

**THEOPNEUSTIA:**  
**THE**  
**PLENARY INSPIRATION**  
**OF THE**  
**HOLY SCRIPTURES.**

**BY**  
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Quæritur an In scribendo, ita acti et inspirati fuerint a Spiritu Sanoto, et quoad  
res ipsas, et quoad verba, ut ab omni errore immunes fuerint: Adverarii negant:  
Nos affirmamus.

F. TURRETINI, *Theol. elenct.*, t. I., loc. ii., 9.4.

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ENLARGED BY THE AUTHOR.**

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

Soon after the first publication of the *Theopneustia*, the late Rev. Dr Welsh wrote to me, urging me to translate it for the press. A series of other engagements prevented me from doing so for several years. At last, in answer to a call for a cheaper and less bulky translation than one that had meanwhile appeared in London, I applied myself to the task, and had completed it before seeing what my predecessor had published in the south. The present translation being from the latest French edition, has the advantage of all the author's improved arrangement.

The importance of the subject, the high character of the author, and the admirable manner in which he has acquitted himself, required that no ordinary pains should be bestowed in doing him justice. These pains I have not spared.

I have endeavoured, as far as I could, to give the texts quoted from Scripture in the precise words of our authorized version, and to secure the utmost possible correctness in the references. The headings at the top of the pages will, it is hoped, be of considerable use to the student.

After consulting an eminent authority as to the propriety of the change, "plenary inspiration," "divine inspiration," or "verbal inspiration," have been substituted throughout for the term *Theopneustie*, borrowed by the author from the Greek, and retained on the title-page. It was thought that the frequent recurrence of so unusual a word might repel ordinary readers, and make it appear that the book was exclusively for the learned.

At a time when almost all religious controversies seem to turn, more or less, on the question, How far the Holy Scriptures are inspired? and when persons of all ranks and classes are called upon to arm themselves against various errors, having their root in false or inadequate views on this subject, it seems hardly possible to overrate the value of the work now before the reader. Nor is it only as a work of controversy that it is invaluable. It is imbued throughout with a spirit of affectionate earnestness and glowing piety, which, even when it makes the greatest demand on the intellect, never suffers the heart to remain cold. Add to this, the wonderful copiousness of the illustrations, which the author seems to borrow with equal case from the simplest objects in nature, the deepest wells of learning, the remotest deductions of science, and the history at once of the most ancient and most modern times. In short, as we accompany him from page to page and chapter to chapter, we seem not so much to be reading a book, as to be listening to a devout and accomplished friend, expatiating on a favourite subject a subject of the very greatest importance, and one amid all the details of which he is quite at home.

DAVID D. SCOTT.  
*Sept. 20, 1850.*

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## **PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.**

A glance at this book and its title may have prepossessed certain minds against it, by creating two equally erroneous impressions. These I would fain dissipate.

The Greek title "Theopneustia," although borrowed from St Paul, and although it has long been used in Germany, from not having found its way into our language, may, no doubt, have led more than one reader to say to himself of the subject here treated, that it is too learned and abstruse (*scientijfique*) to be popular, and too little popular to be important.

Yet I am bold to declare, that if any thing has given me at once the desire and the courage to undertake it, it is just the double conviction I entertain of its importance and its simplicity.

And, first of all, I do not think that, after we have come to know that Christianity is divine, there can be presented to our mind any question bearing more essentially on the vitality of our faith than this: "Does the Bible come from God? is it altogether from God? or may it not be true, as some have maintained, that there occur in it maxims purely human, statements not exactly true, exhibitions of vulgar ignorance and ill-sustained reasoning? in a word, books, or portions

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of books, foreign to the interests of the faith, subject to the natural weakness of the writer's judgment, and alloyed with error?" Here we have a question that admits of no compromise, a fundamental question - a question of life! It is the first that confronts you on opening the Scriptures, and with it your religion ought to commence.

