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“IT IS WRITTEN:”

OR,

THE SCRIPTURES THE WORD OF GOD.

“IT IS WRITTEN:”
OR,
THE SCRIPTURES
THE WORD OF GOD.

FROM THE FRENCH OF PROFESSOR GAUSSEN.

Fourth Edition.



[Πᾶσα Γραφή Θεωρευστος.]

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PREFACE.

THE intrinsic value of this Work has induced the preparation of a FOURTH English Edition, in a cheap form.

In an age when questions of every degree of interest are freely discussed, it is of the utmost importance to bring under general notice the demonstration of the Inspiration of the Scriptures in all their parts. Between profane temerity on the one hand and apathy on the other, the confidence of multitudes is liable to be shaken, and their souls deluded to believe a lie. BUT THE WORD OF GOD ABIDETH SURE. The reckless Rationalist cannot disturb a single stone of the foundation or of the superstructure of the sacred building; neither can the careless Sophist evade or set aside the solemn importance attaching to the fact that God has divinely

revealed His will in the Bible. The opponent of the truth, whatever be his mode of attack, may prove how "hard it is to kick against the pricks," and the soul who has tremblingly fled for refuge to the hope set before him in the Gospel, may be shown such proofs of the finger of the living God in all that is written, that his confidence shall be greatly strengthened, and his heart say with David, "I rejoice at thy Word as one that findeth great spoil."

May the blessing of Him "who giveth understanding in all things" rest upon the work!

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“IT IS WRITTEN:”

OR,

THE DIVINE AND COMPLETE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

THE object of this Treatise is, by the help of God, and on the sole authority of his Word, to set forth, defend, and establish the Christian doctrine of the Divine, complete Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION.

THIS term is given to the mysterious power exercised by the Divine Spirit on the authors of the writings of the Old and New Testaments, to enable them to compose that which the Church of God has received from their hands. “All Scripture,” says an apostle, “is inspired of God.”

Inspiration is not a system; it is a fact: and this fact, like all other events of the history of redemption, is one of the doctrines of our faith.

The Inspiration is in the Writing, not in the Writer.

It is, however, necessary to observe, that the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost had not for its object the sacred writers, who were only its instruments, and would soon pass away; but it had for its object the sacred writings themselves, which were

appointed to reveal to the church, throughout all time, the counsels of God, which abide for ever.

The power, then, which operated in these men of God, and which they themselves experienced in very different degrees, has not been defined to us. There is not any thing to authorise our explaining it. Scripture never presents to us either its mode or its measure, as an object of study. What it proposes to our faith is, simply, the inspiration of their word—the divinity of the book which these men have written. In this respect, it establishes no difference between them. Their word, it assures us, is *inspired*; their book is of God. Whether they record mysteries antecedent to creation, or those of a futurity more remote than the return of the Son of Man; or the eternal counsels of the Most High; the secrets of the heart of man, or the deep things of God: whether they describe their own emotions, speak of things from recollection, or repeat what has been noted by contemporaries: whether they copy genealogies, or extract from uninspired documents;—their writing is inspired: what they pen is dictated from on high: it is always God who speaks, who relates, ordains, or reveals by their mouth, and who, for this purpose, employs, in various degrees, their personality; for it is written, “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.”

But if the words are always those of men, because they are written by men, they are, also, always those of God, because it is God who oversees, employs, and guides them. The narrations, doctrines, and commandments, are not given in “the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;” and thus it is that God has not only constituted himself the guarantee of all those facts, the author of all those ordinances, and the revealer of all those truths, but he has, moreover, given them to his church in the order, measure, and terms, which he has judged to be best adapted to his heavenly purpose.

If, therefore, it be demanded of us, how this work of *inspiration* was accomplished in these men of God, we should answer, that we know not; that we need not to know. We receive the doctrine of regeneration, or the sanctification of a soul by the Holy Spirit, by faith of a like character. We believe that the Spirit enlightens, purifies, elevates, comforts, and subdues that soul; we acknowledge all these effects; we know and adore their causes; but we are ignorant of the means. Thus let it be with *Inspiration*.

Various Objections.

Three classes of persons, in these last times, without disavowing the Divinity of Christianity, and without pretending to object to the authority of the Scriptures, have felt themselves at liberty to reject this doctrine of complete inspiration.

The first of these disowns even the *existence* of this action of the Holy Spirit: the second has denied its *universality*; and the third its *plenitude*.

The first reject all miraculous inspiration, and will only concede to the sacred writers what Cicero attributes to the poets, "a divine action of nature, an inherent power, resembling the other vital agencies of nature."

The second, while fully admitting the existence of a *definite inspiration*, will only acknowledge it *in a portion* of the sacred books. Some portions of the Scriptures are, according to them, from God; the remainder, the production of man.

The third class extend the notion of *this inspiration* to all parts of the Bible, *but not in equal degree to all*. According to their view, inspiration is universal, but unequal, often imperfect, accompanied with harmless errors, and meted out according to the nature of the passages, in very different measure; of which degree they constitute themselves more or less the judges.

Some have gone so far as to specify four degrees of divine inspiration.

An inspiration of *supervision*, as they term it, by virtue of which the sacred authors would have been preserved from any important error;—an inspiration of *elevation*, by which the Divine Spirit, in exalting the minds of men of God to the purest regions of truth, would have indirectly stamped the same characters of holiness and majesty upon their writings;—an inspiration of *direction*, under the most powerful influence of which, the sacred authors would have been directed of God, as to what they were to say, and upon what they were to be silent;—and, finally, an inspiration of *suggestion*, under which all the sentiments, and even the words, would have been given by God, by a still more direct and energetic operation of his Spirit.

All these distinctions are, in our view, chimerical; the Bible itself does not authorise them; the church, during the first eight centuries of the Christian era, knew nothing of them. We believe them to be erroneous, and fraught with evil.

Our design, in this work, as opposed to these systems, is to prove the EXISTENCE, UNIVERSALITY, and PLENITUDE of *Divine Inspiration*.

Our first question, therefore, is,—Whether the Scriptures are the offspring of a divine and miraculous inspiration? We affirm that they are.

We have next to inquire, Whether the parts of Scripture which are *divinely inspired*, are so equally and entirely; or, in other words, whether God has provided in a certain, though mysterious, manner, that even the words of the sacred volume should be invariably what they ought to be, and that they contain nothing erroneous. This we assert to be the fact.

It is, however, necessary at the outset to make ourselves understood. In maintaining that all Scripture is from God, we are far from intimating that man has

no part in it. We shall again refer to this point more fully, but it is necessary briefly to notice it here. All the words of Scripture are the words of man, as they are also those of God. In a certain sense, the Epistle to the Romans is wholly and entirely a letter from Paul; and in a sense still higher, the Epistle to the Romans is wholly and entirely a letter from God.

The Divine power, in causing the Holy Scriptures to be written by inspired men, has almost uniformly put in operation their understandings, their wills, their recollections, and their individualities, as we shall presently show. Thus it is that God, willing to make known to his elect, in an everlasting record, the spiritual principles of the Divine will, during sixteen hundred years, employed priests, kings, warriors, shepherds, publicans, fishermen, scribes, and tent-makers; associating with the Word, in a mysterious manner, and according to his own wisdom, their affections and their faculties.

Such then is the Book of God. Its first line and its last, with all the instruction (whether understood or not) which it contains, are by the same Author. Whatever the sacred penmen may have been—whatever their circumstances, their impressions, their comprehension of what they wrote, and the measure of their individuality brought into operation by this divine and mysterious power—they have all, with a faithful and directed hand, written in the same volume, under the guidance of the same Master, in whose estimation “a thousand years are as one day,” and the result is—the Bible. Let us not lose our time, then, in vain questioning, but study the book. It is the word of Moses, of Amos, of John, and of Paul; but it is the thought of God, and the word of God. “The Spirit of the Lord has spoken by me,” say they, “and his word was on my tongue.” “It is thou, Lord, who hast spoken by the mouth of David thy servant.” (2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2; Acts iv. 25.)

It is therefore erroneous language to say: certain passages in the Bible are those of man, and others those of God. No; every verse therein, without exception, is of man, and they are also all, without exception, those of God.

It is, in fact, with *Divine Inspiration* as with efficacious grace. In the operations of the Holy Spirit, when causing the writing of the Scriptures, and in those of the same Spirit converting a soul, and directing it in the path of sanctification, the man is, in different respects, entirely active and entirely passive. God does everything, and man does everything; and we may say, with regard to both these works, what St. Paul said to the Philippians of one of them: "It is God which worketh in you *both to will and to do.*" (Phil. ii. 13.)

Thus we see, that in the Scriptures, the same operations are alternately attributed to God and to man. God converts, and it is man who is converted; God circumcises the heart, God gives a new heart, and it is man who is called to circumcise and make to himself a new heart; *God producing all, and we acting all.*

Such is then the word of God. It is God speaking in man, God speaking by man, God speaking as man, and God speaking for man! This we affirm; and this we shall seek to establish.

It may, however, be previously requisite to define this doctrine with more precision.

More precise Definition of the Doctrine of Inspiration.

We propose to establish the doctrine of *Divine Inspiration* under the following forms:—

"The Scriptures are given, and guaranteed by God, even as regards their language;" and, "the Scriptures do not contain any error."

By which we understand that they communicate all

that they ought to communicate; and that they communicate only what they ought to communicate.

Now, how can this doctrine be established?—It shall be by the Scriptures, and by the Scriptures alone.

Having once admitted the Scriptures to be true, it is for themselves to inform us what they are; and when once they have vouched for their own inspiration of God, it is for themselves to inform us how they are inspired, and to what extent.

To seek to prove *à priori* their inspiration, by arguing upon the necessity of this miracle for the security of our faith, would be to reason feebly. To attempt, moreover, to establish the entire inspiration of the Scriptures upon the consideration of their beauty, uniform wisdom, their prophetic foreknowledge, and all those characteristics of Divinity which their pages exhibit, would be to rest upon reasoning, doubtless just, but contestable, or at least contested. It is, therefore, solely on the declarations of Holy Scripture that we are bound to stand. We have no other authority for the principles of our faith: and *Divine Inspiration* is one of those principles.

Nevertheless, let us here anticipate a misunderstanding. It might happen that some reader, unsettled about Christianity, mistaking our object, and thinking to find in this treatise arguments which will decide his mind, may find his expectations disappointed, and think himself justified in reproaching our argument as falsely reasoned, as if we were desirous of proving the inspiration of the Scriptures by the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is of consequence to undeceive any such. We have not penned these pages for the disciples of Porphyry, Voltaire, or Rousseau; and our object is not to prove that the Scriptures are worthy of faith. Others have done this. We address ourselves to men who respect the Scriptures, and who admit their veracity. It is to these we affirm, that, being true, they testify their own inspiration; and that,

being inspired, they declare their being entirely inspired: whence we conclude that it must indeed be so.

This doctrine is, certainly, of all truths, one of the most simple and evident, to those who are subject to the testimony of the Scriptures. We may, doubtless, have heard modern theologians represent this doctrine as full of incertitude and difficulties; but men who have sought to study it only by the light of God's Word, have neither met with these difficulties, nor fallen into this incertitude. Nothing is more clearly or more frequently taught in Scripture, than its own inspiration. And thus, men of olden time were entirely unacquainted with the doubts and difficulties entertained by the doctors of our age. With them the Bible was from God, or was not from God. Antiquity presents, on this point, an admirable unanimity. But since the moderns, in imitation of the Talmudist Jews and rabbins of the middle age, have imagined learned distinctions between four or five different derees of inspiration, who can be astonished that incertitude and difficulties multiply before them? They contest what the Scriptures teach, and they explain what they do not teach. We can understand their perplexity; but the fault lies in their own temerity.

This testimony, which the Scriptures bear to their own inspiration, is so evident, that one might be astonished to witness, among Christians, diversities of opinion on a subject so well defined. The evil, however, is but too well explained by the power of prejudice. The minds of men, being already prepossessed with the objections which have been made, pervert the Scripture from its natural meaning, and endeavour to reconcile it with the difficulties which perplex them. They deny, in spite of the Scriptures, their full inspiration, as the Sadducees denied the resurrection, because they found the miracle inexplicable; but we must remind

them that Jesus answered, "Ye do err, because YE KNOW NOT THE SCRIPTURES, NEITHER THE POWER OF GOD." (Mark xii. 24, 27.) It is therefore, on account of this too general disposition of the human mind, that we have judged it best not to set before the reader our scriptural proofs, until we have carried him through a closer examination of the objections which are opposed to us; and this will be the subject of the succeeding chapter.

The Individuality of the Sacred Writers.

The individuality of the sacred authors, deeply stamped upon the books which they have written, seems to many persons irreconcilable with a plenary inspiration. It is impossible (they tell us) to read the Scriptures without being struck with the differences of language, thought, and style, which their authors severally exhibit. We are told the following conclusions must be drawn from the fact:—

1. If it were God who alone and unceasingly spoke in the Scriptures, we should see, in their various parts, a uniformity which does not exist.

2. It must, therefore, be admitted, that two different powers have acted, at the same time, upon the sacred authors, whilst they composed the Scriptures,—the natural power of their individuality, and the miraculous power of inspiration.

3. From the conflict, or the concurrence, or the balanced action of these two powers, there must have resulted a variable and gradual inspiration; sometimes full, sometimes imperfect, and often even reduced to the feeble measure of a mere supervision.

4. The variable power of the Divine Spirit, in this united action, must have proportioned itself to the importance and difficulty of the matters treated of by the sacred author. It may even have abstained from interfering, where the judgment and memory of the

writer could suffice, because God does not perform useless miracles.

All these hypotheses and conclusions suppose that there are, in the Scriptures, some passages devoid of importance, and others infected with errors.

It is, therefore, to this objection that we now reply.

1. We begin by declaring that we fully admit the alleged fact, while we wholly reject the false conclusions which are derived from it. So far are we from being unmindful of these human features, impressed throughout upon the sacred writings, that, on the contrary, it is with profound gratitude, and ever-increasing admiration, that we regard this living, actual, dramatic character, which shines with so much power and beauty throughout the Book of God. Yes (and we gladly, in this point, concur with the objectors), in one place we have the phraseology, accent, and voice of a Moses, in another, of St. John; here of Isaiah, there of Amos; here of Daniel, and there of Peter, Nehemiah, or Paul. We recognise, we hear, we see them; it is impossible to be mistaken. This fact we admit, we delight to contemplate it, we admire it greatly; and we see in it (as we shall have occasion to reiterate) a proof of the divine wisdom which has indited the Scriptures.

