them.

But I cannot really believe that the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, who professes to be a "preacher of the Gospel," looks upon it as quite sufficient that men should believe in order to salvation, that Christ was God the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and, that it is a matter of *perfect indifference* whether they believe or not, all other truths which Christ has thought. I will do him the justice to think, that he considers that every man is bound to believe every truth that Christ has thought, which comes under his knowledge; and that every man is bound, so far as his ability, his time, his occupations &c., will permit him, to learn what these truths are. I will not insult his reason by saying, that he considers that the word of Christ, the authority of Christ, is not as worthy of credit in every instance when He teaches truth, as in one or two or three particular instances.

Well, then, taking it for granted, that the Rev. Mr. Stephenson considers, that all men are required to believe, not only in Christ but also in *all* the truths which Christ has taught, on pain of being condemned, of eternal damnation; and that all men are bound, as far as circumstances will permit, to learn what these all truths, "all things," are; the question naturally arises: How are they to come to a knowledge of Christ and all the truths which Christ has taught? There must be certainly some means open to them; for it would be outrageous to say, that all men must believe in Him and them upon pain of being damned, and that Christ has left no means by which they may learn what they are required to believe. Not only must there be some means, but that means must be,—our common sense tells us so—a means existing in all ages, available in all times; for in all ages and all times of Christianity, the obligation to believe existed and upon the same penalty. It must also be a means within the reach of *all* people, the poor as well as the rich; for the poor are required to believe and have souls to save as well as the rich. It must moreover be a means adapted to the capacity of all people, the dullest and most ignorant, as well as the most intelligent and learned; for the former have as good a right to the joys of Heaven as the latter. It must finally, be a means, that will, if people honestly and sincerely follow it, infallibly lead them, without danger of error, without possibility of mistake to know Christ and "all things" which he has commanded them to believe upon pain of being damned. These conditions, our own reason convinces us, must attach to the rule which Christ has left us.

Now, where is the rule, which Christ has left us, to be found? The Rev. Mr. Stephenson says, he has it, that Protestantism has it; and that it consists in the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible as understood and interpreted by each person. "I am a Protestant," he says "*because I hold the Holy Scriptures a sufficient rule of my faith, and myself responsible for searching them.*" (Page 5.) By the "Holy Scriptures" he must necessarily mean the whole Bible; for he does not limit the meaning of the words. But, now, if the Scriptures or whole Bible be a sufficient rule of faith for Mr. Stephenson, they must also be, and must always have been, a sufficient rule of faith for all people; for it would be absurd to suppose, that Christ established a particular rule of faith for Mr. Stephenson; and if *he* is held responsible for searching them, so must, also, all other persons in all times. This, no one can question.

Well, then, have the Holy Scriptures, or the *whole* Bible, in all times in the past, been a "sufficient" rule of faith for all men, and could all men be held responsible for searching them? Are they, even, in the present day, a "sufficient" rule of faith for all people and can all men be held responsible for searching them? Father Damen said; No. I say no also; and I will give his and my reasons for saying so.

The Holy Scriptures or the whole Bible, as Protestants now profess to have them, have not, in all times of the past, been a "sufficient" rule of faith for all men, and all men could not have been held responsible for searching them—(my first question)—and why? Because first, there was a time when the *whole* Bible did not exist—was not complete—and, therefore, during that time the Rev. Mr. Stephenson's, or the Protestant rule of faith,—the Holy Scriptures as Protestants now profess to have them—could not be a "sufficient" rule of faith; for if they could, then the New Testament is not an essential part of the rule of faith, and Protestants deny this. Well, then, St. Mathew—the first of the apostles who wrote anything of the New Testament—did not write his Gospel until about seven years after the ascension of Christ into Heaven; therefore, for seven years, the chief part of the Protestant rule of faith had no existence. St. Mark wrote his Gospel about ten years after Christ had left the world; St. Luke about twenty-five years, and St. John did not write anything until about sixty-three years after Christ's ascension. Therefore, for ten, for twenty-five, for sixty-three years, the Protestant rule of faith—the *whole* Bible—was incomplete and consequently it could not be looked upon as a "sufficient" rule. It was only about the year sixty-five that St. John wrote the last part of the New Testament; and therefore it was not until that year that Mr. Stephenson's rule of faith—the Holy Scriptures, or *whole* Bible—became complete and could be regarded in any light, as a "sufficient" rule.

But after that period, was Mr. Stephenson's rule a sufficient rule? It was not; and why? Because before it, under any possibility, could become a sufficient rule, and before Christ could hold any man responsible for searching it—the Bible, the *whole* Bible,—it was strictly necessary that the inspired Gospels and Epistles should have been well known throughout the Christian world from the many spurious Gospels and Epistles then extant, and that all the books composing it should have been gathered into some convenient form, that people, without great trouble or difficulty, might be able to consult or search them. Was this the case? Every student of history knows it was not. It was not until over three hundred years had elapsed, that it was definitely known what books or writings really constituted the Bible. In some places the spurious Gospels and Epistles were looked upon as inspired, while in other places the inspired writings were regarded as spurious. And, thus it was, that people generally did not know, and could not know, for over three hundred years, what books or writings constituted the Bible, the *whole* Bible or Protestant rule of faith; and not knowing this, they could not, of course, consult or search it; and not being able to consult or search it, they could not learn from it; and not being able to learn from it, they could not know what they ever required to believe; and not being able to know what they were required to believe, they could not believe; and

not believing, they were all damned—for “he that believeth not shall be condemned”—damned through no fault of their own, but through the fault of Jesus who gave them a rule which it was impossible for them to follow—which is simply absurd. Therefore, for over three hundred years, Mr. Stephenson’s rule of faith was not a “sufficient” rule; for, as I have shown, instead of guiding people to heaven, its impossibility or unavailability would have sent them to hell.

Again; it was not until the fifteenth century, that the art of printing was invented. People, now-a-days, are so accustomed to see a Bible on every table, that, without reflection, they imagine that Bibles should have been always as numerous and common as they are at present. But, sometimes, people make mistakes, and they never fell into a greater mistake, than to imagine that before the art of printing was invented, Bibles could have been, as plentiful as they are now. At the present day, by the aid of type and steam-presses, Bibles can be struck off and printed by thousands in the day; but before the fifteenth century, when neither type nor steam-presses existed, the whole labour of getting up a copy of the Bible, had to be performed by hand and pen. And, now, tell me, Mr. Stephenson, how many Bibles could be got up in this manner—not in a day—but in a year by a man of average expertness in writing? and what would be the cost of each? I will let a Protestant author answer the question; the estimate he makes is certainly exceedingly low. The author is the Rev. S. R. Maitland D.D.F.R.S. & F.S.A., sometime librarian to the late Archbishop of Canterbury and keeper of the M.S.S., at Lambeth. In his series of lectures, intended to illustrate the state of religion and literature in the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th centuries, he says: “To copy all these books (of the Bible) was a great undertaking; and even when there was no affectation of caligraphy, or costly ornament, and when we reduce the exaggerated statements about the price of materials to something reasonable, it was not only a laborious but an expensive matter. Of course, writing and printing are very different things. I do not pretend to speak with accuracy, (for it would require more trouble than the thing is worth), but I am inclined to suppose that at this day a copy of our English Bible, paid for at the rate at which law-stationers, pay their writers for common fair—copy on paper, would cost between sixty and seventy pounds (sterling) for the writing only; and further, that the scribe must be both expert and industrious to perform the task in much less than ten months.” (Page 202). This is what a Protestant author says. Add to this estimate, the cost for material (which was parchment or other costly preparations) and binding, &c., and twenty or thirty pounds more may be added to the cost of the writing. Thus, you see, Mr. Stephenson, that your ordinary English Bible, which now can be purchased for fifty cents, would, in

these good old times before printing was invented, have cost you about a hundred pounds sterling, or about five hundred dollars of our money; or if you had preferred to copy it off yourself, it would take you about ten months' or a year's constant labor. What do you think of this? And I wonder whether you would feel very much inclined, under these circumstances, to press your rule of faith very strongly upon your congregation and insist on their reading it; especially if you had yourself to write out a copy of the Bible for each of them, or pay \$500 for it. What I also ask? would all poor men, men with little and hard earned money, think of it? What would all daily workers, laborers, mechanics, artisans, &c., who constitute now and have always constituted, two thirds of the population of the world, think of it? What would they say, Mr. Stephenson, of your rule of faith, if they had to pay about \$500 to get it, or spend about twelve months' of their time to copy it? I opine they would rather open their eyes, and say: "What! Mr. Stephenson; you say, we must believe or be damned, and that we must purchase a Bible as our rule of faith at a cost of about \$500 and search it, and learn from it, what we are to believe. Why, the thing is utterly impossible, sir; we have not that amount of money, never have had it at any one time, and never expect to have it. That rule of faith may suit you and be "sufficient" for you, as you say, as perhaps you have \$500 to spare; but for us, it, evidently, is not a rule that we, having no \$500 to spare, can avail ourselves of; and therefore it is not and cannot be a sufficient rule of our faith, and our case is the case of *two thirds* of the population of the world. What then are we to do Mr. Stephenson? What is to become of us? We must believe, you say, or be condemned, damned, and it is utterly impossible for us, according to your rule of faith, to believe; for we cannot now, and never expect to be able to, purchase a Bible at \$500, and search it, to learn what we are required to believe. What, therefore is to become of us? Must we be damned? Ah! Mr. Stephenson, this is rather a hard thought to digest. To be damned through our own perversity, our own fault; we could understand it. But to be damned through no fault of our own, and with the best desire and wish in the world to believe all that God requires of us, simply because we cannot scrape together \$500 to buy a Bible, as our rule of faith and search it, to learn what we should believe—the thing is terrible; it appears to us frightfully inconsistent with what you have often told us in your sermons;—that Christ has a deep, an anxious, and unbounded desire to save us. Surely, if He had such a desire, He would not require us to believe upon pain of being eternally damned, and then have given us a rule of faith, wherein we must search out and learn what we are required to believe; which it is utterly impossible for us to make use of, as we have not and

never expect to have \$500 to be able to purchase it. If your teaching there-
 fore about the necessity of believing and the rule of faith, is right, Christ
 must have cared very little about the salvation of the souls of the poor.
 The rich may make use of your rule of faith, but we, who are poor, who
 have no \$500 to spare, can never avail ourselves of it. Therefore, if your
 rule of faith be the rule of faith, ordained by Christ for the poor man as
 well as the rich, then never speak to us again about the great, the un-
 bounded desire of Christ to save us, the poor of the world."

Such might well be the language which the poor, the vast majority
 of the world in all ages, might have addressed, in regard, to the rule of
 faith, to the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, had he lived and preached before the
 art of printing was invented. Previous to the 15th century it was impos-
 sible, as every one acquainted with the difference between writing
 and printing knows,—I will not say for one in a thousand
 —but for one in every ten thousand of the population of the
 world, to become possessed of a copy of the Bible; for \$500 was as rare
 a thing then as it is now, in the hands of the poor man. And such being
 the case, how could Mr. Stephenson's rule of faith be a "sufficient" guide
 for all people during these fourteen hundred years? And if it was not a
 sufficient rule for over fourteen hundred years of the Christian religion
 who can say that it is the rule or means, ordained by Christ? It is evident
 from what I have said that, while the Holy Scriptures may be the Rev. Mr.
 Stephenson's rule, they were not and are not the rule given by Christ to the
 world,—to the poor as well as the rich,—to teach them what they must
 believe upon pain of being damned.

But even at the present day, when type and steam-presses, have
 scattered Bibles over the world by millions, and reduced their price to a
 mere trifle, are there not difficulties in the way, which prove that the Holy
 Scriptures are not a "sufficient" rule of faith for all men and consequently
 not the rule ordained by Christ?—(Second question; see page 6.)—What
 is the proportion of the population of the world, who are unable to read?
 At least one half, some say two thirds, some say three fourths. And what
 can this one half, two thirds or three fourths, do with the Bible as a rule of
 faith for themselves? They cannot read, therefore they cannot consult or
 search it themselves. And still Mr. Stephenson says, they must search it;
 must "hold themselves responsible" for searching it. Really this is a hard
 saying; millions and hundreds of millions of people held responsible for search-
 ing the Bible; they cannot go to Heaven unless they do search it and learn
 from it what they must believe—"he that believeth not shall be condemn-
 ed."—and still they cannot read, and therefore cannot search it themselves;
 they must, therefore, if left to themselves, without teachers to instruct,
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of damnation, to believe; consequently they cannot believe, and not believ-
 ing they will be damned; for Christ has said "he that believeth not shall
 be condemned." So you see, Mr. Stephenson, that even now-a-days, when
 Bibles are scattered, through the aid of type and steam-presses, all
 over the world by millions, your rule of faith is an impossible one for all
 unable to read, the majority of the people of the world. It therefore cannot
 be a "sufficient" rule for them, and consequently can not be the rule ordained
 by Christ, who came on earth to save the illiterate and the ignorant as
 well as the learned.

