

CHAPTER V.

EXAMINATION OF EVASIONS.

Several systems of exceptions, we have said, have been proposed by some. There are persons who, while they fully admit that the thoughts found in Scripture have been given by God, would maintain, nevertheless, that its style and expressions are purely human; others have excluded the inspiration of the historical books; others, in fine, would make an exception of certain details, at least, which to them have appeared too trite, and too remote from edification, to admit of our attributing them to the Spirit of God.

SECTION I.

MIGHT NOT INSPIRATION PERTAIN TO THE THOUGHTS ONLY, WITHOUT EXTENDING TO THE WORDS?

“The prophets and the apostles,” some say, “were, no doubt, inspired when they wrote their sacred books, in so far as respected their thoughts; but we must believe, that, beyond this, they were left to themselves as respects their language; so that in this written revelation the ideas are God’s, and the expressions those of a man. The task of the sacred writers resembles, in some sort, that of a man before whose eyes there have been successively passed some very highly coloured pictures, while he has been charged to describe them

merely in so far as they have passed before his eyes. It is thus that the Divine Spirit is considered to have presented the holy truths they announce to the view of the evangelists and the prophets, leaving them no more to do than simply to express them; and this mode of conceiving of what they did,” it is added, “at once accounts for the striking differences of style which their writings exhibit.”

We reply:-

1. That this system is directly contrary to Scripture testimony. The Bible declares itself to be written, “not with the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.”¹ It calls itself “the word of God,” “the words of God,”² “the voice of God,” “the oracles of God,”³ “the lively oracles of God,”⁴ “the holy letters of God,”⁵ “the scripture of God.” A *scripture*, or writing, is made up of letters and words, and not of invisible thoughts only: but, we are told,⁶ “all SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God.” What is WRITTEN,

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 13.

² Throughout.

³ Rom. iii. 2.

⁴ Acts vii. 38.

⁵ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

⁶ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

therefore, is inspired of God (θεόπνευστος); and that which is inspired of God is ALL SCRIPTURE - it is all that is written (πᾶσα γραφή).

2. While this system is contradictory to the Bible, it is also most irrational. The ideas of our fellow-men embody themselves in words; and it is there only that you can seize them. Souls are revealed to us only in the flesh. You do not learn their character; you know nothing of their desires or their experiences; you do not even suspect their existence; and betwixt you and them there are no ties, until they have become clothed with bodies, and have received organs, so that they can manifest themselves to you. My most intimate friend is known to me only by the language of his voice and his gestures. If he had no power of employing these, in vain might he remain for twenty years at my side: he would be to me as if he were not.

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More than this. There exists, in so far as we are concerned, an inevitable dependance between souls and their organs, betwixt their ideas and words. Not only do we come to know the existence of the former only by the language of the latter, but (even after they have spoken to us) we can but guess only at their true character, as long as we have not the assurance that the organ has been the faithful interpreter of the mind, that the word has truly reflected the idea, and the proposition the thought. And if we have some room to apprehend that language has not been the pliant and adequate servant of the will, we possess no certainty that we have not been mistaken. Though we might know that God himself had placed in the soul of a writer the purest thoughts of heaven, still there would always be required, in order to our having through these words a certain revelation of them, that there should be given us the assurance that the language is exact, that the reflections are faithful, and that they reproduce to us without alteration the objects deposited in the secret chambers of that soul.

Language, then, is the wondrous mirror which reflects to us the depths of the soul.

Were you a son weeping for the loss of a mother, and were God, for your consolation, to desire that you should see again, for some moments, in a looking-glass, the ever-to-be-venerated features of that mother, would it be enough that she herself were made to come down behind you and occupy the place where the reflected light would come from the object to your eyes in most abundance? Doubtless not, it would further be necessary that the mirror should be without any twist, furrow, or blemish. Were it unequal and faithless, of what use would it be to you? You would have near you, it is true, the smiling features of your own mother; her inimitable look would bear towards you the ardent expression of her maternal good wishes and her august benediction; but all this would be in vain; you would have no better than a stranger before your eyes, one

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perhaps of a hideous expression - a deformed creature, with features positively revolting! O my good mother, it is, then, no longer you! you would exclaim. Thus would it also be for you with the thoughts of God, if left to receive them disfigured by the errors of the human language that reflected them to us. It is no longer thou, O thought of my God! we should have to say to it. It is necessary then for our security, that we should have the divine guarantee as well for the fidelity of the mirror as for the faithfulness of the objects.

These reflections will suffice, no doubt, to enable us to comprehend how irrational it is to think of receiving with exactness and certainty the thoughts of another through the medium of inexact and uncertain expressions. Can you lay hold of these thoughts otherwise than by words? And without God's words, how can you be sure of possessing his thoughts?

3. This theory of a divine revelation, in which you would have the inspiration of the thoughts without the inspiration of the language, is so inevitably irrational that it cannot be sincere, and proves false even to those who propose it; for, without their suspecting it, it makes them come much further down in their arguments than their first position seems at a first glance to indicate. Listen to them. Though the words are those of man, say they, the thoughts are those of God. And how will they prove this to you? Alas! once more, by attributing to this Scripture from God, contradictions, mistakes, proofs of ignorance! Is it then the words alone that they attack? and are not these alleged errors much more in the ideas than in the words? So true it is that we cannot separate the one from the other, and that a revelation of God's thoughts ever demands a revelation of God's words also.

4. This theory is not only antibiblical, irrational, and mischievous; further, it is taken up arbitrarily, and amounts at best to a gratuitous hypothesis.

5. Besides, it is very useless; for it resolves no dif-

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faculty. You find it difficult, say you, to conceive how the Holy Ghost could have given the words in Holy Scripture; but can you tell us any better how he gave the thoughts? Will it be more easy for you, for example, to explain how God suggested to Moses the knowledge of the different acts of the creation, or to St John that of all the scenes of the last day, than to conceive how he made them write the narrative of these things in the language of the Hebrews, or in that of the Greeks?

6. But we have much more to say than this. That which in this theory ought above all to strike every attentive mind, is its extreme inconsistency, seeing that those even who hold it most strenuously, are forced withal to admit that, in its greatest part, the Scripture behaved to be inspired to the men of God **EVEN IN ITS WORDS.**

Suppose that the Holy Ghost were to call on you to go down this morning to the public street, there to proclaim, in Russian or in Tamil, "the wonderful works of God;" what would become of you, were he to be content with inspiring you with ideas, without giving you words? You might have the third heaven before your eyes, and in your heart the transports of archangels, still you would have to remain as if dumb and stupid before the persons composing this multitude. In order to your inspiration being of any use to you, it would be necessary that the periods, the phrases, and even the smallest words of your discourse, should be entirely given to you? What do I say? People might very well dispense with your own thoughts, provided you could make them hear, without even understanding them, the thoughts of God in the words of God. Well, then, let us carry this supposition into Jerusalem, and into the persons of the apostles. When the fishermen of Capernaum and Bethsaida, met in their upper chamber on the day of Pentecost, received the command to come down, and to go forth and publish, before that people which had assembled from every region under

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heaven, the wonderful works of God, in Latin, in Parthian, in Elamite, in Chaldean, in Coptic, in Arabic, would not the giving of the words be necessary? What could they have done on that occasion without the words? Why, nothing; while, with their words, they could convert the world!

When, afterwards, in the church of Corinth, the faithful who had received miraculous powers spoke in the midst of the congregations in strange tongues, and found it necessary that some other, to whom the gift of interpretation had been given, should translate after them the unknown words which they had uttered in the ears of their brethren, was it not equally necessary that the words and all the phrases should be entirely dictated to them?⁷ When all the prophets, after having written their sacred pages, set themselves to meditate upon them with so much respect and care, as they would have done to the oracles of a stranger prophet; when they meditated upon them night and day, searching what (as Peter tells us⁸) the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow - was it not, then, also necessary that all the words should have been given them? When Moses gives an account of the creation of the world, and of the extrication of chaos; when Solomon describes the Eternal Wisdom; when David recites, a thousand years beforehand, the prayers of the Son of God on the cross; when Daniel relates in detail, and without very well understanding them himself, the remote destinies of the World and of the Church; and when, in fine, John continues, in his own prophecies, the revelations of the prophet Daniel, was it not necessary that the smallest words should be given to them? and do not all interpreters, in reading them, acknowledge how far we might be led away from the true meaning, by the smallest word being put in the place of some other word, by the tense

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of the verb being ill-chosen, by the imprudent placing of a particle?

From this, therefore, we must conclude, since so considerable a part of the Scriptures is necessarily inspired, even in its words, that the system of an inspiration of the thoughts, without an inspiration of the language, is inconsistent in the highest degree. There are not two kinds of the Word of God in the Holy Scriptures; there are not two sorts of God's Oracles. If it was "as moved by the Holy Ghost that holy men spoke," then all the Sacred Letters are divinely inspired; and that which is divinely inspired in the Sacred Letters is ALL SCRIPTURE.

But these last reflections are about to conduct us to something at once more simple and more important. Here let the utmost caution be observed, for the question has been misrepresented. It has been said that the sacred Scriptures were inspired by God; and people have asked themselves up to what point this behoved to be the case. The matter for inquiry, however, did not lie there.

7. We have said, that the question relates to the BOOK, and not to the WRITERS. You believe that God gave them the thoughts always, and not always the words; but the Scripture tells us, on the contrary, that God has given them always the words, and not always the thoughts. As for their thoughts, while they were in the act of writing, God might inspire them with ideas more or less lively, more or less pure, more or less elevated: that interests my charity alone, but

⁷ 1 Cor xiv.

⁸ 2 Pet. i. 10, 11.

has no bearing on my faith. The SCRIPTURE - the Scripture which they have transmitted to me, perhaps without themselves seizing its meaning, at least without ever entirely comprehending it, this is what concerns me.