2. Of what consequence, to the fact of *Divine Inspiration*, is the absence or the co-operation of the affections of the sacred writer? Cannot God either use or dispense with them? He who can give voice to a statue, can he not make a child of man speak according to his will? He who, by a dumb animal, rebuked the madness of a prophet, could he not convey to a prophet the sentiments or words which he judged best adapted to the plan of his revelations? He who called forth from the wall an inanimate hand to record the terrible denunciation, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, could he not equally direct the intelligence of his apostle? Will you explain to us how the flow of ideas, recollections and emotions of the sacred writers

would deprive them of any particle of their *Inspiration*; and will you tell us why this should not itself be one of its elements? Between the fact of individuality, and the conclusion which you would draw from it, there is an abyss, which your understanding can no more fathom in combating *Divine Inspiration*, than can ours in explaining it.

Was there not much individuality in the wicked Caiaphas, when, abandoning himself to the suggestions of his evil heart, full of bitter wrath, and having no thought of uttering the words of God, he exclaimed in the Jewish council: "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people"? (Jno. xi. 49—51.) Surely we have abundant individuality in these words, and yet it is further written: "*This spake he not of himself, but being high-priest that year,*" he unwittingly spoke as a prophet, proclaiming that Jesus should come "to gather together the children of God that were scattered abroad."

Why, then, should not the same Spirit employ the devout affections of his saints to proclaim the words of God, as well as make use of the hypocritical and wicked thoughts of his most bitter enemies?

3. When it is objected to any passage, that the style of Moses, Luke, Ezekiel, or John, cannot, therefore, be that of God, it would seem to indicate that the operation of the Holy Ghost may be recognised by the cast of the sentences.

4. It must not be forgotten, that in the varied actings of God's sovereignty the employment of second causes is not excluded. On the contrary, it is in their subjection that He delights to display his infinite wisdom. In the field of creation He gives us vegetation by the combined employment of the elements,—of heat, humidity, electricity, air, light; and by the mechanical attraction and multiplied agency of capillary vessels and organs. In the field of providence He

accomplishes the development of his vast designs by the unexpected concurrence of millions of human wills, alternately intelligent and submissive, or ignorant and rebellious. "Herod, Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel (all moved by various motives), were gathered together," He tells us, "to do what his hand and his counsel determined before to be done."

In the field of prophecy it is, also, in like manner, that He brings about the fulfilment of his predictions. For instance; long before the period of action, he prepares a warlike prince in the mountains of Persia, and another in the heights of Media: and having designated the former by name two hundred years previously, he unites them, at the time determined, with ten other nations, against the Chaldean empire; he enables them to surmount a thousand obstacles, and, finally, brings them into the mighty Babylon, just at the expiration of the seventy years which had so long been assigned as the term of the Jewish captivity.

Even in the field of miracles, He is, moreover, pleased to employ second causes. He might here limit himself to saying, "Let it be," and it would be; but his purpose is, even in the employment of inferior agents, to show us that it is He alone who gives power to the weakest among them. To divide the Red Sea, He did not alone command Moses to lift up his rod and stretch out his hand over the waters; but He caused them to go back by a strong east wind, which blew all that night. To cure the man who was born blind, He makes clay and anoints his eyelids.

In the field of redemption, instead of converting a soul by a simple act of his will, He presents him with motives; He inclines him to read the gospel, and sends him the messengers of its glad tidings: and thus it is, that whilst it is He "who works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure," it is He who "of his own will begets us by the word of truth."

And why should it not be thus too in the field of

Divine Inspiration? Why, when He sends his word, should He not put it into the understandings, hearts, and lives of his servants, as well as upon their lips? Why should He not associate their personality with the truths they reveal to us? Why should not their sentiments, history, and experience, be a part of their *divinely-inspired* testimony?

5. The extreme inconsequence of the use which is made of the objection to which we are replying, will further demonstrate its error. In fact, in order to deny the plenary inspiration of certain portions of Scripture, objectors lay stress upon the individuality therein exhibited; they nevertheless admit that other portions of the sacred writings, which bear this same character, have been given directly by God, even in their minutest details! Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the author of the Apocalypse, have all imprinted their peculiar style, features, manner, and character, on their prophecies, as manifestly as Luke, Mark, John, Paul, and Peter, can have done on their narratives or epistles. The objection, therefore, is not valid. If it prove any thing, it proves too much.

6. This objection, and the *intermitting* system of inspiration with which it is associated, has a three-fold character of complexity, rashness, and puerility.

Complexity, in that it supposes that the Divine agency, in preparing the Scriptures, was interrupted or weakened, according to the difficulty of a passage, or as its importance became diminished; and thus they make God alternately withdraw from or advance in the mind of the sacred writer, in the course of a chapter, or even of a few verses!

Rashness, for they have supposed that the importance of the Scriptures has demanded the exercise of human wisdom only, save in some of their passages.

Puerility, because they allege their fear of attributing useless miracles to God: as if the Holy Ghost,

after having, as they admit, provided one portion of the Scriptures, would find less trouble in another portion by merely assisting the sacred penman in the way of enlightenment, or by leaving them to write under his superintendence alone!

7. This objection, which daringly classes the Scriptures as *inspired*, *semi-inspired*, and *non-inspired*, is in direct opposition to the Scriptures themselves. One portion of the Bible is by man, it is profanely affirmed, and another is from God. Nevertheless, hear the Bible itself: "ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD." Here is no exception. By what authority, then, does any one dare to make exceptions, when the Bible itself makes none?

Again, we are told that there are in the Scriptures a certain number of passages which could only have been penned under plenary inspiration; that there are others for which it would have sufficed that their authors had received eminent gifts; and others, again, which a man of very ordinary mind might have composed.

This may be, but of what importance is the question? If "ALL Scripture" is "by inspiration of God," of what consequence, we repeat, is the question, that there are passages which, in your eyes, are more difficult or more important than others? The least of the disciples of Jesus might, doubtless, have given to us the 5th verse of the 11th chapter of John's gospel: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." If, however, God himself declares to us his having dictated the entire Scriptures, who will venture to say that this 5th verse of the 11th chapter of St. John is less from God than is the sublime language in which that gospel begins, and which describes to us the Eternal Word? Inspiration may, doubtless, be *recognised* in certain passages more clearly than in others; but it is not, on this account, less real in these latter than in the former.

In a word, if there were parts of the Bible without

inspiration, it would no longer be the truth to say that the whole is divinely inspired. It would no longer be entirely the Word of God.

8. This fatal system of a graduated inspiration, is the offspring of irreverent disregard. It is because objectors almost always look for inspiration in the man, whilst it is in the book only that they should look for it. It is "ALL SCRIPTURE," it is *all that is WRITTEN*, which is inspired of God. We are not told how God has done it. It is solely attested to us that He has done it. This is what we are bound to believe, without reference to the means He has taken to accomplish it.

From this false point of view in which objectors choose to place themselves, for the consideration of the fact of inspiration, there result the three following delusions:—

In the first place, in contemplating inspiration *in the sacred author*, they are naturally inclined to picture it to themselves as an *extraordinary excitement in him*, of which he is himself conscious, which sets him above himself, and which animates him, like the Pythian priestess, with an *afflatus divinus*—a poetic fire, easily recognised; so that when his words become simple, calm, and familiar, a difficulty is felt in attributing to him divine influence.

Again.—By viewing *inspiration in the person*, they have very naturally been led to impute to him *different degrees* of perfection, because they know that the sacred writers themselves received very various measures of illumination, and differed in personal holiness. But if we see inspiration in the book, instead of looking for it in the man, then only shall we recognise that it cannot be susceptible of degrees. A word is from God, or it is not from God. If it be from God, it cannot be so in two ways. Whatever may have been the spiritual condition of the writer, if all his writings be divinely inspired, all his words are from God. Thus

it is (and it must be especially remarked), that a Christian would no more hesitate than did the Saviour, to associate the writings of Solomon with those of Moses, and the gospel of Mark or Matthew with that of the disciple whom Jesus loved, or with the very words of the Son of God; "they are all alike from God."

Finally.—From considering inspiration in the writers instead of seeing it in the Scriptures, objectors have, by a third delusion, been naturally led to judge it absurd to suppose that God should *miraculously reveal* to a man *that which the man already knew*. On this account, they think themselves justified in denying the inspiration of those passages in which the sacred writers only relate what they have seen, and of those sentences which any man of sound mind might convey without inspiration.

But it would be altogether otherwise, could they see inspiration *in that which is written*; for then they would know that every line was directed by God, whether it related to things which the writer already knew, or to those of which he was ignorant.

Well! such is the Bible. It is not, as some venture to say, a book which God has charged men, previously enlightened, to write under his superintendence: it is a book which God has communicated to them; it is the Word of God: the Spirit of the Lord spake to its authors, and his words have proceeded from them.

9. The human individuality, which is so evident throughout the Scriptures, so far from leaving any stain, or being any mark of infirmity, stamps them, on the contrary, with divine beauty, and powerfully displays their inspiration.

We have asserted that it is God who speaks to us; but it is also man: it is man; but it is also God. Oh! admirable Word of my God! It has been made man in its way, like the Eternal Word. Yes, God has sent it

down to us, full of grace and truth; similar to our words in every respect, error and sin excepted. Admirable and Divine Word!—but replete with humanity,—gracious Word of my God! Yes, in order that we might understand it, mortal lips must be employed to tell of human things; and to win us, the characteristics of our thought, and all the expression of our emotions, must be clothed upon, because God knoweth our frame. But let it be recognised as the Word of the Lord, “quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword,” and the most simple among us, understanding it, can say like Cleopas and his companion: “Have we not felt our hearts burn within us, while it has spoken to us?”

How greatly does this abounding humanity, and all this personality with which the divinity of the Scriptures is invested, charm us; reminding us that the Saviour of our souls, whose touching voice they are, himself, although seated on high, where angels serve and for ever adore him, bears a human heart on the throne of God! Thus also they present to us not only that double character of variety and unity which has ever adorned all the other works of God, as Creator of heaven and earth; but moreover that intermingling of familiarity with authority, of sympathy with greatness, of practical details with mysterious majesty, and of humanity with divinity, which are manifested in all the dispensations of the same God, as the Redeemer and Shepherd of his church.

The Father of mercies, when speaking in his prophets, was pleased not only to employ their manner as well as their voice, their style as well as their pen, but also often to bring into use their faculties of judging and feeling.

Sometimes, to exhibit his divine sympathy, he has seen fit to combine their own recollections, their human convictions, their personal experience and devout emotions, in the words which he dictated to them;

sometimes, for the purpose of manifesting his sovereign intervention, he has preferred to dispense with this *unessential* association of their memory, affections, and intelligence.

Such ought to be the Word of God—like Emmanuel—full of grace and truth; at once in the bosom of God and in the heart of man: powerful and sympathising; celestial and human; exalted, yet humble; imposing and familiar; God and man! This bears no resemblance to the God of the Rationalists. Like the disciples of Epicurus, they would banish the Divinity far from man, even to the third heaven; and their desire also is, that the Bible were removed thither too.

Studied under this aspect, and considered in this character, the Word of God has no equal; it offers to men of every age, place, and condition, surpassing and unfading attractions, which ever satisfy yet never satiate. In contrast with human productions, it interests and develops its momentous import, in proportion as it is assiduously read. The more it is examined and re-examined, the more its greatness and sublimity unfold themselves, as if fresh leaves were daily added by some invisible and gracious hand! And hence it is, that both cultivated and simple minds which have long fed upon the Word, continue to *hang upon it*, as did others upon the lips of Jesus. They find its whole contents incomparable: at one time mighty as the sound of many waters; at another, sweet and gentle as the voice of a wife to her husband; but always “perfect, converting the soul,” and “making wise the simple.”

To what book, in this respect, could you compare it? Place by its side the productions of Plato, Seneca, Aristotle, or Rousseau. Listen to Mahomet but for an hour. From the first word to the last, it is the unvarying note of the same trumpet; it is ever the cornet of Medina, sounding from the top of some minaret, mosque, or caparisoned camel; always the

Sibylline oracles, piercing and merciless, in one continued tone of threatening and command—whether prescribing virtue, or dooming to death—always the same rude, forbidding voice, without feeling, familiarity, tears, soul, or sympathy.

But open the Bible, and hear *it*. Sometimes it is melodious with the songs of angels; but it is of angels visiting the children of Adam: at others, pouring forth the full tide of heaven's harmony, to cheer the heart of man and to awaken his conscience—in the shepherd's cot as in the palace, in the garrets of poverty as in the tents of the desert.

The Bible, in fact, instructs all conditions of men: it unmask alike the humble and the great; revealing equally to both the love of God. It addresses itself to children; and it is often children who therein show us the way to heaven, and the majesty of the Lord. It addresses itself to shepherds; and it is often shepherds who are there presented to us, to reveal the character of God. It speaks to kings and scribes; and it is often they who therein teach us the misery of man, humility, confession, and prayer. Domestic scenes, compunctions of conscience, secret effusions of prayer, travels, proverbs, outpourings of heart, the holy walk of a child of God, unveiled weaknesses, falls, restorations, inward experiences, parables, familiar epistles, theological expositions, sacred commentaries on some ancient Scripture, national chronicles, military annals, political developments, descriptions of God, portraits of angels, heavenly visions, practical exhortations, rules of life, solutions of mental difficulties, judgments of the Lord, sacred songs, predictions of the future, accounts anterior to creation, sublime odes, and poetic imagery—all these by turns present themselves to our view in full and graceful variety, and the whole captivates us like the majesty of a temple. The Bible, from its first page to the last, was intended to associate with its sublime unity the undefinable and attractive features

of a human-like, familiar, sympathetic, personal instruction.

But see, at the same time, what unity and what innumerable and harmonious combinations appear in this immense variety! Under manifold forms we have always the same truth presented to us; always man lost, and God in the character of a Saviour: always the first Adam driven from Eden, and losing the tree of life, and the second Adam with his ransomed ones re-entering Paradise, and finding again the tree of life; always the same cry in ten thousand tones—"O heart of man, return to thy God, for thy God pardons! Ye are in the abyss; escape out of it; a Saviour has descended into it.—He giveth holiness and life."

"Can it be that a book at once so simple and so sublime is the work of men?" was a question put by a celebrated philosopher of the last century to his fellows. To this all its pages answer, No! for, throughout so many centuries, whichever of the sacred writers held the pen—king or shepherd, scribe or fisherman, priest or publican—everywhere we recognise the same Author. Though a thousand years may intervene, it is plainly the same Eternal Spirit which has conceived and presented the whole. Everywhere—at Babylon as at Horeb, at Jerusalem as at Athens, at Rome as at Patmos—we find the same God described, the same world, the same men, the same angels, the same future, and the same heaven. Everywhere, whether it be a poet or a historian who addresses us,—whether in the plains of the desert in the age of Pharaoh, or in the dungeons of the Capitol in the days of the Cæsars,—throughout the world, ruin; in man, condemnation and helplessness; in angels, sublimity, innocence, and love; in heaven, purity and happiness, the meeting of truth and goodness, and the embracings of justice and peace; the counsels of a God who pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin; and who, nevertheless, will not clear the guilty.

