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THEOPNEUSTIA

OR,

PLENARY INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,

Our object in this book is, with God's help, and on the sole authority of his Word, to set forth, establish, and defend, the Christian doctrine of Divine Inspiration.

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITION OF THEOPNEUSTIA

SECTION I.

This term is used for the mysterious power which the Divine Spirit put forth on the authors of the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, in order to their composing these as they have been received by the Church of God at their hands. "All Scripture," says an apostle, "is *theopneustic*."¹

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This Greek expression, at the time when St Paul employed it, was new perhaps even among the Greeks; yet though the term was not used among the idolatrous Greeks, such was not the case among the Hellenistic Jews. The historian Josephus,² a contemporary of St Paul's, employs another closely resembling it in his first book against Apion, when, in speaking of all the prophets who composed, says he, the twenty-two sacred books of the Old Testament,³ he adds, that they wrote *according to the pneustia* (or the inspiration) *that comes from God*.⁴ And the Jewish philosopher Philo,⁵ himself a contemporary of Josephus, in the account he has left us of his embassy to the emperor Caius, making use, in his turn, of an expression closely resembling that of St Paul, calls the Scriptures "*theochrest oracles*;"⁶ that is to say, oracles given under the agency and dictation of God.

Theopneustia is not a system, it is a fact; and this fact, like every thing else that has taken place in the history of redemption, is one of the doctrines of our faith.

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16. (*Theopneust*, less euphonious, would be more exact.)

² P. 1036, edit. Aurel. Allob. 1611.

³ See on this number our chap. iii. sect. 2, ques. 27.

⁴ Κατὰ τὴν ἐπιπνοίον τὴν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ.

⁵ P. 1022, edit. Francof.

⁶ Θεόχρηστα (ἐν χρησμῶ Θεοῦ).

SECTION II.

Meanwhile it is of consequence for us to say, and it is of consequence that it be understood, that this miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost had not the sacred writers themselves for its object - for these were only his instruments, and were soon to pass away; but that its objects were the holy books themselves, which were destined to reveal from age to age, to the Church, the counsels of God, and which were never to pass away.

The power then put forth on those men of God, and of which they themselves were sensible only in very

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different degrees, has not been precisely defined to us. Nothing authorizes us to explain it. Scripture has never presented either its manner or its measure as an object of study. What it offers to our faith is solely the inspiration of what they say - the divinity of the book they have written. In this respect it recognises no difference among them. What they say, they tell us, is theopneustic: their book is from God. Whether they recite the mysteries of a past more ancient than the creation, or those of a future more remote than the coming again of the Son of man, or the eternal counsels of the Most High, or the secrets of man's heart, or the deep things of God - whether they describe their own emotions, or relate what they remember, or repeat contemporary narratives, or copy over genealogies, or make extracts from uninspired documents - their writing is inspired, their narratives are directed from above; it is always God who speaks, who relates, who ordains or reveals by their mouth, and who, in order to this, employs their personality in different measures: for "the Spirit of God has been upon them," it is written, "and his word has been upon their tongue." And though it be always the word of man, since they are always men who utter it, it is always, too, the word of God, seeing that it is God who superintends, employs, and guides them. They give their narratives, their doctrines, or their commandments, "not with the words of man's wisdom, but with the words taught by the Holy Ghost;" and thus it is that God himself has not only put his seal to all these facts, and constituted himself the author of all these commands, and the revealer of all these truths, but that, further, he has caused them to be given to his Church in the order, and in the measure, and in the terms which he has deemed most suitable to his heavenly purpose.

Were we asked, then, how this work of divine inspiration has been accomplished in the men of God, we should reply, that we do not know; that it does

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not behove us to know; and that it is in the same ignorance, and with a faith quite of the same kind, that we receive the doctrine of the new birth and sanctification of a soul by the Holy Ghost. We believe that the Spirit enlightens that soul, cleanses it, raises it, comforts it, softens it. We perceive all these effects; we admire and we adore the cause; but we have found it our duty to be content never to know the means by which this is done. Be it the same, then, with regard to divine inspiration.

And were we, further, called to say at least what the men of God experienced in their bodily organs, in their will, or in their understandings, while engaged in tracing the pages of the sacred book, we should reply, that the powers of inspiration, were not felt by all to the same degree, and that their experiences were not at all uniform; but we might add, that the

knowledge of such a fact bears very little on the interests of our faith, seeing that, as respects that faith, we have to do with the book, and not with the man. It is the book that is inspired, and altogether inspired: to be assured of this ought to satisfy us.

SECTION III.

Three descriptions of men, in these late times, without disavowing the divinity of Christianity, and without venturing to decline the authority of the Scriptures, have thought themselves authorized to reject this doctrine.

Some of these have disowned the very *existence* of. this action of the Holy Ghost; others have denied its *universality*; others, again, its *plenitude*.

The first, like Dr Schleiermacher,⁷ Dr De Wette, and many other German divines, reject all miraculous inspiration, and are unwilling to attribute to the sacred writers any more than Cicero accorded to the poets -

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affiatum spiritûs divini – “a divine action of nature, an interior power resembling the other vital forces of nature.”⁸

The second, like Dr Michaelis,⁹ and like Theodore of Mopsuestia,¹⁰ while admitting the existence of a divine inspiration, would confine it to a part only of the sacred books: to the first and fourth of the four evangelists, for example; to a part of the epistles, to a part of Moses, a part of Isaiah, a part of Daniel. These portions of the Scriptures, say they, are from God, the others are from man.

The third class, in fine, like M. Twesten in Germany, and like many divines in England,¹¹ extend, it is true, the notion of a divine inspiration to all parts of the Bible, but not to all equally (*nicht gleichmaessig*). Inspiration, as they understand it, might be universal indeed, but unequal; often imperfect, accompanied with, innocent errors; and carried to very different degrees, according to the nature of different passages: of which degrees they constitute themselves, more or less, the judges.

Many of these, particularly in England, have gone so far as to distinguish four degrees of divine inspiration: the inspiration of *superintendence*, they have said, in virtue of which the sacred writers have been constantly preserved from serious error in all that relates to faith and life; the inspiration of *elevation*, by which the Holy Ghost, further, by carrying up the thoughts of the men of God into the purest regions of truth, must have indirectly stamped the same characters of holiness and grandeur on their words; the inspiration of *direction*, under the more powerful action of which the sacred writers were under God's guidance in regard to what they said and abstained from saying; finally,

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⁷ Schleiermacher, der Christliche Glaube, band i. s. 115.

⁸ De Wette, Lehrbuch Anmerk. Twesten, Vorlesungen über die Dogmatik, tome i. p. 424, &c.