But even supposing, that every man, women, and child, in the world
 could read and read well, would the case be very different? It is a well
 known fact, that comparatively very few in the world, know anything
 about the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written. Very
 few therefore could consult or search them, in their vernacular tongues;
 the great bulk of the population of the world would have to search the trans-
 lated versions. Well, then, take the English Bible for example. A man
 takes it in his hands, seats himself and begins to search it. A thought
 strikes him. I am about, he says, to do—what? To try and learn from this
 Book, which is given to me as a "sufficient" rule of my faith, whatsoever, Christ
 has commanded I shall believe upon pain of damnation. And how must I
 proceed in order that I may not be led astray, be deceived? I must, first,
 make myself perfectly certain that this English copy of the Bible is
 a correct rendering, a faithful translation of the Bible as written in the or-
 iginal languages; for, if it is only an unfaithful rendering, a corrupt
 translation, then it does not contain the pure word of God; therefore, in search-
 ing it, I may be led astray and deceived, for I may fall upon the corrupt
 passages in it. And how can I make myself certain, that it is a faithful
 translation? Here I am at a stand-still; for I do not know even the
 first word about the original languages, and therefore cannot test the
 matter." Thereupon, Mr. Stephenson steps forward and charitably relieves
 the embarrassment of the searcher of the Bible by saying: "Being more
 or less familiar with both languages, I am bold to aver that the English
 translation, as we have it, does no violence to the original, perverts no divine
 truth." (see page 8.) The man reflects seriously, for a few moments, on this
 solemn assurance; but not finding in it that perfect satisfaction or certainty
 which he considers he should have in a matter of such serious import he
 replies: "Your bold averment, Mr. Stephenson, may be perfectly
 satisfactory to yourself, but to me it is not so. You n. y, indeed, as you
 say, be more or less familiar with both languages, and feel convinced, that
 the English translation, "as we have it," does no violence to the original,
 perverts no divine truth; but it strikes me that I have often heard and
 often read, that our English translation does do violence to the original and

does pervert divine truth, and that this has been maintained even by some men most learned in the original languages, and in biblical lore. And when I have read and heard that this is the case, you, surely, cannot imagine, that I should so far forget the dictates of common prudence and, to use expressions of your own, "ignore my intelligence and offend my conscience," (see page 8)—as to accept your *ipse dixit* or "bold" averment in the matter. When learned doctors disagree, what can I, who know not a word about the Greek Hebrew, &c., decide in the matter. Therefore I must still say, I am at a stand-still, that I know not what to say; and, therefore, I am forced to conclude, on the very threshold of my search, that the Bible is not to me a "sufficient" rule of my faith, and that I cannot be held responsible for searching it."

But even granting that this point—the correctness and faithfulness of the translation is settled,—does the searcher of the Bible find himself in a much better position? As great difficulties yet remain. The man takes the Bible and opening it at the XXII Chapter of the Book Revelations, he reads a quotation which he finds in Mr. Stephenson's sermon as follows: "If any man shall add unto those things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life." "This is a terrible threat," says the Bible searcher to himself; "so I must be careful, to make myself certain, not to add anything to the book or take away anything from it. And how can I make myself certain of this? Only by being certain, assured beyond the possibility of doubt, or mistake that the deductions or doctrines, or teachings, I draw from the words of the book, are the truths which Christ has taught, that God has revealed. And how can I be thus certain? Only by being certain beyond room for doubt, of giving to the words of the book, the exact meaning which Christ, which God, intended they should express and convey to the minds of men. And how can I be certain of this? Ah! here is the difficulty which puzzles me. If I trust my own judgment, I know I may be led astray; for I know my judgment is liable to err, and, as a matter of fact, has often erred in my life time, and may, of course, err, also, now in this instance. What then must I do? Consult my minister; but my rule of faith says, no; search the Scriptures yourself, they are "sufficient" for you. Consult my Church as the divinely instituted organ of God's word, which cannot lead me astray, but my church, says, she is not infallible, is not a divinely instituted body commissioned by Christ to teach infallibly the truth and nothing but the truth, she may, therefore, like my own judgment, err. Where then must I turn in my perplexity? I am at a stand-still again. I cannot trust my judgment, I cannot trust my minister, I cannot trust my Church; what, then, am I to do? Is it possible, that, in this fearful uncertainty, I am held responsible

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by Christ to go and search the Scriptures? It cannot be; for if I go on and search, the only result of my search may be, to give a wrong interpretation to the words of God, to run into error, profess doctrines which are not the teachings of inspiration, and, therefore, I may add to, or take away from, "the words of the book;" and God has declared that if any man do so, He will visit him with plagues and take away his part out of the book of life. Surely, Christ could not place any man in such a terribly perplexing position." But, here Mr. Stephenson might again step forward, and recommend the Bible searcher to have recourse to prayer and "boldly aver" that if he adopted this advice, the Holy Spirit would guide him all right. But to this the searcher of the Bible might answer: "This is indeed a very good advice you give me, Mr. Stephenson, but I do not think that after all your "bold" averment will relieve me out of my difficulty. There are my neighbours, great Bible searchers, Mr. Prayerful, Mr. Pious, Mr. Religious, Mr. Sanctimonious, Mr. Honest, Mr. Sincere, Mr. Well-disposed, Mr. Well-intentioned, Mr. Good-reasoner, Mr. Good-judgement, Mr. Scientific, and Mr. Learned, and a better intentioned, more prayerful set of men I have never known in my life; and they have been praying and praying and searching and searching the Scriptures, and imagining that the "Holy Spirit" was guiding and directing them in doing so, for the last forty-five years and what is the result? Why, that Mr. Prayerful, notwithstanding all his praying and imagining the "Holy Spirit" was guiding him, has come to the conclusion that the Bible teaches, that there are not three really distinct persons in God, while Mr. Pious, on the contrary, has come to the conclusion, that there are three persons; that Mr. Religious quotes the Bible to prove that Christ was not God, while Mr. Sanctimonious quotes it to prove that He is God; that Mr. Honest says, there is no hell, taught in the Bible, while Mr. Sincere says, there is; that Mr. Well-disposed proclaims polygamy as a Scriptural institution, while Mr. Well-intentioned says, the Scriptures abhor such a monstrous doctrine; that Mr. Good-reasoner from his searching of the Bible professes Free-loveism, while Mr. Good-judgment stoutly maintains the Bible teaches marriage; that Mr. Scientific says you must not baptize infants because no such teaching is to be found in the Bible, while Mr. Learned says it is to be found there and you must baptize them. And so on it is with many others of my neighbours, all apparently honest and prayerful &c., and all nevertheless professing the most contradictory doctrines, which they imagine, that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they have found to be contained in the Bible.

Now, how can the searcher of the Bible, if he be a sensible, prudent man, in the face of such facts, accept, the Rev. Mr. Stephenson's "bold" averment, that the Holy Spirit will guide him all right, and thereon trust himself to searching the Scriptures, when he sees so many

around him, who have been led astray in doing so. His common sense tells him, that all these men, professing the most contradictory doctrines, cannot all be right, all believing the truth; and, still, they appear, in their searching after truth in the Bible, all to be as sensible, as honest and as prayerful as he is himself. What, then, must he conclude? Simply that Mr. Stephenson's bold averment is not "sufficient," and the rule, which has led so many other people into error and often into the greatest blasphemies, may lead him astray also. And this being the conclusion which he must, in common sense, draw, how can he trust that rule? And not being able to trust it, he cannot look upon the Holy Scriptures as "a sufficient" rule of his faith, and, consequently, cannot regard it, as the rule ordained by Christ, to lead all men, without fear of mistake or error, to a knowledge of what they must believe, upon pain of being damned. "He that believeth not shall be condemned."

But, do not the Scriptures themselves warn the Bible searcher against trusting to his own private judgement, in searching and interpreting them? Does not St. Peter tell him, that in the Scriptures there are contained "things hard to be understood which the unlearned and unstable wrest as they do also the other Scriptures to their own destruction"? (2 Pet. Ch. III. 16.) And if there are "things hard to be understood" in the Bible, or Holy Scriptures, how can "the unlearned and unstable," the great mass of mankind, without the greatest temerity and the blindest presumption, imagine that they can easily understand and interpret them? And how can Mr. Stephenson place the Bible in their hands as a "sufficient" rule of their faith, and assure them, that they will be able to learn from it, the truths, the "all things" which they are required to believe, to save themselves? St. Peter warns them that they *may wrest* these "things hard to be understood" as they may also all the other Scriptures to their "own destruction,"—that is damnation; but Mr. Stephenson assures them, there is no such danger—but, on the contrary, that the Bible including the "hard things" will unquestionably, lead them right, make them "wise unto salvation." Which are we to believe, St. Peter or Mr. Stephenson?

And again; does not St. Peter also assure us, that "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation"? (2 Pet. 11 Ch.—20 V.) But Mr. Stephenson's rule of faith says, that St. Peter is wrong; that all prophecy of Scripture, all the Scriptures, are of private interpretation, and that they are, St. Peter to the contrary notwithstanding, a "sufficient" rule of faith for all men, even the "unlearned and unstable." Again, I ask, which are we to believe; St. Peter or Mr. Stephenson? Most people would say: unquestionably, St. Peter. Then, in that case, how can the "unlearned and unstable," the great mass of mankind, look upon the Bible as a sufficient rule of their faith? And if they cannot do this, how can they regard it as the means ordained by Christ?

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But even supposing all these difficulties removed, are there not yet points which the searcher of the Bible must satisfactorily settle before he can make use of Mr. Stephenson's rule of faith? How will he be able to prove, beyond doubt, the inspiration of the Bible and all parts of the Bible? And how can he establish the Canon, or the authentic list, of the books of the Scripture, which are to be received as divine? In regard to the first question, the Scriptures themselves furnish no satisfactory information or proof, in regard to their being *inspired* in all their parts. The Rev. Mr. Stephenson himself cannot produce this essential information or testimony from any part of the New Testament, from the first page of the Gospel of St. Mathew to the last page of the Book of Revelations. But, even, if he could, it might still be objected, that the book, being on its trial could not legitimately bear testimony in favor of itself; or that those parts which might be produced, as bearing testimony to it, were not themselves inspired, and therefore were useless as testimony. To be a sufficient rule, the inspiration of every part of the Bible must be first settled, and settled by unquestionable testimony, which the Bible, itself does not furnish. The Rev. Mr. Stephenson may, however, say, that the few texts, that can be wrested or forced into a weak semblance of proof, that the Scriptures assert their own inspiration, ought to satisfy any man; but from what I have said and in the face of the fact, that learned men, Protestants also, like Bishop Colenso and the writers in the Essays and Reviews, have unhesitatingly called in question the inspiration of the Scriptures or at least the inspiration of parts of them, the searcher of the Bible, could have but little confidence in the Rev. Mr. Stephenson's assertion; and therefore on the very threshold of his enquiry he would have to give up the Bible as a sufficient rule of faith for him.

Now, as to the question of the Canon, or authentic list, of the books which constitute the Bible, the Scripture searcher, would be very little better off. The Scriptures, themselves give no catalogue of those books of the New Testament, which are to be received as divine. How, then, could he determine them. His own private judgement could decide nothing in the matter? Would the Rev. Mr. Stephenson here again "boldly aver" something for his satisfaction? But might not he as before, dissent from the Rev. Mr. Stephenson's averment, especially should he happen to know, that learned Protestants themselves have wrangled and quarrelled over the question; and that both in the Old and New Testaments mention or allusion, is made (Numb. xxi. ch. v. 14; 11 Chron. ix. ch. 29 v. Math. xxvii. ch. 9 v. and elsewhere) to books which are now lost. Parsons, Grabe, Toland and many other learned Protestants, have regarded the Canon as either full of difficulties or as very incomplete. The celebrated Protestant divine, the Rev. Jeremiah Jones, who died in the last Century (1724), published a learn-

ed treatise on a "New and full method of settling the Canonical authority of the New Testament"; and in that work, he admits that the question of the Canon is "attended with very many and great difficulties"; and that "a great number of christians are destitute of any good arguments for their belief of the Canonical authority of the books of the New Testament; and "very little has been done on the subject" to settle it. The quotations are from the first edition of his work (the heads of the chapters as given on the first page) published at Oxford in 1827. And at page 12 he says: "*He who has but the least occasion to acquaint himself with the religious state of mankind, cannot but with surprising concern have observed, how slender and uncertain the principles are, upon which men receive the Scripture as the word of God.*" And he adds: "The truth is though a very painful one, that many persons. . . by the *chance of education* and the *force of custom* receive the Scriptures as the word of God, without making any *serious enquires*, and consequently without being able to *give any solid reasons*, why they believe them to be such." And the celebrated Richard Baxter in still stronger language, speaks of the difficulties of the Canon. In his well known work. "The Saints' Everlasting Rest" at page 197 he says: "Are the more exercised, understanding sort of Christians able by *sound arguments* to make good the verity of Scripture? Nay, are the meaner sort of *ministers* able to do this? Let them that have tried judge." So you see, Mr. Stephenson, that, even according to the celebrated Protestant divine, Richard Baxter, not only are the exercised and understanding class of Protestants, not able to prove the truth of Scripture, but that the lower order of ministers or teachers are not able to do it. And again at page 201, he says: "It is strange to consider how we all abhor that piece of Popery, as most injurious to God of all the rest, which resolves our faith into the authority of the Church; and yet that we do, for the generality of professors, content ourselves with the *same kind* of faith, only with this difference.—the *Papists* believe the Scripture to be the word of God, because their Church saith so, and *we*, because *our Church or our leaders say so*. Yea and many ministers never yet gave their people better grounds, but *tell* them that it is damnable to deny it, *but help them not* to the antecedents of faith." And in the following page he remarks: "It is to be understood that *many thousands do profess Christianity and zealously hate the enemies thereof upon the same grounds, to the same end* and from the *same inward corrupt principles*, as the Jews did *hate and kill Christ*." This is very strong language! not the "bold assertions" of Father Damen, but the calm deliberate averment of a learned and celebrated Protestant divine, the Rev. Richard Baxter, who was, subsequently to the Restoration Chaplain to the King of England. And, now, Mr. Stephenson, in the face of such deliberate averments by some of the most learned and distinguished Protestant divines, how can the searcher of the Bible,

trust himself—his own private judgement, beyond danger of doubt, in settling the question of the Canon? And if he can not, how can he accept the Scriptures as a "sufficient" rule of his faith, even in this progressive age, when Bibles, through the aid of type and steam-presses, are scattered over the world by millions.