We therefore conclude that the numerous traces of humanity which are found in the Scriptures, so far from compromising their Inspiration, are but indications of their Divinity.

CHAPTER II.

SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF DIVINE INSPIRATION.

OPEN now the Scriptures. What do they say of their own Inspiration?

All Scripture is Divinely Inspired.

We shall commence by again adducing here the oft-repeated passage (2 Tim. iii. 16): "Holy Scripture is wholly and entirely God-inspired;" that is to say, wholly and entirely given by the Spirit of God.

This sentence admits of no exception or restriction.

No exception: it is ALL SCRIPTURE, it is *all that which is written*; that is, the thoughts which have received the imprint of language.

No restriction: all this writing is so far a work of God, as to be represented to us as uttered by the Divine breath, in the same manner that the words of a man are uttered by the breath of his mouth. The prophet is the mouth of the Lord.

The import of this declaration of St. Paul remains the same in both the constructions of which his words are susceptible; whether, "*all Scripture is divinely inspired and profitable*," &c., the stress lying on the words *divinely inspired*; or whether the sentence be rendered, *all Scripture divinely inspired of God is profitable*, &c. This latter construction would even give the apostle's declaration more force than the former. For his proposition would thus necessarily connect itself with *the sacred writings* of which he has just spoken, and would

take for granted as an admitted and incontestible principle, that to name the *sacred writings* is assuredly thereby to designate the Scriptures inspired by God.

All Prophecy is given from God.

St. Peter in his second Epistle, at the end of the first chapter, thus speaks:—"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Here we may remark:—

1. That *written* revelations of truth are spoken of.
2. That none of them *ever* originated from the impulse, or influence, of the *will of man*.
3. That holy men were *moved or led by the Holy Ghost* to write and speak.
4. That their writings are termed *prophecy*.

Before proceeding farther, let us define precisely the Scriptural sense given to the words—*prophecy, to prophesy, prophet*; because this knowledge is indispensable to the investigation before us, and throws also much light upon the whole question.

Various and often incorrect meanings have been given to the biblical term *prophet*; but an attentive examination of the passages in which it is used will soon convince us that, in the Scriptures, it invariably designates "a man whose mouth utters the words of God."

A prophet in Scriptural language, is one into whose mouth God puts the words which he wills to make known to men: and it was in this sense that God told Moses (Exod. vii. 1) that "Aaron should be his prophet before Pharaoh," as he had said in the 16th verse of the fourth chapter—"He shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God."

Observe in Scripture how the prophets bear witness

of the Spirit which caused them to speak, and to the full-Divine authority of their words: "The Lord hath spoken it," say they continually (Mic. iv. 4; Jer. ix. 12; xiii. 15; xxx. 4; l. 1; li. 12; Isa. viii. 11; Am. iii. 1; Ex. iv. 30; De. xviii. 21, 22): "I will open my mouth in the midst of them," said the Lord to his servant Ezekiel. (Ezek. xxix. 21.) "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was on my tongue," said the royal Psalmist. (2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2.) The prophets announced what they were about to say, with "Hear the word of the Lord!" "Thus saith the Lord!" (Isa. xxviii. 14; Jer. x. 1; xvii. 20; xxii. 1.) "The word of the Lord came to me," say they often. The word of the Lord came unto Shemaiah—unto Nathan—and unto John in the wilderness. (1 Kings xii. 22; 1 Chron. xvii. 3; Luke iii. 2.) "The word which came to Jeremiah by the Lord." "The word which was given to Jeremiah." (Jer. vii. 1; xi. 1; xviii. 1; xxi. 1; xxv. 1; xxvi. 1; xxvii. 1; xxx. 1; and frequently elsewhere; Isa. i. 2; Jer. i. 2, 9, 14; Ezek. iii. 4, 10, 11; Hos. i. 1, 2, &c.) "The burden of the word of the Lord by Malachi." (Mal. i. 1.) "The word of the Lord which came to Hosea." (Hos. i. 1, 2.) "In the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet." (Hag. i. 1, 2.)

This "word of the Lord" descended upon these men of God at the good pleasure of His will, and often in the most unexpected manner.

It was thus that God, when he sent Moses, said to him, "I will be with thy mouth" (Ex. iv. 12, 15); and when he caused Balaam to speak, it is written that he "put a word in Balaam's mouth." (Nu. xxiii. 5, LXX.) The apostles also, in praying, quote from the Psalmist these words:—"It is THOU, Lord, WHO HAST SAID IT, BY THE MOUTH of David thy servant." (Acts iv. 25.) And St. Peter, in addressing the assembled disciples, says, "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the

HOLY GHOST BY THE MOUTH OF DAVID spake before concerning Judas." (Acts i. 16.) The same apostle also, standing in the temple at Jerusalem in Solomon's porch, thus addressed the people: "The God of your fathers hath fulfilled the things which HE HAD SHOWED BEFOREHAND BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS PROPHETS." (Acts iii. 18.)

The apostle's testimony therefore is, that David in the Psalms, and all the prophets in their writings, whatever might be the pious emotions of their minds, were only the mouth of the Holy Ghost. It was David WHO SAID; it was the prophets WHO PROCLAIMED; but also it was God WHO SAID BY THE MOUTH of David his servant—it was God WHO HAD PROCLAIMED BY THE MOUTH of all his prophets.

The following expression also, which so frequently occurs in the Gospels, and which is so conclusive, should be carefully examined, viz.—"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying." (Matt. i. 22; ii. 5, 15, 23; iv. 14; viii. 17; xii. 17; xiii. 35; xxi. 4, &c.)

It is in a sense entirely analogical that holy Scripture gives the name of prophets to those impostors among the Gentiles, who predicted lies in the temples of the false gods, whether they were vulgar knaves falsely pretending to have received revelations from God, or whether in reality they were the mouth of an occult power, of an evil angel, or of a Pythonic spirit. (Acts xvi. 16. See 1 Sam. xxviii. 7; 1 Chron. x. 13; Lev. xix. 26; Isa. viii. 19; xxix. 4.)

And it is also in the same sense that St. Paul, in quoting the epic poet and divining priest among the Cretans, spoke of him as "*one of their prophets*," because all the Greeks consulted him as an oracle.

It is therefore established, that, in the language of Scripture, *prophecies* are "words of God put into the mouths of men."

It is therefore a vulgar error to understand the word

as implying only a miraculous *prediction*. Prophecies may reveal the past as well as the future: may denounce the judgments of God, interpret his word, sing his praise, comfort his people, exhort believers to holiness, and testify of Jesus Christ.

And as "*no prophecy came by the will of man*" (2 Pe. i. 21), a *prophet*, as we have already explained, was a prophet only at intervals, and *according as the Spirit gave him utterance*. (Acts ii. 4.)

A man sometimes prophesied without foreseeing; sometimes again without knowing; and sometimes even without being willing.

I have said, without foreseeing, and often even when he could least expect it: such was the old prophet of Bethel. (1 Kings xiii. 20.) I have said without knowing: such was Caiaphas. (Jno. xi. 51.) And I have said, without being willing: such was Balaam, when, being three times prepared to curse Israel, he could only, three times in succession, give utterance to words of blessing. (Nu. xxiii. xxiv.)

We read in the First Book of Samuel (chap. x.), with what unexpected power the Spirit of the Lord came upon the youthful king Saul, at the moment when seeking the asses of his father he met a company of prophets coming down from the holy place; who on hearing him prophesy among them, said one to another, "What is this which is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

We read in chapter xix. of the same book, something still more remarkable. Saul sends men to Ramah to seize David; but as soon as they meet Samuel and the company of prophets over whom he presided, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon these men of war, and "they also prophesy." Saul sends yet other three, and they too become prophets. Finally, Saul repairs thither himself, and he likewise speaks as a prophet "all that day and all that night, in the presence of Samuel." "The Spirit of God," we are told, "was upon him also."

But it is especially by the twelfth and fourteenth chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, that an exact knowledge may be attained of the action of God, and the agency of man, in prophecy.

The apostle gives the church at Corinth rules by which they were to be guided in the use of this miraculous gift. His counsel will throw great light on this important subject. The following facts and principles will appear:—

1. The Holy Spirit at that time conferred upon believers, for their common benefit, very varied gifts (xii. 7—10). To one he gave the working of miracles; to another the gifts of healing; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues (who, in speaking them, understood them not himself); to another the interpretation of tongues; and lastly, to another *prophecy*,—that is to say, the ability to pronounce, in his own language, words dictated by God.

2. The selfsame Spirit distributed these miraculous gifts according to his own will. (Verse 11; see also Eph. iv. 7, 11; Acts xix. 1—6.)

3. These gifts were a proper object of zeal and christian ambition. (1 Cor. xiv. 1, 39.) But the especial gift which was to be regarded as the most desirable, was that of *prophesying*; for a believer might speak in an unknown tongue without edifying any one, and this miracle was rather useful to unbelievers than to saints; while “the gift of prophecy edified, exhorted, and comforted.” (1 Cor. xiv. 3.)

4. This prophecy,—that is to say, those words that miraculously descended upon lips which the Holy Spirit had chosen for the office,—this prophecy appeared in various forms. Sometimes the Spirit gave a psalm; at others it was teaching; at others a revelation; and occasionally it was a miraculous interpretation of what others had miraculously uttered in unknown tongues.

5. In these prophecies there was plainly both an

operation of God and a work of man. There were the words of the Holy Ghost; but there were also the words of the prophet. It was God who spake, but in men, by men, and for men; and you might therein discern their utterance, perhaps also the habitual turn of their style, and probably allusions to their own experience, actual position and individuality.

6. These miraculous powers were prolonged in the primitive church during the extended career of the apostles. St. Paul, who wrote his letter to the Corinthians twenty years after the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, speaks to them as of a common and habitual order of things, which had existed amongst them from a certain period, and which was further to continue.

7. The prophets, although they were the mouth of God to proclaim his words, were nevertheless not absolutely passive while they were prophesying.

“The spirits of the prophets (says St. Paul) are subject to the prophets” (1 Cor. xiv. 32); that is to say, while these men of God had the prophetic word on their lips, they had nevertheless power, in the repressive action of their own will, to prevent its going forth. Thus, for example, if a revelation be given “to one that sitteth by,” the one who may be speaking is required “to be silent, to sit down, and to let him who has just received a revelation speak.”

Let us now apply these principles and facts to the prophecy of Scripture, and to that passage in St. Peter's Epistle, for the explanation of which we have set them forth.

“No prophecy of Scripture (he observes) is of any private interpretation, for prophecy came not at any time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Pet. i. 20, 21.)

Here, then, we have the full and entire inspiration of the Scriptures clearly established by the apostle;

here we have **SCRIPTURE** identified with those prophecies which we have just defined. "It came not by the will of man;" it is entirely dictated by the Holy Spirit; it gives us the true words of God; it is entirely given by the breath of God.

Who would therefore, after such declarations, dare to maintain that the expressions of Scripture are not inspired? They are the **WRITTEN PROPHECIES**.

Here it may be said by the objector, We admit that *the written prophecy* has, without contradiction, been composed by that power of the Holy Spirit which moved in the prophets; but the rest of the book—the Epistles, Gospels, Acts, Proverbs, the Books of Kings, and as much else as is purely historical—has surely no claim to be placed in the same rank.

Let us pause before replying, and ascertain how far our argument has brought us.

It ought already to be fully acknowledged that at least *every part of the Scriptures* termed **PROPHECY**, of whatever character it may be, has been entirely *dictated by God*; so that the very words, as well as the thoughts, have been given by him.

But now, shall we agree to a distinction between any one of the books of the Bible and all the other books? Is not all that it contains given by prophecy? Undoubtedly so; all that is contained therein has been equally guaranteed by God: this is what we shall proceed to prove.

*All the Scriptures of the Old Testament are
Prophetical.*

And in the first place, all the Scriptures without distinction are called **THE WORD OF GOD**. This title alone ought to suffice to show us, that if Isaiah has commenced his prophecies by inviting the heavens and the earth to give ear, because the Lord hath spoken, the same summons ought to be heard by us as coming

forth from all the books of the Bible, because they are collectively called "the Word of God." "Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! for the Lord hath spoken!"

Not a single passage can be found which would authorise us to detach one solitary clause of the Scriptures as less Divine than the rest. To say that the whole and entire book is "the Word of God," is to attest that even the sentences of which it is composed have been dictated by him.

Now, not only is the entire Bible called "THE WORD OF GOD," but it is called, as a whole, THE ORACLES OF GOD. (Rom. iii. 2.) Who does not know what *Oracles* were, in the minds of the ancients? Was there a word which could more absolutely express a verbal and complete inspiration? And, as if this term which St. Paul uses were not sufficiently significant, we hear Stephen, "full of the Holy Ghost," call them the LIVELY ORACLES. "Moses," says he, "received the lively oracles to deliver unto us." (Acts vii. 38.)

All the Scriptures are therefore without exception a continuous word of God, his miraculous voice: they are his written prophecies, and his living oracles. Which of their various parts, then, will you venture to retrench? The apostles frequently speak of them as divided into "Moses and the Prophets." The Lord Jesus Christ distinguished three parts when he said to his apostles, "All things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." (Luke xxiv. 44.) According to this division, the Old Testament would be divided into these three parts,—Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Which of these three parts of the Old Testament would you dare to take away from the *Scripture of the prophets*, or from the Inspired Word?

Would it be Moses? But what is there more holy and more divine, throughout the Old Testament, than

the writings of this man of God?—He was such a prophet, that his sacred books are set above all others, and pre-eminently called **THE LAW**. “The law of the Lord is perfect.” (Ps. xix. 7.) “The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” (Ps. xii. 6.)—He was such a prophet, that he compares himself to nothing less than the Son of God: “This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, **LIKE UNTO ME**; hear him.” (Acts vii. 37.)—He was such a prophet, that he commonly preceded his commands with the words “Thus saith the Lord!”—He was such a prophet, that God said to him, “Who hath made man’s mouth? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go; and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say.” (Ex. iv. 11, 12.)—He was such a prophet, that it is written, “And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.” (Deut. xxxiv. 10.)

