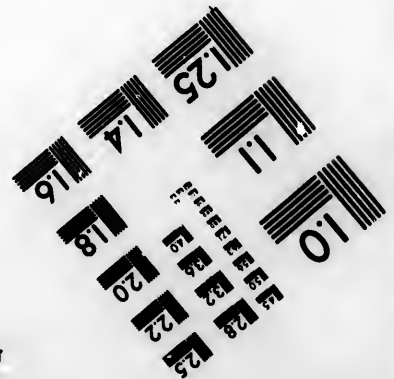
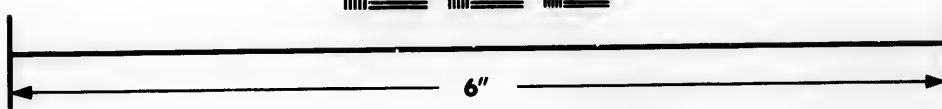
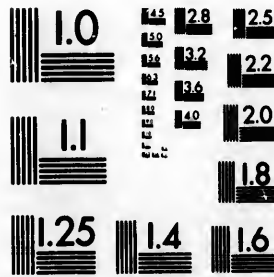


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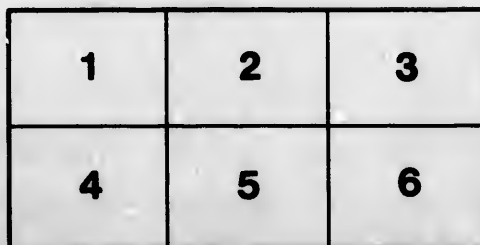
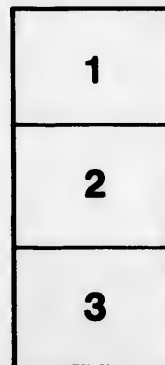
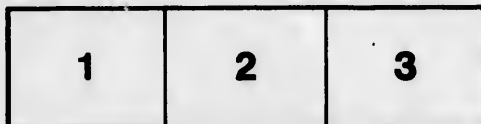
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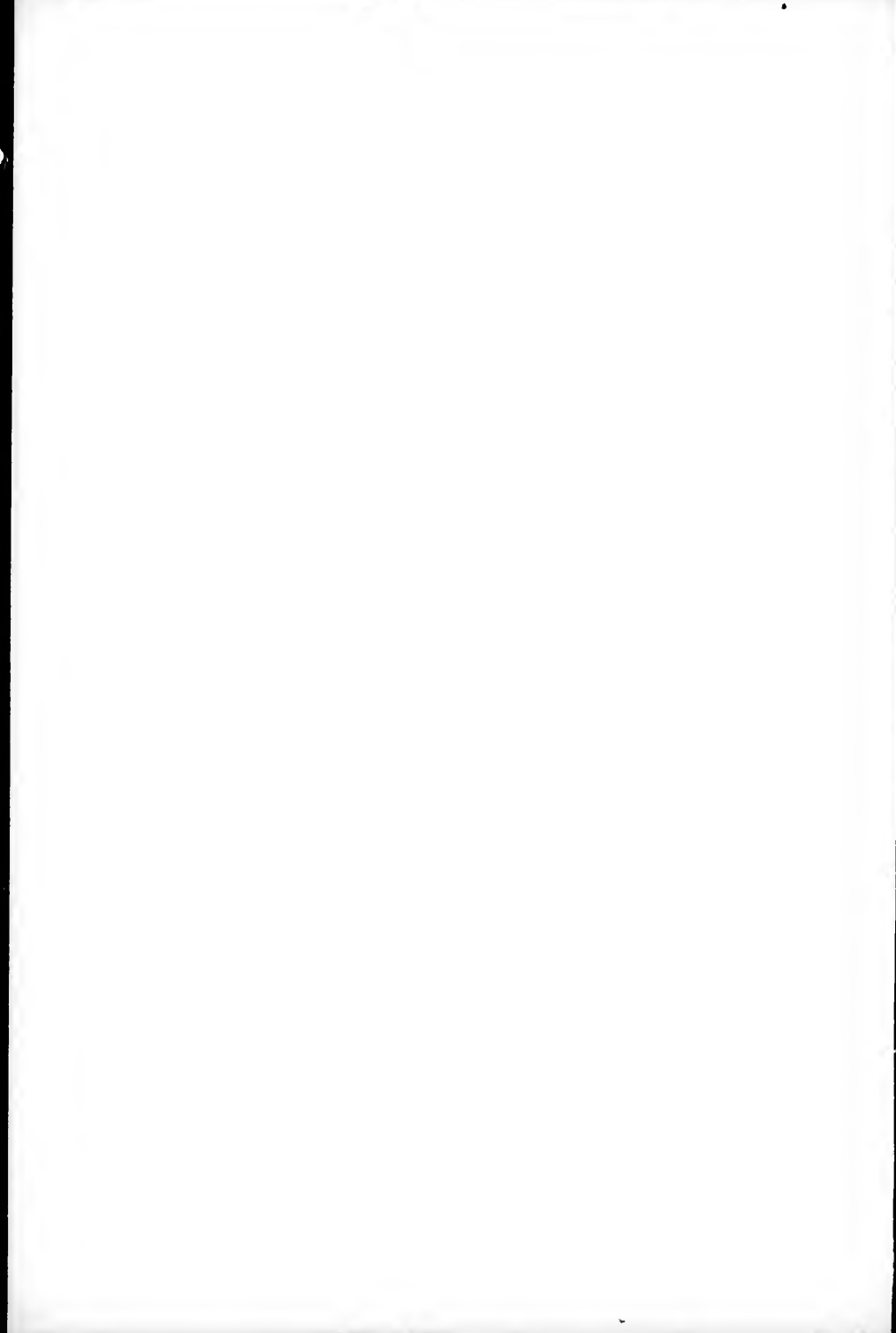
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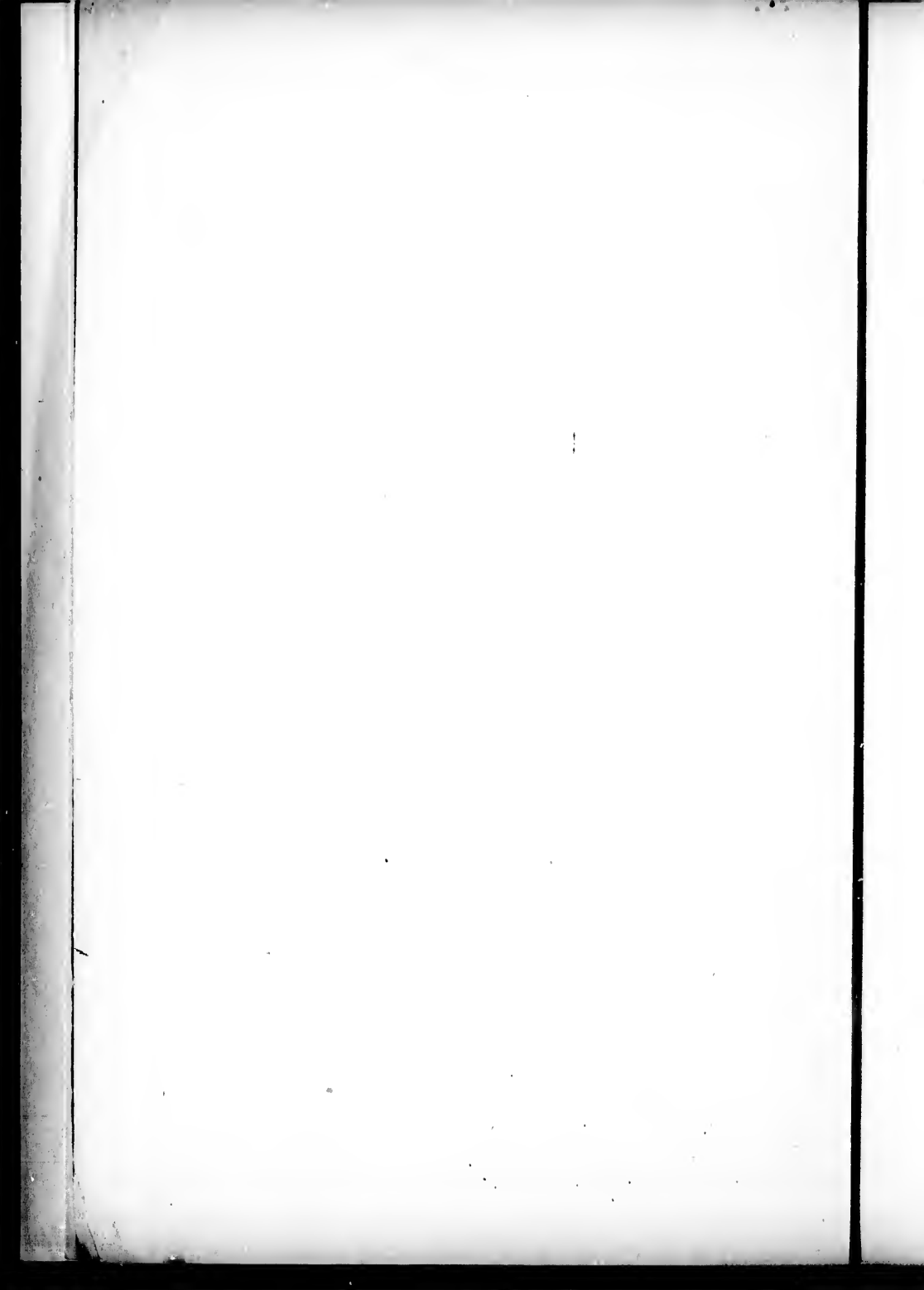
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COPIES OF LETTERS

ADDRESSED BY THE REV. P. McMAHON,

TO THE EDITORS

OF

LE JOURNAL DE QUEBEC,

AND

LE CANADIEN,

CONTAINING

THE REPORT OF A CONFERENCE,

Which took place, at his residence,

IN THE MONTH OF APRIL LAST,

BETWEEN HIM AND

TWO ITINERANT PREACHERS.