Paul might have been mistaken in his thoughts, when, on appearing before the council of the priests, and not recognizing God's high-priest, he ventured to say to him, "God shall strike thee, thou whited wall!" This is of little consequence, however, provided I know that

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WHEN HE WRITES THE WORD OF GOD, "it is Jesus Christ that speaks in him!"⁹

Peter might have been mistaken in his thoughts when, refusing to believe that God could send him among the heathen, he did not perceive and acknowledge that "in every nation, they who turn to God are accepted of him." He might have been still more grievously mistaken when, at Antioch, he compelled Paul to withstand him to the face, because he was to be blamed, and because he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel.¹⁰ But how does this concern me, after all, I repeat, at least as respects my faith? For the question is, not how I can know at what moments, or in what measure, Paul, John, Mark, James, or Peter, were inspired in their thoughts, or sanctified in their conduct: what, above all, interests me, is to know that all the sacred pages were divinely inspired; that their written words were the words of God; and that, in giving these to us, they spoke, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,¹¹ (οὐκ ἐν δισρακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις) that then it is NOT THEY that speak, but the Holy Ghost;¹² in a word, that "God hath spoken BY THE MOUTH of his prophets since the world began."¹³

The sacred writers were SOMETIMES inspired; but the Holy Scriptures were so ALWAYS. Accordingly, the times, the measures, the degrees, the alternations of the inspiration of the men of God, are not for us an object of faith; but that which is an object of faith, is that the Scripture is divinely inspired, and that that which is divinely inspired is the whole Scripture. "Not one jot or tittle of it shall pass away."

There is doubtless an inspiration of thoughts, as there is an inspiration of words; but the first makes the CHRISTIAN, while it is the second that makes the PROPHET.

A true Christian is inspired in his thoughts: the Spi-

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rit of God reveals to him the deep things of God;¹⁴ it is not flesh and blood that have made him know the counsels of God and the glories of Jesus Christ, it is God the Father;¹⁵ for the Holy Ghost leads him into all truth;¹⁶ and he has been incapable of truly owning in his soul Jesus as

⁹ 2 Cor. xiii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 17.

¹⁰ Gal. ii. 11-14.

¹¹ 1 Cor. ii. 13.

¹² Mark xiii. 11.

¹³ Acts iii. 21.

¹⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 10.

¹⁵ Matt. xvi. 17.

¹⁶ John xvi. 13.

Lord (the Lord of lords) but by the Holy Ghost.¹⁷ Every true believer, then, is more or less inspired by God in his thoughts; but he is not so in his words. He is Christian, but not Prophet. The holiest discourses of Cyprian, Augustine, Bernard, Luther, Calvin, Beza, Leighton, are only the words of men on the truths of God - venerable words, no doubt, precious and powerful words, and worthy of our utmost attention, because of the wisdom that has been given to them, and of the abundant expression which we find in them of the thought of God; still these, after all, are but the words of men - they form but a sermon. It is quite otherwise in the case of the prophet. The latter may have, and he may not have, the thought of God in his thought; but that which he will always have, as long AS HE SHALL SPEAK AS A PROPHET, is "the word of God IN HIS MOUTH." The Spirit of God will speak by him, and the word of God will be on his tongue.¹⁸ He will be the mouth of God, a mouth intelligent or unintelligent, voluntary or involuntary - that is of little consequence, provided that God's oracles flow from him, and that I receive the thought of my God in the words of my God.

In a word, one may be a Christian without having on his lips the words of God, and one may be a prophet without having on his heart or in his understanding the thoughts of God; but one cannot be a Christian without having in his heart the thoughts of God, and one cannot be a prophet without having on his lips the words of God.

In the language of the Bible (this we shall ere long establish), a prophet is a person in whose mouth God

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puts, for a time, the words which he wishes to have uttered upon earth. Such a person prophesied only by intervals, "according as the Spirit gave him utterance."¹⁹ One might not be a prophet, like King Saul, more than twice in his life; and, as his soldiers, more than once.²⁰ One might then pronounce the words of God while understanding them, or without understanding them, often even without having been previously apprized, and sometimes even without having wished it.

When Daniel had traced his last pages, he did not understand, he himself tells us, what the Spirit had made him write.²¹ When Caiaphas uttered prophetic words, "*he spoke not of himself;*" he had the will, but he had neither the *consciousness* nor the *comprehension* of what God caused him to pronounce.²² When Balaam went up three times to the top of a hill to curse Israel, and when, three times, words of benediction proceeded from his lips, as it were in spite of himself, because "the Lord had met him and put a word into his mouth,"²³ he had the consciousness of what he did, but neither fully comprehended, nor fully willed it. When Saul's armed followers went in search of David to Ramah, and when the Spirit of the Lord was upon them, so that they also prophesied; and when Saul, three successive times, sent others of them, who also three successive times prophesied; and when the profane Saul went himself likewise to the great well in Sechu, and when God (to illustrate his power, and to manifest more clearly to us what it is to be a prophet, and what his word is) had made his Spirit to come on that

¹⁷ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

¹⁸ 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2.

¹⁹ Acts ii. 4.

²⁰ 2 Sam. x. 19.

²¹ Dan. xii. 8, 9.

²² John xi. 51.

²³ Numb. xxiii. 16.

unbelieving man also; when he went on and prophesied; when the word of the Lord was in that ordinarily profane mouth, and he prophesied before Samuel all that day and all that night, “what was it that happened to the son of Kish? Was Saul also among the prophets?”²⁴ Yes, and Saul had the consciousness of his condition, and of the part he acted as a prophet; but of

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this he had neither the full will, nor the anticipation, nor probably the full comprehension. When the old prophet had seated himself amicably at table with the man of God, whom he had seduced from his road by an unbelieving and carnal kindness, and when, all of a sudden, under an impulse from on high, menacing words proceeded in a loud voice from his mouth against his imprudent and guilty guest, he prophesied with the consciousness of what he did, but he prophesied without having the wish to do so. What do I say? Did not God make his voice be heard in the empty air, in the presence of Moses and of all the people, on Mount Sinai? Did he not cause it to be heard by the couch of a child in the tabernacle at Shiloh? To the ears of the three apostles, and of the two saints who had risen again from Hades, on Mount Tabor? To John the Baptist, and to all the people, on the banks of the Jordan?

Be it well understood, then, it is the holy letters (τὰ ἱερά γράμματα, 2 Tim. iii. 15); it is all *that is written*, that is to say, the *phrases* and the *words*, that are divinely inspired, that are θεόπνευστοι. The question, then, is about the words, and not about the men who have written. As to the latter, that concerns you little. The Spirit was able more or less to associate their individuality, their conscience, their recollections, their affections, with what he caused them to write, and you are nowise obliged to know how far this was the case; but that which it behoves you to know is (as St Peter has said), “that NO WRITTEN PROPHECY came by *the will of man*, but that it was as *moved by the Holy Ghost*, holy men of God spake;” and just as at Belshazzar’s feast people troubled themselves little about knowing what was passing in the fingers of that terrible hand which came forth from the wall over against the candlestick, while, on the contrary, all the thoughts of the guests were turned to the words that were traced on the plaster of the wall, “*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*,” because they knew well that these words were from

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God; so likewise it concerns you little, in point of faith, to penetrate into what passed in the thoughts of Mark, the thoughts of John, the thoughts of Luke, the thoughts of Matthew, during the time that they were writing the roll of the Gospels. It behoves you rather to direct your entire attention towards the words which they have written, because you know that these words are from God. Be the prophet holy like Moses, wise like Daniel, an enemy of God like Caiaphas, ignorant of the language in which he speaks like the prophets at Corinth, impure like Balaam - what do I say? - insensible, like the hand that wrote on the wall in the palace at Babylon; without form, without body, without soul, like the empty air in which was heard the voice of God (on Sinai, on the banks of Jordan; on Mount Tabor. . .), it is of little consequence, once more (unless it be where their personality itself should be found so interested as to make an essential part of their revelation.) Thy thoughts, O my God, thy thoughts and thy words, these are what concern me!

²⁴ 1 Sam. xix. 23, 24.

SECTION II.

SHOULD WE EXCEPT FROM INSPIRATION THE HISTORICAL BOOKS?

“One will admit,” we are told, “that the inspiration of the Scriptures might have been extended to the choice of expressions, wherever this miraculous operation was necessary: in the laying down of doctrines, for example, in announcing the history of a past more ancient than the birth of the mountains, or in unveiling a future which God only can know. But would you proceed to maintain that men who lived at the time of the events they relate, had any need of the Holy Ghost in order to tell us facts of which they themselves were either agents or witnesses, or which they had heard related by others; the humble marriage of Ruth in the small town of Bethlehem, for example, or the emotions

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felt by Esther in the palace of Shusan, or the nomenclatures of the kings of Israel and Judah, their reigns, their lives, their deaths, their genealogies? - Luke, who, from Troas, accompanied the apostle to Jerusalem, to Cesarea, to the isle of Malta, and as far as Rome, had he not enough of recollections of what had passed in order to tell us how Paul had been laid hold of under the porches of the temple; how his nephew revealed to him, in the castle, the conspiracy of the forty Jews; how the centurion took the young man to the chief captain, and how the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked of him all that he knew? Did he then absolutely require for facts so simple and so well known, a continual intervention of power from on high?” Some do not think so, and maintain, on the contrary, that it is neither necessary nor rational to believe that all the historical chapters of the two Testaments are divinely inspired.