What other portion of the Old Testament would you then exclude from the prophetic Scriptures? Would it be the second—that which is called *the Prophets*, and which includes all the Old Testament, with the exception of Moses and the Psalms? The apostles, and our Lord, habitually call all the authors of the Old Testament by the name *Prophets*. To designate the entire Scripture they usually said, “Moses and the Prophets.” (Luke xxiv. 25, 27, 44; Matt. v. 17; vii. 12; xi. 13; Luke xvi. 16, 29, 31; xx. 42; Acts i. 20; iii. 21, 22; vii. 35, 37; viii. 28; xxvi. 22, 27; xxviii. 23; Rom. i. 2; iii. 21; x. 5, &c. &c.) The writers were prophets.—Hence Joshua was a prophet;—the authors of the Chronicles were prophets; they, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, and all the others down to Malachi, were prophets of Jehovah.

The knowledge of God according to his revelation of himself, and the expressing of it whether in words

or actions, seem to admit the appellation of prophesying. Hence Abel is called a prophet (Luke xi. 49, 50); and the patriarchs (Ps. cv. 14, 15). Aaron was also a prophet to Moses (Ex. vii. 1): and the Corinthians generally were allowed to prophesy; that is, I apprehend, each one who had a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, an interpretation, could exercise it, provided all was to edification—for “He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort. And ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted.” (1 Cor. xiv.) In another sense, however, all were not prophets among those in olden or in after times. “Are all prophets?”

They therefore all wrote *prophetic Scriptures*; all, words of which St. Peter tells us that none of them “came by the will of man;” all, those “sacred writings,” which the apostle declares to be divinely inspired. (2 Tim. iii. 16.) The Lord hath said of them all, as of Jeremiah, “Behold, I have put my words into thy mouth” (Jer. i. 9); and as of Ezekiel, “Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee, receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears; and go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, **THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD**, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.” (Ezek. iii. 10, 11.)

And that all the sentences and words were given unto them by God, is manifestly shown by one fact, which is repeatedly related, and which the study of their writings frequently brings to our notice, namely, they were charged to transmit to the church oracles whose signification was yet to remain veiled from themselves. Daniel, for instance, declares more than once that he could not understand the prophetic import of the words which went forth from his own lips, or were traced by his pen. (Dan. xii. 4, 8, 9.) The types imprinted by God on all the events of primitive history, were not to be understood until many centuries

after the existence of those who were charged with their first record: and the Holy Ghost declares to us that the prophets, after having penned their sacred pages, applied themselves to study them with the same reverent attention as they would the other Scriptures; "searching to understand WHAT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST which was in them had FORETOLD concerning the sufferings and future glory of the Messiah." (1 Pet. i. 10—12.) Behold these men of God studiously bending over their own writings, pondering therein the words of God, and the mind of God: but will this excite your astonishment? since what they have just written for the elect of the earth, for principalities and heavenly powers (Eph. iii. 10, 11), is about the advent and the glory of the Son of God; "things which angels desire to look into."

So much for Moses and the Prophets: but what will you say respecting the Psalms? Would these be less than all the rest the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy? Are not the authors of the Psalms always called *prophets*? (Matt. xiii. 35; Ps. lxxviii. 2.) And if they are sometimes, like Moses, distinguished from the other prophets, is it not evidently to assign them a more eminent place? David was a prophet, St. Peter tells us. (Acts ii. 30.) Hear what he says of himself: "The Spirit of the Lord SPAKE BY ME, and HIS WORD was ON MY TONGUE." (2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2.) What David wrote, even his least words, he wrote SPEAKING BY THE HOLY GHOST, says our Lord. (Mark xii. 36.) The apostles also, in quoting him (in their prayer), have been careful to say, "This Scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake," &c. (Acts i. 16.) "It is thou, Lord, who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said," &c. (Acts iv. 25.) What do I say? These Psalms are so fully dictated by the Spirit, that Jesus Christ himself calls them by the name of LAW (John x. 34; see Ps. xxii. 6; John xii. 34; see Psa. lxxxix. 36); all

their words formed a *law*: the least of them was from God. "Is it not written in YOUR LAW?" said Jesus in quoting them, and (as we shall presently have to show) in quoting them FOR A SINGLE SENTENCE.

All the Old Testament is therefore, in the scriptural sense of the expression, a WRITTEN PROPHECY. It is consequently fully inspired by God; since, according to the testimony of Zacharias, "it is GOD who has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, which have been since the beginning of time" (Luke i. 70); and according to St. Peter, it was moved by the HOLY GHOST that they spake. (2 Pet. i. 21; see also Matt. i. 22; xxii. 43; Mark xii. 36.)

Thus far, our reasoning and the evidence upon which it is grounded, only directly relate to the books of the Old Testament; and it may be objected to us that we have as yet proved nothing in respect to the New.

*All the Scriptures of the New Testament are
Prophetical.*

Scripture invariably places the writers of the New Testament in the same rank with the prophets of the Old; and even when it distinguishes between them, it is always to put the latter revelations above the former, as far as one word from God may be superior (not in divinity, certainly, neither in dignity, but in authority) to the word which preceded it.

Let especial attention be paid to the following passage of the apostle Peter. It is so important, because it shows us that while the apostles were yet living, the book of the New Testament was already almost entirely formed, to make one collective whole with that of the Old. It was twenty or thirty years after Pentecost that St. Peter with delight quotes "ALL THE EPISTLES OF PAUL, his beloved brother;" and speaks of them as "sacred epistles," which, even in his time, were a part of the "holy writings," which were to be classed with

“THE OTHER SCRIPTURES.” He assigns to them the same rank; and he declares that ignorant men may wrest them to their own destruction. The following is this important passage: “Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, as *he has done* in ALL HIS EPISTLES, in which he speaks of these things; among which are some hard to be understood, which ignorant and unstable men wrest, as they do also THE OTHER SCRIPTURES, to their own perdition.” (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.)

The apostle in the second verse of the same chapter had already classed himself with the other prophets, in the same rank, and as invested with the same authority, as the sacred writers of the Old Testament, when he said, “Be mindful of the words which were spoken BEFORE by the HOLY PROPHETS, and of the commandments which ye have received FROM US, who are APOSTLES of the Lord and Saviour.”

The writings of the apostles were therefore what the writings of the Old Testament were; and since the latter are a written PROPHECY, the former are not less so.

But we have said that Scripture goes beyond this, in the rank which it assigns to the writers of the NEW COVENANT. It teaches us to consider them as superior even to those of the Old in regard to the importance of their *mission*, the glory of the *promises* which have been made to them, the greatness of the *gifts* which were conferred upon them, and finally by the eminence of the *rank* which is assigned to them.

1. In the first place, let us ascertain what was their *mission*, as compared with that of the ancient prophets; and in this it will at once be seen that their inspiration could not be inferior to that of their predecessors.

When Jesus sent forth the apostles whom he had chosen, he said to them: “Go ye and teach all nations, . . . instructing them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo! I AM,

WITH YOU unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) "Ye shall receive the Holy Ghost which shall come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts i. 8.) "Peace be with you! As my Father HATH SENT ME, even so SEND I YOU." (John xx. 21.)

Such was their mission. They were "*the sent*" immediately from the Son of God; they went to all nations; they had the guarantee that their Master would be ever present with the testimony which they were to bear to him in the Holy Scriptures. Were they then less in need of Inspiration to go to the uttermost parts of the earth, than the prophets to go to Israel? Had they not to promulgate all the doctrines, ordinances, and mysteries of the kingdom of God? Had they not committed to them the keys of the heavenly kingdom; insomuch that whatever they bound or loosed on earth should be bound or loosed in heaven? (Matt. xviii. 18; xvi. 19.) To this end had not Jesus Christ expressly conferred upon them the Holy Ghost, that those sins which they remitted or retained should accordingly be remitted or retained? Had he not breathed upon them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost"? Had they not to reveal the unheard-of character of the "Word made flesh," and of the Creator humbling himself even to take the form of a creature, and to die upon a cross? Had they not to record his incomparable words? Had they not to exercise in the earth the incommunicable and miraculous functions of his representatives, his ambassadors, as if it had been CHRIST speaking by them? (2 Cor. v. 20.) Were they not called to a glory such as "in the last and great regeneration, when the Son of Man shall be seated on the throne of his glory, they also will be seated on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"? (Matt. xix. 28.) If, therefore, the prophetic spirit was necessary to the first men of God,

to show the Messiah in shadows, was it not far more necessary to these latter, to exhibit him in light, and so to set him forth as crucified among us (Gal. iii. 1), that whosoever rejects them rejects him, and whosoever receives them receives him? (Matt. x. 40; Luke x. 16.) By these features let it be judged what must have been the inspiration of the New Testament as compared with the Old; and say whether, while the latter was fully and entirely prophetic, can the New be inferior to it.

2. But this is not all; let us hear the *promises* which were made to them for the accomplishment of such a work. Human language cannot more powerfully express the most absolute inspiration. These promises were especially addressed to them on three important occasions: in the first place, when they were sent for the first time to preach the kingdom of God (Matt. x. 19, 20); in the second place, when Jesus himself publicly preached the gospel before an innumerable multitude of people (Mark xiii. 11; Luke xxi. 14, 15); and in the third place, when he pronounced his final denunciations against Jerusalem and the Jewish people. (Luke xii. 12.)

“When they deliver you up, take no thought **HOW** or **WHAT THING** ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak: for it is **NOT YE** that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which **SPEAKETH IN YOU.**”

“When they bring you before councils and magistrates, take no thought **HOW** ye shall speak, nor **WHAT** ye shall answer in your defence, nor **WHAT** ye shall say; for the **HOLY GHOST** will teach you **IN THAT VERY HOUR** what ye ought to say.”

“Do not be troubled beforehand about what ye shall say, **NEITHER PREMEDITATE**; but it shall be given you in that hour,” says Jesus; “for **IT IS NOT YE THAT SPEAK**, but the Holy Ghost.”

On these several occasions the Lord gives his disciples

assurance that *the most entire inspiration* shall regulate their language in the most difficult and important seasons of their ministry. When they should have to speak before princes they were to feel no disquietude; they were not even to *premeditate* or *think* thereon; because it would be *immediately given to them* by GOD, not only *what* they should speak, but also *the words* in which they should express themselves. (Matt. x. 19, 20.) They were to rest entirely upon him;—what they ought to say would be *entirely given*—given *by Jesus*—given *in the very hour*—and given in such manner and plenitude that they could say it was NO LONGER THEY, but the Holy Ghost, THE SPIRIT OF THEIR FATHER, which spoke in them (Matt. x. 20; Mark xiii. 11); and that then it was not only an irresistible energy which was given them—it was a MOUTH! (Luke xxi. 14, 15.)

“Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate beforehand what ye shall answer; for I will give you A MOUTH and wisdom which none of your adversaries shall be able to resist.”

It will then be (as with the ancient prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) the Holy Spirit speaking by them, as “God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” In one sense indeed it will be *they* who speak, but it will be the Holy Ghost (Luke xii. 12) who “shall teach them in the same hour what they ought to say;” so that in another sense it will be *the Spirit* himself speaking by their lips.

We ask, Whether it is possible in any language to express more absolutely the most entire inspiration, and to declare more unequivocally that even the very words were then guaranteed of God, and given to the apostles?

It is very true that in these promises it is not directly a question of the aid which the apostles should receive as writers, but rather what they were to expect when

they should be brought before priests, governors, and kings. Yet, is it not evident that if the most entire inspiration were assured to them (Luke xii. 12) on passing occasions, to close the mouths of some wicked men, to avert the dangers of a day, and to serve the interests of a fleeting hour—if in these cases it was promised them that even the words of their answers should be supplied to them, is it not sufficiently evident that this same aid could not be refused to these very men, when, like the ancient prophets, they should complete the book of the oracles of God, in order to transmit to future ages the laws of the kingdom of heaven, and to pourtray the glory of Christ and the scenes of eternity? Could any one imagine that the same men, who before Ananias, Festus, or Nero were so far “the mouth of the Holy Ghost,” that then it was no longer “they” who spoke, but the “Holy Ghost,” should, when they wrote “the eternal gospel,” relapse into ordinary beings, merely enlightened, denuded of their preceding inspiration, no longer speaking by the Holy Ghost, and thenceforth using only words which man’s wisdom taught? (2 Pet. i. 21; 1 Cor. ii. 13.) Such a supposition is inadmissible.

3. Behold them commencing their apostolic ministry on the day of Pentecost; observe the *gifts* which they received (Acts ii. 2—11; iv. 31); tongues of fire descend upon their heads; they are filled with the Holy Ghost; they leave their upper room, and all the people hear them proclaim, in fifteen different languages, the wonderful works of God. They spake **AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM UTTERANCE**; they spake (it is said) **THE WORD OF GOD**. It must certainly be that *the words* of these foreign languages were given to them, as well as *the things* they uttered,—the expression as well as the idea. (Matt. x. 19; Luke x. 11.) Can it be believed that the Spirit would condescend to dictate to them all they ought to say while preaching in the corners of the streets,—words which passed away with

the sound of their voice, and which at most only met the ears of some assembled thousands,—and yet when these same men came to write for all the people on the face of the whole earth, and for all ages of the church, the “living oracles of God,” they would find themselves without this aid? Will it be believed that after having been more than the ancient prophets for the purpose of preaching in public places, that they should become less than these prophets, and merge into mere ordinary men when they took up the pen to complete the Book of Prophecies, write their Gospels, Epistles, and the Book of their Revelations? How obvious is the inadmissibility of such a supposition!

4. But we have something to add still more simple and forcible: we refer to the *rank* which is assigned to them; and we might confine ourselves to this fact alone, after having spoken of the prophets of the Old Testament. It is this—that the apostles were **ALL PROPHETS**, and **MORE THAN PROPHETS**. Their writings are **WRITTEN PROPHECIES**, as much as and more than those of the Old Testament; and we are thus brought to the conclusion, that all Scripture in the New Testament, as in the Old, is inspired by God, even in its minutest parts.

I have said that the apostles were all prophets. They themselves frequently declare it. We will only refer to the two following passages by the apostle Paul:

The first is addressed to the Ephesians (iii. 4, 5): “You can,” writes he to them, “by reading **WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN** before in few words, ascertain the understanding which I have in the mystery of Christ; a mystery which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it has **NOW** been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets.”

It is likewise of the same mystery, and of the writings of the same prophets, which this apostle speaks in the second of the passages alluded to; I mean the last chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. (Rom. xvi. 25—27.)

“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest by the means of **PROPHETIC WRITINGS**, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen!”

Here, then, we have the authors of the New Testament called **PROPHETS**, and their writings called **PROPHETIC WRITINGS**, which is the equivalent of the words of St. Peter. And since we have already seen that “no prophecy came by the will of him who uttered it, but that holy men of God spake as they were moved and guided by the Holy Ghost,” the prophets of the New Testament have therefore spoken like those of the Old, and according to the commandment of the eternal God. They were all prophets. (See further, Luke xi. 49; Eph. ii. 20; iii. 5; iv. 11; Gal. i. 12; 1 Pet. i. 12; 1 Cor. xi. 23; 1 Thess. ii. 15.)