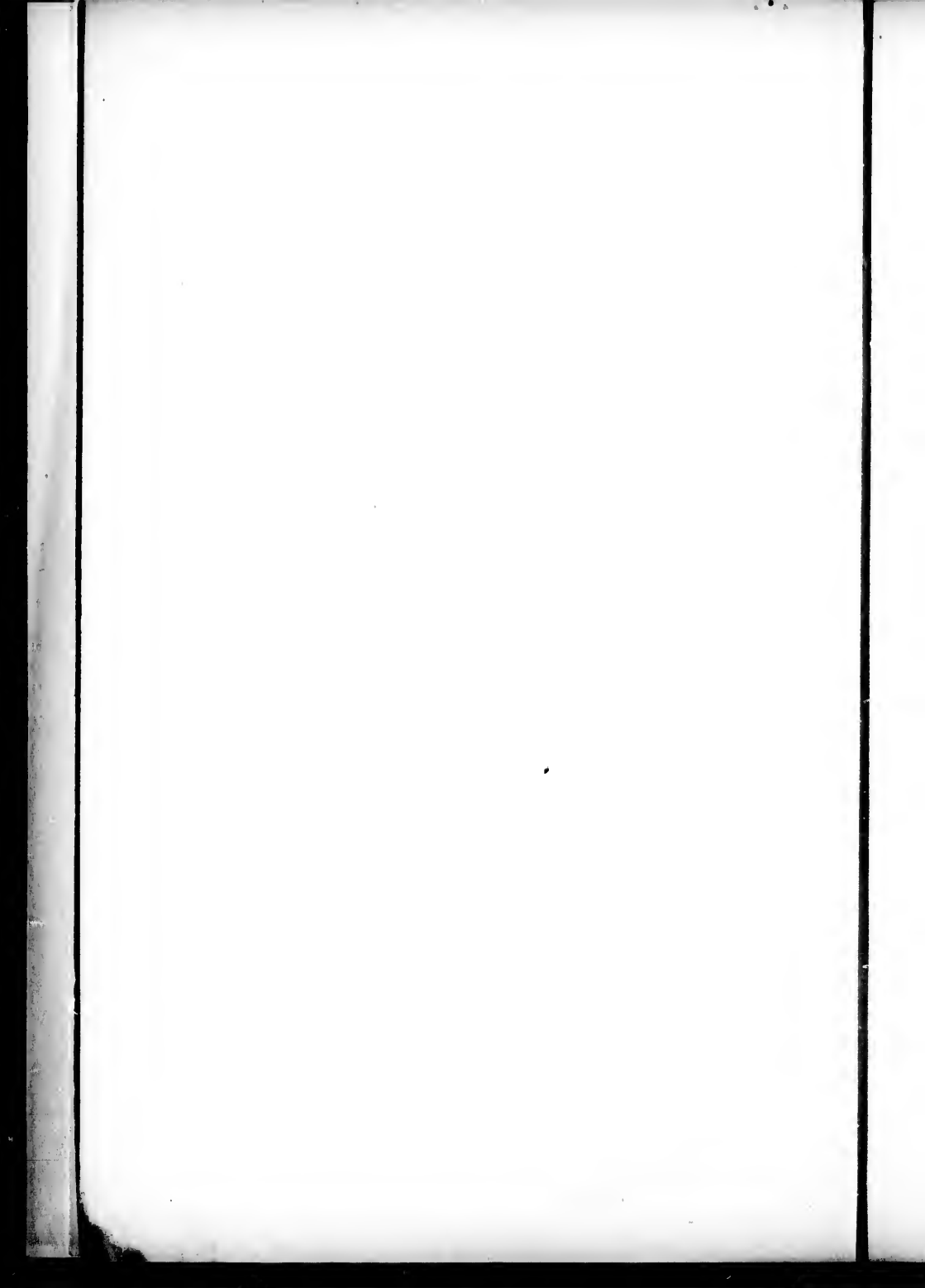
My thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are exalted above the earth, even so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts. *Isaiah Cxv. 17, Ver. 9-9.*

QUEBEC:

PRINTED BY AUGUSTIN CÔTÉ ET CIE.

1843.





TO THE EDITOR
OF THE
JOURNAL DE QUÉBEC.

MR. EDITOR,—There has been just this moment placed in my hands a pamphlet, written in French by an itinerant Preacher, whose name is MOREL, and who styles himself a Missionary of what he calls the *Evangelical Church reformed*. This pamphlet purports to contain an account of a Conference on the subject of religion which he says took place between *Two Missionaries of the above named Church, and Four Priests of the Church of Rome*.

The object of this publication is evidently to mislead its readers, and make wrong impressions on the public mind by a bold misrepresentation of what really passed on the occasion to which it alludes. Fortunately, however, it carries with it its own refutation. For, in spite of all the author's shifts to give his statements an air of truth, a want of sincerity betrays itself even in the very title page. MR. MOREL there sets forth that the conference took place between "Two Missionaries of the Reformed Evangelical Church and Four Priests of the Church of Rome," *Four* against *Two*! surely, Mr. Editor, this is not what an Irishman would call *fair play* in the 19th century. Here, sir, are fearful odds, in favor of the *valiant old Romans*. But this is only one of those shabby little stratagems, one of those specimens of *Evangelical tricks*, which MR. MOREL, no doubt, employs with the greatest purity of intention, for the triumph of *Bible truth*!

I would not, I beg to assure you, Sir, have stooped to notice this miserable production of a brainless fanatic, had he not most unwarrantably and contrary to all the laws of hospitality, taken the unjustifiable liberty of dragging me *personally* before the public, by publishing, without my knowledge or consent, the *pretended* contents of a private interview, which, at his own request, took place under my roof. But, I suppose, MR. MOREL considered it as highly flattering to his vanity, and subservient to his extravagant hopes of seducing the Canadian people from the venerable faith of their forefathers, if he could have it believed that *through me*, he was contending with the Catholic Clergy of this city. Such, however, I need not assure you, was not the case.

Indeed, I frankly admit that were I in need of any assistance to enable me to confute these *religious adventurers*, there are certainly none to whom I would more readily apply than to the Catholic Clergy of Quebec, from whose extensive erudition and superior abilities I might expect to derive information which, would be sought for in vain, among MR. MOREL's fraternity. Justice, however, to my Rev. Brethren of this city, requires that I should not allow this designing fanatic to connect their names with this discussion. For it was I *alone* who spoke on the different subjects that were debated on that occasion; and consequently for my inaccuracies or deficiencies, whatever these may be, they are by no means accountable, no more than the Rev. Gentlemen of the Church of England are accountable for MR. MOREL's absurd and ridiculous answers to my arguments against his rule of faith.

MR. MOREL has, I find, carefully abstained from mentioning the circumstance which has occasioned the discussion in question, as also the place where it was

held. He of course knows best his own motives for the omission. But I have only to beg that, should any of my Protestant fellow citizens find any of the observations which I found it my duty to make on the occasion alluded to, *harsh* or *illiberal* ; I have only to request, I say, that such will remember that the Conference was absolutely forced upon me, and that too, at a time, when severe indisposition had confined me to my bed, and after having *previously* refused to accept a challenge which MR. MOREL had conveyed to me, to meet him and his *confrère* at a certain house in the Suburbs, for the purpose of entering into a religious controversy with them. This Challenge, Mr. Editor, I peremptorily refused to accept ; not indeed because I felt the least apprehension, as to the result of any such controversy, but because I questioned very seriously, the propriety of my consenting to enter into a polemical disputation with individuals, who were utter strangers to me, and with whose moral character and religious creed, I was equally unacquainted. But the circumstance of their coming to my house left me no alternative.