Were it the case, as you whom I now address will have it, that all in the Bible is not important, does not bear upon the faith, and does not relate to Jesus Christ; and were it the case, taking another view, that in that book there is nothing inspired except what, in your opinion, is important, does bear upon the faith, and does relate to Jesus Christ; then your Bible is quite a different book from that of the Fathers, of the Reformers, and of the Saints of all ages. It is fallible; theirs was perfect. It has chapters or parts of chapters, it has sentences and expressions, to be excluded from the number of the sentences and expressions that are God's; theirs was "all given by inspiration of God," "all profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, and for rendering the man of God perfect by faith in Christ Jesus." In that case, one and the same passage is, in your judgment, as remote from what it was in theirs as earth is from heaven.

You may have opened the Bible, for example, at the 45th Psalm, or at the Song of Songs; and while you will see nothing there but what is most human in the things of the earth - a long epithalamium, or the love communings of a daughter of Sharon and her young bridegroom - they read there of the glories of the Church,

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the endearments of God's love, the deep things of Jesus Christ - in a word, all that is most divine in the things of heaven; and if they found themselves unable to read of those things there, they knew at least that they were there, and there they tried to find them.

Suppose now that we both take up one of St Paul's epistles. While one of us will attribute such or such a sentence, the meaning of which he fails to seize, or which shocks his carnal sense, to the writer's Jewish prejudices, to the most common intentions, to circumstances altogether human; the other will set himself, with profound respect, to scan the thoughts of the Holy Ghost: he will believe these perfect even before he has caught their meaning, and will put any apparent insignificance or obscurity to the account of his own dulness or ignorance alone.

Thus, while in the Bible of the one all has its object, its place, its beauty, and its use, as in a tree, branches and leaves, vessels and fibres, epidermis and bark even, have all theirs; the Bible of the other is a tree of which some of the leaves and branches, some of the fibres and the bark, have not been made by God.

But there is much more than this in the difference between us; for not only, according to your reply, we shall have two Bibles, but no one can know what your Bible really is.

It is human and fallible, say you, only in a certain measure; but who shall define that measure? If it be true that man, in putting his baneful impress upon it, have left the stains of humanity there, who shall determine the depth of that impression, and the number of those stains? You have told me that it has its human

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part; but what are the limits of that part, and who is to fix them for me? Why, no one. These every one must determine for himself, at the bidding of his own judgment; in other words, this fallible portion of the Scriptures will be enlarged in the inverse ratio of our being illuminated by God's light, and a man will deprive himself of communications from above in the very proportion that he has need of them; in like manner as we see idolaters make to themselves divinities that are more or less impure, in proportion as they themselves are more or less alienated from the living and holy God! Thus, then, every one will curtail the inspired Scriptures in different proportions, and making for himself an infallible rule of that Bible, so corrected by himself, will say to it: "Guide thou me henceforth, for thou art my rule!" like those makers of graven images of whom Isaiah speaks, "who make to themselves a god, and say to it, Deliver me, for thou art my god." - (Isa. xlv. 17.)

But this is not all; what follows is of graver import still. According to your reply, it is not the Bible only that is changed, - it is you.

Yes, even in presence of the passages which you have most admired you will have neither the attitude nor the heart of a believer! How can that be, after you have summoned these along with the rest of the Scriptures before the tribunal of your judgment, there to be pronounced by you divine, or not divine, or semi-divine? What authority for your soul can there be in an utterance which for you is infallible only in virtue of yourself? Had it not to present itself at your bar, along with other sayings of the same book, which you have pro-

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nounced to be wholly or partly human? Will your mind, in that case, put itself into the humble and submissive posture of a disciple, after having held the place of a judge? This is impossible. The deference you will show to it will be that perhaps of acquiescence, never that of faith; of approval, never of adoration. Do you tell me that you will believe in the divinity of the passage? but then it is not in God that you will believe, but in yourself! This utterance pleases, but does not govern you; it stands before you like a lamp; it is not within you as an unction from above - a principle of light, a fountain of life! I do not believe there ever was a

Pope, however possessed with notions of the importance of his own priestly office, who could confidently address his prayers to a dead person, whom he had himself, by canonizing him of his own plenary authority, raised to the rank of the demigods. How, then, shall a reader of the Bible, who has himself canonized a passage of the Scriptures, however possessed with a high idea of his own wisdom, possibly have the disposition of a true believer with regard to such a passage? Will his mind come down from his pontifical chair, and humble itself before this utterance of thought, which, but for himself, would remain human, or at least doubtful? No one tries to fathom the meaning of a passage which he has himself legitimated, only in virtue of a meaning which he thinks he has already found. One submits only by halves to an authority which he has had it in his power to decline, and which he has once held to be doubtful. One worships but imperfectly what he has first degraded.