But even this is not enough; for we have said, they were **MORE** than **PROPHETS**. This also has been remarked by the learned Michaëlis, who, in spite of his lax principles respecting the inspiration of a part of the New Testament, did not fail to observe this. It is clear, according to him, from the context, that in the sentence where Jesus Christ speaks of John the Baptist (Matt. xi. 9, 11), the words *greater* and *least*, in the 11th verse, only apply to the name of *prophet* which precedes them in the 9th. So that the Lord Jesus there declares that if John the Baptist is the *greatest of prophets*, if he is even *more than a prophet*, yet *the least of the prophets of the New Testament* is nevertheless *greater than John the Baptist*; that is to say, greater than the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. (Ibid, and Luke vii. 28.)

Again,—this superiority of the *apostles and prophets* of the New Testament is more than once attested to us

in the apostolic writings. Wherever mention is made of the several offices established in the church, the apostles are set above the prophets. Thus for instance in a very remarkable passage of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, in which the apostle applies himself to make known to us the gradations of excellence and dignity which mark the various miraculous powers conferred by God in the primitive church, he thus speaks: "God has set in the church, *first*, APOSTLES; *secondarily*, PROPHETS; *thirdly*, TEACHERS; after these, miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." (1 Cor. xii. 28.)

In the 11th verse of the fourth chapter to the Ephesians, Paul sets the apostles above the prophets. He calls them AMBASSADORS, 2 Cor. v. 20; and in 1 Cor. xiv., he places himself above the prophets which God had raised up in that church. He desires that each one of those who had truly received the Holy Spirit, would employ his gifts to recognise in the words of the apostle the commandments of the Most High; and he is so assured that what he writes is given by the inspiration of God, that after having laid down SOME PRECEPTS for the churches, and finished with words which inspiration from on high could alone authorise, viz., "*Thus I ORDAIN in all the churches,*" he does more—he proceeds to rank himself ABOVE THE PROPHETS; or rather, as a prophet himself, he calls upon the Spirit of prophecy in them to receive the words of Paul as the words of the Lord; and concludes in these remarkable terms: "CAME the word of GOD OUT FROM YOU?" "If any man THINK HIMSELF to be A PROPHET, or a man HAVING THE SPIRIT (1 Cor. xiv. 37; see also xv. 46, and Jude 19), let him acknowledge that the things which I WRITE TO YOU are the COMMANDMENTS of THE LORD."

The writings of the apostles are, therefore, (like those of the ancient prophets,) "the commandments of the everlasting God;" they are written prophecies, as much

as the Psalms, and Moses, and the Prophets (Luke xxiv. 44); and all the writers of the New Testament have been enabled to say with St. Paul, "CHRIST SPEAKING IN ME" (2 Cor. xiii. 3; 1 Thess. ii. 13), my word is THE WORD OF God, and the instruction which I give was taught me by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. ii. 13), as much as David before them had said, "The Spirit of the Lord has spoken by me, and his word was on my tongue." (2 Sam. xxiii. 2.)

Hear them also when they speak of themselves. Would it be possible to declare more clearly than they have done, that the *words*, as well as the subject, have been given to them by God? With respect to ourselves (say they), *we have the mind of Christ.* (1 Cor. ii. 16.) "For this cause thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word which ye heard of us, WHICH IS FROM GOD, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, THE WORD OF GOD." (1 Thess. ii. 13.) "Thus, therefore, he that rejects us, rejects NOT A MAN, but GOD, who hath even put his Holy Spirit in us." (1 Thess. iv. 8.)

Such, then, is the book of the New Testament. It is, like the Old Testament Scriptures, the word of prophets, and of prophets even greater than all those who had preceded them; so that, as Michaëlis has well observed, an epistle which commences thus, "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ," (Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1,) more forcibly attests to us its Divine authority and prophetic Inspiration, than could have done even the writings of the most illustrious prophets of the Old Testament, when they open with these words, "Thus saith the Lord" (Isa. l. 1; lvi. 1, *et passim*); or other similar expressions. And if there be in the New Testament some books in which the like prefatory expressions are not found, their Divine Inspiration is no more compromised thereby, than that of the second or ninety-fifth Psalm, which,

although they bear not at their commencement the name of the prophet who composed them, are not the less quoted as Divine by the Lord Jesus and his apostles.

To this point, then, our argument has brought us; and we are bound to acknowledge it on the authority of holy Scripture itself; viz.—In the first place, that the *Divine Inspiration* of the words of the prophets was entire; that the Holy Spirit spake by them; and that the word of the Lord was on their tongue. And secondly, that, all which has been written in the Bible having been written by prophecy, all the sacred books are *holy writings, written prophecies, and writings divinely inspired*. Everything there is of God.

The Examples of the Apostles and of their Master attest that, in their Estimation, all the Words of the Holy Books are given by God.

In the first place let us consider what use the apostles themselves make of the Word of God, and observe in what terms they quote it.

Not only do they say, *God saith* (Eph. iv. 8; Heb. i. 8)—*The Holy Ghost has said* (Acts xxviii. 25; Heb. iii. 7; x. 15, &c.)—*God said by such a prophet* (Rom. ix. 25); but observe, further, when they quote what they feel are the least parts of the divine word, with what reverence they speak of it, with what attention they consider each expression, with what godly confidence they insist often upon a single word, for the purpose of deducing thence the most important consequences and fundamental doctrines!

For ourselves, nothing impresses us so strongly as this consideration;—nothing has produced in our mind such firm and abiding confidence in the entire *and Divine Inspiration* of the Scriptures.

Observe the apostle Paul, when he quotes and comments upon the Scriptures! Remark with what

reverence the apostle discusses and dwells upon the minute expressions; with what sanguine confidence in the submission of the church, he points to the use of such a word, rather than of such another word; and with what earnest affection he clings to each, until he has developed all its power!

Among the many examples which we might adduce, let us, in order to be brief, confine our illustration of this to the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the first place turn to chap. ii. ver. 8, and observe how, after having quoted "Thou hast put all things under his feet," the sacred writer reasons upon the force of the word "*all*."

In the eleventh verse of the same chapter, in quoting from the twenty-second Psalm, he dwells upon the expression "*my brethren*," to exhibit from it the human nature which the Son of God assumed.

Observe in chap. xii. 27, how in quoting the prophet Haggai, he reasons upon the use of the word "*once*:" "Yet once more."

From ver. 5 to 9 of the same chapter, remark how he enlarges upon the expression "*my son*," from Proverbs iii.: "My son, disregard not the chastening of the Lord."

In chap. x., quoting Psalm xl., he dwells upon the expression "*Lo! I come*," as corresponding to "*Thou wouldst not*."

In chap. viii. from ver. 8 to 13, quoting Jer. xxxi. 31, he reasons upon the word "*new*."

In chap. iii. from ver. 7 to 19, and in chap. iv. from ver. 1 to 11, with what earnestness, quoting Psalm xcv., does he rest upon the word "*to-day*;" the expression "*I have sworn*;" and especially upon "*my rest*;" introducing as a commentary, the words from Genesis—"And *God did rest* the seventh day."

From ver. 2 to 6 of chap. iii., observe how he dwells upon the words *servant* and *house*, taken from the book of Numbers, xii. 7: "My *servant* Moses, who is faithful in all my house."

But especially remark, in chaps. vi. and vii., the use which he consecutively makes of all the words of the 110th Psalm,—“The Lord sware;” “He sware by himself;” “Thou art a priest;” “A priest for ever;” “Of Melchisedec, king of righteousness;” and of “Melchisedec, king of Salem.” The exposition of the doctrines contained in these expressions occupies three chapters; viz., v. vi. and vii.

But here I pause. Is it possible to avoid the conclusion, from such examples, that in the estimation of the apostle St. Paul, the Scriptures were inspired by God, even in their least expressions?

And you who may read these lines, where will you then range yourselves? Under the apostles, or under the objectors of this generation? Remember, “If any one take aught from the words of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. xxii. 18); and “if any man preach any other gospel, though it were I or an angel from heaven, let him be accursed.” (Gal. i. 8, 9.)

But now let us leave the apostles,—prophets indeed as they are, sent by God to establish his kingdom, pillars of the church, mouths by which the Holy Ghost has spoken, and ambassadors of Jesus Christ,—and go to THE MASTER. Inquire of Him in what estimation He held the Scriptures. This is the great question. The testimonies which we have been setting forth are, doubtless, conclusive; and the doctrine of a full and entire *Inspiration by God* is as clearly taught in the Scripture as that of the resurrection of the dead. This ought to suffice us; but the argument upon which we are about to enter renders all others superfluous:—How has Jesus Christ himself quoted the Holy Bible? What was His mind as to the letter of the Scriptures? What use has He made of it,—He, who was the object of the Inspirer, the beginning and the end, the first and the last;—He whose Holy Spirit, says St. Peter

(1 Pet. ii. 11), animated all the prophets of the Old Testament;—He who was in heaven, in the bosom of the Father, at the same time that He was seen below holding converse with human kind and preaching the gospel to the poor?

Were I to be asked, What think you of Holy Scripture? I should answer, What has my Master thought? How has He quoted it? What use has He made of it? What, in His estimation, are even its details?

Speak thyself, O Eternal Wisdom!—Uncreated Word!—Judge of judges! And while we proceed to review the declarations of thy mouth, do thou display to us that majesty in which the Scriptures appeared before thee; that perfection which THOU didst acknowledge in them; and especially that unchangeableness which thou hast assigned to their least iota, and in virtue of which they will survive the universe, when heaven and earth shall have passed away!

We do not hesitate to say, that when we hear the Son of God quoting the Scriptures, the question of their *divinely inspired* nature is, in our judgment, at once settled. We want no further evidence. All the declarations of the Bible unquestionably are Divine; but this example of the Saviour of the world at once tells us all. This proof does not require either long or learned researches; the hand of a child can grasp it as powerfully as that of a theologian. If any doubt assail your soul, turn to the Lord of lords, and behold his reverent attitude before the Scriptures!

Follow Jesus in the days of his flesh. See with what serious and tender respect he holds the “volume of the book,” to quote from its every part, and to show the import of its least details. Observe how each expression, even a word, a psalm, or an historical book, has the authority of a law. Mark with what confiding submission he receives *all the Scriptures*. Do I say that he receives them? From infancy to the tomb, from his resurrection to his disappearance in the clouds;

what did he bear about with him everywhere—in the desert—in the temple—and in the synagogue? What does he quote, with resurrection voice, when the heavens already are about to exclaim,—“Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in!” It is the Bible,—evermore the Bible. It is Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets, which he quotes and explains. And this even verse by verse, and word by word.

After such a spectacle, in what sad and fearful contrast do those men present themselves to us, who, in the present day, dare to judge, gainsay, test, and mutilate the Scriptures! One trembles, after beholding the Son of Man commanding the elements, stilling the tempest, and despoiling the tomb—yet filled with profound reverence for the sacred volume—on hearing him declare, that he would one day return to judge, by this book, the quick and the dead,—one trembles, I say, when the eye lights upon some poor, wretched, learned, accountable mortal, irreverently handling the word of his God!

With what arrogant self-complacency do deluded men parade their hypotheses! They retrench, they add, they praise, they blame, and they pity the simplicity of those who read the Bible as Jesus Christ himself read it. Where Jesus Christ confided, they decide what interlineations or retrenchments holy Scripture shall undergo; they lop off that which they understand not; and denounce it as containing mistakes, ill-grounded or inconclusive arguments, prejudices, rash assertions, ignorant conceits, and vulgar errors!

Alas! after the lapse of a few years, these teachers and their pupils will be consigned to a common tomb; they will wither like the green herb; but not one particle of a letter of this Divine book will then have passed away: and as certain as the Bible is truth, so certainly shall we see the Son of Man come in the clouds of heaven, and judge by this eternal word the secret

thoughts of all men. (Rom. ii. 16; John xii. 48; Matt. xxv. 31.) All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass: the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which is preached unto us.—It is this word which will judge us.

We shall now proceed to complete our proofs, by sketching under this point of view the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us follow him from the age of twelve years to his descent into the tomb, or rather to his ascent in the clouds; and in all the course of his incomparable career, let us see what the Scriptures were in the estimation of Him who “upholdeth all things by the word of his power.”

In the first place, observe him when twelve years old. He has increased, like a child of humanity, in wisdom and stature; he is in the midst of the doctors, and his answers amaze all who hear him; for (said they) he knows the Scriptures without having studied them. (John vii. 15.)

Observe him at the time of entering upon his ministry. He is filled with the Holy Ghost; he is led into a wilderness, there to sustain, like the first Adam in Eden, a mysterious conflict with the powers of darkness. The unclean spirit ventures to approach, and seeks to overthrow him; but how does the Son of God, he who was come to destroy the works of the devil, resist him? With the Bible only. The sole weapon in his Divine hands during this threefold assault, was the sword of the Spirit,—the Bible. Three times successively he quotes the book of Deuteronomy (Deut. viii. 3; vi. 16; vi. 13; x. 20; Matt. iv. 1—11): at each new temptation, He, the Word made flesh, defends himself by a sentence from the oracles of God, and even by a sentence whose whole force lies in the employment of one or two words: in the first place, of

these words, *bread alone*; afterwards of these, *thou shalt not tempt the Lord*; and finally of these words, *thou shalt worship God*.

What an example for us! His only answer, his only defence, is—"It is written." "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written;"—and as soon as this terrible and mysterious conflict ended, angels came and ministered unto him.

But let us further and particularly remark, that of such authority is each word in the Scriptures in the estimation of the Son of Man, that the unclean spirit himself (a being so mighty for evil, who knew the Saviour's estimate of the words of the Bible) could not devise a more secure way of operating upon his will, than by citing a verse of the ninety-first Psalm; and immediately Jesus, to confound him, contents himself with once more replying, "It is written."

Thus commenced his ministry—by the use of the Scriptures. And thus it was that, soon afterwards, he entered upon his prophetic ministry—by the use of the Scriptures.

Let us further follow him when, engaged in his work, he goes from place to place doing good; in poverty, always exercising his power for the relief of others, and never for himself. He speaks, and things have being; he casts out devils, stills the tempest, and raises the dead. But in the midst of all these marvels, observe how great is his regard for the Scriptures. The Word is always with him. He bears it about, not in his hands, (he knows it entirely,) but in his memory. Observe him, when he speaks of it:—when he unfolds the sacred volume, it is as if a door in heaven were opened, to enable us to hear the voice of Jehovah. With what reverence, with what subjection, does he set forth its contents, commenting upon, and quoting them word by word! This was now all his business—to heal, and to preach the Scriptures; as it was afterwards to die and accomplish them!