MR. MOREL states, in what he terms his *avant-propos*, that a report had obtained circulation in the public which went to say that he and his *confrère* had been “ confuted in a few words ;” and I suppose it is to this circumstance he would wish to hold the community indebted for the inestimable benefit, which, in the plenitude of his folly, he expects they will derive, from the perusal of his *learned* production. This statement, however, I have good reason for believing to be insincere, and would feel inclined to think that the public acknowledgements for this *very elaborate work* are due rather to some latent cause, which might perhaps be easily traced to a certain uneasiness or mortification of mind, naturally resulting from the

painful conviction, which he must have felt, of the random assertions of nonsense which he substituted for answers to my arguments against his rule of faith—nonsense, I say, which one moment's cool reflection could not have failed to render obvious *even* to his own weak and disordered imagination. This, my opinion, as to the cause of the publication in question, receives additional strength from the circumstance of his having suppressed the whole of my arguments and conclusions, and substituted others of course more suitable to his *evangelical* designs.

It is a uniform custom with us, Mr. Editor, when we undertake to censure or refute our adversaries, to select their best arguments, to place them in the most favorable light, and then to measure our strength with theirs. But MR. MOREL has, I find, for obvious reasons, preferred quite an opposite course ; for he passes over in *dignified* silence, all my arguments, and catches up some mutilated sentences, some disjointed reflection, and then exhibits these for purposes the very reverse of those for which they were intended. Having premised these observations with the view of letting the public see how the controversy originated ; I shall now, Mr. Editor, with your kind permission, proceed to lay before them a true version of what MR. MOREL calls *une Conference entre deux Missionnaires de l'Eglise Evangélique Réformée, et quatre Prêtres de l'Eglise Romaine.*

P. McMAHON.

THE DISCUSSION.

The Rev. MR. McMAHON opened the discussion by calling on MR. MOREL to define his rule of faith.

MR. MOREL rose and stated in reply that the Bible, and the Bible *alone*, as understood by each individual reader, was his rule of faith.

The Rev. MR. McMAHON further enquired, whether MR. MOREL received, *for religious truth*, anything not *expressly* contained in the Bible?

Certainly not, replied MR. MOREL.

The Rev. MR. McMAHON—I call upon you then, Sir, to point out to me the express passage or text of Scripture, which says that the Bible alone is the Christian's rule of faith. I defy you to produce any such text, from the first leaf of *Genesis* to the last of the *Revelations*; and if you cannot, as I am sure you cannot, then, in honest sincerity, you must avow first, that you receive for an article of faith, something not expressly contained in the Bible: and 2ndly that your boasted rule of faith is a mere gratuitous assumption, unwarranted and unsupported by the very book itself from which you pretend to derive it.

MR. MOREL rose and cited, in proof of the Protestant rule, the usual passages, viz: *that all Scripture is given by inspiration*,—that it is *good and profitable &c.* that the Jews were directed by the Saviour *to search the Scrip-*

tures ; and that the Bereans were commended by St. Paul for examining by the test of Scripture the doctrines that were preached to them.

The Rev. Mr. McMAHON—All this I admit, Sir, but between this and the Bible *alone* being the *sole* and *only* rule of faith, instituted by Jesus Christ, there is an immense difference. For these passages and every other which you can adduce, will only go to prove what no Catholic ever denied, viz. that Holy Scripture is *good and profitable and has been written for our instruction and edification*, and, *when correctly understood* is able to make us *wise unto salvation*. But they will never prove that the *Bible alone* is the sole and exclusive rule of faith, which please remember, is the express point you are called upon to establish.

Moreover, Sir, I object to your rule, because it is evident that it is not the one which Christ did institute. Are not, I would ask you, the very terms of the divine commission, which he delivered to his Apostles, when he was sending them, not to scatter Bibles among the nations of the earth, and constitute every man the arbiter of his own faith, but to *preach the Gospel to every creature*, proof positive that he never intended the dead letter of Scripture to be a rule of faith for his followers? *As my father sent me, so I send you. Going, therefore, teach all nations, &c.* Is not, I would again enquire, the manner in which the apostles understood and laboured to fulfil this divine commission, proof *unanswerable* that the Bible alone is not the Christian's rule of faith? Did they or did they not, when they received the command to announce the doctrines of salvation to the nations of the earth, *preach* the Gospel in every country from Judea to Spain in one direction, and to India in another? every where founding churches, and every where *commending*

their doctrine to faithful men, who would be fit to teach others. (2 Tim. 2). But nowhere do we find them employing their time in distributing Bibles, nowhere do we find them stating the Bible alone to be the rule of faith.

Verily, Sir, this divine commission of the Saviour to his Apostles *to preach the Gospel*, and the manner in which the latter fulfilled it, does not look very much like his having constituted the Bible alone for our rule of faith; but, on the contrary, it will for ever record and denounce the guilt and folly of those men, who first raised, and of others who still continue to uphold the rebellious and disorganizing standard of *private Judgment* in the interpretation of Holy-writ, against the authoritative teaching of that Church, which St. Paul calls the *pillar and ground of Truth*, and which Jesus Christ has commanded all his followers, not excepting MR. MOREL himself, to *hear and obey*, under pain of the loss of eternal life. *He that will not hear the Church let him be unto thee as a heathen and a Publican.*

What a pity for MR. MOREL's rule of faith that the Saviour did not say: He that will not *hear, read and interpret* the Bible for himself shall be considered as a heathen and a publican? What a pity it is for the protestant rule of faith, that he did not say to the Bible what he said to the Apostles and through them, to the Pastors of his Church: *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that heareth me, heareth him that sent me.* (Luke X. 16.) If the Saviour had said so of the Bible, then, indeed, MR. MOREL's rule of faith might be plausibly enough defended. But unfortunately for the tottering edifice of protestanism, which is based upon the sandy foundation of the Bible alone as operated upon by private judgment, he said no such thing. Moreover, Sir, if the Redeemer had intended the letter of the Scripture, with the inter-

pretation of every individual reader, for our rule of faith, he would, most certainly have written, at least, a portion of the New Testament himself ; or, he would have commanded his Apostles to do so ; and then would have said : *upon the written word, as interpreted by each individual, I will build my Church.* But we do not find that he ever wrote a word himself, except, perhaps, the condemnation of the *bible reading* Pharisees, with his finger in the dust ; nor is there on record any order or command of his to the Apostles to that effect. But this we do find recorded that he said to Simon Barjona : *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church ; and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her.* (Mat. XVI. 18.)

But you tell us that *Jesus went about all Galilee preaching the Gospel, Mat. IX.*—Certainly he did ; and what of that ? was it the *written* or *dead letter* of the Gospel he preached, submitting the interpretation of his words to the whim of every caprice ? certainly not, for the letter of the Gospel was not written for half a century after that ; a circumstance which forced Dr. Marsh, a Bishop of the Protestant Church of England, to acknowledge that *Jesus Christ laid the foundation of his Church by preaching.* *Nor can we deny,* says he, *that the unwritten word was the first rule of Christianity.* (See his comparative view.)

What think you, MR. MOREL, of this concession to the Catholic rule ? where is now, in the opinion, *even,* of Dr. Marsh your boasted rule of faith ? Where was it during the many ages, which intervened between Adam and Moses ? Were the ancient Patriarchs, who lived and died before the Pentateuch was written, left without a rule of faith ? Answer if you can. What was their rule ? Was it the Bible ? Certainly not ; it could not have been the Bible

for it was not then written. No, Sir, it was *tradition!* Again, I repeat the enquiry, where was your rule of faith before the New Testament was written? That is to say, during the greater part of the first century of the Christian era. I answer, if you cannot, that it was then, where it now is, *in the constant and authoritative teaching of the Church of Jesus-Christ.*

Search the Scriptures, MR. MOREL, for they bear testimony to this Church. But, alas! I fear that you, like the Jews, who, tho' reading the Scriptures, in which they *thought* they had eternal life, could not discover the manifest testimony they bore to Jesus Christ, being blinded by wilful obstinacy; I fear, I say, that you, tho' reading the Gospel, which bears the strongest and clearest evidence of Christ's Church will not allow the awful terrors of God's judgment in that same Gospel announced against all those, who refuse to *hear* that Church, to shake off the scales of prejudice from your eyes, *lest seeing you might see and understand.* Permit me, once more, to ring in your ears, the memorable *sarcasm* of the Saviour to the obstinate, bible reading Jews, *search the Scriptures, in which you think you have everlasting life;* for, as I have already told you, they bear testimony to his Church. But, alas! such is the natural consequence of error that in every attempt against the truth it manifests still more its own weakness, and renders its native deformity more hideous and disgusting.