Besides, and let this be carefully noted, inasmuch as

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the entire divinity of such or such a passage of the Scriptures depends. in your view, not on its being found in the book of God's oracles, but on its presenting certain traits of spirituality and wisdom to your wisdom and your spirituality, the sentence that you pass cannot always be so exempt from hesitation as that you shall not retain, with regard to it, some of the doubts with which you set out. Hence your faith will necessarily participate in your uncertainties, and will be itself imperfect, undecided, conditional. As is the sentence, so will be the faith; and as is the faith, so will be the life. But such is not the faith, neither is such the life of God's elect.

But what will better show the importance of the question which is about to occupy us is, that if one of the two systems to which it *may* lead has, as we have said, all its roots imbued with scepticism, its fruit inevitably will be a new unbelief.

How do we come to see that so many thousands can every morning and evening open their Bibles without once perceiving their doctrines which it teaches with the utmost clearness? How can they thus, during many a long year, walk on in darkness with the sun in their hands? Do they not hold these books to be a revelation from God? Yes, but prepossessed with false notions of the divine inspiration, and believing that there still exists in Scripture an alloy of human error - vain to find in it, nevertheless, its reasonable utterances of thought, in order to their being authorized to believe these divine - they make it their study, as if unconsciously, to give these a meaning that their own wisdom approves; and thus not only do they render themselves

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incapable of recognising therein the wisdom of God, but they sink the Scriptures in their own respect. In reading St Paul's epistles, for example, they will do their utmost to find in them man's justification by the law, his native innocence and bent towards that which is good, the moral omnipotence of his will - the merit of his works. But, then, what happens? Alas! just that after having given the sacred writer such forced meanings, they find his language so ill-conceived for his assumed object, such ill-chosen terms for what he is made to say, and such ill-sustained reasonings, that, as if in spite of themselves, they lose any respect felt for the letter of the Scriptures, and plunge into rationalism. It is thus that, after having commenced with unbelief; they reap a new unbelief as the fruit of their study; darkness becomes the recompense of darkness, and that terrible saying of Christ is fulfilled, "From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."

Such, then, it is evident, is the fundamental importance of the great question with which we are about to be occupied.

According to the answer which you, to whom we now address ourselves, make to it, the arm of God's Word is palsied for you; the sword of the Spirit has become blunted - it has lost its temper and its power to pierce. How could it henceforth penetrate your joints and marrow? How could it become stronger than your lusts, than your doubts, than the world, than Satan? How could it give you energy, victory, light, peace? No! It possibly may happen, at wide intervals of time, by a pure effect of God's unmerited favour, that, in spite of this dismal state of a soul, a divine utterance may come

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and seize it at unawares; but it does not remain the less true, that this disposition which judges the Scriptures, and doubts beforehand of their universal inspiration, is one of the greatest obstacles that we can oppose to their acting with effect. "The word spoken," says St Paul (Heb. iv. 2), "did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them who heard it;" while the most abundant benedictions of that same Scripture were at all times the lot of the souls which received it, "not as the word of man, but which it is truly, as the word of God, working effectually in them who believe." - (1 Thess. ii. 13.)

It will thus be seen, that this question is of immense importance in its bearing upon the vitality of our faith; and we are entitled to say, that between the two answers that may be made to it, there lies the same great gulf that must have separated two Israelites who might both have seen Jesus Christ in the flesh, and both equally owned him as a prophet; but one of whom, looking to his carpenter's dress, his poor fare, his hands inured to labour, and his rustic retinue, believed further, that he was not exempt from error and sin, as an ordinary prophet; whilst the other recognised in him Immanuel, the Lamb of God, the everlasting God, our Righteousness, the King of kings, the Lord of lords.