Observe him, "as his custom was," entering a synagogue on the sabbath-day; for (we are told) "he taught in their assemblies." (Luke iv. 15, 16.) He enters that of Nazareth. What does he there? He, "the eternal Wisdom, whom Jehovah possessed from everlasting, when there were no depths, before the mountains were settled, or the hills brought forth" (Prov. viii. 22—25): he rises from his seat, takes the Bible, opens at Isaiah, and reads a few sentences; he then closes the book, sits down, and while the eyes of all assembled were fixed on him he says,—“This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” (Luke iv. 21.)

Observe him traversing Galilee. What does he there? Still occupied with "the volume of the book," explaining it line after line, and word by word, and claiming our respect for its least expressions as much as he would for the Law of the "Ten Commandments" uttered upon Mount Sinai.

Observe him again in Jerusalem at the pool of Bethesda. What does he call upon the people to do?—"Search the Scriptures." (John v. 39.)

Observe him in the holy place, in the midst of which he does not shrink from declaring, "that in this place there is One greater than the temple." (Matt. xii. 6.) Follow him before the Pharisees and Sadducees while he alternately rebukes both, as he had done Satan, in these words,—“It is written.”

Hear him answering the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the body. How does he refute them? By ONE SINGLE WORD from an historical passage in the Bible; by a single verb in the present tense, instead of that same verb in the past. "Ye do greatly err, (said he to them,) BECAUSE YE KNOW NOT the Scriptures." "Have ye not read what God has declared unto you, in saying, I am the God of Abraham?" It is thus that he proves to them the doctrine of the resurrection. God, on Mount Sinai, 400 years after the death of Abraham, said to Moses, not "I was,"

but "I am the God of Abraham." (Matt. xxii. 31, 32.) I am so now. There is therefore a resurrection; for God is not the God of a few handfuls of dust, of the dead, of annihilated humanity: he is the God of the living. Those you speak of, therefore, live before Him.

Observe him afterwards among the Pharisees. It is still by the letter of the word that he confounds them.

Some few who had already followed him to the borders of Judæa beyond Jordan, came and inquired his doctrines respecting marriage and divorce. What did the Lord Jesus do? He might certainly have answered with authority, and given his own laws. Is he not himself King of kings and Lord of lords? But not so: it is to the Bible he appeals in order to show the foundation of the doctrine, and this he does in a few simple words taken from a purely historical passage in the book of Genesis. (Gen. i. 27; ii. 24.) "HAVE YE NOT READ, that He who made them at the beginning, made them male and female; so that they are no longer two, but one flesh? What therefore God has joined, let not man sever." (Matt. xix. 4—6.)

But hear him, especially, when in the temple he desires to prove to other Pharisees, from the Scriptures, the Divinity of the expected Messiah. Here again, in order to demonstrate it, he lays stress upon the use of A SINGLE WORD, selected from the Book of Psalms. "If Messiah be the Son of David (he observes), how then doth David BY THE SPIRIT call him LORD, when (in Psalm cx.) he said, Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand? If David call him Lord, how is he his Son?" (Matt. xxii. 43.)

How was it, that among the Pharisees there were none to answer him? What! would you insist upon a single word, and this too in a sentence taken from an eminently lyric composition, in which the royal poet might without risk indulge a fervid style, and use exaggerated expressions, and words which doubtless he had not theologically weighed in his mind ere he put

them into his psalmody? Would you pursue the method, at once fanatical and servile, of minutely interpreting each expression? Would you revere the Scriptures even to the very letter? Would you ground a doctrine upon a word?

Yes, answers the Saviour, I would—yes, I would rest on a word, because that word is from God, and with one word he created light. To cut short all your objections, I declare to you that it was **BY THE SPIRIT** that David wrote all the words of his Psalms; and I ask you, how, if the Messiah is his Son, David could **BY THE SPIRIT** call him Lord, when he said, “Jehovah said unto my Lord?”

Students of the Word of God, and you especially who are designed to be its ministers, and who, as a preparation for preaching it, desire, in the first place, to receive it into an honest and good heart, see what, in the estimation of your Master, was each utterance, each word of the book of God. Go therefore and do likewise!

But there is more. Let us further hear him, even on his cross. He there made his soul an offering for sin; all his bones were out of joint; he was poured out like water; his heart was like wax, melted in the midst of his bowels; his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth; and he was about to render his spirit to his Father. (Ps. xxii. 16—18.) But what did he first do? He strove to rally his expiring energies to recite a Psalm which the church of Israel had sung at her festivals through a thousand years, and which records in succession all his sufferings and prayers, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani* (“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me”)? He did even more; and let us well remark it. There remained one little word of Scripture unaccomplished: vinegar was to be given him on that cross. The Holy Spirit had declared it, in Psalm lxix., a thousand years before. “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scrip-

tures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.—And when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, it is finished! then bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” John xix. 28—30.) Could David, when he chanted these sixty-ninth and twenty-second Psalms,—could David, we ask, have known the prophetic sense of each of these expressions?—of the hands and feet pierced, of the gall and vinegar administered, of a vesture appropriated by lot, of people shaking the head and pouting the lip in derision? It matters little to us whether he understood it—the Holy Ghost did; and David, says Jesus Christ, spake **BY THE SPIRIT**. The heavens and the earth are to pass away; but there is not in this book the particle of a letter which will pass away without being fulfilled. (John x. 35.)

But we are called to observe something yet more striking, if it be possible. Jesus Christ rises from the tomb; he has conquered death; he is about to return to the Father, to reassume that glory which he had with him before the world was. Follow him in his remaining rapid movements upon the earth. What words will flow from that mouth to which utterance has been restored by resurrection from the dead? Words of Holy Scripture. Again he quotes, explains, and preaches it. In the first place, we behold him on the way to Emmaus, accompanying Cleopas and his friend; next, in the upper room; and afterwards on the borders of the lake. What does he do? He expounds the Scriptures; beginning at Moses, and continuing through the Prophets and Psalms, he shows them the things concerning himself, he opens their minds to understand them, and causes their hearts to burn while he talks with them. (Luke xxiv. 27, 44.)

But we have not yet done. All these quotations demonstrate in what estimation the Bible was held by Him “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. ii. 3), and “by whom all things subsist.” (Col. i. 17.) But we must further adduce

two declarations and one final example of our Lord, touching the letter of Scripture:—

“It is easier,” he has said, “for heaven and earth to pass, than for one particle of a letter of the Law to fail” (Luke xvi. 17); and by the term *law*, Jesus Christ understood the whole of the Scriptures, and even more particularly the Book of Psalms. (Jno. x. 34; xii. 34.)

What words can be conceived which would express with more force and precision the principle we are maintaining than do the foregoing? I mean the principle of the plenary inspiration, and everlasting character of all the parts, even to the very letter of the Scripture. Students of the Word of God, behold then the theology of your Master! Be such theologians as He was: have the same Bible as the Son of God!

But let us hear another declaration, pronounced by our Lord in his sermon on the mount:—

“Until heaven and earth pass away, there shall not pass *from the Law* a single iota, nor the tittle of a letter.” (Matt. v. 18.) All the words of THE SCRIPTURES, even to the least letter and particle of a letter, are equal to the words of *Jesus Christ HIMSELF*; for he has also said, “Heaven and earth shall one day pass away, but MY words shall not pass away.” (Luke xxi. 33.)

The men who oppose these doctrines ask us, if we go so far as to pretend that holy Scripture is a law from God, even in its words, as hyssop or an oak is the work of God, even in its leaves? We answer, with all the Fathers of the Church, Yes, we do; or rather, Jesus Christ our Saviour and Master lifts his hand to heaven, and replies, Yes, even in its words—even to a single iota or particle of a letter!

Having recorded these two declarations, let us now consider one of the last examples of our Lord, to which we have not hitherto referred.

It is still Jesus Christ who is about to quote the Scriptures; but this he does in claiming for their least

words such an authority as compels us to range ourselves among the most ardent disciples of a verbal inspiration: nor do we think that, if all the writings of our theologians, even the most decided in orthodoxy, were produced, there could be found among them the example of so profound a reverence for *the letter* of the Scriptures, and *the plenitude* of their *Inspiration*.

It was on a winter's day. Jesus was walking under the colonnade of the eastern porch of the Temple; the Jews come round about him; and he then (John x. 27) says to them, "I give eternal life to my sheep; they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand. I and my Father are one." They were amazed at his language; but he continued to rebuke them unmoved, until at length the Jews accused him of blasphemy, and took up stones to stone him, saying, "We stone thee, because, being a man, thou makest thyself God." (John x. 27.)

We would now invite especial attention to the several features of the Lord's reply to this. He proceeds to quote an expression from one of the Psalms, and on this single expression to found the whole of his doctrine: "for," says St. John (chap. v. 18), "he made himself equal with God." To defend the most sublime and mysterious of his doctrines, and to commend to our belief the most marvellous of his pretensions, he rests upon an expression of the eighty-second Psalm. But, mark! previously to uttering this expression, he deliberately pauses for a moment, and then in a solemn parenthesis, adds with impressive authority, — "*And the Scripture cannot be destroyed!*"

Have we sufficiently felt the force of this? Not only is our Lord's argument founded entirely upon the use which the Psalmist has made of a single expression, and not only does he proceed to build upon it the most amazing of his doctrines; but further, in thus quoting the Book of Psalms, and in order to enable us to comprehend that in his estimation the book is

wholly and throughout a writing of the Holy Ghost, in which *each word* ought to be to us a law, Jesus calls it by the name of LAW, and says to the Jews, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" These words occur in the middle of a psalm; they might appear to have been the result of inconsiderate fervour on the part of the prophet Asaph, or a fanciful creation of his poetic genius. And if the plenary inspiration of *all that is written* were not admitted, we might be tempted to view them as indiscreet, and to think that their imprudent use by the psalmist might have led the people into customs elsewhere rebuked by the Word of God, and into idolatrous notions. And here we would once more inquire, how did it happen that some rationalist scribe, of the Israelitish universities, was not found under Solomon's porch, to say to him, "Lord, you cannot take that expression as your authority. The use which Asaph has made of it may have been neither considerate nor becoming. Although inspired in the thoughts of his piety, he doubtless did not weigh his least words with jealous apprehension as to the use which might be made of them a thousand years after he should cease to exist. It would therefore be rash to pretend to lay stress upon them?"

But now mark how the Saviour anticipates the profane temerity of such an assertion. He solemnly calls to mind that he had just uttered words which would be blasphemy in the mouth of an archangel,—“I and my Father are one;” but he interrupts himself, and immediately remarks, “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?” He then pauses, and fixing his eyes with authority upon the doctors who surround him, adds, “**THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE DESTROYED.**” As if he had said, Beware! there is not in the sacred books either an expression which can be questioned, or a word which can be neglected. That which I quote to you from the eighty-second Psalm is traced by the hand of him who made the heavens. If there-

fore He has been pleased to give the name of gods to *men*, in so far as they were the anointed, and types of the true Christ—of the supreme Anointed One—being at the same time fully aware that they “would die like men,” how how much more will it become ME, doing the works of my Father, as him whom God the Father hath sealed?

We will here ask every serious reader—(and we wish it to be remarked that our argument is entirely independent of the orthodox or Socinian interpretations of these words of Jesus Christ)—we will here ask—Is it possible to admit that the Being who made such a use of the Scriptures **DID NOT BELIEVE IN THEIR PLE-NARY AND VERBAL INSPIRATION?** Had he imagined that the words of the Bible were left to the free choice and pious fantasies of the sacred writers, would he ever have resorted to the thought of grounding such arguments on such an expression? The Lord Jesus, our Saviour and our Judge, believed therefore in the most complete inspiration of the Scriptures; and for him the first rule of all interpretation, and the commencement of every exposition, was this simple maxim applied to the least expressions of the written word, “**AND THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE DESTROYED.**”

May, then, the Prince of Life, the Light of the world, rank us all in *His* school! What he believed, let us receive. What he revered, let us revere. Let that word, to which his heart of redeeming love, and all the thoughts of his holy humanity were subject, let that word, we say, be bound upon our diseased hearts, and gain the mastery over every emotion of our fallen nature. Let us seek GOD in its least expressions; nourish with it daily all the roots of our being; that we may be like a tree planted by running waters, which yields its fruit in its season, and whose leaves never wither.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

It is objected, that the fallibility of the Translator renders illusory the infallibility of the original text:—it is objected, that the use made by the apostles of the entirely human version of the Septuagint renders their own Inspiration suspected:—objections are raised on account of the variations in manuscripts, imperfections in reasoning and doctrine, and inaccuracies in facts:—it is objected, that the sacred writers contradict natural laws now well known:—and, finally, objections are raised on what have been termed the avowals of St. Paul. We will undertake to reply to each of these difficulties in succession; and may afterwards analyse some of those theories by which it is attempted to set aside the doctrine of a plenary inspiration.

The following is the first objection:—That if the inspiration of the Scriptures extends even to the words of the original text, of what avail is this verbal exactitude of the sacred Word, since, after all, the great majority of Christians can only use Versions more or less inaccurate?

The first remark we make upon this objection is, that *it is not one*. It does not contest *the fact* of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. To the majority of readers, we are told, the benefit of such an intervention of God would be lost, because instead of the infallible words of the original, they can never have other than the fallible words of a translation. But you are not justified in denying *a fact* because all its value is not at once appreciated, nor in rejecting a doctrine, for

the sole reason that the utility of it has not been recognised. All the expressions, for instance, and all the letters of the *Ten Commandments*, were certainly written by the finger of God, from *Aleph*, which is the first, to the *Caph*, with which they close; but will any one venture to assert, that the credibility of this miraculous fact is weakened through the necessity under which the majority of unlearned persons find themselves, in the present day, of reading the Decalogue through the medium of a translation? No one would venture to assert this. It must therefore be remembered, that this objection does not attack the doctrine we are defending, but only calls in question its advantages; these, it is argued, are lost to us in the work of translation—they vanish in this literary transformation.

We shall proceed to show how entirely this assertion is without foundation.

The Divine Word, which the Bible reveals to us, passes through four successive forms ere it reaches us in any translation. In the first place, it was from all eternity in the mind of God; secondly, it was communicated by him to that of man; thirdly, under the operation of the Holy Ghost, and by a mysterious transference, it has passed from the mind of the prophet into the characters and symbols of an articulate language, and its words take form and meaning; then, finally, when it has undergone this first translation, as important as it is inexplicable, men have reproduced and recopied it in a new translation, from one human language into another. Of these four operations, the first three are Divine; the fourth alone is human and fallible. Are we to be told that, because this last is human, the Divinity of the other three ought to be matter of indifference to us? Let it be remarked, however, that between the third and fourth, that is, between the first transfer of the thought by the sensible signs of a human language, and the second translation of the words by other words, the difference is immense.