I have now, I think, answered pretty fully the two questions, which I preferred at Page 6, of this pamphlet, regarding the rule of faith which holds the Rev. Mr. Stephenson in the Protestant religion. I have examined whether that rule, the Holy Scriptures or *whole Bible*, could have been a sufficient rule of faith for all people in all times in the past, and shewn it could not; and I have examined, also, whether even in the present age, when Bibles are scattered all round, it is a sufficient rule for all people; and proved the same. What, then, is the conclusion that necessarily follows? That the Rev. Mr. Stephenson's rule is not the rule ordained by Christ, and, therefore, that no man can be held responsible for searching, it, to learn what he must believe.

But are there any other arguments, which may be adduced to shew, that the Rev. Mr. Stephenson's, or Protestant rule, is not the divinely instituted rule? There are many; and I will briefly touch upon a few of them, before I come to the consideration of the quotations from the Scriptures and the early Fathers, which Mr. Stephenson brings forward in support of his rule. In the first place; is it not very probable that, if Christ intended that the Holy Scriptures, should be the rule of faith for the world, the means by which the world should be converted and the Christian Religion maintained "even unto the consummation of the world,"—(Math. xxviii. 20)—that He would have written them or some part of them, himself? And what is the fact? That Christ never wrote one single word of the Bible, in his whole life. He *spoke* much, *taught* much by *word of mouth*; He *preached* constantly, but, He never *wrote*, or gave any express intimation of a desire or wish, that his truths, or teachings, should be ever taught by writing, or otherwise, than by oral preaching.

But, if He did not write a word of the Bible himself, surely, if the Protestant rule of faith be the true one, He must have given some express command to his Apostles to commit his teachings to writing. And what do we find? Not one word in the whole New Testament, from the first page of the Gospel of St. Mathew, to the last of the Book of Revelations, about any such command. We find, that He commanded his Apostles to *teach*, and *preach* his religion "to every creature," and that he commanded every creature to *hear* them, (Luke x. 16.) In His commission to his Apostles, (Math xxviii. 19, 20.) He does not say: Go, write Bibles to all nations; but "Go, teach all nations," "*teaching* them to observe, &c." He does not say: Go, write Bibles to every creature; but, Go, *preach* to every creature.

(St. Mark xvi. 15.) And what do we find in St. Mark, (same chapter, 20 v.)? That, going forth, they *wrote* Bibles to every nation, no; but that going forth, they *preached* everywhere. There is no question, but that the Apostles afterwards did commit to writing, some of the truths which they *had previously preached*, but they received no command from Christ to do so, and they did not do so, with the mind of leaving their writings as the rule of faith for the world. St. Paul himself intimates this, when he refers so frequently to his *oral teachings*, his *preaching*, and when (11 Thess. 11. 14.) he bade the Thessalonians to stand firm, and hold the *traditions* which they had learned whether by *word*, or by his (previous) epistle.

Besides this, if the Apostles intended to leave their writings to the world as the rule of faith, is it not reasonable to suppose that they would, in a matter of such paramount importance have sat down all together, and have written the New Testament, or at least have concerted something about it, among themselves. And what is the fact? That there is no proof, not the shadow of a proof, that they ever came to any understanding among themselves about writing, or ever did sit down together, to write, the New Testament. It is, further, a fact, that most of them did not write at all. Out of the twelve, only *five* have left us anything. And out of these five, *three*—St. Peter, St. James, and St. Jude,—have left us only a few short Epistles, written for particular reasons and under particular circumstances. Not *one half* of the New Testament was written by the Apostles; the Gospels of St. Mark, and St. Luke, and the Acts and Epistles of St. Paul, were written by inspired men, but not by the Apostles. St. Paul is, indeed, called an Apostle but he was not one of the twelve Apostles; he was not converted to Christianity until Christ had left the earth.

Moreover; if it had been the intention of Christ, that the Scriptures should form our rule of faith, would not the Apostles have given us, in their writings, at least a regular and complete summary of the Christian faith, and have stated *clearly and distinctly* somewhere in the New Testament, what are the doctrines or truths which we are required to believe upon pain of being condemned? And, still, they have not done so, and the best proof they have not done so, is to be found in the mass of contradictory doctrines professed by those, who take the Bible as their rule of faith, and hold themselves responsible for searching it.

Again; if the Apostles believed that Christ wished them to write down his teachings and leave the Scriptures as the rule of faith, is it not probable, that they would have gone to some trouble to write down for us, all that Christ said and did? And have they done this? They have not. During the forty days, which intervened between Christ's resurrection from the dead and His ascension into Heaven, Christ must have said and done an innumerable number of things, and still how little do any of the inspired

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writers record of His sayings and doings, during that time. And, still, who will say, that this was not a time, in which Christ was very likely to say and do a great deal; discourse much with his Apostles about the kingdom of God? St. Paul himself tells us that He did speak "things" about it. (Acts 1. 3.) Is it not surprising, then, that the Apostles, if the Protestant rule of faith be the true one, have not left us a fuller account of "the things" which He did speak, pertaining to the kingdom of God? Is it not surprising also, that they should have satisfied themselves with giving to the world in the written word, only very brief summaries of a few of the many things Christ did, and said, during His whole public life? It really is. And still the Rev. Mr. Stephenson says, the Scriptures are a satisfactory, a "sufficient" rule of faith. If, indeed, all the many "things" which Christ said and did, were recorded fully in them, there might be some pretence, to regard them as such. But how can any sensible man hold them as "sufficient," when he reads in St. John XXI. 25. "But there are also *many other things* which Jesus did, which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written."

Again; is it not a generally admitted fact, that until the time of Moses, there was no written revelation to form the guide or rule of faith for all the people who lived before his day? And, still, will the Rev. Mr. Stephenson say that Seth, Abraham, Isaac, Melchisedeck, and all God's people, were not saved? And, nevertheless, the truths which they believed and by belief in which they were saved, were truths for which they had no authority but *tradition*. Moreover, did Moses, when he had written the law, give a copy of it to each person of the people of Israel, as the only rule of his faith? He did not; on the contrary, he delivered it to the priests and the ancients, (Deut. xxxi. 9.)—and commanded them to deposit it "in the side of the ark of the covenant," adding, "*after seven years, in the year of remission. . . thou shalt read the word of this law, before all Israel in their hearing.*" This does not look much like, as if the Scriptures or written law, in the days of Moses, formed the *sole* rule of faith for the people, or that they were held responsible for searching them. The *priests* themselves were to read them to the people and this only, once in seven years. Again, (Deut. xvii. 8. 9.) what do we read? That in all matters concerning them, they should take the written law as their *sole* guide or judge and search it? Not so; for we read that when any hard and doubtful matter in judgement was among them, recourse should be had to the priests and the judge of the law and *they* should decide it, and all should abide by their judgement, upon pain of death. "If thou perceive there be among you a hard and doubtful *matter* in judgement. . . thou shalt come to the *priests* of the Levitical race and to the *judge*, that shall be at that time; and thou shalt ask of them and they shall shew you the truth of the judge-

ment. And thou shalt do whatsoever they shall say, that preside in the place which the Lord shall choose, and what they shall teach thee according to his law; and thou shalt follow their sentence, neither shalt thou decline to the right hand, nor to the left hand. But he that will be proud, and refuse to obey the commandment of the priest, who ministereth at that time to the Lord thy God and the decree of the judge, that man shall die, and thou shalt take away the evil from Israel. And all the people hearing it shall fear, that no one afterwards swell with pride." (Deuter xvii. 8 to 13.) From this it is clear, that the people of Israel were not allowed to indulge their judgement by private interpretation of the written law, but, on the contrary, were commanded to consult the priests and especially the judge or High Priest in matters hard and difficult to be decided, and to follow their judgement, upon pain of death. And again: (in II Par. or Chron.) we read: "In Jerusalem, also, Josaphat appointed Levites and priests, and chiefs of the families of Israel to judge the judgement and the cause of the Lord for the inhabitants thereof. And he charged them saying: Thus shall you do in the fear of the Lord faithfully and with a perfect heart. Every cause that shall come to you (before you) of your brethren. . . . concerning the law, the commandments, the ceremonies, the justifications, shew it them, (decide it for them,) that they may not sin against the Lord. . . . And Amarias the priest your high priest shall be chief in the things which regard God. . . . and you have before you the Levites for masters." (II Par. or Chron. xix 8. to 11.) Here again, we find that it was the priests, especially the High Priest, and not each individual, that were to search the Scriptures and explain or decide, "the things which regard God."—Elsewhere, (in Malachias ii. 7.) the Lord declares that "the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge; and they (the people) shall seek the law at his mouth; because he is the Angel (the minister) of the Lord of Hosts."—I might quote many other passages from the old Testament to shew, that before the advent of Christ, the private interpretation of the Scriptures was not permitted; and that the people were not allowed to "hold the Holy Scriptures" as a "sufficient" rule of their faith and hold themselves responsible for searching them. But, I think, the quotations I have made, are clear and explicit enough to decide the question; as they shew, beyond doubt, that recourse was to be had "in the things which regard God" to the priests and especially to the High Priest. And what are we to infer from this? That there is a very strong antecedent probability that the rule asserted by the Rev. Mr. Stephenson and by Protestants generally, is not the rule ordained by Christ, and that, therefore, it is not a sufficient rule.

Again, is it not absurd to place such a book as the Bible in the hands of even the most stupid and ignorant men, and pretend that each one of

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them is better able to interpret it, than all the pastors of the Church
 together? Now, what is the Bible? Let a work open before me, answer.
 "Here is a book" (the Bible,) says the writer, "which comprises within
 a limited compass, the period of four thousand years, and advances further
 towards the most distant future, by embracing the origin and destiny of
 man and the universe—a book which, with the continued history of a chosen
 people, intermingles, in its narrations and prophecies, the revolutions of
 mighty empires—a book which, side by side with the magnificent pictures,
 of the power and splendor of Eastern monarchs, describes, in simple
 colors, the plain domestic manners, the candor and innocence of a young
 nation—a book in which historians relate, sages proclaim, their maxims of
 wisdom, Apostles preach, and doctors instruct—a book in which prophets,
 under the influence of the divine Spirit, thunder against the errors and
 corruptions of the people and announce the vengeance of the God of Sinai,
 or pour forth inconsolable lamentations on the captivity of their brethren,
 and the desolation and solitude of their country; where they relate, in
 wonderful and sublime language, the magnificent spectacles which are pre-
 sented to their eyes; where, in moments of ecstasy, they see pass before
 them the events of society and the catastrophes of nature, although veiled
 in mysterious figures and veils, of obscurity—a book, or rather a collection
 of books, where are to be found all sorts of styles and all varieties of
 narrative, epic majesty, pastoral simplicity, lyric fire, serious instruction,
 grave historical narrative, and lively and rapid dramatic action; a collec-
 tion of books, in fine, written at various times and in various languages, in
 various countries, and under the most peculiar and extraordinary circum-
 stances. Such is the Bible."

And, now, Mr. Stephenson is there not something very absurd,
 in putting such a book, as a rule of faith, into the hands of illiterate, ignorant
 men and telling them to search it, to try and understand it? Must not such
 a book, in the words of the same author, confuse the heads of men, even
 well instructed, who puffed up with their own conceit, grope through these
 pages in the dark, ignorant of climates, times, laws, customs, and man-
 ners. They will be puzzled by allusions, surprised by images, deceived
 by expressions; they will hear the Greek and Hebrew, which was written
 in those remote ages, now spoken in a modern idiom. What effects must
 all these circumstances produce in the minds of readers who believe that
 the Bible is an easy book, to be understood without difficulty by all?
 Persuaded that they do not require the instructions of others, they must
 either resolve all these difficulties by their own reflections, or trust to that
 individual inspiration which they believe will not be wanting to explain to
 them the loftiest mysteries. Who, therefore, can be astonished, that
 Protestantism has produced so many absurd visionaries, who have imagin-

ed, that they had a "call" from God, to rend into pieces the seamless garment of Christ and establish religions as numerous as the days of the year. Who, therefore, can be astonished to find, so many religions, so many sects; "Old and New Presbyterians; Associate and Reformed, and Cumberland Presbyterians; Lutherans; Dutch Reformed; German Reformed Churches; Evangelical Lutherans; Baptists; Freewill Baptists; Seventh Day Baptists; and—as we have sometimes heard and read—Hard and Soft Shell Baptists; Methodists,—The Methodist Society,—The Methodist Episcopal, and Methodist Protestant Churches, the Reformed Methodist and finally, the *true* Wesleyan Methodist Church; Mennonites and Reformed Mennonites; Shakers and Quakers; Seekers and Finders; Tunkers and Restorationists, Millenarians and New Jerusalemites, Schwenkfelders and Second Advent Men; United Brethren in Christ, Congregationalists, Universalists, Unitarians, Moravians, Christians, True Christians, Saints and Latter-Day Saints; Spiritualists and Freelotheists," and two or three hundred other *sects*, all contradicting one another, and all professing to teach the truth. All these *sects* are but the natural offspring of the private interpretation of the Scriptures, of the rule which makes the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, a Protestant; and they are the only offspring which might have been expected from it. It is this principle of private interpretation which has given birth to the whole of them, and generated so many errors. For, such is the activity of the human mind, and the ardour with which it is inclined to embrace all sorts of innovation, that once the yoke of authority thrown off, it is impossible to restrain its restlessness, or make it remain fixed on any one point. Men of free and active minds can never remain tranquil, except in the peaceful regions of truth; and, until they are convinced, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that they dwell in these regions, they will keep seeking after the truth continually with restlessness, and anxiety, and disquietude; and, if they have only a false principle to act upon to guide them in their enquiry, they will keep constantly changing their position, leap from error to error, and precipitate themselves from one abyss to another. And hence, the reason, why we see so many sects continually springing up around us, brought into existence, by those free and active minds, who, feeling no solid ground beneath their feet, constantly change their position, and, like the mariner on the wide ocean, without any compass or reliable chart or knowledge of his course, steers in every direction, in the hope of at last, by chance, reaching some safe harbour in which he may find shelter from the dangers which threaten to lose him. Protestantism itself, at its commencement, seemed to have some idea of this, and it made an attempt to govern this activity and restlessness of the mind of man. "The religious revolution of the sixteenth century," says a Protestant writer, Mr. Giuzot, "did not understand the *true* principle

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ples of intellectual liberty ; it liberated the human mind, and *yet pretended to govern it by law.*" But, this attempt, as a writer commenting on the above says, was in vain ; for man cannot struggle with success against the nature of things : Protestantism endeavoured, without success, to limit the right of private judgement. It raised its voice against it, and sometimes appeared to attempt its total destruction ; but the right of private judgement, *which was in its own bosom*, remained there, developed itself, and acted there, in spite of it. There was no middle course for Protestantism to adopt. It was compelled, either to throw itself *into the arms of authority*, and thus *acknowledge itself in the wrong*, or else allow the *dissolving* principle of private judgement, to exert so much influence on its various sects, as to destroy even the shadow of the religion of Jesus Christ, and debase Christianity to the rank of a school of philosophy.