The reader may not yet have admitted each of these considerations; but he will at least admit that I have said enough to be entitled to conclude that it is worth while to study such a question, and that, in weighing it, you hold in your hands the most precious interests of the people of God. This is all I desired in a preface. It was the first point to which I wished to direct the reader's attention beforehand, and now comes the second.

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If the study of this doctrine be the duty of all, that study is also within the reach of all; and the author scruples not to say, that in writing his book, the dearest object of his ambition has been to make it level to the comprehension of all classes of readers.

Meanwhile, he thinks he hears many make this objection. You address yourself to men of learning, they will say; your book is no concern of ours: we confine ourselves to religion, but here you give us theology.

Theology no doubt! but, what theology? Why, that which ought to be the study of all the heirs of eternal life, and with respect to which a very child may be a theologian.

Religion and theology! let us explain what we mean; for often are both these terms abused to the injury of both, by people presuming to set the one against the other. Is not theology defined in all our dictionaries as "the science which has for its object, God and his revelation?" Now, when I was a boy at school, the catechism of my childhood made this the

designation of my religion. "It is the science," it told me, "that teaches us to know God and his Word, God and his counsels, God in Christ." So, then, there is no difference between them, in object, means, or aim. Their object is truth; their means, the Word of God; their aim, holiness. "Sanctify them, O Father, by thy truth: thy Word is truth!" Such is the aim contemplated by both, as it was that of their dying Master. How, then, shall we distinguish the one from the other? By this alone - that theology is religion studied more methodically, and with the aid of more perfect instruments.

Men have contrived, no doubt, to make, under the

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name of theology, a confused compound of philosophy, or the traditions of men with God's word; but that was not theology - it was only scholastic philosophy.

It is true that the term Religion is not always employed in its objective sense, to signify the science that embraces the truths of our faith; but it is used also, with a subjective meaning, to designate rather the sentiments which those truths foster in the hearts of believers. Let these two meanings be kept distinct. This is what we may do, and ought to do; but to oppose the one to the other, by calling the one Religion, the other Theology, were a deplorable absurdity. This would be to maintain, in other terms, that one might have the religious sentiments without the religious doctrines from which alone they spring; this would imply that you would have a man to be moral without having any religious tenets, pious without belief, a Christian without Christ, an effect without a cause - living without a soul! Deplorable illusion! "holy Father, this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

But even were it rather in its objective sense that people set themselves to oppose religion to theology - that is to say, the religion a Christian learns in his native tongue in his Bible, to the religion which a more accomplished person would study in the same Bible with the aid of history and of the learned languages - still I would say, even in this case, Distinguish between the two; don't oppose them to each other! Ought not every true Christian to be a theologian as far as he can? Is he not enjoined to be learned in the Word of God, nurtured in sound doctrine, rooted and established

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in the knowledge of Jesus Christ? And was it not to the multitude that Our Lord said, in the midst of the street, "Search the Scriptures."

Religion, then, in its objective meaning, bears the same relation to theology that the globe does to astronomy. They are distinct, and *yet* united; and theology renders the same services to religion that the astronomy of the geometricians offers to that of seamen. A ship captain might, no doubt, do without the *Mécanique Céleste* in finding his way to the seas of China, or in returning from the Antipodes; but even then it is to that science that, while traversing the ocean with his elementary notions, he will owe the advantage he derives from his formulas, the accuracy of his tables, and the precision of the methods which give him his longitudes, and set his mind at ease as to the course he is pursuing. Thus too, the Christian, in order to his traversing the ocean of this world, and to his reaching the haven to which God calls him, may dispense with the ancient languages and the lofty speculations of theology; but, after all, the notions of religion with which he cannot dispense, will receive, in a great measure, their precision and their certainty from theological science. And while he steers towards eternal life

with his eyes fixed on the compass which God has given him. Still it is to theology that he will owe the certainty that that heavenly magnet is the same that it was in the days of the apostles - that the instrument of salvation has been placed intact in his hands, that its indications are faithful, and that the needle never varies.