⁹ Michaelis, Introd. to the New Testament.

¹⁰ See our chap. v. sect. 2, quest. 44.

¹¹ Drs Pye Smith, Dick, Wilson.

the inspiration of suggestion. Here, they say all the thoughts, and even the words, have been given by God by means of a still more energetic and direct operation of his Spirit.

“The Theopneustia,” says M. Twesten, “extends unquestionably even to words, but only when the choice or the employment of them is connected with the religious life of the soul; for one ought, in this respect,” he adds, “to distinguish between the Old and New Testament, between the Law and the Gospel, between history and prophecy, between narratives and do between the apostles and their apostolical assistants.”

To our mind these are all fantastic distinctions; the Bible has not authorized them; the Church of the first eight centuries of the Christian era knew nothing of them; and we believe them to be erroneous in themselves, and deplorable in their results.

Our design then, in this book, in opposition to these three systems, is to prove the existence, the universality, and the plenitude of the divine inspiration of the Bible.

First of all, it concerns us to know if there has been a divine and miraculous inspiration for the Scriptures. We say that there has. Next, we have to know if the parts of Scripture that are divinely inspired are equally and entirely so; or, in other terms, if God has provided, in a certain though mysterious manner, that the very words of his holy book should always be what they ought to be, and that it should contain no error. This, too, we affirm to be the case. Finally, we have to know whether what is thus inspired by God in the Scriptures, be a part of the Scriptures, or the whole of the Scriptures. We say that it is the whole Scriptures:- the historical books as well as the prophecies; the Gospels as well as the Song of Solomon; the Mark and Luke, as well as those of John and Matthew; the history of the shipwreck of St Paul in the waters of the Adriatic, as well as that of the shipwreck of the old world in the waters of the flood; the scenes of

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Mamre beneath the tents of Abraham, as well as those of the day of Christ in the eternal tabernacles; the prophetic prayers in which the Messiah, a thousand years before his first advent, cries in the Psalms, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? - they have pierced my hands and my feet - they have cast lots upon my vesture - they look and stare at me” - as well as the narratives of them by St John, St Mark, St Luke, or St Matthew.

In other words, it has been our object to establish by the Word of God that the Scripture is from God, that the Scripture is throughout from God, and that the Scripture throughout is entirely from God.

Meanwhile, however, we must make ourselves clearly understood. In maintaining that all Scripture is from God, we are very far from thinking that man goes for nothing in it. We shall return in a subsequent section to this opinion; but we have felt it necessary to state it here. There, all the words are man's; as there, too, all the words are God's. In a certain sense, the Epistle to the Romans is altogether a letter of Paul's; and in a still higher sense, the Epistle to the Romans is altogether a letter of God's.

Pascal might have dictated one of his Provincial Letters to some Clermont artisan, and another to the Abbess of Port-Royal. Could the former have been on that account less Pascailan than all the rest? Undoubtedly not. The great Newton, when he wished to hand over to the world his marvellous discoveries, might have employed some Cambridge youth to write out the fortieth, and some college servant the forty-first proposition of his immortal work, the *Principia*, while he might have dictated the remaining pages to Barrow and Halley. Should we

any the less possess the discoveries of his genius, and the mathematical reasonings which lead us to refer to one and the same law all the movements in the universe? Would the whole work be any the less his? No, undoubtedly. Perhaps, however, some one at his leisure might have further taken

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some interest in knowing what were the emotions of those two great men, or the simple thoughts of that boy, of the honest musings of that domestic, at the time that their four pens, all alike docile, traced the Latin sentences that were dictated to them. You may have been told that the two latter, as they plied the quill, allowed their thoughts to revert indifferently to past scenes in the gardens of the city, or in the courts of Trinity College; while the two professors, following with the most intense interest every thought of their friend, and participating in his sublime career, like eaglets on their mother's back, sprang with him into the loftiest elevations of science, borne up by his mighty wings, soaring with delight into the new and boundless regions which he had opened to them. Nevertheless, you may have been told, among the lines thus dictated, there may have been some which neither the boy nor even the professors were capable of understanding. These details are of little consequence, you would have replied; I will not waste any time upon them; I will study the book. Its preface, its title, its first line, and its last line, all its theorems, easy or difficult, understood or not understood, are from the same author, and that is enough. Whoever the writers may have been, and however different the respective elevation of their thoughts, their hand, faithful to its task, and superintended while engaged in it, has equally traced their master's thoughts on the same roll of paper; and there I can always study, with equal confidence, in the very words of his genius, the mathematical principles of Newton's philosophy.

Such is the fact of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures (nearly to this extent, that in causing his books to be written by inspired men, the Holy Ghost has almost always, more or less, employed the instrumentality of their understanding, their will, their memory, and all the powers of their personality, as we shall ere long have occasion to repeat). And it is thus that God, who desired to make known to his elect, in a book that was to

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last for ever, the spiritual principles of divine philosophy, has caused its pages to be written, in the course of a period of sixteen hundred years, by priests, by kings, by warriors, by shepherds, by publicans, by fishermen, by scribes, by tentmakers, associating their affections and their faculties therewith, more or less, according as he deemed fit. Such, then, is God's book. Its first line, its last line, all its teachings, understood or not understood, are by the same author; and that ought to suffice for us. Whoever may have been the writers - whatever their circumstances, their impressions, their comprehension of the book, and the measure of their individuality in His powerful and mysterious operation - they have all written faithfully and under superintendence in the same roll, under the guidance of one and the same Master, for whom a thousand years are as one day; and the result has been the Bible. Therefore I will not lose time in idle questions; I will study the book. It is the word of Moses, the word of Amos, the word of John, the word of Paul; but still the thoughts expressed are God's thoughts, and the words are God's words. "Thou, Lord, hast spoken by the mouth of thy servant David." "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me," said he, "and his word was in my tongue."¹²

¹² Acts iv. 25; 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2. See our chap. ii. sect. 2.

It would then, in our view, be holding very erroneous language to say - certain passages in the Bible are man's, and certain passages in the Bible are God's. No; every verse without exception is man's; and every verse without exception is God's, whether we find him speaking there directly in his own name, or whether he employs the entire personality of the sacred writer. And as St Bernard has said of the living works of the regenerated man, "that our will does nothing there without grace, but that grace does nothing there without our will;" so ought we to say, that in the Scriptures God has done nothing but by man, and man has done nothing but by God.