Will you again urge the text, which appears to be such a favorite with you, *search the Scriptures, &c.?* If you do, be pleased not to garble or mutilate it, but give it, as it stands in the Gospel, *whole and entire.* Why do you and your unhappy partners in error, whenever you cite this passage, generally omit the middle part, "*in which you think you have eternal life?*" could it be that

you conceive these words to be a reproach to your prejudice and blind obstinacy in refusing to hear the church as they were to the Jews? Are you aware, Sir, that some of the most learned Protestants have admitted that this passage was uttered by the Saviour rather as a reproach to the Jews (who read the Scriptures only to confirm themselves in their guilty prejudices against him) than a command to read them? You talk of traditions. Does not St. Paul exhort the faithful *to hold fast the traditions which they had learned?* (2 *Thes.* 11, 14.) When Christ reproached the Jews for making void the law of God by their traditions, was it to the traditions of the Jewish Church that he alluded? Or was it not rather to the *silly and ridiculous* traditions of their own, such as the washing of *cups, pots and hands*, which they preferred *to the positive commands of the law?* Nay, is it not a fact that, whilst the Saviour condemned them for preferring these unauthorised and silly practices, to the commandments of God, he tells them to *hear those, who sat in the Chair of Moses.* (See *Matt.* 23, 2.) How then Sir, can you adduce this instance as condemnatory of Catholics for *hearing* the Church and *standing fast* to her traditions?

Having now proved, and I trust satisfactorily, from the example of Christ and of his Apostles that the Bible alone as interpreted by the private judgment of each individual reader is not the Christian's rule of faith; I shall proceed to shew that it was not the rule which the successors of the Apostles adopted, for their guidance, when they went forth to announce the happy tidings of salvation to the nations of the earth. Tell me, then, MR. MOREL, was it the protestant rule of the *Bible alone*, or the Catholic rule of the Bible, *as taught and explained by the Church*, which the first Christian Missionaries made

use of when they succeeded in engaging the Huns, the Samaritans, the Goths and Vandales, the Franks and Saxons, with all those other countless tribes, which overran the Roman Empire, to exchange their paganism for the piety and mortification of the Cross, and to believe and practice the blessed truths and virtues of the gospel of Jesus Christ, without *reading or being able to read the Bible* in their respective tongues? Was not the religion of Christ *preached* at Jerusalem, Syria, Antioch, Rome, Greece, Egypt, Assyria, Galatia, Mesopotamia, Ephesus, Phillipia, Corinth, and innumerable other places, before the New Testament was written? And does not St. Ireneus tell us, in his book *against heresies*, cap. 4, page 178, that *many barbarous nations submitted to the authority of the Catholic Church, who, tho' ignorant of the use of letters, had the words of salvation written in their hearts, and carefully guarded the doctrine which was delivered to them?*

This leads me to the consideration of the protestant rule of the Bible alone, as understood by each individual reader, in reference to such as cannot read. And here, Sir, I find an insuperable objection to your rule. If Jesus-Christ had intended that all his followers should learn their religion from the Bible alone, in justice to them, he should have laid down the obligation of learning to read, as the first and fundamental precept of his religion. Now, this he has not done. The Bible moreover, as a rule of faith, is not calculated for all states and conditions of men, for it would give infinite advantages to the rich and the learned over the poor and illiterate; and thousands upon thousands, in every age and in every country, never could have availed themselves of such a rule at all. You are aware that before the art of printing was discovered not one in every thousand, and,

indeed, I might safely say, not one in every ten thousand of the human family could read, nor was it possible, practically speaking, that they should. For before this discovery (which took place about the year 1440) it was requisite that every book should be written throughout with the pen, a laborious process, which required considerable time and very great patience, and which consequently rendered books of every description both scarce and expensive. It is standing on record, that in England, in the reign of Edward the First, a fairly written copy of the Bible was not worth less than £300 of our sterling money.

How then, I would ask, could any, except the rich, have found means to purchase a Bible, even if they could read? And yet it must be borne in mind that such was the state of things, not only in England but throughout the whole Christian world, for upwards of fourteen hundred years after the death of Christ and his Apostles, when more than half the nations of the earth had been converted from paganism, and the religion of Jesus Christ was flourishing from one end of the creation to the other! Is it to be believed then, that the Saviour, who came to announce the happy tidings of salvation to the poor; who always manifested so much sympathy for the poor; and who pronounced a particular *blessing* on the poor, declaring that *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; is it to be believed I say that he would have left them, during so many ages, entirely destitute of a rule of faith, and consequently of the adequate means of salvation? Or are we to be told that he established one rule for the rich and the learned, and another for the poor and the unlettered? Or did he appoint any rule of faith at all for the latter? And if he did, it surely could not be the Bible, for it is most absurd to maintain that Jesus

Christ would establish a rule of faith, from the benefit of which the great overwhelming majority of his followers should, necessarily, be excluded. Tell me, then, MR. MOREL, what this rule was ?

MR. MOREL here rose and expressed his astonishment at hearing us date the discovery of the Art of Printing only from the beginning of the 15th century. He was evidently under the impression that Moses was the *discoverer*; and was about to amuse us with some rich specimens of his chronological acquirements, when a significant hint from a close neighbour caused him to direct his observations to the main argument, which he endeavoured to answer by saying that he who could not read himself, might get his neighbour to read for him, and he further stated that, as the laws of the state oblige all indiscriminately, so likewise the laws of God.

The Rev. MR. McMAHON—But a few moments ago, Sir, you told us that the Bible and *nothing* but the Bible was the Christian's rule of faith ; and, now, you contradict yourself by stating (at least for such as cannot read) that the Bible and the neighbour is that rule ! *Ex ore tuo te juco, serve nequam.* Why not, Sir, acknowledge the true rule at once ? Why not refer the unlettered peasant to the Pastors of the Church, to whom Jesus Christ has said : *go and teach all nations, &c.. He that heareth you, heareth me, &c.* Why not, Sir, why not, as you are forced to acknowledge the necessity of an interpreter, allow that recourse should be had to him of whom the prophet Malachi speaks, cap. 11, v. 7. *The lips of the Priest shall keep knowledge, and they (the people) shall seek the law at his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of Hosts !* How very differently this inspired prophet thought from you, on this subject ? Say, MR. MOREL, which of our rules does this sacred passage seem to recognise for the

true one ? Again, Sir, do we not find your rule of private interpretation condemned, in the 8th chapter of the prophet Nehemiah, which appoints *thirteen interpreters* whose business it was to explain the law, with the Levites, and caused it to be understood by the people ; *So they read in the Book of the Law of God, and gave the sense and made them (the people) understand the reading.* This certainly does not look very like the protestant rule of individual interpretation ! Again, Sir, was it by following the protestant rule of reading and interpreting the Bible that the Eunuch of Ethiopia was converted to the faith of Christ ? Was it not rather by adopting the catholic rule that he came to the knowledge of the truth ? If the Bible alone was sufficient, why was Philip commanded to meet him, on the way, and ask him *if he understood what he read ?* What was his reply ? Hear it, MR. MOREL in both your ears. *And how can I, unless some man shew me ?* Did he not even invite Philip *to get up into his chariot and sit with him,* and did not Philip explain to him the scriptures in reference to Christ ? And what was the result of this explanation ? It was this : *the Eunuch believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and was accordingly baptized.* (Acts 8, cap.)

Answer me this one question, Sir, if you can : If your rule of the Bible alone, as interpreted by each individual reader, was that which the Saviour instituted, was it not the duty of Philip to tell the Eunuch so, and, in place of explaining and interpreting Isaias for him, to refer him to his own interpretation of the Prophet ? Tell me again, Sir, why did not Jesus Christ when he arrested Saul, on the road to Damascus, from his work of slaughter, refer him to the Bible for instruction ? Was he told by Christ to go and read and interpret the Bible for himself ? You know, Sir, that he was, on the contrary, directed to go to

Annanias, who would tell him *what he had to do*. In like manner, Cornelius, notwithstanding his extraordinary piety and charity, was commanded to go to Joppe, and call hither one *Simon*, who is surnamed *Peter*, to hear words from him ; and was not the said Cornelius, with many others, moved by the *preaching* of St. Peter, and then and there baptized ? Now if the Bible alone was a sufficient rule of faith to bring mankind to the knowledge of the truth, is it not extraordinary, that these personages were not referred to it ? Alas ! how truly deplorable the condition of those whose mental vision is impaired and destroyed by the darkening influence of religious prejudice and religious error ! I could, were it necessary, multiply almost *ad infinitum*, examples like the above, which establish the fact that your rule was never recognized nor allowed of in the Church of Christ from its first foundation down to the present hour.