Between the doubts we may entertain with regard to the correctness of versions, and those by which we may be exercised as to the accuracy of the original text, (if it were not inspired even in its language,) the distance is infinite.

Such reasoning would amount to this:—What is it to me that the third operation is that of the Spirit of God, if the last is only accomplished by the mind of man? In other terms, What avails it that the primitive language is inspired, if the versions are not? But, in speaking thus, objectors forget that we are infinitely more assured of the accuracy of the translations than we could be of that of the original text, supposing all its expressions had not been given by God.

The following considerations will, however, meet this question:—

The operation by which the sacred writers express in words the mind of the Holy Ghost, is itself, we have observed, a version, not of words by other words, but of Divine thoughts by sensible symbols. Now, this first translation is infinitely more undefined, more mysterious, and more exposed to error (if God's hand were not in it) than could be afterwards that by which we would render a Greek word of the original text by a vernacular equivalent. In order that a man may exactly express the mind of God, it is requisite, if his language be not dictated from on high, that he should entirely apprehend it in its full measure and in all the extent and depth of its meaning. But it is not thus with a simple version. The Divine mind being, as it were, already incarnate in the language of the sacred text, the question is no longer, when we would translate it, about giving it a form, but merely of changing its garb—to make it speak in French or English what it speaks in Greek, and modestly to replace each of its words by an equivalent term. This is an operation, comparatively far more simple in its nature, without mystery, and infinitely less subject to error than the

preceding. It even requires so little spirituality, that it might be *perfectly* done by an honest-minded heathen, provided he were *perfectly* acquainted with both languages. The version of an educated rationalist, who confined himself to the simple labour of translation, would afford us more security than that of an orthodox believer, who allowed himself to paraphrase, who attempted to complete the sense of the text, and who endeavoured to present truth more clearly in his own language than it was found in the Greek or Hebrew original. And let not this assertion excite surprise: it is justified by fact. At the present day, in Germany, is not the translation by De Wette esteemed above that of the great Luther? Is it not felt that there is more likelihood of possessing the thought of the Holy Spirit in the lines of the Professor of Basle than in those of the Reformer, because the former has adhered closely to the expressions of his text, as a scholar subject to the laws of philology, while the other has seemed to seek after something more, and has written rather as an interpreter than as a translator? The more, then, we reflect upon this first consideration, the greater must appear the difference between these two operations—I mean, the transference of the Divine thoughts into the words of human language, and the translation of these same words into the equivalent terms of another language. It need not then be said, What good can it do me that the one is Divine, if the other is human?

Translations can always be compared and confronted with the Divine text, to be corrected and recorrected by this eternal model, until they become its perfect counterpart. The *inspired* word never leaves us; we have not to ascend for it to the third heaven; it is still on the earth, pure as God himself originally vouchsafed it. We can, therefore, study it throughout time, for the purpose of subjecting the human work of our translations to its immutable truth. We can now, equally well, correct the versions of former days, by applying

to them more closely their infallible rule; after three hundred years we can test the work of Luther; and after fourteen hundred, that of St. Jerome. The phraseology of God continues ever the same as God himself dictated it, in Hebrew or in Greek, at the day of its revelation; and with our lexicons in hand, we can return to, and re-examine, from century to century, the infallible expression which he has deigned to give of his Divine mind, until we are assured that modern versions have received the impress of their original, and that we have obtained, for our use, the most faithful *facsimile*. Say no longer, then, What does it avail that one is Divine and the other human?

If some friend, returning from the East Indies, where your father, far from you, had breathed his last, were the bearer of a letter written with his own hand, or dictated by him, word after word, in the Bengalee dialect, would you feel indifferent whether this letter was entirely from him, because, being ignorant of the Bengal idiom, you could only read it through the medium of a translation? Do you not know that you might get translated versions of it multiplied, until you could have no more doubt as to the import of the original, than you would have if you were a Hindoo? Would you not admit that, after successively receiving these translations, your incertitude would go on diminishing, until it would no longer be appreciable? It is thus with regard to the Bible. If I believe that God has dictated the entire book, my incertitude as to its versions would be limited to a very narrow compass, the boundary of which would be in a continual course of restriction, in proportion as translations were multiplied.

Who does not therefore now feel to what an immeasurable distance all these considerations separate the Bible and its versions, with regard to the importance of verbal inspiration? Between the transference of the mind of God into human words, and the simple turning of these words into other words, there is a distance

equal to that of heaven from earth. The one required God; while for the other man sufficed. Let us therefore no more hear the question, Of what advantage to us is the verbal inspiration of the one, if we have not this inspiration in the other?—for between these two terms, which it is sought to equalise, there is almost infinity.

Of the Use made by the Sacred Writers of the Septuagint Version.

It is insisted as follows:—We will admit that the fact of modern translations can in no degree affect the first inspiration of the Scriptures; but there is another point of importance to be considered.

The sacred authors of the New Testament, when they themselves quote in Greek the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures, make use of the *Greek translation* called the Septuagint, executed at Alexandria two centuries and a half before Jesus Christ, which no one will now affirm to be an inspired work.

We are gratified in touching here upon this difficulty; because, like many others, a close examination changes objections into arguments.

An inquiry into the manner in which the apostles employed the Septuagint alone suffices to discover a striking indication of the verbal inspiration under which they wrote.

If a modern prophet were sent from God to the churches of our land, how think you would he proceed in quoting the Scriptures? Undoubtedly he would quote them in English, and from the authorised version, whenever the translation appeared to him sufficiently exact. But as often as the sense of the original did not appear to him to be conveyed with sufficient fidelity, he would be especially careful to supply his own translation. Sometimes, perhaps, he would do even more. The better to convey to us the exact sense in which he desired to apply such or such passages of

Scripture, he might paraphrase the quoted passage, and neither follow the letter of the original text nor that of the common translation.

This is precisely what the sacred writers of the New Testament have done with regard to the Septuagint.

Although the universal custom of the Greek Jews, throughout the East, was to read in the synagogues, and to cite in their discussions, the Old Testament from this ancient version, the apostles, by the three different ways in which they make their quotations, show us the independence of the spirit which guided them.

In the first place, when the Alexandrine translators appeared to them accurate, they did not hesitate to adopt what was familiar to the ears of their Greek auditors, and to quote literally the Septuagint version.

Secondly, (and this mode is very frequent,) when they are not satisfied with the rendering of the Septuagint, they correct it, and make their quotations from the original Hebrew, which they re-translate more exactly.

Thirdly, when they desire to indicate more clearly in what sense they quote this or that declaration of the Old Testament books, they paraphrase in quoting it. Compare, for example, Micah v. 2, and Matt. ii. 6; Mal. iii. 1, and Matt. xi. 10; Mark i. 2, and Luke vii. 27, &c.

These details will suffice for us to estimate the independence with which the Holy Ghost cites in the New Testament what he had aforetime caused to be written in the Old. We not only reply to the objection, but convert it into a witness.

The Various Readings found in the Original Text.

Other opponents say, We must leave the Translations; we admit that they in no wise affect the question of the first inspiration of the original text; but in this text itself there are numerous differences between the various ancient manuscripts which our churches consult,

and from which our printed editions are compiled. What becomes of verbal inspiration before the evidence of such a fact, and of what use is it to us?

Here again the reply is easy. We might repeat, with reference to the variations of the manuscripts, what we said respecting the translations—Do not confound two orders of facts which are absolutely distinct—that of the first inspiration of the Scriptures, and that of the actual integrity of the copies which have been made from it. If it were God himself who dictated the very letter of the sacred oracles, we have there a settled fact; and none of the copies which have been made from it, nor any translation of it, can annul this first act.

When a fact is consummated, nothing that follows thereupon can obliterate it from the history of the past.

There are then before us two questions which must be most carefully distinguished. Was the entire Scripture divinely inspired? is the first question, and to this we must first apply ourselves. The second is, Are the copies made by learned men and monks, in later times, accurate?

This latter question can in no degree affect the former; do not therefore seek to subordinate the first to the second: they are altogether independent. A book is from God, or it is not from God. In the latter case, it would be vain for us to transcribe it a thousand times with accuracy: we could not make it Divine. And in the first case, equally vain would it be for us to make a thousand incorrect copies: our inability, inaptitude, or unfaithfulness could not at all invalidate the divinity of the original. The Decalogue, we will here repeat, was entirely written by the finger of Jehovah, on two tables of stone; but, supposing the manuscripts which have transmitted it to us do exhibit some variations, this latter fact would not prejudice the former. The sentences, words, and letters of the *Ten Commandments* would not the less have been written by God.

The inspiration of the first text, and the integrity of the subsequent copies, are two orders of facts absolutely different, and separated widely the one from the other. Be careful not to confound what right reason, time, and place require us to keep distinct.

It is by precisely analogous reasoning that the indiscreet admirers of the Apocrypha are reprov'd. The ancient oracles of God, they are told, were confided to the Jewish people, as in these last times the new oracles have been to Christians. If therefore the Book of Maccabees was simply a human book in the days of Jesus Christ, a thousand decrees of the Christian Church could never cause it to be transubstantiated into a Divine book.

The prophets wrote the Bible either with words of human wisdom, or with words given them by God. This is the question before us.

But you will perhaps say, Have they been faithfully copied from century to century, from manuscript to manuscript? This is doubtless important, but it is wholly a different question. Do not confound what God has separated.

It is undoubtedly true, it will be said, that the fidelity of a copy does not render the original Divine when it is not so; and the inaccuracy of another copy does not render it human if it be not human. (This is not the point we aim to establish.) The fact of the inspiration of the sacred text in the time of Moses, or of St. John, cannot of course depend upon the copies which we have made from it in Europe or in Africa two or three thousand or less years after them; but if the second of these facts does not destroy the first, at least it renders it illusory, by depriving it of its value and utility.

Here then is the objection. The question has been shifted; it is no longer the inspiration of the first text, but a question of its present integrity. It was in the first place a question of doctrine: Is it declared in the

Bible, that the Bible is inspired even in its language? But now it is reduced to a mere question of history or criticism. Have the copyists transcribed accurately? Are the manuscripts faithful?

We might be silent on a subject of which we are not here commissioned to undertake the defence; but the answer is so easy, I will say more,—God has rendered it so triumphant, that we cannot forbear giving it. Moreover, the faith of the simple has been so often disturbed by a sort of scientific phantasmagoria, that it may be useful to expose the true nature of this objection. And although it takes us rather out of the field of our treatise, we must reply to it.

It was once specious; but in the present day it is regarded by all who have examined it as but a baseless illusion. The rationalists themselves have avowed that it is valueless, and must be renounced.

The Lord has miraculously watched over his word. Facts demonstrate this. In the first place, by constituting the Jews its depositaries, and afterwards the Christians; his providence thus charged itself with watching that the oracles of God should be faithfully transmitted to us. This has been done; and to attain this result, various causes were brought into operation, of which we shall have to speak hereafter. Recent researches of science have placed this fact in the light of day. Herculean labours have been undertaken to collect all the readings, *or variations*, which could be supplied, either by the diligent examination of the manuscripts of the sacred writings, preserved in the various libraries of Europe, the study of the most ancient versions, or the investigation of the innumerable quotations made from the sacred books throughout the writings of the Fathers of the church:—and this immense labour has furnished a result admirable in its insignificance,—imposing by its nullity.

All this labour has established so convincingly the astonishing preservation of the text, copied nevertheless

so many thousand times (in Hebrew during thirty-three centuries, and in Greek during eighteen hundred years), that the hopes of the enemies of religion, in this channel, have been overwhelmed: they have ceased to hope for anything from the critical researches which they were at first so vehement in recommending, because they expected discoveries which have not been made. A learned rationalist himself acknowledges, that the different readings of the Hebrew manuscripts scarcely afford enough interest to repay the labour bestowed upon them. But these very miscalculations, and the absence of these discoveries, have been a precious discovery for the Church of God. This was what she expected; but she has to rejoice in owing it to the labours of her adversaries:—"In truth," says a scholar of our times, "if we set aside those admirable *negative* conclusions at which they have arrived, the obvious result obtained by the lives of so many men consumed in these mighty researches appears to be nothing; and it may be said that to arrive at it they have foolishly squandered time, talent, and science."

But, as we have said, this result is immense by its nothingness, and all-powerful by its insignificance. When it is remembered that the Bible has been copied during thirty centuries, as no book of man ever was, or ever will be; that it has borne with Israel all their vicissitudes and captivities; that it was transported for seventy years to Babylon: that from the days of the Philistines to those of the Seleucidæ it has been so often persecuted, forgotten, interdicted, and burnt; when it is remembered that from the time of Jesus it had to endure the first three centuries of imperial persecutions, in which those convicted of having it in their possession were sentenced to be torn by wild beasts; after which came the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, in which were everywhere multiplied false books, legends, and decretals; the tenth century, in which so few men knew how to read, even among

princes; the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth, in which the use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue was punished with death;—in the remembrance of all this, it will be well understood how necessary it was that God should always keep his powerful arm uplifted, in order that, on the one hand, the Jewish church should give us, in full integrity, that word which records their rebellion, predicts their ruin, and testifies of Jesus; and on the other, that the Christian Churches (the most powerful of which, and especially the Roman sect, prohibited the people from reading the sacred books, and set aside the word of God for traditions) should notwithstanding transmit to us, in all their purity, those writings which condemn all their traditions.

Now, although all the libraries which possess ancient copies of the sacred books have been summoned as witnesses; although the commentaries of the Fathers of every country have been examined; although the Arabic, Syriac, Latin, Armenian, Ethiopic, and other versions have been compared; although all the manuscripts of all countries, and of every age, from the third to the sixteenth century, have been examined a thousand times by innumerable critics, who sought with ardour, as the reward and glory of their sleepless toil, for some new reading; and although the learned, not content with the libraries of the West, have visited those of Russia, and extended their researches to the convents of Mount Athos, of Asiatic Turkey, and of Egypt, in quest of new records of the sacred text:—yet has nothing been discovered, not even a single reading, which can cast doubt upon any of the passages hitherto received as authentic. All the variations, with scarcely one exception, leave untouched the essential meaning of each sentence, and relate merely to points of secondary importance, such as the insertion or omission of an article or conjunction, the position of an adjective before or after its substantive, and the accuracy, more or less important, of grammatical construction.