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In fact, it is with divine inspiration as with efficacious grace. In the operations of the Holy Ghost while causing the sacred books to be written, and in those of the same divine agent while converting a soul, and causing it to advance in the ways of sanctification, man is in different respects entirely active and entirely passive. God does all there; man does nil there; and it may be said for both of these works what St Paul said of one of them to the Philippians, "It is God that worketh in you *to will and to do.*"¹³ Thus you will see that in the Scriptures the same operations are attributed alternately to God and to man. God converts, and it is man that converts himself. God circumcises the heart, God gives a new heart; and it is man that should circumcise his heart, and make himself a new heart. "Not only because, in order to obtain such or such an effect, we ought to employ the means to obtain such or such an effect," says the famous President Edwards in his admirable remarks against the errors of the Arminians, "but because this effect itself is our act, as it is our duty; God *producing all, and we acting all.*"¹⁴

Such, then, is the Word of God. It is God speaking in man, God speaking by man, God speaking as man, God speaking for man! This is what we have asserted, and must now proceed to prove. Possibly, however, it will be as well that we should first give a more precise definition of this doctrine.

SECTION IV.

In point of theory, it were allowable to say that a religion might be divine without the books that teach it being miraculously inspired. It were possible, for example, to figure to ourselves a Christianity without divine inspiration; and one might conceive, perhaps, that all the miracles of our faith have been performed

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with the single exception of this one. On this supposition (which nothing authorizes), the everlasting Father would have given his Son to the world; the creating Word, made flesh, would have submitted for us to the death of the cross, and caused to descend from heaven upon his apostles the spirit of understanding and the power of working miracles; but, all these mysteries of redemption once consummated, he might have relinquished to these men of God the care of writing, according to their own wisdom, our sacred books; and their writings would thus have presented no more than the natural language of their supernatural illuminations, of their convictions, and their charity. Such an order of things, no doubt, is but an idle supposition, directly opposed to the testimony which the scriptures have rendered to

¹³ Phil. ii. 13.

¹⁴ Edwards' Remarks, &c., p. 251.

what they are. But without saving here that it resolves nothing, and that, miracle for miracle, that of illumination is not less inexplicable than that of inspiration; without saying, farther, that the 'Word of God possesses a divine power which belongs to it alone - such an order of things, granting it were a reality, would have exposed us to innumerable errors, and plunged us into the most dismal uncertainty. Upon what testimony could, in that case, our faith have rested? On something said by men? But faith is founded only on the Word of God. - (Rom. x. 17.) In such a system, then, you would only have had a Christianity without Christians. Deprived of any security against the imprudence of the writers, you could not even have given their books the authority at present possessed in the Church by those of Augustine, Bernard, Luther, and Calvin, or of so many other men whom the Holy Ghost enlightened with a knowledge of the truth. We are, in fact, sufficiently aware how many imprudent expressions and erroneous propositions have found their way into the midst even of the finest pages of those admirable doctors. And yet the apostles (on the supposition we have made) would have been far more subject to

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serious mistakes even than they were, since they would not have had, like the doctors of the Church, a Word of God by which to direct their own; and since they themselves would have had to compose the whole language of religious science. (A science is more than half formed when its language is formed.) What deplorable and inevitable errors must have necessarily accompanied, in their case, this revelation without divine inspiration! and in what deplorable doubts would their hearers have been left! - errors in the selection of facts, errors in the appreciation of them, errors in the statement of them, errors in the mode of conceiving the relations they bear to doctrines, errors in the expression of those very doctrines, errors of omission, errors of language, errors of exaggeration, errors in adopting certain national prejudices, or prejudices arising from a man's rank or party, errors in the foresight of the future, and in judgments pronounced upon the past.

But, thanks be to God, it is not thus with our sacred books. They contain no error; they are written throughout by inspiration of God. "Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" they did so, "not with words that man's wisdom teacheth, but with words which the Spirit of God taught;" in such sort, that not one of these words should be neglected, and that we are called to respect them and to study them, even to their smallest iota and their slightest jot: for "this Scripture is pure, like silver refined seven times: it is perfect."

These assertions, which are themselves testimonies of the Word of God, have already comprised our last definition of Divine Inspiration, and lead us to characterise it, finally, as "that inexplicable power which the Divine Spirit put forth of old on the authors of holy Scripture, in order to their guidance even in the employment of the words they used, and to preserve them alike from all error and from all omission."

This new definition, which might appear complex, is not so really; for the two traits of which it is com-

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posed are equivalent, and to admit the one is to accept the other.

We propose them disjunctively to the assent of our readers, and we offer them the alternative of accepting either. One has more precision, the other more simplicity, in so far as it presents the doctrine under a form more disengaged from all questions relative to the mode of

inspiration, and to the secret experiences of the sacred writers. Let either be fully accepted, and then there will have been rendered to the Scriptures the honour and the credit to which they are entitled.

What we propose, therefore, is to establish the doctrine of Divine inspiration under one or other of these two forms:-

“The Scriptures are given and warranted by God, even in their language;” and, “The Scriptures contain no error - (whereby we understand that they say all that they ought to say, and that they do not say what they ought not to say).”

Now. how shall a man establish this doctrine? By the Scriptures, and only by the Scriptures. Once that we have recognised these as true, we must go to them to be taught what they are; and once that they have told us that they are inspired of God, it belongs to them farther to tell us how they are so, and how far they are so.

To attempt the proof of their inspiration *a priori* - by arguing from that miracle being necessary for the security of our faith - would be to adopt a feeble mode of reasoning, and almost to imitate, in one sense, the presumption which, in another sense, imagines *a priori* four degrees of divine inspiration. Further; to think of establishing the entire inspiration of the Scriptures on the consideration of their beauty, their constant wisdom, their prophetic foresight, and all the characters of divinity which occur in them, would be to build on arguments no doubt just, but contestable, or at least contested. It is solely on the declarations of holy Scripture, therefore, that we have to take our stand.

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We have no authority but that for the doctrines of our faith; and divine inspiration is just one of those doctrines.

Here, however, let us anticipate a misapprehension. It may happen that some reader, still but feebly established in his Christianity, mistaking our object, and thinking to glance through our book in search of arguments which may convince him, might find himself disappointed, and might conceive himself authorized to charge our line of argument with some vicious reasoning, as if we wanted to prove in it the inspiration of the Scriptures by the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is of consequence that we should put him right. We have not written these pages for the disciples of Porphyry, or of Voltaire, or of Rousseau; and it has not been our object to prove that the Scriptures are worthy of belief. Others have done this, and it is not our task. We address ourselves to men who respect the Scriptures, and who admit their veracity. To these we attest, that, being true, they say that they are inspired; and that, being inspired, they declare that they are so throughout: whence we conclude that they necessarily must be so.