There was a time when all the sciences were mysterious, professing secrecy, having their initiated persons,

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their sacred language, and their freemasonry. Physical science, geometry, medicine, grammar, history - every thing was treated of in Latin. Men soared aloft in the clouds, far above the vulgar crowd; and would drop now and then from their bark sublime a few detached leaves, which we were bound to take up respectfully, and were not allowed to criticise. Now-a-days, all is changed. Genius glories in making itself intelligible to the mass of mankind; and after having mounted up to the ethereal regions of science, there to pounce upon truth in her highest retreats, it endeavours to find a method of coming down again, and approaching near enough to let us know the paths it has pursued, and the secrets it has discovered. But if such be at present the almost universal tendency of the secular sciences, it has been at all times the distinctive character of true theology, That science is at the service of all. The others may do without the people, as the people may do without them; true theology, on the contrary, has need of flocks, as they again have need of it. It preserves their religion; and their religion preserves it in turn. Woe to them when their theology languishes, and does not speak to them! Woe to them when the religion of the flocks leave it to go alone, and no longer esteems it We ought then, both for its sake and for theirs, to hold that it should speak to them, listen to them, study in their sight, and keep its schools open to them as our churches are.

When theology occupies the professor's chair in the midst of Christian flocks, its relations with them, constantly keeping before its eyes the realities of the Christian life, constantly recall to it also the realities of

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science: man's misery, the counsels of the Father, the Redeemer's cross, the consolations of the Holy Ghost, holiness, eternity. Then, too, the Church's conscience, repressing its wanderings, overawes its hardihood, compels it to be serious, and corrects the effects of that familiarity, so readily running into profaneness, with which the science of the schools puts forth its hand and touches holy things. In speaking to it, day after day, of that life which the preaching of the doctrines of the Cross nourishes in the Church (a life, without the knowledge of which all its learning would be as incomplete as the natural history of man were it derived from the study of dead bodies), the religion of the flocks disengages theology from its excessive readiness to admire those branches of knowledge which do not sanctify. It often repeats to it the question addressed by St Paul to the perverted science of the Galatians: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" It disabuses it of the wisdom of man; it imbues it with reverence for the Word of God, and (in that holy Word), for those doctrines of the righteousness of faith which are "the power of God our Saviour," and which ought to penetrate the whole soul of its science. Thus does it teach it practically how to associate, in its researches, the work of the conscience with that of the understanding, and never to seek after God's truth but under the combined lights of study and prayer.

And, on the other hand, theology renders in its turn, to Christian flocks, services with which they cannot long dispense without damage. It is it that watches over the religion of a people, to see that the lips of the

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priest keep knowledge, and that the law may be had from his mouth. It is it that preserves purity of doctrine in the holy ministry of the gospel, and the just balancing of all truths in preaching. It is it that assures the simple against the confident assertions of a science inaccessible to them. It is it that goes for its answers to the same quarters whence those assertions have come; which puts its finger on the sophisms of the adversaries of truth, overawes them by its presence, and compels them, before the flocks, to avoid exaggeration, and to put some reserve on the terms they employ. It is it that gives the alarm at the first and so often decisive moment, when the language of religion among a people begins to decline from the truth, and when error, like a rising weed, sprouts and grows into a plant. It then gives timely warning, and people hasten to root it out.

It has ever happened that when flocks have been pious, theology has thriven. She has accomplished herself with learning; she has put due honour on studies that require vigorous effort; and, the better to capacitate herself for searching the Scriptures, not only has she desired to master all the sciences that can throw light upon them, but she has infused life into all other sciences, whether by the example of her own labours, or by gathering around her men of lofty minds, or by infusing into academical institutions a generous sentiment of high morality, which has promoted all their developments.

Thus it is that, in giving a higher character to all branches of study, she has often ennobled that of a whole people.