To such objections our first answer will always be very simple. “All Scripture,” we say, “is divinely inspired.” - Thou hast known the holy letters, O Timothy: well then, “all the holy letters, all the Scriptures are given by the breath of God.” - We have not heard the Holy Ghost make an exception anywhere to these declarations; accordingly, neither in man, nor in angel, do we acknowledge any right to hazard any.

But we will say more. Were it allowable to place one book of God before another - if we must distinguish in the firmament of the Scriptures the more glorious constellations and stars of the first magnitude, we should certainly give the preference to the historical books. - In fact:

1. It is to the historical books that the most striking and most respectful TESTIMONIES are rendered by the prophets in the Old Testament, and by the apostles in the New. - What is there more holy in the Old than the Pentateuch? what is there greater in the New than

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the four Gospels? - Is it not solely of the historical books of the Bible that it is written: “The law of the Lord is perfect; his testimonies are wonderful; they are sure; they make wise the simple; they are pure; they are more to be desired than gold; the words of the Lord are pure

words; they are like silver seven times refined. Blessed is the man who meditates on his law day and night.”²⁵

2. Besides, mark with what respect our LORD HIMSELF QUOTES THEM, and how in doing so he takes a pleasure in pointing to the smallest details in the divine decrees, and sometimes to the use of a single word.

3. The histories in the Bible have not been given us solely for the transmission to future ages of the memorials of past events: they are presented to the Church of all ages, for the purpose of making her know by facts THE CHARACTER OF HER GOD; they are there as a mirror of providence and grace; they are destined to reveal to us God’s thoughts, God’s designs, the invisible things of God, his heaven, his glory, his angels, and those mysteries which the angels desire to look into.²⁶ - For all this the most entire inspiration is requisite.

4. Remark further, that the historical Scriptures are given to us for the purpose of revealing to us THE DEEP THINGS OF MAN. It has been said of the Word of God, “that it pierces like a sword, to the division of the soul and spirit; that all is naked and open to it, and that it is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” This holds true of the written Word as well as of the personal Word of God, for the one is the language of the other; but it is especially true of the historical word. Do you not see that that word, in its narratives, is a two-edged sword, and that it tries men’s consciences? And in like manner as it describes to you what took place on our globe in the days of chaos, when the Spirit of God moved on the face of the abyss, it

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equally tells YOU of what takes place in the abyss of the human heart, the mysteries of the invisible world, the secret motives, the hidden faults, and many a thought which, but for it, would only have been known in the great day when the Lord will bring to light things hid in darkness, and will make manifest the purposes of men’s hearts. Is it thus, then, that men write history?

5. The historical Scriptures behaved on another account to have the most entire inspiration, namely, in order that they might relate to us without any error the mysterious interventions of the ANGELS in this world’s affairs, in those of the Church, and in those of Heaven. Is there a subject more delicate, more novel, more difficult? Do not those ardent and pure, humble and sublime creatures, whose existence we know of only from the Bible, differ as much from man as the heavens differ from the earth? Was any thing similar to the angels ever conceived by the imaginations of the peoples, by their poets, or by their sages? No, they never even show the slightest approach to it. One will perceive, then, how impossible it was, without a constant operation on the part of God, that the biblical narratives, in treating of such a subject, should not have constantly borne the all too human impression of our narrow conceptions; and that the sacred writers should not have often let slip from their pen imprudent touches, investing the angels by turns with attributes too divine, or affections too human. All nations have taken a fancy for figuring to themselves invisible beings, as the inhabitants of the celestial regions, whom they have tricked out with all those marks of superiority that charm the heart of man. But how have all their conceptions been creeping, childish, and vulgar, compared with what the angels are! How have all those creations of our fancy been comparatively earthly, passionate, selfish, impure, and often odious! See the gods, the demigods, and the whole

²⁵ Ps. xix. 7-10; i. 1.

²⁶ 1 Pet. i. 12.

Olympus of the ancients; see the fairies, the genii, and the sylphs of the moderns: see even farther, the angels of Scripture

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speedily disfigured in the books of man, in the Apocrypha of Enoch, for example, in several of the Fathers, in the legends of Rome, and even in the more recent creations of several of the French poets. Winged passions, devout puerilities, sacrilegious idols, immortal egotisms, celestial wickednesses, deified impurities! But study the angels of Scripture; there not only is every thing great, holy, and worthy of God; not only is that character at once ardent and sublime, compassionate and majestic, constantly recalled to us by their names, their attributes, their employments, their dwellings, their hymns, their contemplations of the depths of redemption, and the ineffable joys of their love; but that which above all ought to strike us, is the perfect harmony of all this as a whole; it is that all these features accord together; it is that all these attributes correspond to each other, and maintain themselves in the justest proportions.

In a word, this whole doctrine, sustained from one end to the other of the Scriptures, throughout a course of fifteen hundred years, presents to us a unity which of itself alone will be found to attest the inimitable reality of its object, but which bears the most striking testimony to their entire inspiration.

While all the mythologies speak to us of the inhabitants of the moon and of the planets, the Bible says not a word of them: it says nothing to us about the second heaven; but it pictures to us, with no less fulness than precision, the sublime inhabitants of the third heaven, or of the heaven of heavens. This subject recurs constantly there, and under the most varied forms. Descriptions of the angels are often found in the Bible; descriptions unembarrassed, full of details, independent of each other. They are exhibited to us in all situations in heaven and on earth, before God and with men, ministers employed in executing acts of mercy and sometimes also acts of vengeance, bathed in the radiance of the divine glory, standing before God and worshipping him night and day; but also engaged in

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ministering to the humblest believers, helping them in their distresses, in their travels, in their imprisonments, on their deathbeds; and finally coming, at the last day, on the clouds of heaven, with the Son of man, to remove all the wicked from his kingdom, and to gather in his elect from the four winds.

And what were the historians of the angels? Let us not forget this: some were shepherds; others were kings, or soldiers, or priests, or fishermen, or tax-gatherers; some writing in the days of Hercules, of Jason and the Argonauts, three hundred years before the war of Troy; others in the age of Seneca, of Tacitus, and of Juvenal. And yet we see that the relater has the same beings throughout before his eyes. Unlike men, they are always like themselves. We are defiled, they are perfect; we are selfish, they glow with love; we are haughty, they are gentle and meek. We are vain and proud in a body which will be gnawed by the worms, they are humble in their glory and immortality. We would sometimes fain worship them; "See thou do it not," they say

to us, "I am but thy fellow-servant!"²⁷ We are disquieted with lusts, they are fervent in spirit, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die.²⁸ We are hard-hearted, they are compassionate; we leave the poor Lazarus to groan as he lies famished at our gate and our dogs lick his sores, but they come to take him when he is dead, and convey him away to Abraham's bosom;²⁹ they utter shouts of joy at the conversion of a sinner; and yet, Jesus said, "the angel of one of these little ones continually beholds in the heavens the face of my Father."³⁰ Such is the angel of the whole of the Scriptures.

Now, let each ask himself, how, without a constant inspiration of all the historical books, it could have happened, that over a course of so many ages, not one of the authors who had occasion to bring such beings before us, has let slip, with regard to them, either words

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fraught with excessive respect, after the manner of the liturgies of Rome, or other words bearing too much of the impress of our humanity, after the manner of many of the Fathers? and, how not a single discordant trait falling from their pen, spoils the perfect harmony of that inimitable character, or derogates from the ever amiable dignity of that sublime creation?

Once more, this unity, this purity, this perfection, comes not from man: it is from God! and we ought to own that here, as well as elsewhere, it was necessary that the Holy Ghost should himself superintend all that is written by his historians, and make himself the guarantee of their slightest expressions.

6. But this is not all. See farther how, even without the knowledge of the authors, the histories in the Bible are full of the future. Even in relating the events of the past, "they are types," says Paul, "for us upon whom the ends of the world are come."³¹ They relate, it is true, national scenes or domestic scenes; but while they relate, Jesus Christ is incessantly and prophetically portrayed under all his aspects, and in all his characters. See the history of Adam, of Noah, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Joseph, of Moses, of the sacrificial lamb, of the deliverance from Egypt, of the pillar of fire, of the manna, of the rock which was Christ (1 Cor. x. 4), of the goat Azazel, of all the sacrifices, of Joshua, of David, of Solomon, of Jonah, of Zorobabel. One would need to write a commentary on the whole history, in order to do justice to this truth. Read over, in order that you may appreciate it, the pages of Paul on Agar, on Sarah, on Aaron, on Melchisedec.

If, then, one would reflect upon this, he would soon acknowledge, with wonder, the constant forth-putting of the power of inspiration in all parts of these Scriptures; and one would feel assured, that if there be pages in the Bible that have need to be inspired in

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every line and in every word, these are the historical books: they preach, they reveal, they set forth doctrine, they legislate, they prophesy.

²⁷ Apoc. xxii. 9.

²⁸ Luke xx. 36.

²⁹ Luke xvi. 22.

³⁰ Matt. xviii. 10.

³¹ 1 Cor. x. 6, 11.

Compare them not, therefore, with other histories: they have quite another scope.

They behoved to have this full inspiration, in order to recite, without any error, facts inaccessible to man's knowledge, the creation of the universe, the extrication of chaos, the birth of light, the rise of the mountains, the intervention of angels, God's secret counsels, the thoughts of man's heart and his secret faults; but they specially behoved to have it in order that they might prefigure Christ by a thousand types unperceived by the writer himself, and thus exhibit even in their narratives of the past, the character of the Messiah, his sufferings, his death, and the glories that were to follow. It was necessary for them, in order that they might speak in a suitable manner of those events even that were known to them, to pass some over in silence, to relate others, to characterize them, to judge them, and thus to show in them the thought of God; but it was above all necessary for enabling them to describe in the just measure prescribed by that thought of God, and by the needs of the future Church, the scenes, whether national or domestic, which behoved to carry along with them the types of the work of redemption, to prefigure the last times, and to take in a vast sweep of thousands of years posterior to them. They required it for the purpose of determining the measure of what they might confide to their readers, and what they should withhold, for the discreet use of their expressions, and for that admirable restraint upon themselves which they have uniformly preserved.