Certainly, of all truths, this doctrine is one of the simplest and the clearest to minds meekly and rationally submissive to the testimony of the Scriptures. No doubt modern divines may be heard to represent it as full of uncertainties and difficulties; but they who have desired to study it only by the light of God's Word, have been unable to perceive those difficulties, or to find those uncertainties. Nothing, on the contrary, is more clearly or oftener taught in the Scriptures than the Inspiration of the Scriptures. Accordingly, the ancients knew nothing on this subject of the embarrassments and the doubts of the doctors of the present day; for them

the Bible was from God, or it was not from God. On this point antiquity presents an admirable unanimity.¹⁵ But since the moderns, in imitation of

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the Talmudistic Jews and Rabbins of the middle ages, have imagined learned distinctions between four or five different degrees of inspiration, who can wonder that for them difficulties and uncertainties have been multiplied? Contesting what the Scriptures teach, and explaining what the Scriptures do not teach, it is easy to see how they come to be embarrassed; but for this they have only their own rashness to blame.

So very clear, indeed, is this testimony which the Scriptures render to their own inspiration, that one may well feel amazed that, among Christians, there should be any diversities of opinion on so well-defined a subject. But the evil is too easily explained by the power of preconceived opinions. The mind once wholly preoccupied by objections of its own raising, sacred passages are perverted from their natural meaning in proportion as those objections present themselves; and, by a secret effort of thought, people try to reconcile these with the difficulties that embarrass them. The plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is, in spite of the Scriptures, denied (as the Sadducees denied the resurrection), because the miracle is thought inexplicable; but we must recollect the answer made by Jesus Christ, “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not THE SCRIPTURES, nor THE POWER OF GOD?” - (Mark xii. 24, 27.) It is, therefore, because of this too common disposition of the human mind, that we have thought it best not to present the reader with our scriptural proofs until after having completed our definition of divine inspiration, by an attentive examination of the part to be assigned in it to the individuality of the sacred writers. This will be the subject of the following section. No less do we desire being able to present the reader with a more didactic expression of the doctrine that occupies us, and of some of the questions connected with it: but we have thought that a more fitting place might be found for

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this development elsewhere, partly because it will be more favourably received after our scriptural proofs shall have been considered; partly because we have no desire, by employing the forms of the school, to repel, at the very threshold, unlearned readers who may have taken up these pages with the idea of finding something in them for the edification of their faith.

SECTION V.

ON THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE SACRED WRITERS.

The individuality of the sacred writers, so profoundly stamped on the books they have respectively written, seems to many impossible to be reconciled with a plenary inspiration. No one, say they, can read the Scriptures without being struck with the differences of language, conception, and style, discernible in their authors; so that even were the titles of the several books to give us no intimation that we were passing from one author to another, still we should almost instantly discover, from the change of their character, that we had no longer to do with the same writer, but that a new personage had taken the pen. This diversity reveals

¹⁵ See on this subject the learned dissertation in which Dr Rudelbach establishes the sound doctrines on inspiration historically, as have sought to establish them by Scripture. (*Zeitschrift für die gesammte Lutherische Theologie und Kirche*, von Rudelbach und Guericke, 1840.)

itself even on comparing one prophet with another prophet, and one apostle with another apostle. Who could read the writings of Isaiah and Ezekiel, of Amos and Hosea, of Zephaniah and Habakkuk, of Jeremiah and Daniel, and proceed to study those of Paul and Peter, or of John, without observing, with respect to each of them, how much his views of the truth, his reasonings, and his language, have been influenced by his habits, his condition in life, his genius, his education, his recollections - all the circumstances, in short, that have acted upon his outer and inner man? They tell us what they saw, and just as they saw it. Their memory is put into requisition, their imagination is called into exercise, their affections are drawn out - their whole being is at work, and their

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moral physiognomy is clearly delineated. We are sensible that the composition of each has greatly depended, both as to its essence and its form, on its author's circumstances and peculiar turn of mind. Could the son of Zebedee have composed the Epistle to the Romans, as we have received it from the apostle Paul? Who would think of attributing to him the Epistle to the Hebrews? And although the Epistles general of Peter were without their title, who would ever think of ascribing them to John? It is thus, likewise, with the evangelists. All four are very distinctly recognisable, although they all speak of the same Master, profess the same doctrines, and relate the same acts. Such, we are told, is the fact, and the following consequences are boldly deduced from it

1. Were it God who speaks alone and constantly in the Scriptures, we should see, in their various parts, an uniformity which is not to be found there.
2. It must be admitted that two different impulses have acted at the same time on the same authors, while they were composing the Scriptures; the natural impulses of their individuality, and the miraculous impulses of inspiration.
3. There must have resulted from the conflict, the concurrence, or the balanced action of these two forces, - an inspiration variable, gradual, sometimes entire, sometimes imperfect, and oft times even reduced to the feeble measure of a mere superintendence.
4. The variable power of the Divine Spirit, in this combined action, must have been in the ratio of the importance and the difficulty of the matters treated of by the sacred author. He might even have abstained from any intervention when the judgment and the recollections of the writer could suffice, inasmuch as God never performs useless miracles.

“It belongs not to man to say where nature ends, and where inspiration begins,” says Bishop Wilson.¹⁶

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“The exaggeration we find in the notions which some have entertained of inspiration,” says Dr Twisten, “does not consist in their having extended them to all, but in their having extended them to all equally. If inspiration does not exclude the personal action of the sacred authors, no more does it destroy all influence proceeding from human imperfection. But we may suppose this influence to be more and more feeble in the writers, in proportion as the matter treated of is more intimately related to Christ.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, p. 506.

¹⁷ Vorles. ueber die Dogmatik, tome i.

Dr Dick recognises three degrees of inspiration in the holy Scriptures:- “1. There are many things in the Scriptures which the writers might have known, and probably did know, by ordinary means In these cases, no supernatural influence was necessary to enlighten and invigorate their minds; it was only necessary that they should be infallibly preserved from error. 2. There are other passages of Scripture, in composing which the minds of the writers must have been supernaturally endowed with more than ordinary vigour 3. It is manifest, with respect to many passages of Scripture, that the subjects of which they treat must have been directly revealed to the writers.”¹⁸

5. Hence it follows, that if this plenary inspiration was sometimes necessary, still, with respect to matters at once easy and of no religious importance, there might be found in the Scriptures some harmless errors, and some of those stains ever left by the hand of man on all he touches. While the energies of the divine mind, by an action always powerful, and often victorious, enlarged the comprehension of the men of God, purified their affections, and led them to seek out, from among all their recollections of the past, those which might be most usefully transmitted to the Church of God, the natural energies of their own minds, left to themselves in so far as regarded all details of no consequence either

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to faith or virtue, may have led to the occurrence in the Scriptures of some mixture of inaccuracy and imperfection. “We must not therefore,” says M. Twesten, “attribute an unlimited infallibility to the Scripture, as if there were no error there. No doubt God is truth, and in matters of importance all that is from him is truth; but if all be not of equal importance, all does not then proceed equally from him; and if inspiration does not exclude the personal action of the sacred authors, no more does it destroy all influence of human imperfection.”¹⁹

All these authors include in their assumptions and conclusions the notion, that there are some passages in the Scriptures quite devoid of importance, and that there are others alloyed with error. We shall ere long rebel with all our might both these imputations; but this is not yet the place for it. The only question we have to do with here, is that respecting the living and personal form under which the Scriptures of God have been given to us, and its alleged incompatibility with the fact of a plenary inspiration. To this we proceed to reply.