The cry of resistance to the authority of the Church once raised, the fatal results might have been easily imagined ; it was easy to foresee that that poisoned germ, the principle of private judgement, in its development, must cause the ruin of all Christian truth. And time, the best judge of opinions, has confirmed these melancholy prognostics. Things have now reached such a pass, that those only who are very ill instructed, or who have a very limited grasp of mind, can fail to see that the Christian religion as explained by Protestants, is nothing more than an opinion—a system made up of a thousand incoherent parts, and which is degraded to the level of the schools of philosophy. If Christianity, among Protestants, still seems to surpass these schools in some respects, and preserves some features which cannot be found in what is the *pure invention* of the mind of man, it ought not to be a matter of astonishment. It is owing to that *sublimity* of doctrine and that *sanctity* of morality, which, more or less disfigured, always shines while a trace is preserved of the words of Jesus Christ. But the feeble light which struggles with darkness after the sun has sunk below the horizon, cannot be compared to that of day : darkness advances, despite its struggles, and spreads and extinguishes the last expiring reflection, and night comes on. Such is the doctrine of Christianity among Protestants. A glance at these sects shows us that they are not purely philosophical, but it shows us at the same time that they have not the characters of the true religion. Christianity has no authority therein ; and is there like a being out of its proper element,—a tree deprived of its roots ; its face is pale and disfigured like that of a corpse. Protestantism talks of faith, and its fundamental principle destroys it ; it endeavors to exalt the Gospel, and its own principle, by subjecting that Gospel to private judgement, weakens its authority. If it speak of the sanctity and purity of Christian morality, it is reminded that some of its dissenting sects deny the divinity of Jesus Christ ; and that they may all do so according to the principle of private

judgement on which it rests. The divinity of Jesus Christ once doubted, the God made man is reduced to the rank of great philosopher and legislator; He is no longer the authority necessary to give to his laws the august sanction which renders them so holy in the eyes of men; he can no longer imprint upon them the seal which raises them above all human thoughts, and His sublime instructions cease to be lessons flowing from the lips of uncreated wisdom.—If you deprive the human mind of the support of authority of some kind or other, on what can it depend? Abandoned to its own delirious dreams, it is forced again into the gloomy paths which led the philosophers of the ancient schools to chaos. Reason and experience are here agreed. If you substitute the private judgement of Protestants for the authority of the Church, all the great questions respecting God and man, remain without a solution. All the difficulties are left; the mind is in darkness, and seeks in vain for a light to guide it in safety; stunned by the voices of a hundred schools or sects, who dispute without being able to agree or throw any light on the subject, it relapses into that state of discouragement and prostration in which Christianity found it, and from which, with so much exertion, she has withdrawn it. Doubt, pyrrhonism, and indifference become the lot of the greatest minds; vain theories, hypothetical systems, and dreams take possession of men of more moderate abilities; the ignorant are reduced to superstitions and absurdities.”

Of what use, then, would Christianity have been on the earth, if the dissolving principle of private judgement, which affords no support to the human mind, had been the *true* principle, the *true* and *only* guide, which the human mind had to direct it, in its search after the truth. “Let us, if you will,” as the same author remarks, “acknowledge the dignity and elevation of our minds to shew our gratitude to our Creator, but, let us not forget our weakness and defects. Why should we deceive ourselves by fancying, that we know what we are really ignorant of? Why forget the inconsistency and variableness of our minds, and conceal the fact, that with respect to many things, (even those with which we are supposed to be well acquainted,) we have but confused ideas? How delusive is our knowledge, and what exaggerated notions we have of our progress in information, even in those things? Does not one day contradict, what another had affirmed? Time runs its course, laughs at our predictions, destroys our plans, and clearly shows how vain are our projects. What have these geniuses who have descended to the foundations of science, and risen to the boldest flights of the loftiest speculations told us? After having reached the utmost limits of the space which it is permitted to the human mind to range over, —after having trodden the most secret paths of science, and sailed on the vast ocean of moral and physical nature, the greatest minds of all ages have returned dissatisfied with the results. They have seen a beautiful illusion

as Christ once doubted, the philosopher and legislator to give to his laws the eyes of men; he can no longer stand above all human lessons flowing from the mind of the support of depend? Abandoned to the gloomy paths which Reason and experience judgement of Protestant questions respecting difficulties are left; the guide it in safety; stung to dispute without being lapses into that state of safety found it, and from it. Doubt, pyrrhonism, vain theories, hypothetical more moderate abilities;ilities."

on the earth, if the disorders no support to the and *only* guide, which the truth. "Let us, if you the dignity and elevation but, let us not forget ourselves by fancying, Why forget the inconceivable fact, that which are supposed to be well naive is our knowledge, less in information, even another had affirmed? destroys our plans, and we those geniuses who then to the boldest flights reached the utmost a mind to range over, ce, and sailed on the minds of all ages have in a beautiful illusion

appear before their eyes,—the brilliant image which enchanted them has vanished; and when they thought, they were about to enter a region of light, they have found themselves surrounded with darkness, and they have viewed with affright the extent of their ignorance. It is for this reason that the greatest minds have so little confidence in the strength of the human intellect, although they cannot, but, be fully aware that they are superior to other men." And, still, in the greatest and deepest of all sciences, the science of God, the Eternal, the Infinite, and of the truths He has revealed, the Rev. Mr. Stephenson would tell the poor, ignorant, illiterate man, that he is, by his own individual judgement, fully competent to explore it, and, with the Bible,—that most difficult of books,—in his hands, fully able to unravel all its mysteries and difficulties, and learn what God has revealed, and what He requires, that he shall believe, upon pain of being damned! Is there not something here very absurd?

Let the human mind study itself, its own history, and it will see and understand how little security, there is to be found in its own strength, and how very liable it is to err, in its own judgement. Abounding in systems, inexhaustible in subtleties; as ready in conceiving a project as incapable in maintaining it; full of ideas which rise, agitate, and destroy each other, like insects that abound in lakes; now raising itself on the wings of sublime inspiration, and now creeping like a reptile on the face of the earth; as able and as willing to destroy the work of others, as it is impotent to construct any durable ones of its own; urged on by the violence of passion, swollen with pride, confounded by the infinite variety of objects which present themselves to it; confused by so many false lights and so many deceptive appearances, the human mind when left *entirely* to itself, resembles those brilliant meteors which dart at random through the immensity of the heavens, assume a thousand eccentric forms, send forth a thousand sparks, dazzle for a moment by their fantastic splendor, and disappear without leaving even a reflected light to illuminate the darkness. Such is the history of man's knowledge. And in the light of such history can we be astonished that man, relying *solely* on his private judgement, in interpreting the Holy Scriptures, should grope in the dark, follow delusion after delusion, profess error after error, until, in the hundreds of objects which have been established, a ray of that divine truth which Christ has taught, is scarcely discernible.

The Catholic Church, knowing this weakness of man's mind, says to him: "Thy intellect is weak, thou hast need of a guide in many things." Protestantism, on the contrary, says to him: "Thou art surrounded by light, walk as thou wilt; thou canst have no better guide than thyself." Which is right? I leave the reader, to his own reflections on what has been said about the difficulties of the Bible and the weakness of man's intellect, to answer the question himself.

But, it is not alone Catholic writers who proclaim the Bible as replete with difficulties, which puzzle the weakness of man's mind when left to itself; Protestant authors themselves proclaim them, and point out the results, of private interpretation, in attempting, by its own unaided light, to solve them. "In order to understand the Bible," says the celebrated Protestant divine, Claude, "a great deal is required. A great many obstacles are to be surmounted, and a great many difficulties, to be overcome. The terms are to be weighed exactly; the style to be examined. Similar expressions must be considered, and dissimilar passages discussed. The sense of obscure and ambiguous sentences should be penetrated, and the connection of texts alluded to, as they refer to such and such an object. For these purposes, it is necessary to know how to distinguish the Apocryphal books from the Canonical ones, and to understand the original languages, in order to be enabled to judge of the fidelity of the translations; *in so much that it is in fact true, that the whole length of a life is not too long to do this well. Nay, I even say, that it is too short; and that all human strength is too weak to fathom the sense of the Bible—the bottomless source of mysteries and heavenly truths.*" (Def de la Ref). And, still, Mr. Stephenson would give this "bottomless source, &c.," which it is above all human strength to fathom, to even ignorant men, to learn by their own private judgement, what God has revealed, what they are required to believe.

Another Protestant, the renowned Jurieu, writing on the same subject says: "The ignorant and simple are not only incapable of finding out the truth by reading the Bible; but, I allow, with Monsieur Nicole, *that such means of finding out the truth is absurd and impossible* (Vrai Syst.)

Again; the Protestant Bishop of Durham, Van Mildert, writes: "Whatever some may dream of the facility of extracting from the Scripture, a coherent and correct system of divine truth, this hardly is to be effected, without such qualifications and attainments as we shall look for in vain among a very considerable portion of mankind. . . . A general knowledge of the principles of grammar and criticism, and an acquaintance with the idioms of the language in which any book is written, *are in every instance indispensable.* . . . It is chiefly by attention to the verbal analogy of Scripture, that the Biblical critic is to be distinguished. Here his labour must begin; and aid must be sought of a competent apparatus for the purpose—of Concordances; Scripture Lexicons; and other helps of a similar kind. Commentators, harmonists, philologists—all must be called in, to enable us to analyse, or to combine, rightly to divide or to compare spiritual truths. *To neglect these, is virtually to neglect the means of profiting by the Bible*" (Bamp. Lect.) And, still, the Bible, says Mr. Stephenson, is the *only* rule of faith for all men, even for the poor ignorant man who knows no more about lexicons, concordances, &c., than he does about "the man in the moon"!

Another Protestant divine, Bishop Mant says: "It is not every man,

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that is duly qualified to explain them (the Scriptures) to advantage. In order to understand the Scriptures, not only much zeal and diligence are necessary; but also much study in preparatory exercises; much care in comparing them; much discrimination in distinguishing between passages of limited and those of an universal import; much humility and sobriety of mind, in explaining the more mysterious points of doctrine; and especially, freedom from all prepossession, &c., (Brampt Lect.)

Another learned Protestant critic, the great Dr. Barrow, says: "The truths and precepts of religion are conveyed (in the Scriptures) to us in the language of a distant age and country; and consequently, in translations only can they be known to the great majority of mankind. They are expressed in terms, alluding to the customs and manners of the times; to secular modes of thinking and acting now known by little else than these illusions themselves. They are collected from a variety of treatises, historical, prophetic, moral, and religious No wonder, then, surely, that so many theological controversies have begun and ended in mere disputes about the meaning of words. No wonder, under these circumstances, that the *upright, the pious, and even the learned*, should have been led into the *mistaken* interpretations of the Scripture to hold *mistaken doctrines*." (Brampt Lect.) And we are told, nevertheless by the Rev. Mr. Stephenson that, notwithstanding all this possibility of being "mistaken" in his interpretation, and of his holding "mistaken doctrines," he is enabled, with the Scriptures alone in his hands, "to come even *with boldness* to the throne of grace." His "boldness" must indeed be something very extraordinary.

The most celebrated Protestants have considered the Bible, not only as a most difficult book; but, they have plainly pointed out the sad state to which the private interpretation of it, has brought the religious world. In a work before me entitled "The Bible Question Fairly Tested," I find the following (Page 65.): "The number of organized sects, and religions, which within the interval of a few years, (after the Reformation was started), was established among the Reformers, exceeded according to the testimony of some of the Protestant historians,—Functius, Lindan, &c.,—upwards of two hundred. The confusion was indeed such, that Luther lamenting now the evils, which his own violence had created—exclaimed! "*Men are now come to such a pitch of disorder, that they stand no longer in need of any teachers. Every man now gives the law to himself.*" Mosheim, (the great German Protestant historian) states that in some parts of Germany,—such was the growth of error and fanaticism,—the magistrates interfered and *forbid the reading of the Bible*. This too, as I have already remarked, was more or less the case in England, where in 1543, the Parliament in consequence of the abuses, resulting from the indiscriminate use of the sacred book, restricted the reading of it to *such persons only as were deemed the most competent to understand it.*"

Again;—"Our Divines," says Starke, himself a Protestant—call the most fundamental doctrines of Christianity, religious prejudices, just like so many carpenters, constantly hacking and hewing away, they have made the temple of religion a mere miserable hovel."—"The Academical Protestantism of Germany" say the writers of the Quarterly Review, "is hardly a veiled Deism. . . . The Bible in the hands of these Christian commentators, is changed into a mere minstrelsy of the Jewish Border—a patchwork of wild old ballads." Muller,—again, a Protestant,—asserts the same thing: "Many of our theologians," he tells us "make it an absolute duty to drown the fundamental doctrines of Christianity in pure Deism. Hence it was, that Coleridge,—again a Protestant,—informs us, that whilst he was in Germany, "he found the professors in the universities lecturing against the most material points in the Gospel." Empaytaz,—a zealous Protestant himself, informs us that "In Switzerland, Christianity in regard to dogma, is almost wholly exploded, and that Socinianism reigns there uncontrolled." Referring to England, the eloquent writers in the 'British Critic,' say, "there is quite enough of infidelity among us already; and liberal principles—that is no fixed principles whatsoever,—are professed in every quarter, and in spite of the apparent tranquillity, which reigns around, the day may not be distant, in which there will be as little belief among the gentlemen of England, as there is now among the philosophers of Germany—that is, none at all" (ibid Page 69.)