7. We could wish we had time to speak here of their dramatic power (if such an expression may be permitted), that divine and indefinable charm, that mysterious and ever-recurring attraction, which we find attached to all their narratives, which captivates man's soul under all climates, which makes us find in them, throughout all our lives, as in the scenes of nature, an

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ever fresh charm; and after being delighted and moved by these incomparable narratives in our early childhood, affects our tender feelings even in hoary age. Certainly, there must needs be something superhuman in the very humanity of these forms, so familiar and so simple. - Men are incapable of telling a story thus. - Who shall tell us the secret of this attractiveness? In what does it consist? We should find it not easy to say, perhaps: it seems to lie in an ineffable mixture of simplicity and depth, of the natural and the unlooked for, of local colouring and spirituality; it further lies in this, that the narratives are marked by rapidity and simplicity, that they are at once minute in detail and concise; it lies, finally, in the harmony and the truth of the sentiments; it presents man, it presents nature, in their in-most reality. - In a word, you cannot fail to feel (even without being able to account for it) that He who speaks in this book, has immediately before him all the most hidden strings of man's heart, so as to be able to touch them at will, with a hand light or powerful, in the precise measure that his Spirit has proposed to itself. Read over the scenes in which Ruth and Boaz appear on the plains of Bethlehem, those where Abraham and Isaac meet on mount Moriah, those of David and Jonathan, those of Elijah and Elisha, those of Naaman the Syrian, of the widow of Zarephath, or of the Shunamite, and, above all, those of the life and death of the Son of man; and, after that, search every where else in the books of men, and see if you can find any thing similar. Read, if you like, the four Vedahs, and the voluminous collection of Pauthier, the sacred books of the East, Confucius, Manon, Mahomet;³² and see if there are to be met with there eight lines that can be

³² *Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient*, comprenant le *Chouking*, ou *Livre par excellence le Sse Chou*, ou les *Quatre livres moraux de Confucius et de ses disciples*; les *Lois de Manon*, premier législateur de l'Inde; le *Koran de Mahomet*, par Pauthier, Paris 1840.

compared to these incomparable narratives of Scripture. - But that we dreaded enlarging too far, we could have

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wished to make some comparisons here, and to take in turns the relations of the same facts in the Old Testament and in the Koran, in the New Testament and in the spurious Gospels, in the patriarchal scenes of Genesis, and in what has been made of them by men every time they have related them. Read over, for instance, in Moses, the life of Joseph, his infancy, his misfortunes, his temptations, and as far as that inimitable scene in which Jacob's eleven sons appear before their brother; as far as that "*God be gracious unto thee, my son!*" (xliii. 29), and as far as "I am Joseph (יֹסֵף אֲנִי)" which at no time of life can one peruse without fresh emotion; and, then, go and take up that history again in Mahomet; go read his xii. chapter, intitled *Joseph*, written at Mecca in a hundred and eleven verses, and beginning with these words: "We have made this book come down from heaven in the Arabic tongue, in order that people may understand it, and we proceed to relate the most beautiful story that we have revealed to thee in this Koran."

"Let, then," says the celebrated Duplessis Mornay,³³ "the hardest hearts, and the most squeamish palates in the world, come and read over these histories of our Bible; . . . they will feel their whole bodies thrill, their hearts move, and a tenderness of affection come over them in a moment, more than had all the orators of Greece and Rome preached to them the same matters for whole days. Let them go and read the same histories in Flavius Josephus, to whom the emperor Titus ordered a statue to be erected on account of the elegance of his history, he will leave them colder and less moved than he found them. What, then, if this Scripture has in its humility more elevation, in its simplicity more depth, in its absence of all effort more charms, in its grossness more vigour and point, than we know to find any where else of these qualities?"

Oh no! we must say of the historical Scriptures,

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even in this respect, that never have men related events as they have done, neither before nor after.

8. People have not perhaps sufficiently remarked, they have not sufficiently admired their divine brevity. If you would, in this respect, appreciate the Scriptures, compare them with the biographies that men have written, or with the systems of doctrine which they have given, when left to do so. See, for example, the modern Church of the Jews, and see that of the Latins. While the former has joined to the Scripture its two Talmuds, by attributing to them the same authority, one of which (that of Jerusalem) forms a large folio volume; and the other (that of Babylon), which is most followed, and which must be studied by all its doctors, is a work of twelve folio volumes;³⁴ and while the Roman Church in its Council of Trent declares, "that it receives, with the same affection and reverence as the Holy Scripture, its traditions respecting faith and morals;" that is to say, the vast repertory of its synodal acts, of its decretals, of its

³³ De la Verité de la Religion Chrétienne, pp. 613, 614.

³⁴ La dernière édition d' Amsterdam. Maimonides has made a learned extract from it in his *Yad Hachazakah*. See Prideau, *Histoire des Juifs*, Amsterdam, vol. ii. p. 130.

bulls, of its canons, and of the writings of the holy fathers;³⁵ behold what the Spirit hath done in the Bible, and there admire the celestial prudence of its inimitable brevity.

Who among us could have been, for three years and a half, the constant witness, the passionately attached friend, of a man like Jesus Christ, and could have been able to write in sixteen or seventeen short chapters, or in eight hundred lines, the history of the whole of that life - of his birth, of his ministry, of his miracles, of his preachings, of his sufferings, of his death, of his resurrection, and of his ascension into the heavens? Who among us would have found it possible to avoid saying a word of the first thirty years of such a life? Who among us could have related so many acts of kindness

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without an exclamation; so many miracles without reflections on them; so many sublime thoughts without any emphasis; so many sufferings without complaint; so many acts of injustice without bitterness; so many sinless infirmities in their Master, and so many sinful infirmities in his disciples, without any suppression; so much ingratitude in their cowardly abandonment of him; so, many instances of resistance, so much ignorance, so much hardness of heart, without the slightest excuse or comment? Is it thus that man relates a history? Who among us, further, could have known how to distinguish what behoved to be said cursorily from what required to be told in detail? Who among us, for example, could have thought that the whole creation of the world behoved to be related in a chapter of thirty-one verses; then the probation, the fall, and the condemnation of our race, in another chapter of twenty-four verses; while he consecrated so very many chapters and pages to the construction of the tabernacle and of its utensils, because these presented to future ages a continual and typical view of Jesus Christ and of his redemption? Who among us, for the same reason, would have devoted the fifth part of the book of Genesis to relating the history of one alone of the twelve children of Jacob, while two chapters only had seemed to suffice for seventeen hundred years of the history of the human race, from Adam's fall to the deluge? Who among us would have thought, like Matthew, of mentioning only four women (and such women!) in the forty-two generations of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, and of their recording there the names of the incestuous Tamar, the impure Rahab, Ruth the Moabitess, and the adulterous spouse of Uriah, without tempering the scandal by a single reflection? Who among us would have, consecrated but a single verse to the conversion of a Roman proconsul (Acts xiii. 12)? Who among us, after having shared, during ten years, in the labours of Paul, his perils, his imprisonments, his preachings, and his prophetic gifts, could have related twenty-two

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years of such a life without saying a word about himself, and without making known, except by the mere change of the personal pronoun (at chap. xvi. ver. 10), that from Troas to Jerusalem and Cesarea, and from Jerusalem and Cesarea to Malta and thence to Rome, he had been his suffering, faithful, indefatigable companion? It is necessary, in order to our being aware of this, that it should be Paul himself who, during his last imprisonment, should write to Timothy: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; Luke only is with me." - (2 Tim. iv. 16,11; Philem. 24; Coloss. iv. 14.) Holy and heavenly reserve, humble and noble silence, such as the Holy Ghost alone could have taught!

³⁵ Concile de Trent, sess. 4, 1st and 2d decrees, published 28th Apr. 1546. Bellarmin. de Verbo Dei, lib. iv. cap. 3, 5, 6. Coton, lib. ii. cap. 24, 34, 35. Baile Traité i. du Perron contre Tilenus.

Where will you find, among all uninspired narrators, a man who could have written, like Luke, the Acts of the Apostles? Who could have contrived to relate within thirty pages the church history of the thirty noblest years of Christianity - from the ascension of the Son of man above the clouds of heaven, to the imprisonment of St Paul in the capital of the Roman world? Incomparable history! See, at once, how short it is, and yet how full! What do we not find in it? Addresses delivered to the Jews, to the Greeks, before the tribunals, before the Areopagus, and before the Sanhedrim, in places of public resort and before a proconsul, in synagogues and before kings; admirable descriptions of the primitive Church; miraculous and dramatic scenes witnessed in the midst of her; the interventions of angels, to deliver, to warn, or to punish; controversies and divisions in Christian congregations; new institutions in the Church; the history of a first council and its synodic epistle; commentaries on the Scripture; accounts of heresy; judgments from God, solemn and terrible; appearances of the Lord in the highway, in the temple, and in prison; details of conversions, often miraculous and singularly varied - that of Eneas, that of the eunuch, that of Cornelius the centurion, that of the Roman jailer, that of the proconsul, that of Lydia,

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that of Apollos, that of a numerous body at Jerusalem - not to mention such as were only commenced, as in the emotion felt by king Agrippa, in the troubled state of Felix's mind, in the kind acts of the centurion Julius; missionary excursions; different solutions of sundry cases of conscience; permanent divisions with respect to external matters among different classes of Christians; mutual prejudices; disputes among the brethren and among the apostles; warm expressions, explanations, and yet triumphs of the spirit of charity over these obstacles; communications from one military officer to another, from one proconsul to another; resurrections from the dead; revelations made to the Church, in order to hasten the calling of the Gentiles; collections for the poor by one Church for another; prophecies; national scenes; punishments consummated or prepared; appearances before Jewish tribunals or Roman municipalities, before governors and kings; meetings of Christians from house to house; their emotions, their prayers, their charity, their doubts; a persecuting king struck by an angel and eaten by worms, just as when, in order to gratify the populace, he had actually slain one apostle and was meditating the death of another; persecutions under every form - by synagogues, by princes, by municipalities, by the Jews, or by popular tumults; deliverances experienced by men of God, through the instrumentality sometimes of a child, sometimes of an angel, sometimes of a Roman tribune or ship-captain, of pagan magistrates or idolatrous soldiers; storms and shipwrecks described with a nautical exactness of detail which, as we ourselves have witnessed, continues to charm the sailors of our own day; - and all this in thirty pages, or twenty-eight short chapters. Admirable brevity! Was God's Holy Spirit not necessary for this conciseness, for this choice of details, for this manner at once pious, varied, brief, richly significative, so sparing in the employment of words, and yet teaching so many things? - Fulness, conciseness, clearness, unction, simplicity, elevation, practical rich-

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ness; such is the book of Church history that was needed for God's people. True; but, once more, it is not thus that men compose histories.