1. We begin by declaring how far we are from contesting the fact alleged, while, however, we reject the false consequences that are deduced from it. So far are we from not acknowledging this human individuality stamped throughout on our sacred books, that, on the contrary, it is with profound gratitude - with an ever-growing admiration - that we contemplate this living, actual, dramatic, humanitarian character diffused with so powerful and charming an effect through all parts of the book of God. Yes (we cordially unite with the objectors in saying it), here is the phraseology, the tone, the accent of a Moses; there, of a John: here, of an Isaiah; there, of an Amos: here, of a Daniel or of a Peter; there, of a Nehemiah, there again of a Paul. We recognise them, listen to them, see them. Here, one may say, there is no room for mistake. We admit the fact; we delight in studying it;

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we profoundly admire it; and we see in it, as we shall have occasion more than once to repeat, one additional proof of the divine wisdom which has dictated the Scriptures.

¹⁸ See an Essay on the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by the late John Dick, D.D. Fourth edition. Glasgow, 1840. Chapter 1.

¹⁹ *Ut supra.*

2. Of what consequence to the fact of the divine inspiration is the absence or the concurrence of the sacred writers' affections? Cannot God equally employ them or dispense with them? He who can make a statue speak, can he not, as he pleases, make a child of man speak? He who rebuked by means of a dumb animal the madness of one prophet, can he not put into another prophet the sentiments or the words which suit best the plan of his revelations? He that caused to come forth from the wall a hand, without any mind of its own to direct it, that it might write for him those terrible words, "*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin,*" could, he not equally guide the intelligent and pious pen of his apostle, in order to its tracing for him such words as these: "*I say the truth in Christ, and my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, and who are Israelites?*" Know you how God acts, and how he abstains from acting? Will you teach us the mechanism of inspiration? Will you say what is the difference between its working where individuality is discoverable, and its working where individuality is not discoverable? Will you explain to us why the concurrence of the thoughts, the recollections, and the emotions of the sacred writers, should diminish aught of their theopneustia? and will you tell us whether this very concurrence may not form part of it? There is a gulf interposed betwixt the fact of this individuality and the consequence you deduce from it; and your understanding is no more competent to descend into that gulf to contest the reality of theopneustia than ours is to explain it. Was there not a great amount of individuality in the language of Caiaphas, when that wicked man, full of the bitterest spite, abandoning himself to

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the counsels of his own evil heart, and little dreaming that he was giving utterance to the words of God, cried out in the Jewish council, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people?" Certainly there was in these words, we should say, abundance of individuality; and yet we find it written that Caiaphas *spake this not of himself* (ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ), but that, being high priest for that year, "he prophesied," unconsciously, that Jesus should die, "in order that he might gather into one the children of God that were scattered abroad." - (John xi. 49-52.)

Why, then, should not the same Spirit, in order to the utterance of the words of God, employ the pious affections of the saints, as well as the wicked and hypocritical thoughts of his most detestable adversaries?

3. When a man tells us that if, in such or such a passage, the style be that of Moses or of Luke, of Ezekiel or of John, then it cannot be that of God - it were well that he would let us know what is God's style. One would call our attention, forsooth, to the accent of the Holy Ghost - would show us how to recognise him by the peculiar cast of his phraseology, by the tone of his voice; and would tell us wherein, in the language of the Hebrews or in that of the Greeks, his supreme individuality reveals itself!

4. It should not be forgotten, that the sovereign action of God, in the different fields in which it is displayed, never excludes the employment of second causes. On the contrary, it is in the concatenation of their mutual bearings that he loves to make his mighty wisdom shine forth. In the field of creation he gives us plants by the combined employment of all the elements - heat, moisture, electricity, the atmosphere, light, the mechanical attraction of the capillary vessels, and the manifold operations of the organs of vegetation. In the field of providence, he accomplishes the development of his vastest plans by means of the unexpected concurrence of a thousand millions of human

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wills, alternately intelligent and yielding, or ignorant and rebellious. "Herod and Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel" (influenced by so many diverse passions), "were gathered together," he tells us, only "to do whatsoever his hand and counsel had determined before to be done." Thus, too, in the field of prophecy does he bring his predictions to their accomplishment. He prepares, for example, long beforehand, a warlike prince in the mountains of Persia, and another in those of Media; the former of these he had indicated by name two hundred years before; he unites them at the point named with ten other nations against the empire of the Chaldeans; he enables them to surmount a thousand obstacles; and makes them at last enter the great Babylon, at the moment when the seventy years, so long marked out for the captivity of the Jewish people, had come to a close. In the field of his miracles, even, he is pleased still to make use of second causes. There he had only to say, "Let the thing be, and it would have its being;" but he desired, by employing inferior agents, even in that case to let us know that it is he that gives power to the feeblest of them. To divide the Red Sea, he not only causes the rod of Moses to be stretched out over the deep - he sends from the east a mighty wind, which blows all night, and makes the waters go back. To cure the man that was born blind, he makes clay and anoints his eyelids. In the field of redemption, instead of converting a soul by an immediate act of his will, he presents motives to it, he makes it read the Gospel, he sends preachers to it; and thus it is that, while it is he who "gives us to will and to do according to his good pleasure," he "begets us by his own will, by the word of truth." Well, then, why should it not be thus in the field of inspiration (theopneustia)? Wherefore, when he sends forth his Word, should he not cause it to enter the understanding, the heart, and the life of his servants, as he puts it upon their lips? Wherefore should he not associated their personality with what they reveal to us? Where -

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fore should not their sentiments, their history, their experiences, form part of their inspiration (theopneustia)?

5. What may, moreover, clearly expose the error involved in this alleged difficulty, is the extreme inconsistency shown in the use that is made of it? In fact, in order to impugn the plenary inspiration of certain portions of the Scriptures, the individuality with which they are marked is insisted on; and yet it is admitted that other parts of the sacred books, in which this character is equally manifest, must have been given directly by God, even to the most minute details. Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the author of the Apocalypse, have each stamped upon their prophecies their peculiar style, features, manner - in a word, their mark; just as Luke, Mark, John, Paul, and Peter have been able to do in their narratives, or in their letters. There is no validity, then, in the objection. If it proved any thing, it would prove too much.