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But, on the contrary, when theology and the people have become indifferent to each other, and drowsy flocks have lived only for this world, then theology herself has given evident proofs of sloth, frivolity, ignorance, or perhaps of a love of novelties; seeking a profane popularity at any cost; affecting to have made discoveries that are only whispered to the ear, that are taught in academies, and never mentioned in the churches; keeping her gates shut amid the people, and at the same time throwing out to them from the windows doubts and impieties, with the view of ascertaining the present measure of their indifference; until at last she breaks out into open scandal, in attacking doctrines, or in defying the integrity or the inspiration of certain books, or in giving audacious denials to the facts which they relate.

And let a man beware of believing that the whole people do not ere long feel the consequences of so enormous a mischief. They will suffer from it even in their temporal interests, and their national existence will be compromised. In degrading their religion, you proportionally lower their moral character; you leave them without a soul. All things take their measure, in a nation, according to the elevation that is given to heaven among the people. If their heaven be low, every thing is affected by it even on the earth. All there becomes ere long more confined and more creeping; the future becomes narrowed; patriotism becomes materialized; generous traditions drop out of notice; the moral sense loses its tone; material wellbeing engrosses all regard; amid all conservative principles, one after another, disappear.

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We conclude then, on the one hand, that there exists the most intimate union, not only between a people's welfare and their religion, but between their religion and true theology; and, on the other hand, that if there have always been most pertinent reasons for this science being taught as such, for all and before all, never was this character more necessary for it than when treating of the doctrine which is about to occupy us. It is the doctrine of doctrines; the doctrine that teaches us all others, and in virtue of which alone they are doctrines; the doctrine which is to the believer's soul what the air is to his lungs - necessary for birth in the Christian life - necessary for living in it - necessary for advancing in it to maturity, and persevering in it.

Such, then, has been the twofold view under which this work has been composed.

Every part of it, I trust, will bear testimony to my serious desire to make it useful to Christians of all classes.

With this object I have thrown off the forms of the school. Without entirely relinquishing, I have abstained from multiplying, quotations in the ancient tongues. In pressing the wonderful unanimity of Christian antiquity on this question, I have confined myself to general facts. In fine, when I have had to treat the various questions that bear upon this subject, and which must be introduced in order to complete the doctrine which it involves, I have thrown them all into a separate chapter. And even there, against the advice of some friends, I have employed a method considered by them out of harmony with the general tone of the book, but which to me has seemed fitted to enable the

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reader to take a clearer and more rapid view of the subject.

It is, then, under this simple and practical form that, in presenting this work to the Church of God, I rejoice that I can recommend it to the blessing of Him who preached in the streets, and who, to John the Baptist, pointed to this as the peculiar character of his mission: "To the poor the gospel is preached."

Well will it be if these pages confirm in the simplicity and the blissfulness of their faith those Christians who, without learning, have already believed, through the Scriptures, in the full inspiration of the Scriptures! Well will it be if some weary and heavy-laden souls are brought to listen more closely to that God who speaks to them in every line of his holy book! Well will it be if, through any thing said by us, some travellers Zion-ward (like Jacob on his pilgrimage at the stone of Bethel), after having reposed their wearied being with too much indifference on this book of God, should come to behold at last that mysterious ladder which rises from thence to heaven, and by which alone the messages of grace can come down to their souls, and their prayers mount up to God! Would that I could induce them, in their turn, to pour the sacred unction of their gratitude and their joy, and that they also could exclaim: "Surely the Lord is in this place! this is the house of God, and the gate of heaven!"

For myself, I fear not to say, that in devoting myself to the labour this work has cost me, I have often had, to thank God for having called me to it; for while engaged in it, I have more than once beheld the divine majesty fill with its brightness the whole temple of the

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Scriptures. Here have I seen all the tissues, coarse in appearance, that form the vesture of the Son of man, become white, as no fuller on earth could whiten them; here have I often seen the

Book illuminated with the glory of God, and all its words seem radiant; in a word, I have felt what one ever experiences when maintaining a holy and true cause, namely, that it gains in truth and in majesty the more we contemplate it.

O my God, give me to love this Word of thine, and to possess it, as much as thou has taught me to admire it!

“All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of the grass: the grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth, but the word of God abideth for ever; and it is this word which, by the gospel, has been preached unto us.”

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