As to your allusion to the laws of the State, it is, permit me to assure you, not only without point, but quite unfortunate for your cause. Your doctrine is that every man should read and interpret the Bible for himself, and then square his creed and his conduct in accordance with his interpretation. Tell me now, MR. MOREL, are the subjects of the State allowed, in this manner, to sit in judgment on the laws of the land, and to interpret them, each one, according to his own particular fancy or interest or passion ? You know full well they are not. Where then, permit me to ask you, is the analogy ? If you were a King, MR. MOREL, and were about to promulgate a code of laws for the good government of your people, what would you think of the minister who would advise you not to establish a tribunal for the interpretation of these laws, but to leave them to be interpreted and executed by your subjects just as each one might see fit ? Would you think such a minister to be in his senses ? Yet such is the

counsel you give with regard to the eternal and immutable laws of God, which you would submit to the tribunal of private judgment, to be interpreted, judged, ruled and executed by every man, according to his caprices, interests or passions. The idea is so perfectly ridiculous that the most impervious intellect cannot fail to see its palpable absurdity.

You do not seem to understand, Sir, that christianity is a divine revelation, not a human science. Human laws and sciences are changeable and open to constant improvement ; not so the religion of Jesus Christ. It is as unchangeable as its divine author. It is a final revelation and the perfection of all former dispensations, and leaves no room whatever for *Evangelical Reformers* to work on. Surely then it is quite rational to conclude that our heavenly legislator, would never have revealed such a law, without making the necessary provision for its stability and unchangeable integrity. If the Saviour had neglected doing so, what opinion would we form of his wisdom as a Lawgiver ? But he has made this necessary provision, in the establishment of an infallible tribunal, by whose decisions he has commanded all his followers to be governed, under pain of eternal damnation. A circumstance which destroys, *root and branch*, your boasted doctrine of private judgment. I will now leave you, Sir, to go in search of this tribunal, and turn to the consideration of the difficulties of your rule of faith in reference to such even as can read.

.Before the Protestant sits down to cull the articles of his creed from the Bible, he must, if he act rationally, make himself morally certain that the book which he holds in his hand contains the true and real word of God. Now, this, I am bold to say, he never will be able to do, by the aid of his private judgment alone ; for the Bible being a dead

letter cannot bear testimony to its own authenticity, or prove itself to be the inspired word of God; for I presume nothing is proved to be true, merely because it is said or written to be so in a book. This principle if admitted, would prove too much; it would prove the *Koran* of Mahomet to be the inspired word of God, for it asserts that much of itself, and boldly maintains that the *Arabian Impostor* was the inspired prophet of the Lord! I call on you then, Sir, to prove to me by your rule that the Bible is the true and authentic word of God.

Mr. MOREL, in answer, repeated the same texts which he had before cited in proof of the bible being the rule of faith. But he was immediately reminded that his mode of arguing was what Logicians call *petitio principii*, or begging the question, which could not be admitted. For before he could argue the question from Scripture, he should first prove that the Bible is the true and inspired word of God, which was exactly the point he was called upon to do.—Otherwise his scriptural quotations could have no weight whatever. Mr. MOREL here became woefully embarrassed, lost his temper, called us all *infidels*, and concluded by saying that the Bible does bear testimony to its own truth, and proves itself to be the inspired word of God.

The Rev. Mr. McMAHON.—You say, Sir, that the Bible bears testimony to itself. Please then tell me in what part of the Pentateuch does Moses assure us that he was inspired, when he wrote it? where do the Apostles or Evangelists tell us they were under the influence of the divine inspiration of the Holy-Ghost, when they wrote the Gospels and Epistles and the other portions of the New Testament? By making such an assertion, are you aware, Sir, that you flatly contradict Hooker,

Chillingworth, and a host of the greatest protestant authorities, of which the Church of England can boast. Besides, Sir, had not the Church authority to *teach*, before the New-Testament was written, and was it not by her authority that the sacred volume was formed, and stamped with the character of being divinely inspired? Moreover, Sir, why are the Scriptures called *Canonical*? Is it not, because they were sanctioned by the *Canons* of the Church? It is, then, upon the authority of the Church, and not that of private judgment, or any other *criteria whatever*, that we must rely for the authenticity and inspiration of Holy-Writ. Hear what the great St. Augustin says on this subject: *Ego verò Evangelio non crederem, nisi me commoveret ecclesie Catholice auctoritas. I would not believe the Gospel but for the authority of the Catholic Church.* Did this Holy father believe that the Bible bears testimony to itself? certainly not.

Again, Sir, are you aware that the original text of the Bible was destroyed, together with the city and Temple of Jerusalem, by the Assyrians, under Nebuchadnezzar? I will be told, of course, that it was afterwards restored by Esdras, at the end of the captivity. This I willingly admit; but Esdras' copy was again destroyed, in the subsequent persecution of Antiochus. See Maccabees, Lib. 1, cap. 1, v. 59. *And they cut in pieces (says the sacred text) and burnt with fire the Books of the Law of God.* Nor have we, from that time, any evidence of its authenticity, till it was supplied by Christ and his Apostles, who committed the sacred deposit to the keeping of the Church. How then, Sir, can you, who reject the authority of this Church, be morally certain, by your rule of private judgement, that you have the Bible as it came from the inspired pen of Moses and the ancient Prophets?

Here Mr. MOREL rose and boldly denied the above statement, and maintained that the Bible was never wholly destroyed, advancing for proof of his assertion the most ridiculous absurdities, in the teeth of the positive declarations of the Bible itself, and of all history. (*Those who wish to have more ample information on this head, are referred to Brett's dissertation, in Bishop Watson's Collections, vol. 3, page 5, Protestant Writers.*)

It is evident, Sir, said the Rev. Mr. McMAHON to Mr. MOREL, that you are under the impression that the Bible, in those days, was to be found on every shelf, in every shop and in every school, as is now the case. But, Sir, you are egregiously mistaken. The *Hebrew* Youth were not permitted, as *yours* are, to *thumb* over the sublime writings of the ancient Prophets, nor to extract moral poison from the bold figures of Hosea, Ezekiel, and the Canticles of Solomon; nor were they, in afterlife, as is now unfortunately, in too many instances, the case, tempted to treat these and other portions of Holy-Writ, with open contempt, as uncommented records of depravity and the histories of unrepented vice. You deny that the writings of the Maccabees are inspired; but, *surely*, you cannot help allowing them, at least, historical credit; and even as such, they unanswerably refute your assertions. I refer you again, Sir, to the fact that there existed, in the reign of King Josias, but *one single copy* of the original text of the *book of the Law of God*, and that copy was *accidentally* discovered by the High Priest Helcias and a Scribe, while repairs were being made, in the temple. Contradict this fact, if you can; and if you cannot, what are we to think of the bold and wreckless manner, by which you seek to disprove the best established historical facts.

But let us now come to the New Testament, and we

will find your rule of faith to be equally defective and insufficient. Tell me then, Mr. MOREL, are you aware that several spurious Gospels and Epistles were written and circulated among the early Christians, under the venerable names of the Apostles and Disciples, and that too, during the first 300 years of the Christian era? How do you know, or how can you ascertain, by your private judgment, that the Gospels, which you now have, are genuine? How was this most important point decided? Was it by the authority of your rule of private judgment, or by the authority of the Church? Answer! Do you not receive books as *Canonical* Scripture, which were not written by Apostles at all, viz: the Gospels of St. Mark, St. Luke and the Acts? and do you not reject as *spurious* others that were written by Apostles? namely that written by St. Barnaby, who is called an *Apostle* and declared to be *full of the Holy-Ghost*? See *Acts Cap. 14. Ver. 24.* Is it by the authority of your private judgment you do so? No, Sir, for this and innumerable other points of the deepest importance, you must, whether you will avow it or not, throw yourself upon our rule, and entirely rely upon the authority of the Catholic Church.