6. What still farther strikes us in this objection and in the intermittent system of inspiration with which it is associated, is its triple character of complication, rashness, and childishness. Complication; for it is assumed that the divine action, in dictating the Scriptures, intermitted or fell off as often as the passage falls in the scale of difficulty, or in the scale of importance; and thus God is made to retire or advance successively in the mind of the sacred writer during the course of one and the same chapter, or one and the same passage! Rashness; for the majesty of the Scriptures not being recognised, it is boldly assumed that they are of no importance, and require no wisdom beyond that of man, except in some of their parts. We add childishness; one is afraid. it is alleged, to attribute to God useless miracles, - as if the Holy Ghost, after having, as is admitted, dictated, word for word, one part of the Scriptures, must

find less trouble in doing nothing more elsewhere than aiding the sacred author by enlightening him, or leaving him to write by himself under mere superintendence!

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7. But this is by no means all. What most of all makes us protest against a theory according to which the Scriptures are classed into the *inspired*, the *half-inspired*, and the *uninspired* (as if this sorry doctrine behoved to flow from the individuality stamped upon them), is its direct opposition to the Scriptures. One part of the Bible is from man (people venture to say), and the other part is from God. And yet, mark what its own language on the subject is. It protests that *ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*” It points to no exception. What right, then, can we have to make any, when itself admits none? Just because people tell us, if there be in the Scriptures a certain number of passages which could not have been written except under plenary inspiration, there are others for which it would have been enough for the author to have received some eminent gifts, and others still which might have been composed even by a very ordinary person! Be it so; but how does this bear upon the question? When you have been told who the author of a book is, you know that all that is in that book is from him - the easy and the difficult, the important and the unimportant. If, then, the whole Bible “is given by inspiration of God,” of what consequence is it to the question that there are passages, in your eyes, more important or more difficult than others? The least among the companions of Jesus might no doubt have given us that 5th verse of the 11th chapter of St John, “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus;” as the most petty schoolmaster also might have composed that first line of Athalie, “Into his temple, lo! I come, Jehovah to adore.” But were we told that the great Itacine employed some village schoolmaster to write out his drama, at his dictation, should we not continue, nevertheless, still to attribute to him all its parts - its first line, the notation of the scenes, the names of the *dramatis personæ*, the indications of their exits and their entrances, as well as the most sublime strophes of his choruses? if, then, God himself declares to us

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his having dictated the whole Scriptures, who shall dare to say that that 5th verse of the 11th chapter of St John is less from God than the sublime words with which the Gospel begins, and which describe to us the eternal Word? Inspiration, no doubt, may be perceptible in certain passages more clearly than in others; but it is not, on that account, less real in the one case than in the other.

In a word, were there some parts of the Bible without inspiration, no longer could it be truly said that the whole Bible is divinely inspired. No longer would it be throughout the Word of God, It would have deceived us.

8. Here it is of special importance to remark, that this fatal system of a gradual, imperfect, and intermittent inspiration, has its origin in that misapprehension to which we have more than once had occasion to advert. It is because people have almost always wished to view inspiration in the man, while it ought to have been seen only in the book. It is “*ALL SCRIPTURE,*” it is *all that is written*, that is inspired of God. We are not told, and we are not asked, how God did it. All that is attested to us is, that He has done it. And what we have to believe is simply that, whatever may have been the method he took for accomplishing it.

To this deceptive point of view, which some have thought good to take in contemplating the fact of inspiration, the three following illusions may be traced.

First; in directing their regards to inspiration in the sacred author, people have naturally been led to figure it to themselves as an *extraordinary excitation* in him, of which he was conscious, which took him out of himself; which animated him, after the manner of the ancient Pythonesses, with an *afflatu divino*, a divine fire, easily discernible; in such sort, that wherever his words are simple, calm, familiar, they have been unable to see how divine inspiration could be attributed to him.

Next; in contemplating inspiration in persons, peo-

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ple have farther been led to attribute to it *different degrees* of perfection, seeing they knew that the sacred authors had themselves received very different measures of illumination and personal holiness. But if you contemplate inspiration in the book, then you will immediately perceive that it cannot exist there in degrees. A word is from God, or it is not from God. If it be from God, it is not so after two different fashions. Whatever may have been the spiritual state of the writer, if all he writes be divinely inspired, all his words are from God. And (mark well) it is according to this principle that no Christian will hesitate, any more than Jesus Christ has done, to rank the scriptures of Solomon with those of Moses, any more than those of Mark or of Matthew with those of the disciple whom Jesus loved - nay, with the words of the Son of God himself. They are all from God.

Finally; by a third illusion, from contemplating inspiration in the men who wrote the Scriptures, not in the Scriptures which they wrote, people have been naturally led to deem it absurd that God should *reveal* miraculously to any one *what that person knew already*. They would, on this ground, deny the inspiration of those passages in which the sacred writers simply tell what they had seen, or simply state opinions, such as any man of plain good sense might express without being inspired. But it will be quite otherwise the moment inspiration is viewed, not as *in the writer*, but as *in that which is written*. Then it will be seen that all has been traced under God's guidance - both the things which the writer knew already and those of which he knew nothing. Who is not sensible, to give an examples that the case in which *I should dictate* to a student a book on geometry, altogether differs from that in which, after having *instructed him* more or less perfectly in that science, I should employ him to compose a book on it himself under my auspices? In the latter work, it is true, he would require my intervention only in the difficult propositions; but then, who would think of

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saying the book was mine? In the former case, on the contrary, all parts of the book, easy and difficult alike, from the quadrature of the transcendental curves to the theory of the straight line or of the triangle, would be mine. Well, then, so is it with the Bible. It is not, as some will have it, a book which God employed men, whom he had previously enlightened, to write under his auspices. No - it is a book which he dictated to them; it is the word of God; the Spirit of the Lord spake by its authors, and his words were upon their tongues.

9. The style of Moses, Ezekiel, David, St Luke, and St John, may be at the same time God's style, is what a child might tell us.