Could you find upon the earth a man capable of relating the murder of his mother with the calmness, the moderation, the sobriety, the apparent impassibility of that quadruple narrative of the evangelists, telling of the crucifixion of Jesus, of that Jesus whom they loved more than

one loves his mother, more than one loves his life? of that Jesus whom they had seen on his knees in Gethsemane; then betrayed, forsaken, dragged with his hands bound to Jerusalem, and finally nailed naked to a cross, while the sun hid his light, and the earth quaked and opened, and when He who had raised the dead to life again, was himself reduced to the state of the dead! Was not God's Spirit then required at every line, at every word of such a narrative, in order to make a suitable choice of details, amid an age and a world of recollections?

9. There was a necessity, moreover, for an entire guidance by the Holy Ghost, in order to the maintenance of that prophetic reserve which the sacred historians were enabled in so many respects to observe; and of that altogether divine prudence, which reveals itself not only in what they teach, but also in what they withhold; not only in the terms which they employ, but also in those they avoid.

And here, to enable one to form some estimate of this, observe them, for example, when they speak of the mother of Jesus. What divine foresight, and what prophetic wisdom, both in their narratives and in their expressions! How readily might they have been led, in their ardent adoration of the Son, to express themselves, when speaking of the mother, in terms of too much respect! Would not a single word, suffered to escape from the want of circumspection so natural to their first emotions, have forever sanctioned the idolatries of future ages towards Mary, and the crime of the worship which is paid to her? But they have never

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allowed themselves to drop any such word. Had they so much as merely called her the mother of God? No, not even that; although he was in their eyes Emmanuel, the God-Man, the Word which was in the beginning, which was with God, which was God, and which was made flesh. Listen to them. What do we find them say of her after the death and the resurrection of their Saviour? One single sentence, after which they say not a word more about her. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." (Acts i. 14.) ("*Hi omnes erant perseverantes unanimiter in oratione cum mulieribus, et Mariâ et matre Jesu et fratribus ejus.*") Here they name her neither first nor last; here she appears, as the mother of Jesus, among the brethren of Jesus, and the women of Galilee. And what do we find them say of her before the Lord's death? Note this carefully. Ah, it is not thus that men relate events! Of all that Jesus Christ may have said to his mother after the opening of his mission, they have selected but three sayings to be handed down to us. The first is as follows: "Woman (when she interfered with his commencing ministry, and asked of him a miracle), woman (woman!) what have I to do with thee?"³⁶ Then, when a woman from among the people, in the warmth of her enthusiasm, cried out from amid the crowd: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked!" "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it!"³⁷ Such is the second. Hear now the third: His mother and his brethren were shaken in their faith, and some of them had been heard to say, "He is beside himself (*dicebant enim, quoniam in furorem versus est*); and one said unto him, 'Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee.'" "Who is my mother?" was his reply; and stretching forth his hand towards his disciple's he said: "Behold my mother . . .

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³⁶ John ii. 4.

³⁷ Luke xi. 27, 28.

every woman that shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my mother.” “*Ecce mater mea.*” And when, in his last agony, he beholds her from the cross, he no longer calls her by the name of mother; but he bequeaths her to the disciple whom he loved, saying, “Woman, behold thy son; John, behold thy mother;” and from that hour that disciple took her to his own home, not to worship her but to protect her, as a weak and suffering creature whose soul had been pierced through with a sword.

Is it thus, then, we again ask, that men relate events, and must not the prophetic Spirit alone have been the relater of these facts?

We could wish to give other examples: they at this moment crowd upon our mind, and it costs us a sacrifice to omit mentioning them; for the more narrowly we study these historical books, the more does the prophetic wisdom of God’s Spirit who dictated them reveal itself there in details, at first sight far from obvious. We could wish to point out among others the altogether prophetic wisdom with which the Holy Spirit often, on coming to relate some one important fact more than once, is careful to vary his expressions, in order to prevent the false interpretations that might be put upon it, and to condemn beforehand the errors which were in a distant future to be attached to it. We would cite, for example, the manner, so remarkable and so unexpected, in which the tenth law of the Decalogue is repeated in Deuteronomy,³⁸ with a remarkable transposition of its first terms; the Holy Ghost thus desiring to confound prophetically the artifice whereby the doctors of Rome were to endeavour, fifteen centuries afterwards, to divide that commandment into two, in order to veil over the criminal omission they have dared to make of the second: “And thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, nor any likeness . . . thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them.” We could wish to

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point farther to the variety of expression with which the Holy Ghost has related to us the divine institution of the holy Supper, and has paraphrased it several times, for the purpose of enabling us better to comprehend what was the meaning of Jesus Christ, and to condemn beforehand the carnal sense which people were to give to these words: “THIS IS MY BLOOD; this CUP is the New TESTAMENT in my blood,” he also said: “This cup is the COMMUNICATION of the blood of the New Testament.” We would desire to call attention to the prophetic wisdom with which the Holy Ghost, in order to confound those who in the sequel were to allege that Judas did not participate in the last Supper, and that he went out before, or did not come in till after it, has taken care to let us know, by Mark and Matthew,³⁹ that Jesus gave notice of the treachery of Judas before the communion, Judas being present; and by Luke, that he gave notice of it also afterwards, Judas being present.⁴⁰ We could wish to show in the case of all the New Testament writers, the constant sobriety of their words, when the subject in hand hears on the relations of pastors to the churches; and that admirable prudence with which they have always abstained from applying, even in a single instance, to the ministers of the Christian Church, the name *sacerdotes*, or sacrificers; reserving to them that title of elders or presbyters which was given to laymen in Israel, and distinguishing them always from the sacerdotal race (which represented Jesus Christ, and which behoved to cease when the sole true priest had appeared). We could wish to point out, also, that prudence with which never do we find a soul

³⁸ Deut. v. 21; Exod. xx. 17; Luke viii. 25.

³⁹ Matt. xxvi. 21-26; Mark xiv. 19-33.

⁴⁰ Luke xxii. 19-23.

conducted to any other pastor, any other director (καθηγητής)⁴¹ than Jesus Christ, and with which, in recommending deference towards spiritual guides, the Scripture is careful to name them always in the plural, in order that none might ever have its authority to appeal to in support of that idea, so natural to pastors and

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to the members of flocks, that every soul ought to have its pastor among men. “Call no man on earth your father; and do not make yourself be called DIRECTOR, for Christ alone is your director.” What precaution, what reserve in the narratives, in order that too much might never be attributed to man, and to recount “the great things that God did by means of the apostles,”⁴² in such a manner that self in all might be abased, that all glory might redound to God, and that all the Lord’s servants may learn to say with the last prophet of the Old Testament and the first prophet of the New, “He must increase, and I must decrease.”

We repeat it, one must do violence to his own feelings, with the volume of the Bible before him, not to cite more such examples from it.

From all these traits taken together, it behoves us then to conclude, that, though the whole Scripture is divinely inspired, the historical books, more than all the rest, make this divine intervention most manifest; they show it to be most indispensable; they attest, that for such pages it was necessary that the invisible and almighty hand of the Holy Ghost should be placed over that of the sacred writer, and guide it from the first line to the last. Here something more was necessary than learned men, than saints, than enlightened minds, than angels or archangels - here God was necessary.

We will say, then, with Origen, that the sacred volumes breathe the plenitude of the Spirit, and that there is nothing either in Prophets, or in Law, or in Gospel, or in Apostle, which does not come down from the fulness of the majesty of God;⁴³ and with St Ambrose,⁴⁴

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- “drink both the cup of the Old and that of the New Testament, for, in both, it is Christ that thou drinkest. Drink Jesus Christ, that thou mayest drink the blood by which thou hast been redeemed. Drink Jesus Christ, in order that thou mayest drink in all his sayings. We drink holy Scripture, we devour holy Scripture, when the juice of the everlasting Word descends into the veins of our mind, and penetrates the energies of our soul.” And with Augustine:⁴⁵ “Wonderful are the depths of thine oracles! Behold how their surface charms little ones; but wonderful depth, O my God, what wonderful depth! One shudders at the contemplation of it - a thrill of reverence and trembling of love!”

⁴¹ Matt. xxiii. 8, 10.

⁴² Acts xiv. 27; Rom. xv. 8; 1 Cor. iii. 6.

⁴³ *Homilia* ii. in *Jerem.*, cap. I.