And what has caused this deplorable state of things? Perhaps, the following extracts from the same work may throw some ray of light on the the question. "We conscientiously believe," says Dr. Norris (a Protestant) in his letter to Lord Liverpool, "that the Bible Society is an institution, fraught with danger, not only to our Church, but to the best interests of truth and unity, throughout the world." The learned Selden, a Protestant also, says: "These two words 'Scrutamini Scripturas' (search the Scriptures) have undone the world"—"The Bible," says Bishop Hare, quoting the Protestant rule, "is the religion of Protestants. And so say all the heretics and schismatics that ever were." And Archbishop Bramhall, another Protestant, declares that, "the unrestricted liberty of reading the Bible is more injurious to religion, than all the restraints of the Catholics." And the candid Hooker, another Protestant, says: "Scripture may be abused to any purpose."

But enough, I could go on, until I should fill a pamphlet larger than this, quoting Protestant authorities, on the difficulties of understanding the Scriptures, and on the great absurdity of scattering them broadcast over the world, and telling men, that they must search them, and learn from them, by their own individual, private, interpretation, what God requires they must believe; and, also, on the deplorable state, to which this private interpretation of them, has reduced religion in the world. In the words of the learned Selden, these two words "search the Scriptures," have undone the world.

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But the Rev. Mr. Stephenson may say, this is all very fine, sir; but notwithstanding all the difficulties of understanding the Scriptures, if a man only pray sincerely for light, the Holy Spirit will guide him to a knowledge of the truth. I have answered this “bold” assertion sufficiently before (page 13). If the Holy Spirit really does direct the searchers of the Bible, how does it happen, that so many thousands as well-intentioned and prayerful—for they all claim to be that—as their neighbours, or perhaps as the Rev. Mr. Stephenson himself, are led, to use the expressions of Dr. Barrow, into “the mistaken interpretation” of the Scriptures and profess “mistaken doctrines”? Can Mr. Stephenson answer satisfactorily this question? And if not; is not this fact alone sufficient to prove, that all the talk of Bible searchers about the Holy Ghost, guiding them, is very like what the profane call, so much “pious twaddle and cant.” The Holy Spirit, is the God of truth, and He cannot contradict himself, or teach lies.

I now turn to the consideration of the arguments and proofs, brought forward by the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, in support of his rule of faith. I italicize some of his expressions.

In the first place, he says: “Taking the word of God as my rule of faith, I am enabled to trust in a living Saviour, and through him to come even with boldness to the throne of grace that I may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” This is all very nice. Very sanctimonious if you like, but it is not argument or proof. It is mere pious averment, mere assertion, and as averment or assertion, is not argument or proof, I pass it over, simple remarking, that the Rev. Mr. Stephenson seems to be possessed of a much greater degree of “boldness,” in rushing into the awful presence of God, before “the throne of grace” than most people would like to lay claim to. The Scriptures tell us that “Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and feet when they went into the Tabernacle of the Covenant, and went to the altar, as the Lord had commanded Moses.” (Exod xl. 29. 30). They tell us, also, that many thousands were slain for looking through curiosity into the ark of God—“because they had seen the ark of the Lord.” (1 King’s vi. 19.) And elsewhere, we read, that the indignation of the Lord was enkindled against Oza for having put forward his hand to the ark of God, and taken hold of it, merely to prevent it, as he thought, from falling; and that “the Lord struck him dead” on the spot “for his rashness.” (II King’s vi. 7). But Mr. Stephenson seems to have no fears of the presence of God; like a certain individual we read of, in the Bible (Luke 18. 10.), styled a “Pharisee,” who went, even with boldness, up into the Temple, and thanked God that “he was not like the rest of men”; he rushes, with the Bible in his hands, even with boldness to the throne of grace. His boldness, however, might, perhaps, fare not much better than did that of the Pharisee alluded to; and the only result of it might be

to excite the indignation of the Lord as did the rashness of Oza. But this is his own business; so I pass on.

In the next place; the Rev. Mr. Stephenson endeavors to prop up his rule of faith by giving, what he professes are, some passages from Catholic writers. But how these extracts prove anything in favor of his rule, it is very difficult for the reader to see. All they say, in the matter, is, that his rule is not the rule of the Catholic Church: they do not say a single word in favor of his rule being the true one; therefore, they prove nothing for him; so I pass on again.

He, next, quotes some passages from the early Fathers of the Church, who, he says, are with him. Perhaps they are, but many people do not say so; Martin Luther himself did not think so, when he said: "I care not if a thousand Chrysostoms, a thousand Cyprians, a thousand Augustins, stood up against me," and "neither do I concern myself what Ambrose, Austin, the Councils or practices of ages say. . . *I know their opinions so well that I have declared against them.*" So strongly did the great Reformer feel, that the Fathers were against Protestant principles, that he allowed his ungovernable temper, to carry him even so far, as to call them a lot of "Thomistical Asses" (C. Reg. Tom. 2.) So you see, Mr. Stephenson, that it is not so very certain after all, that the Fathers of the Church are with you. I might quote from the writings of many other celebrated Protestants, to show the same thing; but it is not necessary now for my purpose.

The Fathers summoned into the witness box by Mr. Stephenson, are eight in number: Tertullian, Eusebius, Athanasius, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, Theophilus and Chrysostom. He gives some passages, which he professes to have taken from their writings; but he does not give either the name of the works, book, chapter or page, from which he takes them. This does not look very like, as if he himself felt very certain, that the authority, of the Fathers was with him. The short—only a very few words in some instances—extracts, given by him, may, in their isolation from their context, appear to give some semblance of a support to his rule; but I feel certain, that, read in connection with their context, they would leave very little site for Mr. Stephenson to base an argument upon. The Fathers, indeed, wrote much on the Holy Scriptures; but I defy Mr. Stephenson to give some clear, distinct passages from their writings—(and mention the work &c., from which he takes them)—which will prove, in an unquestionable manner, that they ever taught, that the Scriptures *alone* and the private interpretation of them, constituted the rule of faith, ordained by Christ, to lead all men, in all times, to a knowledge of the truth, which they are required to believe, upon pain of being condemned, damned. I have gone over pretty carefully the writings of some of the Fathers, which he quotes from, and I have not been able to find in them the passages, as he gives them.

The first Father, Mr. Stephenson quotes from in favor of his rule—the Scriptures *alone*,—is Tertullian, and he gives the great number of *six words* from this Father. Now let us see, if Tertullian really did teach, that the Scriptures *alone* are “all-sufficient,” and that *tradition* is to be altogether rejected. Tertullian, the reader will remember, was born about the year 160; he became a convert to Christianity, and was afterwards ordained a priest, and died about the year 245; having lived about 85 years. Tertullian must, therefore, have known pretty well, whether the Christian Church, in those early days rejected tradition and the authority of the Church, and regarded the Scriptures *alone*, as the rule of faith. Well, what does Tertullian say on the matter? Let him speak for himself. In his most excellent work on “Proscriptions against Heretics,” he says: “We are not allowed to indulge our own humor, nor to choose what another has *invented*. We have the Apostles of our Lord for our founders, who were not themselves, the inventors nor the authors of what they left us; but they have faithfully *taught* the world,” (not allowed the world to *teach* itself by Scripture searching) “the doctrines which they received from Christ.” (Ch. VII.) And how are we to know these doctrines? Tertullian answers: “Now to know what the Apostles taught, that is what Christ revealed to them, recourse must be had.”—(To the Scriptures? No, but,)—“to the Churches which they founded and which they instructed by *word of mouth* and by their epistles.” “For,” continues Tertullian, “it is plain that all doctrine, which is *conformable* to the faith of these mother Churches,”—(not to the faith which each individual imagines he finds in the Scriptures)—“is true, being that which they received from the Apostles; the Apostles from Christ; Christ from God; and *all other opinions must be novel and false.*” (Ch. XXI.) And addressing those who would claim the Scriptures as justifying and upholding their “notions,” he asks: “What will you gain by recurring to Scripture, when one denies what the other asserts? Learn rather, who it is that possesses the faith of Christ; to whom the Scriptures belong; from whom, by whom, and when that faith was delivered, by which we are made Christians. For wherever shall be found the true faith, *there* will be found the *genuine Scriptures*; *there*, the *true interpretation* of them, and *there*, *all Christian tradition*. . . . If then the truth be adjudged to us who *embrace the rule*, which the *Church received from the Apostles*; the Apostles from Christ; and Christ from God; and heretics, it is plain, *cannot be allowed to appeal to Scriptures*, in which we prove, they have no concern. They are not Christians;”—(in the essential sense, I presume, Tertullian meant)—“and therefore, to them we may say: What business have you on my estate, you, who are none of mine? . . . The possession, I say, is mine; has been long mine; mine first; the title deeds are in my hands, derived from them whose property it was. I am, the heir of the Apostles. As

they settled it by will, on the conditions prescribed, I hold it. You (heretics), they disinherited, as aliens and enemies. And *why are you such*, but by the *diversity of the doctrine* which each one of you, as he was disposed, produced or received against those Apostles. Where this diversity of doctrine is, there, will be adulterated the Scriptures and the expounding of them."—All this, Mr. Stephenson, does not look very like, as if Tertulian adored the plenitude of the Scriptures, as the only, and "all sufficient" rule of men's faith.

Mr. Stephenson, next, quotes from Eusebius. He died in the year 338. Now, what does Eusebius say in favor of Mr. Stephenson's rule, and against tradition and the authority of the Church? Let the reader peruse his words, and then he can judge for himself. In his work (Dem. Evang. lib. 1.), speaking of the truths of Christ, he writes: "Which truths, though they be consigned to the sacred writings, are still in a fuller manner confirmed by the traditions of the Catholic Church, which Church is diffused over all the earth. This unwritten tradition confirms and seals the testimony of the Holy Scriptures."—So you see, Mr. Stephenson, that Eusebius was not, after all, a great advocate of your sole and "all sufficient" rule of faith. Unlike you and Martin Luther, he had great respect for the unwritten tradition; and, still, if you could have any ground to expect, that any of the early Fathers would favor your rule, you might hope that Eusebius would, for he was pretty strongly suspected of being tainted with Arianism and favouring that heresy.

St. Athanasius is the next Father, which the Rev. Mr. Stephenson summons up in favor of his rule. He was bishop and patriarch of Alexandria, and lived in the fourth century. He was one of the most celebrated Fathers of the Church; he wrote much against the Arian heresy. Well, let the reader peruse the following prayer of St. Athanasius and say, whether he looks much like a Protestant, or an advocate of the Protestant rule of faith. Addressing the Blessed Virgin, Mary, he says. "Hear now oh! daughter of David; incline thine ears to our prayers,"—We raise our cry to thee. *Remember us, oh! most Holy Virgin*, and for the feeble eulogiums we give thee, grant us great gifts from the treasures of thy graces, thou who art full of grace.—Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. *Queen, and Mother of God, intercede for us.*"—(Serm. in Annunt).—I think this extract from St. Athanasius, is quite sufficient, without any more, to decide, whether St. Athanasius was a Protestant or not.

St. Basil, (fourth century), is the next Father, which the Rev. Mr. Stephenson mentions; but he does not quote any extract from him. I will supply the omission. Hear St. Basil on tradition, or the unwritten word: "Among," he says, "the points of *belief and practice*, in the Church, some were delivered in writing, while *others were received by apostolic traditions* in mystery, that is in a hidden manner; but *both have an equal author*

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nor are they opposed by any one, who is but slightly versed in ecclesiastical rites. For, if we attempt to reject, *as matters of little moment, such points as were not written*, we shall, by our imprudence offer a *signal injury to the Gospel*, confining the whole preaching of faith to a mere name" (de Spir. Sanct). "Separate not the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son : *let tradition enter you.*" (Scr. adv. sabel).—This makes it pretty clear, that St. Basil was no advocate of the Scripture *alone* as the rule of faith.

St. Ambrose (fourth century) is the next Father, cited by Mr. Stephenson. I do not think, I need weary my readers by giving long extracts from him on the question. Martin Luther's opinion of him is quite sufficient to settle the matter. Luther says of him : "Neither do I consider what Ambrose, Austin, &c., say ; *I know their opinions so well that I have declared against them.*"

The next Father is St. Jerome (fourth century.) Let the reader peruse the following extract from that Father and see his "mind" about those, who believe, that every man, and women is able to interpret the Scriptures. The remarks of St. Jerome are very sarcastic. He says, that in every thing else we must have some one to show and guide us, but ever old woman, and doting old man, Biblesearchers, think they are able, and able alone, to master the Scriptures. "In all menial arts" he says, "there must be some one to show the way. The art of understanding the Scriptures alone is open to every reader ! Here learned or unlearned, we can all interpret. *The tattling old woman, the doting old man, the worldly sophist, all, all here presume ; they tear texts asunder and dare to become teachers before they have learned.* (Ep L. T. IV.) What does Mr. Stephenson think of St. Jerome after these sarcastic remarks on "tattling old woman, &c.," who presume to learn all things from the Scripture, and "become teachers before they have learned ?"