Let us suppose that some modern French author had thought good, at the commencement of the present century, to aim at popularity by borrowing for a time the style, we shall say, of Chateaubriand; might it not then be said with equal truth, but in two different senses, that the style was the author's and yet the style too of Chateaubriand? And if, to save the French from

some terrible catastrophe by bringing them back to the Gospel, God should condescend to employ certain prophets among them, by the mouths of whom he should proclaim his message, would not these men have to preach in French? What, then, would be their style, and what would you require in it, in order to its being recognised as that of God? If such were his pleasure, one of these prophets might speak like Fénelon, another like Bonaparte; in which case there is no doubt that it would be, in one sense, the curt, barking, jerking style of the great captain; also, and in the same sense, the sustained and varied flow of the priest of Cambray's rounded eloquence; while in another, and a higher and truer sense, it would, in both these mouths, be the style of God, the manner of God, the word of God. No doubt, on every occasion on which he has revealed himself, God might have caused an awful voice to resound from heaven, as of old from the top of Sinai, or on the

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banks of the Jordan.²⁰ His messengers, at least, might have been only angels of light. But even then what languages would these angels have spoken? Evidently those of the earth! And if he behoved on this earth to substitute for the syntax of heaven and the vocabulary of the archangels, the words and the constructions of the Hebrews or the Greeks, why not equally have borrowed their manners, style, and personality?

10. This there is no doubt that he did, but not so as that any thing was left to chance. "Known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world;"²¹ and just as, year after year, he causes the tree to put forth its leaves as well for the season when they respire the atmospheric elements, and, cooperating with the process at the roots, can safely draw nourishment from their juices, as for that in which the caterpillars that are to spin their silk on its branches are hatched and feed upon them; just as he prepared a gourd for the very place and the very night on which Jonah was to come and seat himself to the east of Nineveh, and when the next morning dawned, a gnawing worm when the gourd was to be withered; so, too, when he would proceed to the most important of his doings, and cause that Word to be written which is to outlast the heavens and the earth, the Lord God could prepare long beforehand each of those prophets, for the moment and for the testimony to which he had foreordained them from eternity. He chose them, in succession, for their several duties, from among all men born of women; and, with respect to them, fulfilled in its perfection that saying, "Send, O Lord, by the hand thou shouldst send."²²

As a skilful musician, when he would execute a long score by himself, takes up by turns the funereal flute, the shepherd's pipe, the merry fife, or the trumpet that summons to battle; so did Almighty God, when he would make us hear his eternal word, choose out from

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of old the instruments which it seemed fit to him to inspire with the breath of his spirit. "He chose them before the foundation of the world, and separated them from their mother's womb."²³

Has the reader ever paid a visit to the astonishing organist, who so charmingly elicits the tourist's tears in the Cathedral at Freiburg, as he touches one after another his wondrous keys, and greets your ear by turns with the march of warriors on the riverside, the voice of prayer

²⁰ Exod. xix.; John xii. 39.

²¹ Acts xv. 18.

²² Exod. iv. 13.

²³ Gal. 1.15; Eph. i. 4.

sent up from the lake during the fury of the storm, or of thanksgiving when it is hushed to rest? All your senses are electrified, for you seem to have seen all, and to have heard all. Well, then, it was thus that the Lord God, mighty in harmony, applied, as it were, the finger of his Spirit to the stops which he had chosen for the hour of his purpose, and for the unity of his celestial hymn. He had from eternity before him all the human stops which he required; his Creator's eye embraces at a glance this range of keys stretching over threescore centuries; and when he would make known to our fallen world the everlasting counsel of his redemption, and the coming of the Son of God, he put his left hand on Enoch, the seventh man from Adam,²⁴ and his right on John, the humble and sublime prisoner of Patmos. The celestial anthem, seven hundred years before the flood, began with these words, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all;" but already, in the mind of God, and in the eternal harmony of his work, the voice of John had answered to that of Enoch, and closed the hymn, three thousand years after him, with these words, "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him! Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen!" And during this hymn of thirty centuries, the Spirit of God never ceased to breathe in all his messengers; the angels, an apostle tells us, desired to look into its won-

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drous depths.²⁵ God's elect were moved, and life eternal came down into the souls of men.

Between Enoch and St John, listen to Jeremiah, twenty-four centuries after the one, and seven hundred years before the other, "Before I formed thee in the belly," saith the Lord, "I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."²⁶ In vain did this alarmed man exclaim, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." The Lord answers him, "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt speak whatsoever I command thee;" and the Lord put forth his hand and touched his mouth, "Behold," said he, "I have put my words in thy mouth."

Between Enoch and Jeremiah, listen to Moses. He, too, struggles on Mount Horeb against the call of the Lord, "Alas, O my Lord, I am not eloquent; send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." But the anger of the Lord is kindled against Moses. "Who hath made man's mouth?" he says to him. "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and will teach thee what thou shalt say."²⁷

Between Jeremiah and John, listen to Paul of Tarsus, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal his Son in me, he called me by his grace, that I might preach him among the heathen."²⁸

You see, then, it was sometimes the artless and sublime simplicity of John; sometimes the impassioned, elliptical, rousing, and logical energy of Paul; sometimes the fervour and solemnity of Peter; it was Isaiah's magnificent, and David's lyrical poetry; it was the simple and majestic narratives of Moses, or the sententious and royal wisdom of Solomon - yes, it was all this; it was Peter, it was Isaiah, it was Matthew, it was John, it was Moses; yet it was God.

²⁴ Jude 14.

²⁵ 1 Peter i. 12.

²⁶ Jerem. i. 5-7.

²⁷ Exod. iv. 10, &c. &c.

²⁸ Gal. i. 5.

“Are not all these which speak Galileans?” the people exclaimed on the day of Pentecost; yes, they

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are so; but the message that is on their lips comes from another country - it is from heaven. Listen to it; for tongues of fire have descended on their heads, and it is God that speaks to you by their mouths.

11. Finally, we would fain that people should understand that this human individuality to which our attention is directed in the Scriptures, far from leaving any stain there, or from being an infirmity there, stamps upon them, on the contrary, a divine beauty, and powerfully reveals to us their inspiration.

Yes, we have said that it is God who speaks to us there, but it is also man:- it is man, but it is also God. Admirable Word of God! it has been made man in its own way, as the eternal Word was! Yes, God has made it also come down to us full of grace and truth, like unto our words in all things, yet without error and sin! Admirable 'Word, divine Word, yet withal full of humanity, much-to-be-loved Word of my God! Yes, in order to our understanding it, it had of necessity to be put upon mortal lips, that it might relate human things; and, in order to attract our regard, behoved to invest itself with our modes of thinking, and with all the emotions of our voice; for God well knew whereof we are made. But we have recognised it as the 'Word of the Lord, mighty, efficacious, sharper than a two-edged sword; and the simplest among us, on hearing it, may say like Cleopas and his friend, “Did not our hearts burn within us while it spoke to us?”