⁴⁴ “Utrumque poculum bibe Veteris et Novi Testamenti, quia ex utroque Christum bibis. Bibe Christum, ut bibas sanguinem quo redemptus es: bibe Christum, ut bibas sermones ejus. Bibitur Scriptura sacra, et devoratur Scriptura divina, cum in venas mentis ac vires animi succus verbi descondit eterni.” (*Ambrosius in Psalm i. Enarratio.*)

⁴⁵ Mira profunditas eloquorum tuorum, quorum ecce ante nos superficies blandiens parvulis; sed mira profunditas, Deus meus, mira profunditas! Horror est intendere in eam, horror honoris et tremor amoris! (*Confess. lib. xii. cap. 14.*)

But, how now (it has been sometimes said further), must we believe that the letter of the Pagan Lysias,⁴⁶ or the harangue of the Jew Gamaliel,⁴⁷ or the discourses of Job's harsh friends, were all inspired? No, without doubt. No more than those of Cain, or of Lamech, or of Rabshakeh, or of Satan. But the sacred writers were as really guided by God, in order that they might transmit them to us, as they were to tell us⁴⁸ the song of Mary in the hill country, or that of the seraphim in the year that king Uzziah died, or that of the celestial army at Bethlehem. The Holy Ghost is not always the author of the words which he reports, but he is always the historian.

Meanwhile another evasion is made in order to except a part of the Scriptures from the Theopneustia. If this is not the most serious objection, it is, at least, one of those that are most frequently advanced.

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SECTION III.

WILL THE APPARENT INSIGNIFICANCE OF CERTAIN DETAILS IN THE BIBLE AUTHORIZE THEIR BEING EXCEPTED FROM INSPIRATION?

“Was it suited to the dignity of inspiration to accompany the thoughts of the apostle Paul, even into those vulgar details to which we see him descend in many of his letters? Could the Holy Ghost have gone so far as to dictate to him those ordinary salutations with which they close? or those medicinal counsels which he gives to Timothy with respect to his stomach and his frequent infirmities? or those commissions with which he charges him with respect to his parchments and a certain cloak which he had left with Carpus at Troas, when he quitted Asia?” We beg the reader will allow us to beseech him to ponder well, when, on taking the Bible into his hands, he does not perceive, from his very first readings, the tokens of God in such or such a passage of the Word. Let not those reckless hands proceed to cast a single verse out of the temple of the Scriptures. They clasp an eternal book, all the authors of which have said, like Paul, “And I think that I also have the mind of the Lord.” If then he does not as yet see any thing divine in such or such a verse, the fault is in himself, not in the passage. Let him say rather, like Jacob, “ Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.”⁴⁹

Let us examine more closely the passages alleged.

Paul, from the recess of his prison, asks for the return of his cloak; he had left it with Carpus at Troas; he begs Timothy to hasten before winter, and not to forget to bring it with him. This domestic detail, so many thousand times adduced as an objection to the inspiration of the Scriptures, from the days of the Anomeans,

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⁴⁶ Acts xxiii. 25.

⁴⁷ Acts v. 34.

⁴⁸ Luke i. 46.

⁴⁹ Gen. xxviii. 16.

spoken of by Jerome,⁵⁰ this detail seems to you too trivial for an apostolical book, or, at least, too insignificant, and too remote from edification, for the dignity of inspiration. Unhappy is the man, nevertheless, who does not perceive its pathetic grandeur!

Jesus Christ also, on the day of his death, spoke of his garment and his vesture. Would you have that passage dismissed from the number of inspired sayings? It was after a night of fatigue and anguish. He had been led through the streets of Jerusalem for seven hours in succession, by torch-light, from street to street, from tribunal to tribunal, beaten and buffeted, blindfolded in mockery, and struck with sticks on the head. The morrow's sun had not risen when they bound his hands to lead him further from the sacerdotal palace to Pilate's pretorium. There, his flesh torn with stripes, bathed with blood, then delivered over in order to his final execution into the hands of ferocious soldiers, he saw all his clothes taken from him that he might be arrayed in a purple robe, while people knelt before him, and put a reed in his hand, and spit in his face. Then, before placing the cross on his torn limbs, his garments were thrown over his wounds, in order to his being taken to Calvary; but, when they were about to proceed to his execution, they were taken from him for the third time; and it was then that, spoiled of every thing, first of his upper garment, then of his very inner vesture, he was to die on the felon's gibbet, in view of an immense concourse of people. Was there ever found under heaven a man who has not found these details deeply moving, sublime, inimitable? and was there ever found one who, from the recital of this death-scene, would think of retrenching, as useless or too commonplace, the account given of those garments which were parted, and of that vesture on which a lot was cast? Has not infidelity itself said, in speaking of it, that the majesty of the Scriptures astonished it, that their

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simplicity addressed itself to the heart, that the death of Socrates was that of a sage, but that the death of Jesus Christ was that of a God?⁵¹ And if divine inspiration was reserved for a portion only of the holy books, would it not be for these very details? Would it not be for the history of that love which, after having lived upon the earth more poor than the birds of the air and the foxes of the field, desired to die poorer still, despoiled of every thing, of his upper and under garments, fixed to a felon's gibbet, with his arms extended and nailed to the tree? Ah! let your mind be at ease with respect to the Holy Ghost! He has not derogated from his dignity; and very far from having thought that he descended too far in reporting these facts to the earth, he hastened to relate them; and it was a thousand years beforehand, it was in the age of the war of Troy, that he sang them to the harp of David: "They pierced my hands and my feet (he said); they look and stare upon me; they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture!"⁵²

Well then, this is the same Spirit who has desired to show to us Paul writing to Timothy and asking for his cloak. Mark what he says. he, too, was spoiled of every thing. Even while as yet but a youth, he was great among men, a favourite of princes, admired by all: he forsook all for Jesus Christ. For thirty years and more he has been poor; in labours more abundant than others, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent; of the Jews five times received he forty stripes save one; thrice was he beaten with rods; once was he stoned; thrice he suffered shipwreck; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils on the sea; in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness

⁵⁰ See Proemium in epist. ad Philem.

⁵¹ Rousseau's *Emile*.

⁵² Ps. xxii. 17, 18; John xix. 23, 24.

(we quote his own words.)⁵³ Mark now what he says: behold him advanced in years; he is in his last prison; he is in Rome; he is waiting for his

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sentence of death; he has fought the good fight; he has finished his course; he has kept the faith; but he is shivering with cold; . . . winter has commenced; and he is in want of clothes! Buried in one of the dungeons of the Mamertine prisons, he lies under such a load of opprobrium that even all the Christians of Rome are ashamed of him, and when first called to appear before his judges, no man stood by him. The time was, ten years before, when already a prisoner in Rome, and loaded with chains, he had at least received some money from the Philippians, who, knowing his wretched state, had subscribed among themselves in their indigence something to be sent as alms to him there; but now behold him forsaken; nobody was with him but Luke; all had abandoned him; winter was at hand. He needed a cloak; he had left his two hundred leagues oft with Carpus at Troas; in the chilly dungeons of Rome there was nobody to lend him one: had he not joyfully parted with all for Jesus?⁵⁴ had he not counted all the world's glories as dung that he might win Christ? and does he not willingly endure all things for the elect's sake?⁵⁵ We were ourselves last year in Rome, in a hotel at the beginning of November, on a rainy day. With what a lively feeling, under the chill impressions of the evening, did we represent to ourselves the holy apostle Paul in the subterranean prisons of the Capitol, dictating the last of his letters, expressing his regret at the want of his cloak, and begging Timothy to send it to him before winter!

Who is there now that would wish to retrench from the inspired epistles a trait so affecting and so pathetic? Does not the Holy Ghost take you as it were into Paul's prison, there to have instant ocular evidence of his affectionate self-renunciation and sublime poverty; so as to make us see also, as with our own eyes, what was the depth of his love, sometime before, when it made him

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write in his letter to the Philippians: "I tell you, even weeping, that there are many among you who mind only earthly things, and whose end is destruction!" Do you not seem to behold him in his prison, loaded with his chain, engaged in writing, and the tears dropping on his parchment? And do you not seem also to behold that poor body of his, one day ill-clothed, suffering, and benumbed; the next, beheaded and dragged into the Tiber, in expectation of that day when the earth will give up her dead, and the sea the dead that are in it, and when Christ shall change our vile body to be fashioned like unto his glorious body?" And if these details are beautiful, do you think they are not useful too? And if useful for the man who reads them as a simple historical truth, what do they not become for him who believes in their inspiration, and who says to himself: "O my soul, these words are written by Paul; but it is thy God that addresses them to thee!" Who could tell the strength and the comfort which, by their very familiarness and their actuality, they may have carried into prisons and cottages? Who could reckon up the poor men and the martyrs to whom such traits have imparted encouragement, example, and joy? We recollect, in Switzerland, in our day, the pastor Juvet, who was refused a coverlet, twenty years ago, in the prisons of the Canton de Vaud. One may call to mind in the Universal Church that Jerome of Prague, who was shut up for three hundred and forty days in

⁵³ 2 Cor. xi. 23-27.

⁵⁴ Phil. iii. 8.