St. Theophilus, (second century) is the next brought up. He was Bishop of Antioch ; He wrote strongly against the heresies of Marcion and others ; and, also, wrote an apology for the Christian religion. In his apology, he says, that, as there are islands in the sea, furnished with safe harbors to which mariners may fly for security "from the tossing of the tempest," so also has God given to the world Churches—those established by the Apostles and teaching the same doctrine—into whose safe havens the lovers of truth may flee, and, also, "all those who desire to be saved and escape the wrath of God." And representing heresies, as dangerous islands in the sea he says, as these islands "are destructive to sailors," so likewise are erroneous doctrines and heresies, destructive to "those who are seduced and drawn aside by them." Any one who reads the writings of this author will easily perceive, that he has little to say in favor of Mr. Stephenson's rule.

St. Chrysostom is the last Father, put by Mr. Stephenson in the

witness box. Commenting on the words of St. Paul, to the Thessalonians (Rom. iv in 2 Thess.) "Hence," he says, "it is plain that all things were not delivered in writing, but many otherwise, and are equally to be believed. Wherefore, let us hold fast the traditions of the Church. It is tradition; let this suffice."—This is pretty plain; is it not?

These are all the Fathers, whom the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, quotes from; and, as the reader will have perceived, they have little to say in favour of his rule of faith. On the contrary, they all speak clearly against it, and hold fast, as St. Chrysostom says, "to the traditions of the Church which are equally to be believed," with the things, or truths, contained in the Scriptures. The Rev. Mr. Stephenson, had better let the Fathers alone; for their writings contain more evidence than would be sufficient, to condemn, his "all-sufficient" rule a hundred times over.

It is not only the Fathers, quoted by Mr. Stephenson, who speak against his rule; but so, also, do all the other Fathers, who have touched upon the subject, either directly or indirectly. I cannot encumber this article with too many citations from them, otherwise, I might cover any number of pages, with their testimony. I will content myself with referring to St. Irenæus, who lived in the second century, and a few others. St. Irenæus,—whom the great book-of-Martyrs-man, John Fox—an authority, which, I presume, the Rev. Mr. Stephenson will not question—designates as "the zealous opposer of heresies in general,"—was the disciple of St. Polycarp, who was a convert of St. John, the Evangelist; and therefore, he must have been well acquainted with the mind of the Apostles and of the Church in his day, on the question of the private interpretation of the Scriptures. Well, what does he say? Hear him. "To him" he writes, "that believeth that there is one God and holds to the head which is Christ,—(whom all Catholics hold to be the invisible head of the Church,)—to this man all things will be plain, if he read diligently the Scriptures,—(and be guided by his own private judgement in interpreting them? No. But)—with the aid of those who are the priests in the Church and in whose hands, as we have shown, rests the doctrine of the Apostles." And elsewhere in book first of the same work, Chapter 1st., he says, speaking of these same heretics: "And not only from the evangelical and apostolical writings, which they perversely interpret and wickedly expound, do these (heretics) attempt to prove their assertions; but also from the law and the prophets. For as there are in these, many parables and allegories, which may be forced into various meanings, then they craftily fit to their own purposes." And again in the same work. "Such being their positions (or doctrines) which the prophets never preached, nor Christ taught, nor the Apostles delivered, they boast their own superior knowledge, and attempt to make it seem credible—(like Mr. Stephenson—

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son with his "bold" averments)—forming as it were a rope of sand by adding some words from the parables or sayings of the prophets, or of Christ, or of the Apostles,"—like Mr. Stephenson, by the texts of Scripture which he cites, in support of his position. And, again, in the same work Book IV. Ch. XIX. after stating that "so varying are the notions," which these searchers of the Bible "draw from the Scriptures," he declares, that it is scarcely worth the trouble to refute them, for they already refute themselves, by their constant variations. "When they shall be agreed," he says, "among themselves on what they draw from the Scriptures it will be our time to refute them. Meanwhile, thinking wrongfully, and not agreeing in the meaning of the same words, they convict themselves." Just as the many sects of Protestantism do now convict themselves, by thinking wrongfully and not agreeing on the meaning of the same words. I presume the Rev. Mr. Stephenson will not consider St. Irenæus much of an authority in favor of his rule of faith.

A few more extracts and I am done with the Fathers for the present. Origen who lived in the same century says: "That alone is truth which in nothing differs from ecclesiastical and apostolical tradition. (Præf. lib. 1. de Princip.) And again: "As often as the heretics produce the Canonical Scriptures in which every Christian is agreed and believes, they seem to say, Lo! with us is the word of truth. But to them (the heretics) we cannot give credit nor depart from the first and ecclesiastical traditions." (Tract 29 in Mat.)—St. Cyprian says: "If we turn to the source of Divine tradition, error ceases." (Ep. 63.)—St. Epiphanius says: "We must look also to tradition for all things cannot be learned from the Scriptures."

But, enough from the Fathers. The reader can, now, see what truth there is in the "bold averment" of the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, (Page 6.) that "the authority of the Fathers" is with him in his attitude against tradition. As I have said before, he had better let the Fathers alone. They were not Protestants, as any one can perceive from the foregoing extracts.

The next witness, which the Rev. Mr. Stephenson calls up, to testify in favor of his rule of faith, are the Scriptures. And what do they say? "In the second Epistle to Timothy (3. 15)," he says, "it is said that 'the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation.'" (Page 6.) Be honest, Mr. Stephenson; the Scriptures say no such thing. In your anxiety to prop up your rule of faith, you should not allow yourself to change the words of Scripture. Even in your own Protestant Bible, the text reads, "are able to make thee (not 'us') wise unto salvation; or, as the Catholic Bible has it; "can instruct thee to salvation." Now why did Mr. Stephenson change the word "thee" into "us"? His object is evident: he wished to make his hearers

imagine, that St. Paul was speaking in this text to all the laity or faithful ; and that he wished them ("us") to search the Scriptures, as their only rule of faith, to become wise unto salvation ; whereas Mr. Stephenson must know, St. Paul was addressing Timothy, a bishop of the Church. It was to him Timothy, a bishop, and not to the laity that the Apostle said, the Scriptures "are able to make *thee* (not "us") wise unto salvation." It was Timothy's duty, as a bishop, to study and possess the Scriptures, that he might, not only make himself, "wise unto salvation," but be able to instruct others—the faithful committed to his care,—to become wise unto it also. And St. Paul himself tells him this ; for he says to him, "all Scripture..... is profitable to teach, to *reprove*, to *correct*, to *instruct* in justice " or as the Protestant Bible expresses it, "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

If any further proof were required that St. Paul was not, in the text quoted, speaking of the private interpretation of the Scriptures as the *sole* rule of faith, either for the laity or, even, for Timothy himself, although a Bishop ; it can easily be found in the verse preceding, where the Apostle, tells Timothy : "Continue thou in those things which thou hast *learned*, and which have *been committed* to thee ; or as in Prot. Bible ; "thou hast been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them." Remark, the Apostle does not say : knowing thou hast learned them by thy own private judgement from the Scriptures ; but "of *whom* (St. Paul himself) thou hast learned them." The reader can now judge for himself, what value there is in argument in favor of his rule, which Mr. Stephenson attempts to draw from this text of St. Paul ; and why he changed the word "thee" into "us." Besides, he must remember that the Scriptures, St. Paul speaks of, were not the *whole* Bible, or Protestant rule of faith ; for the whole of the New Testament was not then written.

The next text which the Rev. Mr. Stephenson quotes, is from St. James. Martin Luther used to call his Epistle "an Epistle of straw" ; but, it is evident, Mr. Stephenson does not look upon it in the same light as the "great Reformer," since he quotes from it in favor of his rule. Well, what does St. James say ? "In St. James, (r. 21)" says Mr. Stephenson, "we are told ; 'the engrafted word is able to save us.'" But what of this ? Has Mr. Stephenson read over carefully the chapter of St. James from which he quotes ? If he had, do not think he would be in a hurry to summon St. James as a witness to testify in his favor. St. James says : "the engrafted word is able to save us" ; and then Mr. Stephenson concludes that he, therefore, teaches the private interpretation of the Scriptures. Now, if he really meant this by the words quoted, what does he mean in verse 16, by the words "let every man be swift *to hear*" ; in verse 22, "be ye doers of the word, and not *hearers only*" ; in verse 23, "If a

man be a *hearer* of the word, and not a *doer*”; in verse 25, “not becoming a *forgetful hearer*, but a *doer* of the work” and in the very verse quoted (21), “with meekness *receiving* the engrafted word.” Please explain all these *Hearers* and *receivers* of the word, so often repeated in the immediate context of the text quoted, do not seem to establish that St. James was speaking about *searchers* or *private interpretations* of the Scriptures. People *hear* with their *ears*, they *search* the Scriptures with their *eyes*. And, again; if the engrafted word is able to save us, in the sense Mr. Stephenson wishes it to be understood, what did St. James mean by *doer* of the word repeated three times in a few short verses? It is clear, St. James knew nothing of Mr. Stephenson’s doctrine about the rule of faith, and he would have gained much more for his cause, by treating St. James’ writing, with Luther, “the great Reformer,” as an “Epistle of straw,” than by summoning him up as a witness. Let the reader ponder St. James’ words.

But, perhaps, the Rev. Mr. Stephenson’s next quotation will be more satisfactory. He tells us, that Christ gave us a “precept” to search the Scriptures in these words, “search the Scriptures,” (John v. 39.) Why does not Mr. Stephenson give the whole text? Christ said: “Search the Scriptures for you *think* in them to have everlasting life; and the same are they that give testimony of me,” or, as we read in the Protestant Bible, “for in them ye *think* ye have eternal life: and they are they, which testify of me.” Now, is it a question beyond dispute, that in this text Christ gives a *precept*, as Mr. Stephenson says, to search the Scriptures. Mr. Stephenson must know, if he knows anything, at all, about the writings of commentators, even Protestant commentators, on this text, that it is not beyond question, that a precept was therein given. Many maintain, that Christ in speaking, did not use the imperative mood, but the present tense of the indicative; and that the words should read, “ye search the Scriptures” and not “search the Scriptures.” Even the great Protestant critic, Dr. Campbell, whom the celebrated Baptist divine, Dr. Carson, calls “one of the ablest critics that has ever appeared,” maintains that the words of Christ should be read in the indicative. The Rev. Albert Barnes, another Protestant commentator, is of the same opinion. He says: “The word [search] *may be* either in the indicative or imperative mood. In our translation it is in the imperative, as if Jesus commanded them to search the Scriptures. But it is probable that he meant merely to say that they *did* search the Scriptures, expecting to find in them eternal life.” And, still, in the face of this judgement of Barnes, and other Protestant commentators, and even, of Dr. Campbell, “one of the ablest critics that has ever appeared,” as Dr. Carson calls him, Mr. Stephenson is “bold” enough to aver unreservedly, that a “precept” is given in the words: “Search the Scriptures.” Really, his boldness seems to have no limit.

But, even allowing that the words of Christ do convey a precept, what follows? That Mr. Stephenson's rule is right? Not at all. To whom was Christ speaking at the time? To His Apostles, His disciples or followers? Evidently not, as any one can perceive in reading over carefully this Chapter of St. John; but to the Scribes and Pharisees, to the Jews and the enemies of Christ. His words were addressed reproachfully or sarcastically to them, because they had all along boasted they knew the prophecies, and, still in Him they could not perceive the fulfilment of them. He spoke in much the same manner, as if He had said: Ye boast yourselves on your knowledge of the Scriptures, and, still, you so are blind, as not to see that I am the Messiah, the fullfillment of them.

Again: "Search the Scriptures." But what Scriptures? The whole Bible, composed of the New as well as the Old Testament, which form or constitute together, the Protestant rule of faith? Not at all; for, at that time, there was not one word of the New Testament written. What Scriptures then? The Old Scriptures only,—which *alone* do *not* constitute Mr. Stephenson's rule of faith.

But, why did Christ use these words "Search the Scriptures," at all? Because, as I have before said, He wished to reproach His enemies for their pretended knowledge, or, rather, understanding, of the Scriptures, and still denying, that He was the promised Messiah. This itself is evident, from the words which follow: "because ye *think* ye have life everlasting in them." He does not say, because ye know for certain, ye have everlasting life in them; but *ye think* ye have. And hence, it is, that in the preceding verse he tells them, that not withstanding all their *thinking*, the word of the Father did not abide in them. "You have not his word abiding in you; for whom he hath sent, him you believe not." Christ spoke to them, much in the same manner, as any person might say to the Rev. Mr. Stephenson himself: "You are a Protestant, because you *think*, not because you *know*, without fear or possibility of error or mistake, that the Protestant rule of faith, is the one taught and ordained by Christ." As with the Jews, might it not, also, possibly be with him, that, notwithstanding all his searching and *thinking*, the word of the Father abideth not in him either, and that he believeth not in the manner, required by Christ upon pain of eternal damnation?

In the text, Christ further adds: "and the same are they that give testimony of me." Exactly. If the Jews really understood, as they boasted, the Scriptures, the prophecies, why did they not perceive this testimony? But, like Bible searchers, now-a-days, they only presumptuously *thought* (*ye think*) they understood them, and, therefore, they did not perceive the testimony, they offered of Christ. It is this *thinking* about understanding the Scriptures, which has given rise to all the heresies, that have ever existed.

The reader can now see what argument there is, in this text from St. John, in favor of Mr. Stephenson's rule of faith. If it proves anything, it proves simply a condemnation of his rule, which makes people, like the Jews in question, *think* and *imagine*, they understand the Scriptures, and fail to perceive the testimony which they give of Christ and His religion. "Ye *think* in them to have life everlasting" and still "you have not his word abiding in you; for whom he hath sent, him you believe not," in all He teaches.