Again, Sir, if the Bible alone be the Christian's rule of faith, as you have told us, the whole Bible must be necessary—must be read and studied by every individual Christian before he can make up his creed. Now the impracticability of this rule is self-evident, at least, so far as the mass of human kind are concerned. Besides, it is a historical fact, proved and established beyond the power of controversy, even by Protestant writers themselves, that more than 20 Books of Holy-Writ are missing; and St. Justin, Martyr, in his book against Tryphon, tells us that the Jews destroyed *several books of the Old*

Testament, that the New might not seem to agree. Therefore, as you have not the entire bible, your rule must necessarily be incomplete and consequently insufficient. Moreover, we all surely know that the New Testament does not contain all the truths which Jesus-Christ taught. Where, for example, do you find recorded, in that book, the many proofs he gave, and all he spoke to his Apostles of the Kingdom of God, during the forty days after his resurrection? (*Acts 1. 3.*) Say, Mr. MOREL, did he not give many signs, in the sight of his Apostles, which are not written? (*John, 20. 30.*) Where are all the explanations which he gave them, in private, concerning the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven? (*Matt xiii. 2.*) Where are all or any of the expositions which he gave to the disciples of Emmaus, *when beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning him?* *Luke.*—Where in fine are all those doings and sayings of the Saviour, of which St. John speaks at the close of his Gospel, and which were so numerous that, according to the declaration of that Apostle, *the whole world would not be able to contain all the books they would fill?*

With these facts then Sir, before your eyes, how can you any longer say that you have the whole of God's word in the Bible, and that the Bible is a complete and sufficient rule of faith? But let us suppose for the sake of argument, that not one of the difficulties which I have mentioned, exists, and that, by your private judgment, you can arrive at moral certainty of the integrity, authenticity and inspiration of the Bible; in a word, that you have the whole of God's word, as it was revealed to Moses, the Ancient Prophets, and Apostles, &c., there remains still a difficulty before you, which appears, at least, to me, *insurmountable*; and that is the moral as-

surance that you understand it rightly. You are aware, Sir, that it is not the dead letter of the Bible, which is the word of God, but the sense and meaning of that letter. This moral assurance you must have before you can pretend to make the Bible a sure rule of faith. And how, please inform me, can you be morally certain that you, by the aid of your private judgment, interpret the word of God, according to the sense and mind of the Holy-Ghost? Hear what the inspired Apostle Peter says on this subject, and tremble for your guilty presumption! Yes, sir, St. Peter tells us that *no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation*. And he adds that, in the Epistles of St. Paul, *there are somethings hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest as they do also the other Scriptures to their own destruction*.

Contrast, now, Sir, your rule of faith with this solemn declaration of the inspired Apostle. You *teach* that every prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation, and that it is the bounden duty of every man to interpret the Bible by his own individual judgment. St. Peter solemnly warns us against doing so, and tells us that, if we do, we run the risk of wresting the word of God from its true meaning, and thereby expose ourselves to everlasting damnation. This warning of St. Peter is, in my opinion, quite decisive of the question between us; for it establishes upon the authority of the Bible itself the fact that Holy Scripture should never be subjected to the various and conflicting interpretations of men; and proves moreover that some parts of Holy Writ are *hard* to be understood, and that the *unlearned* and *unstable* wrest these and other portions of the word of God from their real meaning, to the destruction of their own immortal souls; a circumstance, which should suffice to

convince every rational, sincere, honest minded Christian that Christ our merciful Saviour never intended the *Bible alone*, as interpreted by each individual reader, for a rule of faith to guide his followers in the way of salvation. Hear, Sir, what the learned and ingenious Bolingbrooke says on this subject :

Writers of the Roman religion have attempted to prove that the text of Holy-writ is, on many accounts, insufficient to be the sole rule of faith. I apprehend too that they have proved it. Sure I am that experience, from the first promulgation of christianity to this hour, has abundantly shewn, with how much ease and success, the most opposite, the most extravagant, nay, the most impious opinions and the most contradictory systems of faith may be founded on the same text and plausibly defended by the same authority. (See his letters on the use and study of history. Letter 5, page 11.)

As a practical illustration of the truth of Lord Bolingbrooke's statement will present my argument against your rule in the most intelligible form, I beg to observe that, of all the doctrinal questions at present debated among Christians, there surely is not one of more serious importance than the divinity of Jesus-Christ, because upon this single point depends the whole system of man's redemption, and practical duties too of a very serious nature are likewise involved in it. On this momentous question, however, Bible-readers and Bible-interpreters are widely at issue, and the Bible, as operated upon by your rule of private judgment, affords no solution whatever to the difficulty. There are sundry passages in the sacred volume which the Unitarian (whose rule of faith is precisely yours) is free to interpret as favourable to his belief that *Christ is not God*; while there are other passages of equal force, which to Christians of other denominations (who have also adopted your rule) ap-

pear conclusive of doctrine directly the reverse. Amongst the Unitarians, you must allow, there are men of integrity, of acute and penetrating minds, and heaven forbid that I should presume to pronounce of them that they are not as sincere, in their way of thinking, as any other class of believing Christians. On the other hand there are numberless individuals of equal talents and of equal sincerity—equally learned and equally competent to judge, who, interpreting the same passages, by the very same rule of private judgment, arrive at the very opposite conclusion. With these facts then before you, please tell me, Sir, by what criterion can a christian, taking your rule for his guidance, reasonably determine, whether he is bound to worship Christ as his Lord and Creator? Or whether, in doing so, he may not be guilty of the damning crime of idolatry? The Bible, as I have before stated, interpreted by private judgment, can afford him no help whatever to solve his difficulty, and the question, so far as his mind is concerned, must remain forever undecided.

Are we then, Sir, to conclude that, in the christian dispensation, the Divine Founder of our holy religion has left his followers without the adequate means of ascertaining, with moral certainty, who the God is they ought to adore? Or rather should we not conclude that the protestant rule of faith, which leaves so momentous a question undecided, is erroneous in itself and insecure in its results, exactly verifying these words of the Holy Ghost: *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof leads to death.*

Here MR. PREVOST, MR. MOREL'S confrère rose to reply, but, in place of meeting the above arguments against his rule of faith, with the capacity and learning of a scholar and the sincerity of a christian, he began to talk

about Jesuits and Jansenists, Holy-water, beads and scapulars ; and after speechifying forth with a furious vehemence, so as to render it even necessary to be called to order several times, he concluded a shower of *Billingsgate*, which lasted at least a long half hour, by calling Catholics the usual *Nicknames* of *ignorant, stupid, Idoliters !*

The Rev. MR. McMAHON—Perceiving that my opponents are entirely unable to extricate themselves from the difficulty in which I have, or rather their own doctrine has placed them, and that they are forced to substitute vulgar abuse for argument, I will take leave to make a few observations on other consequences fairly deducible from their rule of private judgment, as operating upon the Bible ; consequences, which must powerfully influence the mind of a Catholic against the validity of that rule. If the Bible alone, Sir, is, in your opinion, the only rule of faith which Jesus Christ did establish, then tell me, how you are justified in the exercises of your profession of *preaching* ? If the Bible alone, as interpreted by each individual reader, be the christian's rule of faith, as you have told us repeatedly that it is, then to be honest and consistent, you should immediately abandon your work of *preaching*, and cease to interpret the Bible for any but yourself. For the *bible alone*, and not the bible and the *preacher* is the rule of faith which all christians, according to you, are obliged to be guided by ?

Again, Sir, if the bible *alone* be the sole rule of faith, the Apostles were *wrong* in drawing up that venerable symbol of faith, commonly called *the Apostles' Creed*, which we all were taught in our very cradles, and which, if your rule be correct, we should forthwith endeavour to forget. The Nicene and Athanasian Creeds—the 39 Articles—the Book of Homilies, and the book of Com-

mon Prayer—and every Tract, Commentary and Catechism, that were ever written for the instruction of mankind, ought instantly to be consigned to oblivion ; for MR. MOREL tells us that the *bible alone* : not the bible and the creed—not the bible and the catechism—not the bible and the articles—not the bible and the homilies, but the bible and the *bible alone*, constitutes the entire and only rule of faith, instituted by the Saviour for the guidance and instruction of human kind in the knowledge and practice of those truths and virtues which are necessary to salvation !

Now, Sir, I appeal to you ; are not such consequences revolting to the feelings and common sense of every true and rational christian ? Yes, they certainly are, and must ever contribute powerfully to influence us to suspect that the principle in which they originate, is insecure and unsound, and well calculated to subvert the very foundations of all revealed religion.

MR. MOREL said: we consider ourselves justified in receiving the creeds you have mentioned, for this reason, because they are evidently contained in the Bible as can be clearly proved by the plainest texts of Scripture.

The Rev. MR. McMAHON—If the different articles contained in these creeds, are so evidently revealed in the bible, and can be so easily proved by the clearest and strongest passages of the Gospel, as you tell us that they can, were not the Fathers of Nice very much *overseen* in taking the trouble to travel such immense distances to draw up distinct symbols and professions of faith ? And, moreover, were they not, in the hypothesis of your rule of the bible alone being that which the Saviour did institute, very guilty, in encumbering it with useless and unnecessary matter ? Drawing up articles, which, according to your declaration, are so clearly

revealed in the bible, that he who *runs* may read them. More, Sir, if your private judgment doctrine be true, they were guilty of a sacriligious invasion of that right by seeking to force their symbols upon the christian world, thereby most unjustifiably violating the simple rule which Jesus Christ bequeathed to his followers. And you, MR. MOREL, and your brother preachers too, who maintain with you, that the bible, as interpreted by the private judgment of each individual reader, is the true and only rule of faith, you are grossly inconsistent, to speak in the least possibly offensive terms, to endeavour, as you are constantly doing, to force your tracts upon the public, and to cram your incessant *brawlings* about your *reformed evangelical church* down your neighbours throats. Is not this inconsistent conduct of yours a manifest proof, if any were wanting, that you, *your very selves* have no confidence whatever in the validity of your rule? But you tell us, Sir, that you receive the creeds of which there is question, only because they can be proved by certain texts of Scripture. Come then, MR. MOREL, and tell me, where in the Bible, you can shew us *expressly* mentioned, the *procession* of the Holy-Ghost from the Father and the Son? This article of the Christian faith, with many others, which I have never yet been able to find expressly revealed in the Bible, constitutes a portion of the Nicene Creed. Tell me again, in what chapter and verse of the Bible you meet the word *Consubstantiality*? You are aware that that the Nicene Fathers have drawn up an article, which declares Christ to be *consubstantial* to the Father. Where is this word to be found in the Bible? Mr. MOREL, please don't blink the question.