⁵⁵ 2 Tim. ii. 10.

the prisons of Constance, in the bottom of a dark fetid tower, and never allowed to leave it except to appear before his murderers. No more has there been forgotten, among the English, holy Bishop Hooker, dragged from his damp, disgusting cellar, covered with wretchedly poor clothes and a borrowed cloak, as he proceeded to the stake, tottering on his staff, and bent double with rheumatism. Venerable fathers, blessed martyrs, you would no doubt call to mind your brother Paul, shut up in the prisons of Rome, suffering from cold and nakedness, and asking for his cloak! Ah! unhappy he

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who feels not the sublime humanity, - the tender grandeur, the provident and divine sympathy, the depth and the charm of such a mode of instruction! but more to be pitied still, perhaps, is he who declares it to be human, because he does not comprehend it! Here we would quote the noble words of the venerable Haldane⁵⁶ on this verse of Paul:- "Here, in his solemn farewell address, of which the verse before us forms a part - the last of his writings, and which contains a passage of unrivalled grandeur - the apostle of the Gentiles is exhibited in a situation deeply calculated to affect us. We behold him standing upon the confines of the two worlds - in this world about to be beheaded, as guilty, by the Emperor of Rome - in the other world to be crowned, as righteous, by the King of kings here deserted by men, there to be welcomed by angels here in want of a cloak to cover him, there to be clothed upon with his house from heaven."

Ah! rather than bring forward these passages in order to rob the Scriptures of their infallibility, one should have owned in them that wisdom of God, which so often, by a single stroke, has contrived to give us instructions for which, without that, long pages would have been necessary. One should have adored that tender condescension which, stooping to our feebleness, has been pleased not only to reveal to us the loftiest conceptions of heaven in the simplest words of earth, but also to present them to us in forms so lively, so dramatic, so penetrating, by often concentrating them, so as to enable us the better to seize them, in the narrow compass of a single verse.

It is thus, then, that St Paul, by these words thrown

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out at random, among the very last commissions of a familiar letter, darts for us a sudden light on his ministry, and discovers to us with a word the whole of the apostle's life, as a single flash of lightning, during night, illuminates in an instant all the summits of our Alps, and as some people reveal to you their whole soul by a look.

How many striking instances of this might we cite! They crowd upon us; but we are obliged to restrain ourselves; and it will behove us rather to keep to the precise passages which have been adduced as objections.

⁵⁶ *The Verbal Inspiration of the Old and New Testament maintained and established, by Robert Haldane, Esq. Edinburgh 1830.* We warmly recommend to our readers the book of a man whose memory ought to be dear to our churches, and whose short residence at Geneva bore so much fruit. We would also refer, on the same subject, to a treatise by Mr Alexander Carson: *The Theories of inspiration, &c. &c. Dublin 1830.* Both these works have been of much use to us.

Before proceeding farther, we must, however, frankly avow, that we are almost ashamed to defend under this form the Word of the Lord; and for any such apology we experience, as it were, a disgust of conscience. Is it altogether becoming? and can we engage in it without some irreverence? We ought to look well at all times to the manner in which we defend the things of God, and see to it that we do not imitate the recklessness of Uzzah in putting forth his hand to the ark of God, and wishing to hold it, for the oxen stumbled. The anger of the Lord, we are told, was kindled against him for his error.⁵⁷

If it be fully acknowledged, on both sides, that any word is contained in the oracles of God, then why defend it . . . as worthy of him, by man's reasonings? You may do so, no doubt, before unbelievers, but with men who own the divinity of the Scriptures, is it not to commit an insult on that word - is it not to take up a false position, and to lay your hand on the ark, as Uzzah did? Did this Word present itself to your eyes as a root out of a dry ground; had it no form nor comeliness, and no beauty to make you desire it, still you ought to venerate it, and look for every thing for it from him who has given it. Does it not imply, then, our being wanting in respect for him when he speaks, when we would prove the respect that is due to him? Should I not have been ashamed when shown my Sa-

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viour and my God rising from supper, taking a bason, laying aside his garments, girding himself with a towel, and proceeding to wash his disciples' feet - should I not have been ashamed to set myself to prove that, in spite of all this, still he was Christ! Ah, I should rather have wished to worship him more fervently than ever! Well, then, the majesty of the Scriptures desires to stoop to us! There do you not behold one who rises from the table, lays aside his garments, girds himself like a servant, and kneels before sinners, in order to wash their feet? "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me!" Is there not in that very humiliation, which reveals itself to us with such a charm, as it were the voice of the Word in his humiliation?

As for us, it strikes us that there is no arrogance to be compared with that of a man who, owning the Bible to be a book from God, then makes bold to sift with his hand the pure in it from what is impure, the inspired from what is uninspired, God from man. This is to overturn all the foundations of the faith; it amounts to placing it, no more in believing God, but in believing ourselves. It ought to be enough for us that a chapter or a word form part of the Scriptures, in order to our knowing it to be divinely good; for God has pronounced upon it as he has upon the creation, "I beheld all that I had made, and behold all was good." We will never say then, I find this saying admirable, therefore it is from God; and still less, I see no use in it, therefore it is from man. God preserve us from so doing! But we say, it is in the Scriptures, therefore it is from God. It is from God, therefore it is useful, therefore it is wise, therefore it is admirable; and if I do not yet see it to be so, the fault lies only with myself. We hold there is at error in this protection which man's wisdom would accord to that of God; we hold there is an outrage involved in that clumsy stamp with which it sets itself to legalize the holy Scriptures, and in that absurd signature with which it dares to mark its pages.

If, then, we still go on here with the work of showing

⁵⁷ 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7.

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how the divine wisdom shines out in some passages which people dare to consider human, it is not for the purpose, of establishing their divine origin on the judgments of our better informed wisdom, or to procure a tardy respect for them from the mere fact of the beauty they disclose. Our respect goes before; it was founded on the passage being written in the "Oracles of God." Henceforth, before having seen, we have believed. We have no thought, therefore, but that of refuting the objection by some examples of its temerity. Let us listen, further, to two or three passages to which people have made bold to refuse the honours of inspiration, because they have started with the idea that they are without any spiritual bearing. We will quote but a very small number here. It takes no time to pronounce of a sentence that it is useless or vulgar - to demonstrate that there is a mistake in the objection, requires pages.

One of the passages which we have most frequently heard adduced, when people have wished to justify the distinction between what is inspired in the Word of God, and what is not, is Paul's recommendation to Timothy with regard to the stomach complaints and ailings with which that young disciple was afflicted. "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine, for thy stomach's sake and frequent infirmities."⁵⁸

Nevertheless examine this passage more closely; what an admirable and living revelation do we find in it of the grandeur of the apostolic calling, and of the amiability of the Christian character! Mark, first, that it was as it were in the temple of God that it was pronounced; for immediately before you hear those solemn words:- "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, keep thyself pure, drink no longer water." One sees that it is in the presence of their common Master, and of his

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holy angels, that Paul desired to speak to his disciple; let us enter then into the same temple, in order to comprehend him - let us place ourselves on the same heights, "before the Lord and his holy angels," then shall we speedily perceive how many beauties are revealed by these words, both in the ministry of the apostles, and in the ways of the Lord. This the celebrated Chrysostom well understood, when, preaching on those very words, he observed how little the Lord's most useful servants should be surprised, should it so happen that their Lord should deem it fit to prove them, as he did Timothy, with complaints in their chest, or head, or stomach - should he put some thorn in their flesh; and should he thus buffet them by some angel of Satan, in order to fashion them, on the one hand, for sympathy, for cordial affections, for tender compassions; and, on the other, for patience, self-denial, and, above all, for prayer. Read over seriously, and as if in the light of the last day, this beautiful passage of the apostle's; ere long, within the small compass of this single verse, you will wonder how many precious lessons the Holy Ghost would give us, besides that pointed out by the pious bishop of Constantinople. How many words, and almost chapters, would have been required, in order that as much might be said to us under another form! Here you will learn, for example, Timothy's sobriety; he had wished, like Paul, to bring his body under - he abstained entirely from wine. You will see here, in the third place, with what a tender and fatherly delicacy the apostle reprov'd him, either for his imprudence, or for austerity carried too far. You will remark here with what wisdom the Lord authorizes, and even bids, by these words, the men of

⁵⁸ 1 Tim. v. 23.

God to pay the necessary attention to their health, at a time, nevertheless, in which he has thought fit to compromise it by sicknesses. In the fifth place, you will here admire the prophetic forecast with which these words, put in the mouth of an apostle, condemn beforehand those human traditions which were afterwards to interdict the use of wine to

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believers as an impurity. Here you will see, in the sixth place, with what tender solicitude, and with what fatherly watchfulness, the apostle, in the midst of his high functions, and notwithstanding the cares with which all the churches overwhelmed him (from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and from Illyricum to Spain), directed his regards to the personal circumstances, to his health, to the weakness of his stomach, to his often infirmities, and to the imprudent habits of his daily regimen. You will further learn here an historical fact, which will throw an useful light for you on the nature of the miraculous gifts. Notwithstanding all the interest felt by Paul in his disciple, he is incapable of re-establishing Timothy's health, even he who, however, had so often healed the sick, and even raised the dead to life again; for the apostles (and we learn it again by this verse, as well as by the illness of Epaphroditus),⁵⁹ did not receive the gift of miracles for a continuance, any more than that of inspiration; it was a power that was renewed to them for every particular occasion.

But if these numerous lessons from the apostle are important, and if we thus receive them all in a single verse, and in a way the best fitted to affect us, oh! how penetrating do they not become to the Christian soul, from the moment he has the certain conviction that here we have not the words of a good man only; that they are not even those of an apostle only; but that it is the voice of his God who desires to teach him, under so affecting a form, sobriety, brotherly love, an affectionate interest for each other's health, the usefulness of infirmities and afflictions even for God's most zealous servants, and who, in order to convey so many precious lessons to him, condescends to address him by the mouth of a simple creature!