The next text which the Rev. Mr. Stephenson brings forward is, that in which St. Paul appears, to commend the Bereans for "daily searching the Scriptures." "The precept" he says, 'search the Scriptures,' and the commendation of the Bereans who 'searched the Scripture daily' present a rule and an example, we should all follow." If Mr. Stephenson simply means by this, that it is, a good, an excellent, a recommendable thing, to read the Scriptures, or parts of them daily, for edification, &c., I have not to disagree with him. But he means much more; that all are bound to take them and search them, as their *only* rule of faith. Now, let us consider the text and examine, if it teaches any such precept. St. Paul said: "Now these (Bereans), were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all eagerness, daily searching the Scriptures, whether these things were so," or, as given in the Protestant Bible, "in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so." (Acts xvii. 11.) The Rev. Mr. Stephenson imagines or *thinks*, again, this text offers a powerful prop for his rule of faith. Let us see.

In the first place, all commentators—(I wonder whether Mr. Stephenson ever read commentators' works)—are not agreed, whether the epithet, "more noble" was strictly intended to commend the Bereans for daily searching the Scriptures, or for "the all eagerness," or the "all readiness of mind," with which they received the word from him *by preaching*. If the commendation, "more noble" was bestowed on them, for the latter reason, as some say it was, because, that the Jews in Thessalonica, where the Apostle had been preaching only a short time before, had "stirred up the people and the rulers of the city" against him, and forced him to fly to Berea (Acts 17);—then the text is decidedly against the Protestant rule of faith. But, even if the commendation, "more noble," was bestowed on them for the former reason, it offers no solid argument to Mr. Stephenson. And why? Because, in the first place, what Scriptures did the Bereans examine daily, whether the faith St. Paul taught, the sacraments he administered and the observances he commanded, were so ("whether these things were so?") Evidently not the Acts of the Apostles, or at least this part of them; for it is self evident this part of the New Testament was not

then written, nor did they search any portion of it, for all of its epistles were not written : nor is it likely the Bereans had a copy of any Gospel or Epistle then written. It was, therefore, the Old Testament they searched, the very same which, a few days before, St. Paul had expounded, had preached, to them. It was not, therefore, the *whole* Bible, or Protestant rule of faith, which they searched.

But why did they search the Old Scriptures at all? Evidently not to call it doubt or question, or to set up and profess doctrines extracted from them, by their own private judgement, contrary to, what St. Paul had preached to them by word of mouth a few days before ; since we find they were "all eagerness," or "all readiness" to receive the word. But, being Jews, and desiring to embrace the religion of Christ, if they found it to be true, they very naturally turned to the prophecies to ascertain, whether what St. Paul had preached to them, about the fulfilment of these prophecies in Christ, was correct or not ; and, finding that it was, they became Christians. It was simply on this account they searched the Scriptures, and not because they believed they were required to take them as their *sole* rule of faith and search them, to learn what they were required to believe, upon pain of being condemned.

But enough : I must not extend this article to too great a length. The texts of Scripture which the Rev. Mr. Stephenson quotes, even by straining them out of their real meaning, afford no satisfactory proof in favor of his rule of faith. What he should do, to prove the Protestant rule of faith to be the one ordained by Christ, is to give his hearers or readers some clear, distinct texts from the Scriptures, which may, not only in their isolation from their context, be forced or strained into appearing to give a feeble support to his rule of faith ; but which will, read in their connection with the context, *clearly and distinctly*, and *without room for reasonable doubt*, prove that his or the Protestant rule of faith—the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible—is the *one, sole* rule ordained by Christ, and that all men must hold themselves responsible for searching it. "*I am a Protestant,*" he says, "*because I hold the Holy Scriptures a sufficient rule of my faith, and myself responsible for searching them.*" I ask my readers to consider, well, whether in his sermon he has *proved* this rule, in any satisfactory manner from the Holy Scriptures?

A few words more on some of his other "bold" averments, and I have done for the present. His next argument is on Page 6. There he says : "The great mass of men, who have been saved by the Bible are emphatically Bible Christians, unacquainted with the traditions of men, individuals of humble minds—in many cases illiterate, who knew, but, knew no more, their Bible true, and who felt and cared only for this, that the Bible is the word of God, and who set themselves to find Him and His truth in its

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written pages *alone*." All this amounts to what? That Mr. Stephenson 'boldly avers' that the great mass of men—"Bible Christians"—have been saved by searching God and his truth in the Scriptures *alone*, and that is all. It is another "bold" assertion, and as mere assertion is not proof or argument, I pass on to the next paragraph.

"Is there," he says, "a single point connected with the duty or hopes of man on which the Scriptures do not shed light?" This is exactly the question, the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, should answer himself; and the very question he proposed to solve when he said: *I am a Protestant, because I hold, &c.* But, now, he seems to feel that it is rather a difficult question, and he would feel much obliged, if some one else would answer it for him. I think, however, he does answer it, unknowing to himself, and not in a manner, very favorable to his rule. "It is true," he says, there are difficulties, (in the Scriptures) which, with our limited grasp of mind we cannot solve." Well, if there are difficulties, &c., how does he know, but some of these "difficulties" contain something, which might shed a ray of light on "a single point connected with the duty or hopes of man?" He, surely, is not infallible; therefore, these "difficulties" may contain some ray of light such as he speaks of. Therefore his "bold" averment goes for nothing, and therefore, his rule of faith, despite it, may not be "all-sufficient."

But, he asks: "Have the Fathers solved them?" "Has the Church of Rome solved them?" This is not the question. He proposed to solve them himself, when he "boldly" declared that the Holy Scriptures alone are a "sufficient," an "all-sufficient" rule of peoples' faith. They cannot be an "all-sufficient" rule of faith, if there be some "duty and hopes of men," on which they do not shed a ray of light. The Fathers, or the Church of Rome, never "boldly" declared that the Scriptures *alone*, are the rule of any man's faith. It is, therefore, for Mr. Stephenson, himself, to answer his own question. Let him do his own work; prop up his own rule. Let him prove that "the difficulties which &c., in the Scriptures," contain no ray of light, which might be shed "on a single point connected with the duty or hopes of man." Let him do this and he will have solved his own question.

In another paragraph, Mr. Stephenson says: "I hold the Scriptures as a sufficient rule of my faith, because of the fallibility of all tradition." Here, again, he assumes, what he should prove. He does, indeed, say: "Take the Fathers of the Church; what peculiar character had they to qualify them to give statements, bearing the force of Scripture?" But, this is only another question; it is not proof; and, besides, no person ever said, that the Fathers ever did or could give statements bearing the force of Scripture. He further asks: "Were they inspired, in the sense, in which the Apostles were inspired? Were they infallible?" Mr. Stephenson is

very prolific in asking questions; more so than in answering them. Nobody, as he admits himself, ever said they were inspired like the Apostles. And as to their infallibility, in the sense he means, I am not aware, that anybody, ever maintained it. It is clear, from the manner, in which he writes, that he does not really understand what tradition means. Tradition signifies, the *unwritten word of God*, not the Fathers, either individually or collectively. They are not tradition; they are, indeed, the channels, through which tradition or the unwritten word of God, has been handed down to us; they are faithful and credible witnesses of the doctrines professed and taught by the Church, in all the ages of her existence; but they are not tradition itself. They bear reliable testimony to it, are credible witness of it, in all the ages, in which they, respectively, lived; that is all. Their fallibility, as men, therefore, has nothing to do with the infallibility of tradition itself. But, though they were not inspired or infallible "in the sense in which the Apostles were," there is no reason to say, why they were not, and could not be, just as infallible in recording the belief of the Church in their respective days, as other historians in recording events which transpired in those same days. Most people would say, they should be more infallible. But let Mr. Stephenson, regard this as he may; it has really little to do with the question. The Catholic rule of faith is not the Fathers, or tradition, or even tradition and the written word together, as interpreted by each individual; but tradition and the Scriptures, or the unwritten as well as the written word, interpreted, expounded and preached by the Church to which Christ gave his commission to teach all nations, to preach the Gospel to every creature, and against which He has promised, the gates of hell shall never prevail. This is the Catholic rule of faith, and, therefore, when the Rev. Mr. Stephenson talks about the fallibility of the Fathers, he says something not to the point; and, consequently, adduces no proof in favor of his rule. His talk, also, about the inconsistencies of the Fathers, is of the same character as his other bold avowments. What he, as a "logical debater," has to do, is, not to take up his time in boldly averring this or that, about the Fathers, who, as he himself admits, were men of powerful minds and talents; but to try, if he deem himself able, to clear the rule he has so "boldly" professed, from the inconsistencies in which it is involved; and, further, prove, that it is an infallible, an unerring guide to divine truth. "I am a Protestant," he says, "*because, I hold the Holy Scriptures a sufficient rule of my faith and myself responsible for searching them.*" Let him prove this, an infallible rule, one capable of leading all men, in all times, to a knowledge of what they are required to believe, upon pain of being damned; and he needs not, then, trouble himself much about the fallibility or infallibility of any other rule of faith. This proved, he may rest satisfied, that he is right, and that his hearers have indisputable

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ground for being Protestants. But has he proved it, or can he prove it? He has not and he cannot, as I have already shewn.

The Rev. Mr. Stephenson, next, says: "But we are asked, with ill-disguised contempt where our Church was before Luther," and he adds, a little further on: "If, when, we are asked where Protestantism was before Luther, the doctrines of Protestantism are meant, the answer is *short and easy*. As Jeremy Taylor, long ago said: 'They were in the Bible, in the original and authentic documents of the Christian religion? There they had always been, as the R. C. hierarchy knew tolerably well even before Luther's time; as we may judge from the fact that they had never, to one single nation of Europe given one copy of the Bible in the vernacular tongue.'"

Now, as to the answer to the above question being "short and easy," if it be really so, why, then, has not the Rev. Mr. Stephenson given it clearly and distinctly, and in some manner, at least, satisfactorily. He says, the doctrines of Protestantism were, before Luther, in the Bible. But this is exactly what he has to prove; his *ipse dixit*, or "bold" averment, does not settle the matter beyond dispute. Let him *prove*, that the doctrines of Protestantism were in the Bible before Luther's time; that that fundamental doctrine of Protestantism,—that doctrine on which the whole fabric of Protestantism rests, as upon its foundation,—that the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible, is the rule, ordained by Christ and taught in the Bible, to lead all men, in all times, to a knowledge of what they are required to believe, upon pain of being damned. "I am a Protestant" he says, "because I hold the Holy Scriptures a sufficient rule of my faith, and myself responsible for searching them." Let him prove, that this rule was contained in the Bible before Luther's time; or is contained in it now, and he may, then, congratulate himself, that he has done something satisfactory. As yet he has not done it; and he cannot do it. All his averments, therefore, about the *doctrines* of Protestantism being in the Bible before Luther, are but so many high sounding words.

There is another "bold" averment, and an exceedingly bold one too, in the above quotation, which I cannot allow to pass without notice. The Rev. Mr. Stephenson says, that the Catholic hierarchy knew very well, the doctrines of Protestantism were contained in the Bible before Luther, "as we may judge, from the fact that they had never, to one single nation of Europe, given one copy of the Bible in the vernacular tongue." I wonder, that Mr. Stephenson did not blush, redder, to the very eyes when making such a barefaced statement. He pretends to be a preacher of truth, and from his pulpit, he does not hesitate to proclaim one of the greatest falsehoods, that ever fell from the lips of man. Can it be, that he was quizzing his hearers, twitting them on their deep ignorance of history; that he wished to show to the community, that, no matter what he

might "boldly" aver, even were it the most absurd and ridiculous thing in the world, they are ready, in their ignorance, to gulp it down. It really looks very much like as if this was his object; for, it is impossible to believe, that any one, like Mr. Stephenson, pretending to even a fair knowledge of history, would utter such a barefaced statement, merely for the purpose of making *himself* ridiculous before the world. He must, indeed, have been laughing within himself when he uttered it, and saw his hearers swallow it without objection. "One copy" of the Bible in the vernacular tongue, to "one single nation of Europe indeed! The thing is really rich. And Mr. Stephenson's hearers swallowed the whole of it, without one sign of repugnance? Wonders will never cease. Who will say, after this, that the age of miracles has passed? A minister boldly averring, and a whole congregation unhesitatingly swallowing, the statement, that not *one copy* of the Bible was ever given before Luther's time, in the vernacular tongue, to *one single* nation of Europe. Is not this one of the greatest wonders of the age?

But, to be serious; is it true; is there even the smallest particle of truth, in this bold averment of the Rev. Mr. Stephenson? There is not; and it is almost impossible to believe that he himself did not know there was not. "One copy" of the Bible to "one single" nation of Europe. Why, has the Rev. Mr. Stephenson ever read a page of real history? Has he never cast his eyes beyond the pages of the short epitomes of history placod in the hands of children in the elementary schools of the country? or has he never thought it his duty to wander beyond the lying pages of some authors, like D'Aubigne, who, in their mad hatred against the Catholic Church, have not hesitated to garble history, to misrepresent facts, and write the most unblushing falsehoods? If he had, he would have hesitated himself before making so barefaced a statement. "One copy" of the Bible in the vernacular tongue to "one single" nation of Europe! Now, what are the facts? I wish the reader, to call to mind, here, that printing was not invented until about the year 1440; so before that time it was not possible to print and publish any copy of the Bible. There were, however, before that time, many manuscript translations—not mentioned in the following list—into the vernacular tongues, as even learned Protestant historians admit.