Mr. MOREL, nothing, Sir, is more easy to be proved than the procession of the Holy-Ghost from the Father

and the Son. In the Gospel of St. John, Cap. 15. ver. 26, 27, we find this doctrine manifestly revealed; for there we read these words of Jesus-Christ: *When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the spirit of truth, WHO PROCEEDETH FROM THE FATHER, he shall bear testimony of me.* And again, Cap. 16, *For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* Mr. M. produced other passages from the New Testament just as proper to prove the doctrine of the Seven Sacraments or of Purgatory, as the *procession* of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son.

The Rev. Mr. McMAHON. Are you serious, Sir, when you assert that these passages prove the *eternal procession* of the Third person of the most Holy Trinity from the Father and the Son? Or are you aware that the Greek Church, which denies this article, takes its stand upon the strength of the very passage you have cited--*the spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father.* Here, say the Greeks, the Saviour positively declares that the Holy-Ghost proceeds from the Father alone. But I perceive that you, Mr. MOREL, do not comprehend the nature of the question now before us. The question is not, I wish you to understand, about the peculiar attributes of the Holy-Spirit, but as to *how* he exists. The Catholic Church has ever believed and taught that it is by *procession* from the Father and the Son.

MR. MOREL—Does not Christ say that he will send them (the Apostles) the Paraclete. Therefore, if he proceeds from the Father, and is sent by the Son, surely he proceeds from the Father and the Son. Nothing can be clearer.

The Rev. MR. McMAHON—Here again, Sir, I find

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you are still ignorant of the real nature of the question. You ought to be aware that this passage has reference only to the peculiar offices attributed to the Holy Spirit, and not at all to his eternal procession from the Father and the Son. According to your notions and mode of arguing this question, it might be inferred that the Apostles proceed from the Son, for did not the Saviour say to them ; *as the Father sent me ; so I send you.* Therefore as the Father sent the Son, and the Son sent the Apostles ; these latter must necessarily proceed from the Son, and, according to Mr. MOREL's logic, must constitute so many Holy-Ghosts ! Alas ! for poor Mr. MOREL's bible and private judgment !

You see now, Mr. MOREL, that you are forced to avow that there are some articles of the Christian doctrine, which you receive, tho' not clearly revealed in the Bible, and that you believe them, not, certainly, upon the authority of the bible, but upon that of the Catholic Church. What then becomes of your boasted rule of faith ? Again, Sir, give me Scripture, and nothing but Scripture, for your catalogue of the inspired books of Holy-Writ— for the true translation and true sense of these books. Where do you find, in the bible, the words *Unity and Trinity of God* ? Give me Scripture for the observance of the Festivals of *Christmas, Easter* and other days kept sacred by Protestants. Shew me, if you can, scriptural authority for changing the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Does not the Bible, whose ordinances you pretend to make the rule of your moral and religious conduct, tell us that *the Lord rested on the seventh day* ? and that he *blessed, sanctified, and commanded that day to be kept holy* ? See *Exodus*, cap. 10. *Deut.* 12. Now, Mr. MOREL, tell me what Scripture you can adduce to shew that Christ annulled this positive

precept of the Lord. Surely the keeping holy the Sabbath day is one of the *Ten Commandments*, the strict and faithful observance of which the Saviour tells us is absolutely and indispensably necessary to salvation. *If thou wilt enter into life, says he, keep the Commandments. Mat.* Moreover, does he not assure us that *he came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law*? He not only observed the Jewish Sabbath himself but commanded his Apostles to keep it holy. By what authority then, Sir, I desire to know, do you set aside this precept thus most positively and bindingly enjoined by the Eternal God himself, and upheld by the express command and example of Jesus-Christ? Is it by the authority of the bible alone and private judgment?

I could, were the thing necessary, lengthen this list of *queries* by adding more than one hundred other items of great importance, in a doctrinal and moral point of view, which must convince every honest and sincere Christian that you and your unhappy partners in religious error, notwithstanding your eternal brawlings about the Bible, and the bible alone, have never taken the bible alone for your rule of faith. Where, for example, do you find the 39 articles in the bible? Or the book of Homilies, or the book of Common Prayer, so many times *revised, altered, subtracted from, and added to*? Where, I say, is there Scripture and nothing but Scripture, for all the *rites, ordinances, articles, rules, offices, notes, Comments, formulaires, creeds, Catechisms, and professions of faith*, so *different*, in the various protestant Churches? Are all these and countless other things which I omit for brevity sake, to be found *expressly* revealed in the bible? Where is your warrant, in the bible, for baptizing infants? There is positively *none*. Tell me, Sir, what we are to understand by *the baptism of fire*, mentioned by

our Saviour in St. Matt. ? or by the *baptism of the dead*, spoken of by St. Paul ? You, who have *so much of the Spirit*, will find of course no difficulty in enlightening us poor ignorant Papists, on these dark passages.

I shall now make you acquainted with the opinion of Doctor Whitaker, a Protestant Bishop, on the subject which we are discussing. *When Belarmin, says he, states that Protestants receive for articles of faith and practice many things not clearly revealed in the bible ; and that the Scriptures are not in themselves so clear and plain, as without any interpretation, to decide controversies of faith, he fights without an adversary ; for in this we agree with him.* Now, Mr. MOREL, be pleased to remember your definition of the rule of faith, which you gave us at the outset of this little controversy, and contrast it with this avowal of the celebrated Dr. Whitaker ! Hear again what Doctor Walton, known to the Christian world, as one of the most eminent biblical scholars of his day, states to be the fruits of your rule of faith : "*Aristarchus formerly could scarce find seven wise men in Greece ; but amongst us, now a days, we can scarce shew that number of fools. Every one is a Doctor ; every one has the Spirit. There is not a fanatic or a Mountebank, nor one of the vilest dregs of the rabble, who does not vend his dreams for the word of God. The bottomless pit seems to be opened, and there came out of the smoke locusts with stings, the whole tribe of Sectaries and heretics, who have renewed all the heresies of former ages, and added a numerous and monstrous progeny of their own !*"

What now, Mr. MOREL, do you think of your rule of faith and your blasphemous pretensions to a familiar intercourse with the *Spirit* ! Our blessed Lord and Redeemer tells us that *the tree is known by its fruit*. Let us then apply this test to your rule, and we will find that

it has been the fertile parent of all those countless and contradictory systems of religion, which now, by their conflicting influence: divide and distract the Christian family, and tear to pieces the seamless garment of Jesus-Christ. Yes, Sir, your rule of faith has produced, in the lapse of ages, a thousand religions, as different from each other, as from the parent Church, and as divided from one another, as the fallen leaves of autumn, without unity, without universality, without permanency, *tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine*, till, like these leaves, some mighty storm at last scatters and disperses them for ever. Does not the world abound, at present, with demonstrative evidence, that your rule is an attack upon the Majesty of God; is an opposition to the example, teaching, practice and commands of Jesus-Christ and his Apostles; is a direct sanction of man's worst errors and impieties; and in fine is the foundation stone on which blasphemy against high heaven stands? in a word, Mr. MOREL, was not your rule of private interpretation first suggested by the *old serpent* in the earthly paradise, and, unfortunately, brought into operation upon God's divine prohibition, by our first Parents; and has it not continued ever since to be as fertile in blasphemy, impiety, and religious discord, as a dunghill is in vermin; Count if you can, the number of religions which your rule has *spawned* upon the world, each one *differing* from all the rest—each one *contradicting* all the rest, and each one claiming for itself the exclusive right of *primogeniture*. And how truly painful is the reflection that *the most prevalent* of all these religions is that which professes to believe *nothing at all!*

Look around you, Sir, and behold, with fear and trembling, the moral ravages, which your doctrine of Private Judgment is every where committing among Protes-

tants. See the *disastrous epidemic*, which the bitter fruits of this *Tree of Knowledge* have produced, and are still producing, in the neighbouring States, thro' the *quackery* of your *confrère*, Farsor Miller. Tell me, Mr. MOREL, how it happens that, while the *enlightened, bible reading Yankees* are flocking, in crowds, from all quarters of the *Union*, to join the *Prophet's* standard, not so much as *one, solitary, benighted Papist* has been converted by this *Evangelical Reformer*?