People, further, often object to us those greetings which close the epistles of Paul, and which, after all,

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we are told, are of no more importance than those ordinary compliments with which we all usually conclude our letters. Here there is nothing unworthy of an apostle, no doubt; but no more is there any thing inspired. Here the Holy Ghost has allowed Paul's pen to run on, as we ourselves would allow a clerk to conclude by himself, in the usual form, a letter, the first pages of which we had dictated to him. Look, for example, at the last chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Is it not evident there, that the apostle surrenders himself, in the course of sixteen verses, to the purely personal reminiscences of his friendships? Was there any need of inspiration for the dry nomenclature of all those persons? The apostle mentions eighteen by their names, without reckoning all to whom he sent remembrances collectively in the house of Aquila, in that of Narcissus, or in that of Aristobulus. These verses require no inspiration; and, what would have sufficed at most, in order to their being written, would have been such a superintendence on the part of the Holy Ghost, as that which he still exercised when he left them to their personality.

⁵⁹ Phil. ii. 27.

We are not afraid to avow that we delight to recall here these sixteen verses that have been so often objected to; for, far from furnishing any ground for objection, they belong to the number of passages in which the divine wisdom recommends itself by itself; and, if you will examine more closely, you will, ere long, join us in admiring the fecundity, the condescension, and the elevation of this method of instruction; you will find in it, under the most practical and the most artless form, a living picture of a primitive church; and you will recognize in it to what an elevation, even the least known, and the most feeble among them, may rise in its bosom.

Listen first, with what an affectionate interest the apostle recommends to the kind regard of the church of Rome that humble woman, who, it would appear, undertook the voyage from Corinth to Rome for the sake of his temporal affairs. She was a sister well be-

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loved, who had put herself at the service of the saints, and who had not been afraid to open her house to a great many of the believers, and to Paul himself, notwithstanding the perils of that hospitality. She was servant to the church of Cenchrea. It behoved the brethren who were settled at Rome, therefore, to receive her in the Lord, and to aid her in all her needs. Behold, then, what an example the apostle sets us, in some words, of that Christian urbanity which ought to characterize all the mutual relations of God's children. Admire, as he passes so rapidly under review the brethren and the sisters of the church of Rome, the manner in which he contrives to pour even over this list of names which is called dry, the sweet unction of his charity. He has some words of encouragement and affectionate esteem for each of them; he recalls in it the generous hospitality of Phebe, the risk of death which Aquila and his companion braved for him, the honour which Epenetus had of having been the first of the Achaians that were converted to Jesus Christ, the great labours of Andronicus and of Junia, who were even in the faith before him; his Christian love for Amphias, the evangelical labours of Urbane, the proved fidelity of Apelles, the manifold labours of Tryphena and Tryphosa in the Lord, and those of the beloved Persis. What an appeal, too, to the conscience of every serious reader is there in this rapid catalogue! See, then, he ought to say to himself, who the faithful were to whom salutations were sent in the church of Rome! And were the same apostle to write a letter to the church in which I myself occupy a place for some days, what would he say of me? would my name be found in it? could he add that, like Phebe, I receive the saints into my house; that, like Aquila and Priscilla, I hold Christian meetings under my happy roof; that, like Mary, I have bestowed much labour on the Lord's ministers; that, like Andronicus and Junia, I had suffered for Jesus Christ; that, like Rufus, I am chosen in the Lord; that, like Urbane, I am his helper; that, like Tryphena,

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and Tryphosa, I labour in the Lord; and that I even labour much, like the beloved Persis?

But behold, above all, what a lesson there is for Christian women in these admirable verses! In the unaffected familiarity which terminates this letter, what a lofty idea is given us of their vocation! What an important part, then, is assigned them in the church, and, what a place in heaven! Without having yet seen the city of Rome, Paul mentions there by their own names, no fewer than nine or ten women among his fellow-labourers. First we have, besides Phebe, that admirable Priscilla, who had even exposed herself to death for the apostle, and towards whom all the churches of the Gentiles felt so much gratitude. Then we have a lady, called Mary, who had, he says, bestowed much labour on the apostles; there was Tryphena; there was Tryphosa,

who laboured also in the Lord; there was Persis, who was particularly dear to him, and who had laboured much in the Lord; there was Julia; there was the sister of Nereus; there was Olympias, perhaps;⁶⁰ there was, in fine, the venerable mother of Rufus. And observe, in passing, with what respect he has named this lady, and with what delicacy he proceeds to salute her with the tender name of mother. Have we not here the very Christian politeness which he recommends to these same Romans in the 12th chapter of this epistle: “Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord,” he writes, “and his mother, WHO IS ALSO MINE!”⁶¹ What an affecting pattern do not these verses propose to husbands and wives, in the persons of Aquila and of Priscilla! You see them here in Rome; you may have seen them, five years before, banished from Italy by the Emperor Claudius, arriving at Corinth, and receiving in their house the apostle Paul; then, eighteen months afterwards, setting off with him to Asia, and staying at Ephesus, where they

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already had a church in their house,⁶² and where they received with so much success the young and brilliant Apollos, who, notwithstanding his talents, thought himself fortunate in having it in his power to put himself to the school of their Christian conversation and their charity. Now that Claudius had died, so as to make way for Nero, you see them, when hardly returned to Rome, immediately consecrate their new residence to the church of God. It is in their house that it meets; and you learn here, further, as it were in passing, that these spouses had not hesitated to lay down their lives for the life of Paul.

But, besides all these lessons, which, in these sixteen short verses, are offered to our consciences, you may there learn further two facts of deep importance for the history of the church. And, first, you see there, with the most unsought and the fullest evidence, that at that time there was no question in Rome about Peter, or his episcopate, or about his popedom, or his primacy, or even his presence. Do you not perceive a prophetic foresight in the care taken by the Holy Ghost to do, for this epistle to the Romans, what he has not done for any other of the fourteen of Paul’s epistles, and to close it thus with a long catalogue of the women and of men that were the most esteemed at the time in the whole Roman church? Behold, then, the apostle of the Gentiles, who, twenty years after his conversion, writes to them with greetings addressed to as many as twenty-eight persons hiving in the midst of them, by their proper names, and many others besides by collective designations, and who has not a word to send them for the prince of the apostles, as he is called, for the vicar of Jesus Christ, for his superior, for the bishop of the universal church, for the founder of the Roman church!! Peter was the apostle of the Circumcision, and not of the Gentiles;⁶³ his place was at Jerusalem; there we have to look for him, and there

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Paul had always found him. In his first journey, three years after his conversation, Paul visited him and abode fifteen days in his house.⁶⁴ In his second journey, to go to the first council, he again meets him there. In his third journey, in the year 44, at the time of the death of Herod

⁶⁰ Or Olympias. This name might have been that of a woman; but it is probably that of a man.

⁶¹ Rom. xii. 10.

⁶² 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

⁶³ Gal. ii. 7, 8, 9.

⁶⁴ Gal. i. 18.

Agrippa, again it is there that Peter has his residence.⁶⁵ In his fourth journey, seventeen years after his conversion,⁶⁶ Paul finds him still there, in the charge of an apostle, not of the Gentiles (mark this well) but of the Circumcision. And when at last he was on the way accomplishing his fifth and last journey, he writes to the Romans and the Galatians; and then in order that the whole Church might know well that Peter is not at Rome, and never was there, we find Paul taking care to salute by their names all the most eminent among the believers at Rome, even among the women. What bishop in our days, of the Latin sect, would dare to write a letter of sixteen chapters to the church of Rome, without saying to it a single word either about its pope, or about Peter, or about a vicar of Jesus Christ?⁶⁷

But there is another historical fact, still more interesting, to the knowledge of which these very sixteen verses, said to be useless, conduct us by the most striking traits. See, in the very details of these short salutations, by what humble instruments, and yet how extensively, the gospel had established itself in so short a time, in the mighty city of Rome. No apostle had set his foot there,⁶⁸ yet behold with wonder what progress had already been made by the Word of God, solely through the labours of artizans, merchants, women, slaves, and freedmen, who happened to be in Rome! Jesus Christ had his disciples there, even in the palaces of the Jewish princes who resided at the imperial court, and even among the pagans who served nearer the person of

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Nero. Paul asks that salutations should be sent from him, first (among other Christians) to those of Aristobulus' household; and, secondly, to those of the household of Narcissus "who are in the Lord." Now, the former of these two great personages was the brother of Agrippa the Great and of Herodias; the second was the all-powerful favourite of the emperor Claudius. Agrippina caused him to be put to death only at the close of the year 54.

Ah! let all who call themselves Christians renounce then, and for ever, those rash systems in which people rise against the words of the Scriptures, to impugn their propriety; in which people take away from God's Bible such and such a passage, and such and such a word, in order to make (at least as respects that passage and that word) a Bible of man's; and in which people thus charge themselves with the responsibility of the temerities that shall be ventured upon besides, by doctors of greater hardihood, imitating upon a book what they shall have seen you do upon a verse! What idea can a man have of the sacred writers, when he would impute to them the mad audacity of mingling their own oracles with those of the Most High? We recollect the case of a man who had lost his reason, who was supported by our hospitals, whose handwriting, however, as a copyist, was so beautiful that one of the Geneva ministers engaged him to transcribe his sermons. Great was the confusion of the latter, when on looking at his papers again, he ascertained that the unhappy man had thought it his duty to enrich all the pages with his own thoughts. The distance is less, however, between a lunatic and a minister, even were he holy as Daniel and sublime as Isaiah, than between Daniel and Isaiah and the Eternal Wisdom!

⁶⁵ Acts xii. 1, 3.

⁶⁶ Gal. ii. 7.

⁶⁷ See on this subject the excellent dissertation of Pastor Bost: "*Du pouvoir de St Pierre dans l'Eglise*. Geneva 1833."

⁶⁸ Rom. i. 11, 13, 14, 15; xv. 22.

Now, then, having advanced thus far, we would wish, before proceeding farther, to recommend to our readers, in the practice of sacred criticism, three precautions, the importance and necessity of which ought to be impressed upon them by the theopneustic doctrine.

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