Now, what versions of the Bible were published after the invention of printing, and before Luther had published his version? I will give a list of some of them, which will be quite sufficient to show what little truth there is in Mr. Stephenson's statement. It was about the year 1523 that Luther commenced his translation of the Bible, and it was not, until about eleven year afterwards, that he completed it. It was, therefore, not until about the year 1434, that his whole version was published, or until about ninety four

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years after printing was invented. The Catholic versions which were published, in the meantime, were as follows. The list is not completed, but it is sufficient for my present purpose. I take the enumeration from an author before me and in his words. "In the first place," he says, "there is a copy yet extant of a printed version so old as to have no date; for the first printed books had neither date nor name of place. In the second place, a Catholic version was printed by Fust in 1472, nearly sixty years before the completion of Luther's version. Another had appeared as early as 1467; a fourth was published in 1472; and a fifth in 1473. At Nuremberg, there was a version published in 1477, and republished *three times more*, before Luther's appeared. There appeared, at Augsburg, another in the same year, which went through eight editions before that of Luther. At Nuremberg, one was published by Koburg, in 1483, and in 1488; and at Augsburg, one appeared in 1518, which was republished in 1524, about the same time that Luther was going on with his; and down to the present time, the editions of this version have been almost countless.

In Spain, a version appeared in 1478, before Luther was thought of, and almost before he was born. In Italy, the country most peculiarly under the sway of Papal dominion, the Scriptures were translated into Italian by Malermi, at Venice, in 1471; and this version was republished *seventeen times* before the conclusion of that century, and twenty-three years before Luther's appeared. A second version of parts of the Scripture was published in 1472; a third at Rome, in 1471; a fourth by Brucciolo, at Venice, in 1532; and a corrected edition, by Marmochini, in 1538, two years after Luther had completed his. And every one of these came out, not only with the approbation of the ordinary authorities, but with that of the Inquisition, which approved of their being published, distributed and promulgated.

In France, a translation was published in 1478; another by Menand; in 1484; another by Guiars de Moulins, in 1497, which may rather be called a history of the Bible; and, finally, another, by Jacques C. Fevre, in 1512, often reprinted.

In the Belgian language, a version was published at Cologne, in 1475, which, before 1498, had been republished three times. A second appeared in 1518.

There was also a Bohemian translation, published in 1485, thrice reprinted before Luther's; not to speak of the Polish and Oriental versions. In our own country (England) it is well known that there were (manuscript) versions long before that of Tyndal or of Wickliffe. Sir Thomas More has observed that, "the hole Byble was, long before his (Wickliffe's) dayes, by vertuous and wel lerned men, translated into the English tong, and by good and godly people, with devotion and soberness, well and reverently red." I might add other versions, but the above list is quite sufficient to show,

how little truth there is in the reckless statement of the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, that to one single nation of Europe one copy of the Bible in the vernacular tongue was never given before the time of Luther.

But, even, had not one copy of the Bible in the vernacular tongue been given to one single nation of Europe, would this fact prove what the Rev. Mr. Stephenson desires to insinuate by his statement,—that the Catholic hierarchy wished to conceal the Bible from the people? It would not; for, not to speak of the vernacular versions, there were the Latin versions, which could be easily consulted. "The Latin language," as an author before me remarks, "continued to be that which was most generally understood, and even spoken in Europe, until the reign of Charlemagne, in the beginning of the ninth century; and even for several centuries afterwards, while the modern languages were struggling into form, it was more or less known, and was not, properly speaking, a dead language. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, and for a long time afterwards, it was the only language of literature, of theology, of medicine and of legislation. Most of the modern languages were formed from it, and were so similar to it both in words and in general structure, that the common people of Spain, Italy, Portugal and even France, could understand the mother tongue without great difficulty. In Hungary, it had been the common language of the people since the days of King Stephen, in the latter part of the tenth century. It was, moreover, taught and studied in every school and college of Christendom, and it was the medium through which most other branches were taught. The Latin language must, therefore, have been pretty commonly understood in Europe, even up to the time of the Reformation, and the Catholic Church, consequently, could not have concealed the Bible from the people, even if she had given it to them, only in the Latin Vulgate; nor could it have remained "an unknown book," as the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, wished his hearers to believe it was. It is a well known fact, that one of the first—if not the first—books published after the art of printing was invented was the Latin Bible. The Protestant historian Hallam insists it was the first book printed; probably in the year 1456. And the learned Protestant bibliographer, Didbin, mentions several other Latin Bibles printed before Luther's time. "From the year 1462 to the end of the fifteenth century," he says in his 'Library Companion,' "the editions of the Latin Bible may be considered *literally innumerable*," and he mentions the places at which some of them were printed: "at Mentz in 1455; at Bamberg 1461; at Rome, 1471; Venice 1476; Naples, 1476; in Bohemia, 1488; in France, 1475; in Holland, 1477; in Spain, 1477."—So you see, Mr. Stephenson, the insinuation, which you wished to convey to the minds of your hearers by your "bold," averment, has not one particle of truth to rest upon. When you, next time, try to prejudice your hearers, against

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the Catholic Church, endeavor to have, at least, some little plausibility in your bold averments; for, after all, I do not believe your congregation are so utterly ignorant of history as you seem to imagine, and some of them might undertake to contradict your "bold" statements, themselves, and this would be rather unpleasant for you, their "minister of truth."

But besides all this, if the Catholic Church wished to destroy the Bible, had she not a pretty fair opportunity to do so long before the Reformation was thought of? Was it not she, on the contrary, who preserved it? and was it not from her that the Reformers received it? Who, as an author before me asks, "kept it safe through all dangers; in the midst of conflagrations, wars, and the destructive torrents of barbarian incursion? Who copied it over and over again, before the art of printing? The Roman Catholic Church did all this; and yet flippant or dishonest writers still accuse her of having concealed this Book of Life from the people! But for her patient labor, vigilant watchfulness, and maternal solicitude, the Bible might have perished with thousands of other books; and still she was an enemy of this good book, and wished to keep it hidden under a bushel! She had choice selections from it read to her people on every Sunday and festival in the year, even according to the enforced avowal of our unscrupulous and romantic historian of the Reformation; still she wished to conceal this treasure from the people! A curious way of concealing it truly.

But did not Pope Paul IV., as the Rev. Mr. Stephenson boldly avers, put all the various editions in the modern languages, extant in the 16th century, in the *Index Expurgatorius*, not a single exception being made? He did not, Mr. Stephenson to the contrary notwithstanding; and the best proof that he did not is to be found in the fact, that the *Index Expurgatorius*, had no existence until Paul IV. was for some years dead and buried. The list of prohibited books, or the *Index*, was not drawn up until after the Council of Trent had closed its sessions in 1563, during the Pontificate of Pius IV; and the Congregation of the *Index* was not established until 1588, during the Pontificate of Pope, Sixtus V. How, then, could Paul IV put the various editions of the Bible, &c., in the *Index* in the year, Mr. Stephenson is so particular to mention, 1559? Mr. Stephenson is, evidently, a little too reckless in his "bold" averments.

But did not some Pope put the various editions of the Bible in the modern languages, "not a single exception being made," in the *Index*? Not that I have ever been able to discover; and, I think, the Rev. Mr. Stephenson will have a pretty difficult task to find good proof of it either. There is no evidence that any general restrictive law ever existed, previous to the Council of Trent, as to the reading of the Bible. Pius IV. did, indeed, after the close of the Council of Trent, impose restrictions of a temporary and local character on the indiscriminate reading of the Bible in the

vernacular tongues, in that period of religious vertigo, which followed the outbreak of the Reformation, and in which men's minds dwelt in an effervescence of excitement, incapable of calmly and dispassionately judging any question. In issuing this temporary decree, Pius IV. gave his reason for doing so, in these words ; "that experience had made it manifest, that the permission to read the Bible indiscriminately in the vulgar tongues had, from the rashness of men, done more harm than good." And the Pope was not alone of this opinion, for many others were of the same opinion ; and the learned Gerson himself, who cannot certainly be accused of having favoured the maxims of the Ultramontanists, felt himself constrained to avow, that the alleged right of reading and interpreting the Bible, was the *empoisoned source* from which came forth and daily increased, the errors of all innovators ; that it was "the source of errors and evils, without number." The decree in question, however, as I have said before, was merely a disciplinary regulation of a temporary and local character, and it has long since ceased to be of binding force in any part of the Catholic Church. Any rescripts which may have been since issued, regard not the reading itself of the Bible, but only the false and corrupted versions of it, which some people in their zeal and bigotry would force upon the attention of Catholics. There is no prohibition whatsoever, against any Catholic reading an approved version of the Bible, accompanied with explanatory notes taken from the Fathers, or approved Catholic commentators. On the contrary, they are urged to read it, as any one may see by referring to the letter—published at the beginning of approved editions of the Catholic Bible—of Pope Pius VI., to Anthony Martini, the translator of the Italian version, in 1778. In that letter the Pope says : "At a time that a vast number of bad books, which most grossly attack the Catholic religion, are circulated, even among the unlearned, to the great destruction of souls, you judge exceedingly well, that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the Holy Scriptures ; For these are the most abundant sources which ought to be left open to every one, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine, to eradicate errors which are so wildly disseminated in these corrupt times." These are the words of the Pope himself, published in every Catholic Bible, and, still, we are never done hearing the slander repeated, that the Catholic Church hates the Bible and forbids her children to read it. There are no people so blind as those who have eyes and will not see ; and such are they who are constantly rehashing this slander at Bible society meeting's &c., about the Catholic Church's.

I have now done with the consideration of the chief reason given by the Rev. Mr. Stephenson for his being a Protestant. "I am a Protestant," he said, "because I hold the *Holy Scriptures* a sufficient rule of my faith, and myself responsible for searching them." I have endeavored to ascertain whether this

reason is a sound one or not, for him or any other person being a Protestant; and, I think, I have shewn, that it is not. I have examined, whether it is a rule of faith which existed and was available in all times, that people might learn, what they were required to believe upon pain of being damned, and I have shewn that it is not. I have further shewn that it is not a rule or means within the reach of all people, the poor as well as the rich; that it is not a rule or means adapted to the capacity of all people, the dullest and most ignorant, as well as the intelligent and learned; that, finally, it is not a rule or means which will, if honestly and sincerely followed, lead men, without danger of error, or possibility of mistake, to a knowledge of what God requires they shall believe, upon pain of being condemned; but, on the contrary, that is calculated to lead them astray and into any number errors. Therefore, the conclusion is necessarily forced upon the mind, that it is not the rule of faith, or means, ordained by Christ, to teach men what they must believe, upon pain of being condemned, and, therefore, it is no rule at all, and, consequently, it is no sound or sufficient reason for any man being a Protestant, not even for the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, himself. The reader can now weigh my arguments and say for himself, whether, the conclusion, I have drawn, is justified or not.

In the beginning of this pamphlet, I said, that I would confine my remarks strictly to the question of the rule of faith, as professed by the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, and the reader will now be able to judge whether I have not pretty closely adhered, throughout, to that promise. I have carefully avoided mixing up questions, by following the Rev. Mr. Stephenson into all the subjects into which he has wandered, or touched upon in his sermon, except, perhaps, noticing, *en passant*, a few of the aspersions which he has cast upon the Catholic Church, in regard to the reading of the Bible. And I have done this; because, first, these subjects have no direct or proximate bearing on the question under discussion: secondly, because one thing at a time is quite sufficient to treat; and, thirdly, because, if the rule of faith, professed by the Rev. Mr. Stephenson in these words: "I am a Protestant, because I hold the Holy Scriptures &c.,—is the true one, the one ordained by Christ, to lead men to a knowledge of what they are required to believe, upon pain of being condemned; then, of course, all I had to say, was, that Father Damen was wrong, and Mr. Stephenson was right, and that he and all Protestants had good, solid, unquestionable ground for being Protestants and for believing all that Protestantism teaches. But, this, I think, I have shewn is not the case.

Into the Catholic rule of faith,—the second part of Father Damen's lecture,—I can not now enter, as in doing so, I should extend this pamphlet, far beyond reasonable limit. On some future occasion, I may take the subject up and deal with it. In the meantime, if any of my readers,

desire to study it, he will find it pretty fully treated in Wisemen's work on "The doctrines of the Church," or in "the Points of Controversy" by Samarius. These books may, I believe, be procured at the book store of Mr. Joyce, Rideau Street.

I now conclude, apologizing for the length to which I have extended this article, and expressing the sincere hope that the reader will calmly, dispassionately, and without prejudice, weigh seriously the arguments, one by one, that I have advanced, with a view, to learning where is to be found that true religion, which the Saviour came on to establish, and which is to lead us to the haven of eternal rest. For, "who is the man that shall live and not see death," (Ps. 88, 49.) and we know not the hour that the Son of man will come to judge us, and "what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer loss of his own soul." (Math. 16. 26).

Ottawa, February 7th, 1872.

P.S.—In reference to Father Damen's visit to this city, I find the following remarks, in the *Ottawa Citizen* of 17th inst., which it may not be out of place to insert here :

"FATHER DAMEN.—Now that the little controversial breeze raised by this missionary has subsided, the good works he achieved are becoming known. In the annals of the Police Court, for many years past, the names of certain delinquents, sunk in drunkenness, poverty, and vice, were continually appearing, but since Father Damen's last visit to this city they have not been seen at their usual place, in trembling dejection or hardened effrontery. They had been induced to hear the gifted preacher, and their hearts, that had withstood all previous efforts of reclamation, were melted. They were induced to take the pledge of temperance, and this point once gained, the rest was easy. Sobriety brought reflection, which in turn brought shame and repentance, and now these poor outcasts are struggling with poverty alone, having thrown from them the serpent drink and the devil vice. This we hold to be a great triumph for temperance and religion, and the preacher, who can perform such wonder, no matters what his creed may be, is deserving of the warmest approbation of all good people."

ERRATA.

Page 5, lines 36, 38, instead of "Christ has thought," read: "Christ has taught."

Page 7, line 41, instead of "ever required," read: "were required."

Page 11, line 14, after word "them," insert: "except."

Page 32, line 42, instead of "author," read: "authority."