With regard to the memorable declaration, which this *Arch Impostor* has made, at New Jersey, last Fall, in one of his inflammatory harangues on the *Advent*, that "the days of the *Roman Beast* were, at length, numbered;" I have only to say, that time, will prove him, as it has already proved all his *Predecessors*, from Simon Magus down to Sir Edward Courtney, to be only links in that chain of false Prophets, to whom an angry God has said—*I have not sent you, yet you ran.—I have not spoken, yet you prophesied.* (ISAIAH).

Enough I think now, Sir, has been said to convince any sincere Christian that the Saviour of the world, (who told us that there was to be but *one Shepherd and one Sheepfold*, and that all his followers should be *one*, as *He and the Father* are *one*) never intended the eternal and unchangeable truths of his Gospel to be subordinate to the *evervarying* dictates of Private Judgment, which never will allow *men to be of one mind;—nor with one mind and one mouth to glorify God.* Rom. 12.—16. nor to come to the knowledge and profession of *the One Lord—One Faith—and One Baptism*; but must ever result in producing discord among Christians, and in making their religious opinions as different as their faces! Fly then, Sir, from this house of discord—this *Babel* of confusion, and instantly sue for peace and security in the bosom

of *Catholic Unity*, where *alone*, it is to be found. As the dove, which left the Ark of Noah, could find no resting place for her foot, till she returned back ; so you; Mr. MOREL, will never enjoy true repose until you return back to the Church of Jesus-Christ, which your forefathers, at an evil hour, have deserted.

END OF THE CONFERENCE.

Having now, Mr. Editor, thro' the medium of your Journal, laid before the Public, the line of argument, which I used, in the *conference* with Mr. MOREL, against his rule of Faith ; I have only to add that I shall, as soon possible, take up his thesis on the *Supremacy of St. Peter*, and I pledge myself that, *I will tear to pieces and scatter to the winds* the cobweb objections, which he has woven for the purpose of casting a veil over the evidence of truth. In the meantime,

I remain, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

P. McMAHON.

POSTSCRIPT.

Among the great variety of unfounded charges, which are constantly urged by Protestants against the Catholic Church, I know not of any one more seriously important, or more comprehensive in its nature, than that which has reference to the sacred volume of the Holy Scriptures. The accusation is repeatedly brought against her, that she keeps the Bible locked up from the Laity; palming doctrines upon them, which its pages do not recognize, and then forbidding them to read it, lest the *imposture* should be detected. Now, this foul accusation is entirely destitute of foundation, in point of fact; for in every age from her first establishment down to the present hour, she has venerated the mysterious volume, as containing the oracles of the God of eternal truth. Her doctrine and her discipline respecting it, are invariable and the same; and if they are not in accordance with the doctrine and practice adopted by Protestants, she is not afraid openly to acknowledge that they are not, nor ever possibly can be.

In refutation of this bold and comprehensive calumny, which, I believe, has been more extensively circulated and more generally believed among our protestant brethren, than any other, I need here only copy the letter of **POPE PIUS THE SIXTH**, to the Most Rev. Anthony Martini, Archbishop of Florence, on the occasion of his having translated the Holy Bible into Italian. From

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this letter it will appear how utterly unfounded the charge is.

Beloved Son, health and Apostolic Benediction,

“ 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 the errors which are widely disseminated in these corrupt times : This you have seasonably effected, as you declare, by publishing the Sacred Writings in the language of your country, suitable to every man’s capacity ; especially when you shew and set forth, that you have added explanatory notes, which, being extracted from the Holy Fathers, preclude every possible danger of abuse : Thus you have not swerved either from the laws of the Congregation of the Index, or from the constitution published on this subject by Benedict XIV, that immortal Pope, our predecessor in the pontificate, and formerly when we held a place near his person, our excellent master in ecclesiastical learning ; circumstances which we mention as honourable to us.

“We therefore applaud your eminent learning, joined with your extraordinary piety ; and we return you our due acknowledgments for the books which you have transmitted to us, and which, when convenient, we will read over. In the mean time, as a token of our pontifical benevolence, receive our apostolic benediction, which to you, beloved son, we very affectionately impart. Given at Rome, on the calends of April, 1778, the fourth year of our Pontificate.”

There is yet another point on which I shall make one or two short observations, as it is immediately connected with the conference, and forms an inexhaustible subject of bitter invective against the Church. I mean the right of private Judgment, which we are told is the inalienable birth right of every child of Adam, and which, it is asserted, the Catholic Church most tyrannically withholds from her children. Now, the solution of this question, entirely depends upon the nature of the right contended for; for the right of Private Judgment, like other questionable rights, may be considered in a two fold point of view, either with reference to Almighty God, or to our fellow men.

If considered in reference to God and understood in the sense of a positive divine right, the Catholic Church certainly denies that any individual possesses such a right; and I do not believe there is a single sensible Protestant in this community who will undertake to maintain the reverse. If for example, to prove our obedience, God has been pleased to impose upon us certain restrictive laws, the Ten Commandments for instance; will any Christian contend that he has a right to sit in judgment upon these laws, and to determine by his private judgment, how far he will admit them, or how far he will reject them? Well, and if for the exercise of our Faith, God has revealed certain truths to be believed by us, will it be contended that his creatures have a right to determine, by their private judgment, how far they will believe or disbelieve these truths? To pronounce of some that they are *true*, because they fancy they understand them; and of others that they are false because they do not.

But if the *right* contended for be understood as a *mere human, civil*, right, the Catholic Church admits it

freely in its fullest possible extent. For if I, or any other man should choose this day to renounce every article of the Christian Creed, we have a civil right to do so, and no human power has any just authority to punish us for so doing. For we believe that *to God alone* man is responsible for his religious opinions; and that we will have to account to him for our faith as well as for our moral conduct. With the conviction of this awful accountability then before you, my Catholic friends, take the Holy-Bible, and read and peruse its sacred pages for your instruction and edification; and whilst others, who read it, acknowledging no other guide than the *ignis fatuus* of their own private judgment, are liable, at all times, to pervert its meaning, and thereby *wrest it to their own perdition*; may you divine from it evidence to confirm and consolidate your faith; encouragement to cheer and enliven your hope; and precepts of fraternal charity, with every inducement to observe them. In fine let these words of Isaiah make you sensible how incompetent man is to sit in judgment on the sublime truths of divine revelation: *My thoughts, says the Lord, are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways; for as the heavens are exalted above the earth, even so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts.* Cap. 55. v. 8-9.

I will here subjoin for the information of the reader, a few extracts from the most ancient of the Fathers, as bearing upon the doctrine of Private Judgment:

He, who reading the Gospel, applies it to his own interpretation, not understanding it as the Lord spoke it, he is truly a false Prophet, uttering words from his own mind Heretics always apply their own fables to the Gospels and the writings of the Apostles, expounding

them by their own Judgment, and not according to the sense of the Holy-Ghost, speaking and teaching by the Church. (Origen, Hom. 2. in Ezech. Tom. 3. pag. 362).

Recollect, says St. Hilary, that there is not one of the heretics who does not now impudently assert that all his blasphemies are derived from the Scriptures. They all urge the Scriptures without the right knowledge of them, and without faith talk about their faith ; for it is not by reading, but by comprehending their meaning, that the Scriptures should be weighed. (Ad Constans. Lib. 2. pag. 1227).

St. Ephrem says : *Heretics, wishing to give strength to their error, endeavour to extract passages from the Scriptures by which they pervert the minds of those who listen to them.* And St. Irenæus, in his book, against heretics, cap. 8. pag. 35. says : *such being their doctrines, which the Prophets never preached, nor Christ taught, nor the Apostles delivered, they boast their own superior knowledge of Scripture, and attempt to make it seem credible, forming, as it were, a rope of sand by adducing some passages from the sayings of the Prophets, or of Christ, or of his Apostles, but in such manner as to violate the order of the Sacred Writings, and, as far as in them lies, dissolve the whole connexion of truth.*

They appeal to the Scripture with such frontless impudence, that they make impressions upon some ; in the course of their disputes they tire out the strong, entrap the feeble, and fill the minds of ordinary persons with great perplexity. We therefore establish, as a fixed principle, that Heretics should not be allowed to dispute from Scripture ; for if they contend with these weapons, we should first enquire to whom these Scriptures belong, lest we should allow these men to usurp that treasure, to which they have neither right nor pretensions. (Tertullian).