With what a mighty charm do the Scriptures, by this abundance of humanity, and by all this personality with which their divinity is invested, remind us that the Lord of our souls, whose touching voice they are, does himself bear a human heart on the throne of God, although seated on the highest place, where the angels serve him and adore him for ever! It is thus, also, that they present to us not only that double character of variety and unity which already embellishes all the other works of God, as Creator of the heavens and the earth; but, further, that mingling of familiarity and

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authority, of sympathy and grandeur, of practical details and mysterious majesty, of humanity and divinity, which is recognisable in all the dispensations of the same God, as Redeemer and Shepherd of his Church.

It is thus, then, that the Father of mercies, while speaking in his prophets, behoved not only to employ their manner as well as their voice, and their style as well as their pen; but, further, often to put in operation their whole faculties of thought and feeling. Sometimes, in order to show us his divine sympathy there, he has deemed it fitting to associate their own recollections, their human convictions, their personal experiences, and their pious emotions, with the words he dictated to them; sometimes, in order to remind us of his sovereign intervention, he has preferred dispensing with this unessential concurrence of their recollections, affections, and understanding.

Such did the Word of God behove to be.

Like Immanuel, full of grace and truth; at once in the bosom of God and in the heart of man; mighty and sympathizing; heavenly and of the earth; sublime and lowly; awful and familiar;

God and man! Accordingly it bears no resemblance to the God of the Rationalists. They, after having, like the disciples of Epicurus, banished the Divinity far from man into a third heaven, would have had the Bible also to have kept itself there. "Philosophy employs the language of the gods," says the too famous Strauss of Ludwigsburg, "while religion makes use of the language of men." No doubt she does so; she has recourse to no other; she leaves to the philosophers and to the gods of this world their empyrean and their language.

Studied under this aspect, considered in this character, the Word of God stands forth without its like; it presents attractions quite unequalled; it offers to men of all times, all places, and all conditions, beauties ever fresh; a charm that never grows old, that always satisfies, never pails. With it, what we find with respect to human books is reversed; for it pleases and fascinates,

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extends and rises in your regard the more assiduously you read it. It seems as if the book, the more it is studied and studied over again, grows and enlarges itself, and that some kind unseen being comes daily to stitch in some fresh leaves. And thus it is that the souls, alike of the learned and the simple, who have long nourished themselves on it, keep hanging upon it as the people hung of old on the lips of Jesus Christ.²⁹ They all think it incomparable; now powerful as the sound of mighty waters; now soft and gentle, like the voice of the spouse to her bridegroom; but always perfect, "always restoring the soul, and making wise the simple."³⁰

To what book, in this respect, would you liken it? Go and put beside it the discourses of Plato, or Seneca, or Aristotle, or Saint Simon, or Jean Jacques. Have you read Mahomet's books? Listen to him but for one hour, and your ears will tingle while beaten on by his piercing and monotonous voice. From the first page to the last, it is still the same sound of the same trumpet; still the same Medina horn, blown from the top of some mosque, minaret, or war-camel; still sybilline oracles, shrill and harsh, uttered in an unvarying tone of command and threat, whether it ordain virtue or enjoin murder; ever one and the same voice, surly and blustering, having no bowels, no familiarity, no tears, no soul, no sympathy.

After trying other books, if you experience religious longings open the Bible; listen to it. Sometimes you find here the songs of angels, but of angels that have come down among the children of Adam. Here is the deep-sounding organ of the Most High, but an organ that serves to soothe man's heart and to rouse his conscience, alike in shepherd's cots and in palaces; alike in the poor man's garrets and in the tents of the desert. The Bible, in fact, has lessons for all conditions; it brings upon the scene both the lowly and the great; it

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reveals equally to both the love of God, and unveils in both the same miseries. It addresses itself to children; and it is often children that show us there the way to heaven and the great things of Jehovah. It addresses itself to shepherds and herdsmen; and it is often shepherds and herdsmen who lift up their voices there, and reveal to us the character of God. It speaks to kings and to scribes; and it is often kings and scribes that teach us there man's wretchedness, humiliation, confession, and prayer. Domestic scenes, confessions of conscience, pourings forth of prayer in secret, travels, proverbs, revelations of the depths of the heart, the holy

²⁹ Luke xix. 48: ὁ λαὸς ἅπας ἐξεκρέματο.

³⁰ Ps. xix. 7.

courses pursued by a child of God, weaknesses unveiled, falls, recoveries, inward experiences, parables, familiar letters, theological treatises, sacred commentaries on some ancient Scripture, national chronicles, military annals, political statistics, descriptions of God, portraits of angels, celestial visions, practical counsels, rules of life, solutions of cases of conscience, judgments of the Lord, sacred hymns, predictions of future events, narratives of what passed during the days preceding our creation, sublime odes, inimitable pieces of poetry; - all this is found there by turns; and all this meets our view in most delightful variety, and presenting a whole whose majesty, like that of a temple, is overpowering. Thus it is, that, from its first to its last page, the Bible behaved. to combine with its majestic unity the indefinable charm of human-like instruction, familiar, sympathetic, personal, and the charm of a drama extending over forty centuries. In the Bible of Desmarets, it is said, "There are fords here for lambs, and there are deep waters where elephants swim."

But behold, at the same time, what unity, and, lo! what innumerable and profound harmonies in this immense variety! Under all forms it is still the same truth; ever man lost, and God the Saviour; ever man with his posterity coming forth out of Eden and losing the tree of life, and the second Adam with his people re-entering paradise, and regaining possession of the

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tree of life; ever the same cry uttered in tones innumerable, "O heart of man, return to thy God, for he pardoneth! We are in the gulf of perdition; let us come out of it; a Saviour hath gone down into it he bestows holiness as he bestows life."

"Is it possible that a book at once so sublime and so simple can be the work of man?" was asked of the philosophers of the last century by one who was himself too celebrated a philosopher. And all its pages have replied, No - it is impossible; for every where, traversing so many ages, and whichever it be of the God-employed writers that holds the pen, king or shepherd, scribe or fisherman, priest or publican, you every where perceive that one same Author, at a thousand years' interval, and that one same eternal Spirit, has conceived and dictated all; - every where, at Babylon as at Horeb, at Jerusalem as at Athens, at Rome as at Patmos, you will find described the same God, the same world, the same men, the same angels, the same future, the same heaven:- every where, whether it be a poet or a historian that addresses you, whether it be in the plains of the desert in the age of Pharaoh, or in the prisons of the capitol in the days of the Caesars - every where in the world the same ruin; in man the same impotency; in the angels the same elevation, the same innocence, the same charity; in heaven the same purity, the same happiness, the same meeting together of truth and mercy, the same mutual embracing of righteousness and peace; the same counsels of a God who blotteth out iniquity, and who, nevertheless, doth not clear the guilty.

We conclude, therefore, that the abundance of humanity to be found in the Scriptures, far from compromising their divine inspiration, is only one farther mark of their divinity.

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