It is well known that among the Jews it was the profession of the Masorites, or doctors of tradition, to transcribe the Scriptures; we know to what extent these indefatigable scholars carried their respect for the letter; and when we read the rules under which their labours were carried on, we understand the use that the providence of God (who had "confided his oracles to the Jews") made of their reverence, severe exactitude, and even of their superstition. They reckoned the number of verses, words, and letters in each book. They tell us, for instance, that the letter A occurs forty-two thousand three hundred and seventy-seven times in the Bible; the letter B thirty-eight thousand two hundred and eighteen times; and so on to the end. They were scrupulous of changing the position even of a letter, though evidently misplaced, but limited themselves to noting it in the margin, supposing some mystery was involved. They tell us which is the middle letter of the Pentateuch, as well as of each of the books of which it is composed. They never allowed themselves to correct their manuscript; and if any mistake escaped them, they rejected the papyrus or the skin which they had blemished, and recommenced upon a fresh one; for they were equally interdicted from even correcting one of their errors, and from retaining for their sacred volume a single parchment or skin in which an erasure had been made.

This intervention of the providence of God in the preservation of the Old Testament will be seen still more strikingly, if we compare the astonishing integrity of the original Hebrew (at the end of so many centuries) with the decided and important alteration which in the days of Jesus Christ, at the end only of 200 years, the Greek Septuagint version had suffered. Although this book had acquired throughout the East, after the almost universal propagation of the Greek language, a semi-canonical authority at first among the Jews, and afterwards among the Christians; although later it was

the only text whence the Fathers of the East and the West (with the exception of Origen and Jerome) drew their knowledge of the Old Testament; the only one that Ignatius, Chrysostom, and Theodoret commented on; the only one whence Athanasius, Basil, and Gregory of Nazianzen took their arguments and illustrations; although the Western world as well as the Eastern have during so many ages been illumined only by this borrowed light; (since the ancient Italian Vulgate, which they used universally, had been made from the Greek, and not from the original Hebrew;) hear notwithstanding what these learned men tell us of the alteration of this important Version, of the additions, changes, and interpolations which it had suffered,—first by the ancient Jews before the days of Jesus Christ, afterwards by the (infidel) Jews, and later by the imprudence of Christian copyists.

“The evil was of so serious a nature,” says Dr. Lee, “that, in certain books, scarcely could the ancient version be recognised; and when Origen (in the year 231) had consecrated twenty-eight years of his noble life to search the different manuscripts, to undertake on this text (in his Tetrapla and his Hexapla) what the modern critics have accomplished on that of the Old and of the New Testament; not only he could not find any edition which was correct, but he even aggravated the evil. By the ignorance of the copyists (who neglected to transcribe his obelisks, his asterisks, and his other marks), the greater part of his marginal corrections glided into the text; so that new errors being interspersed there, they were unable in the time of Jerome to distinguish his annotations from the original text.”

These facts, we repeat it, together with the astonishing preservation of the Hebrew text (twelve hundred years more ancient than that of the Septuagint), plainly tell us how the intervention of the mighty hand of God was needed in the destinies of this sacred book.

So far the Old Testament: but think not that the

Providence which watched over this holy book, and confided it to the Jews (Rom. iii. 1, 2), has less protected the oracles of the New Testament, which were committed by God to his new people. To these he has not left less reason for gratitude and confidence.

Such then has been the astonishing preservation of the Greek manuscripts which have handed down the New Testament to us, that—after the sacred text has been copied and re-copied so many thousand times in Europe, Asia, or in Africa, in convents, colleges, palaces, or in presbyteries, and this almost without interruption, during the long course of one thousand five hundred years;—notwithstanding during the last three centuries (and especially during the lapse of the last hundred and thirty years) so many noble characters and ingenious minds, and so many learned lives have been devoted to labours hitherto unheard of in extent, admirable for their sagacity, and scrupulous as those of the Masorites;—after the collation of all the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, which were buried in the private, monastic, or national libraries of the East and West;—after comparing them not only with all the ancient Latin, Armenian, Sahidic, Ethiopic, Arabic, Slavonic, Persic, Coptic, Syriac, and Gothic versions of the Scriptures, but also with all the ancient Fathers of the church, who have quoted them in their innumerable writings, in Greek or in Latin;—after so much research, what have they been able to find? Of this you can judge from the Epistle to the Romans. It is the longest and most important of the New Testament Epistles, “the golden key of the Scriptures”—“the ocean of Christian doctrine,” as it has been termed. It contains four hundred and thirty-three verses, and in these four hundred and thirty-three verses are ninety-seven Greek words which are not elsewhere met with in the New Testament. And now how many—(even admitting all the corrections adopted, or only preferred, by Griesbach)—how many renderings are found which

would in the slightest degree change the meaning of any sentence? Five! And what are they? We will repeat them.

The first occurs in chap. vii. 6. Instead of, "That being dead wherein," &c.—Griesbach reads, "Being dead to that wherein." And let it be particularly remarked that in the Greek the difference merely amounts to the *changing of a single letter*—an *o* instead of an *e*; and that moreover the greater number of the manuscripts were so entirely in favour of the ancient text, that (since the time of Griesbach) Tittmann, in his edition of 1824, has rejected this correction; and so has Lachmann, in his edition of 1831. Scholz has however preserved it.

The second occurs in chap. xi. 6. Instead of, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work;"—Griesbach suppresses the last part of this sentence.

The third occurs in chap. xii. 11. Instead of, "Serving the Lord;"—Griesbach reads, "Serving the opportunity."

Remark here, that the correction only involves the changing of *two letters* in one of the Greek words, and that the majority of the manuscripts do not appear to justify even this. Moreover, on this point Whitby remarks that upwards of thirty manuscripts, and all the ancient versions—that Clement of Alexandria, St. Basil, and St. Jerome—all the writings of the Greek and Latin scholiasts (St. Ambrose only excepted), followed the ancient text; and the two learned men whom we have named above (Lachmann and Tittmann) have restored the ancient text in their respective editions of the New Testament. Scholz has done the same in his edition of 1836.

The fourth occurs in chapter vi. 16. Instead of, "Whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness;" Griesbach reads, "Whether of sin, or

of righteousness;" but he himself inserts at this place the simple sign of a bare probability. Tittmann and Lachmann, in their respective editions, have also rejected this correction; and Scholz, in following them, has done the same.

The fifth is in chap. xvi. 5. Instead of, "The first-fruits of Achaia;" Griesbach reads, "The first-fruits of Asia."

We have not here shown the words which have been omitted in the first paragraph of chapter viii., because they are again found in the fourth verse.

Here then we see the admirable integrity of the Epistle to the Romans. According to Griesbach, *only five unimportant corrections* in the entire epistle! according to more modern critics, but **TWO**—and these the most unimportant of the five; and according to Scholz **THREE**.

We repeat, that we have selected the Epistle to the Romans as a specimen, only on account of its length and importance, without having examined whether it contains more or fewer variations than any other portion of the New Testament. We have however just run through Griesbach, and in the last pages of the **EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS**, (written at the same time, and on the same subject, as the Epistle to the Romans,) we have found only the three following corrections which can be said to affect the sense, or, more properly speaking, the form of the sense:—Chap. iv. 17, "They would exclude *us*;" or "They would exclude *you*."—Chap. iv. 26, "She is the mother of us *all*;" or, "She is the mother of us."—Chap. v. 19, "*Adultery*, fornication, uncleanness;" or, "Fornication, uncleanness."

These examples will, as we judge, speak more forcibly to our readers than any general assertions on our part. There are certain truths which must be seen with our own eyes; of this we have ourselves had the happy experience.

Let the value of the objection now be weighed by those who make it.

Let them, for instance, explain to us how the three or four variations which have just passed in review before us, in the Epistle to the Romans, (and which modern critics have reduced to one or two,) can throw any doubt upon the fact of its first inspiration. Without doubt, in these three or four passages, as well as in those in other parts of the sacred books, in which the true word of the text may be contested, without doubt here (but here only), between the two different readings of the manuscripts, one is the inspired word, and the other is not: and it is necessary that, in this trivial number of instances, we should divide or suspend our confidence between two expressions; but this is the extent to which incertitude can go; here it must stop;—farther it cannot proceed.

It is calculated that, in the seven thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine verses of the New Testament, there scarcely exist ten or twelve in which corrections introduced by the new texts of Griesbach and Scholz, at the close of their laborious investigations, have any weight. These moreover do not for the most part extend beyond the difference of a single word, and sometimes even of a single letter.

Thus then all the efforts of the adversaries of inspiration, to shake our faith in this channel, have in the end only had the effect of strengthening it. They have compelled the church to follow them in their investigations, and very soon afterwards to precede them:—and what has been the result? Why that the text is found more pure than the most pious ventured to hope; and that the opponents of inspiration, and those of orthodox doctrines, (at least in Germany,) have been compelled to come to the same conclusion. After the labours of Erasmus, Stephens, and Mill, they had hoped to have derived, from among the numerous manuscripts of our libraries, readings more favourable

to Socinian doctrines than those which they could gather from Beza and the Elzevirs. Several, indeed, anticipated that the differences would be so great, and such uncertainty would result, that (to use their own terms) all exclusive, positive, evangelical belief would be thereby overthrown. But it has not been thus. It is now a suit terminated; the plaintiffs are cast, at their own appeal; the inquest having been held by modern criticism, all the judges—even the bench of Rationalists—have unanimously pronounced that it is a lost cause, and that the objectors must go to some other quarter for arguments and grievances.

When this question of the integrity of the original text presented itself for the first time (upwards of one hundred and twenty years ago) to the learned and estimable Bengel, he was dismayed at it, and his upright and pious mind became deeply exercised. Then commenced on his part that work of sacred criticism which gave a new direction to this science in Germany. The English had preceded the Germans; but the latter soon outstripped them. At length, in 1721, after long and laborious research, Bengel, who had become satisfied and happy, thus wrote to one of his disciples:—“Eat the Scripture bread in simplicity, just as you have it; and do not be disturbed, if here and there you find a grain of sand which the mill-stone may have suffered to pass. You may hereby avoid all the doubts which for a season so horribly tormented me. If the Holy Scriptures, which have been so often copied, and have so often passed through the erring hands of fallible men, were absolutely without variations, this would be so great a miracle, that faith in them would be no longer faith. I am astonished on the contrary that from all these transcriptions there has not resulted a greater number of different readings.” The six comedies of Terence alone contain thirty thousand variations, and they have been copied a thousand times less frequently than the New Testament.

“The inspired writings of the Old and New Testaments,” says Dr. Tregelles, “have been transmitted to us just in the same manner as other books; they have been liable to the same casualties in transcription, and the correctness of copies made has depended upon the diligence and accuracy of their transcriber. But just as a copyist might err in transcribing the letters and words of the Decalogue which God had written, so might he with respect to any other portion of Scripture. And it must not be looked at as a want of reverence for the Word of God, or a want of belief in its verbal inspiration *in the fullest sense*, for this fact to be fully admitted. Various readings are thus found in the copies of the Holy Scriptures, as well as in other writings. Various readings are in their origin to works in MS. what mistakes of the press are in printed books. Every one who has had any connection with the operations of printing must be conscious of the sources of various readings. If a page of a manuscript were put into the hands of a compositor, he would almost undoubtedly make some errors in setting it up in type. In some places he might read the copy wrongly, in others might omit, in others might repeat some of the words before him; and there would probably be several errors in punctuation and orthography. The page of letter-press would on these accounts require a good deal of revision, to make it actually represent the page of MS. which had been sent to the printing-office.

“If the page set up in type, instead of being corrected, were at once worked off with all its errors, and the copies so printed were put into the hands of fresh compositors, then new variations would undoubtedly arise. Some of the compositors might notice unquestionable mistakes, and try to rectify them; in doing this they would not improbably depart yet farther from the original MS., and each one, perhaps, in a different way.

“Now, if the MS. page originally used had been lost, so that it could not be applied to the revision of

the incorrect copies, the only way would be to take the copies, such as they were, and by examining them among themselves, to restore if possible the original readings. To this end the page as set up by the first compositor would be the most helpful, and would undoubtedly be the nearest to the MS. It would therefore be important to trace the *genealogy* of these printed copies. If the MS. copy had been put into the hands of more than one compositor, the page as set up by each of these would be a separate and important witness; the united testimony of such pages would lead one to something like a certainty as to the original reading. This may serve to illustrate the causes and character of various readings, and the mode of critically dealing with them."

How can we avoid recognising here the powerful intervention of God in this unanimous agreement of all the religious societies of the East and of the West? Everywhere the same Scriptures. What a distance separates in their worship Christians from Jews! and, notwithstanding, enter our schools, examine our Hebrew Testaments, then go into their synagogues, ask of their Rabbies their sacred rolls, you will there find the same books, without the difference of a letter! What a distance separates the reformed Christians from the sectaries of Rome! Yet you will find in our respective schools the same Greek Testament, without the difference of an iota. Again, what a distance separates the Latin church from the Greek church, which also calls itself the catholic, but orthodox apostolic, daughter of Antioch, condemning the Romans as rebel and schismatic sons! and yet ask of one and the other their sacred texts, neither will you find any difference here. There are no variations to make two schools; they will bring forward the same manuscripts; priests and popes, Munich and Moscow, will give you the same testimony. We were then to have amongst us, Greeks, Romanists, and Protestants, the same sacred

book of the New Testament, without the difference of a single iota.

We come then once more to the conclusion, that not only was Scripture inspired at the time when God caused it to be written, but that this word, which was inspired eighteen centuries ago, is now in our possession; and that moreover, holding the sacred text in one hand, and all the readings which science has collected from hundreds of manuscripts in the other, we can exclaim with gratitude, "I now hold in my hands the eternal word of my God!"

Concerning Errors of Reasoning, or in the Doctrine of Holy Scripture.

We will leave the Various Readings, say some opposers, and admit that the sacred text may be regarded as the original language of the prophets and apostles; but in this text we are compelled to recognise the leaven of human weakness. We meet with irrelevant or inconclusive reasonings, inapt quotations, popular superstitions, prejudices, and other infirmities resulting from the ignorance of the times and condition of those who wrote. Such being the traces of infirmity which are apparent in Scripture, it is impossible, say some, for us to acknowledge an inspiration in the details of their language.

The experience of every age, and especially of later times, has sufficiently demonstrated, that before an impartial examination all these difficulties vanish; light is thrown upon what appeared obscure; and eventually inconceivable harmony and beauty, such as the human mind never had conceived, stand revealed in the Word of God, to the manifestation of which even objections are made subservient. What is an object of doubt to-day, may by further study become a motive of faith to-morrow; and what is to-day a subject of perplexity, may to-morrow be converted into proof.

We do not hesitate to assert that, on hearing such objections, we feel at once two opposite emotions—those of sorrow and of satisfaction: of sorrow, to see men who acknowledge the Bible to be a revelation from God, not fearing to advance against it the most serious accusations; and of satisfaction, in considering how forcibly such language on their part helps to confirm the doctrine which we are defending.

The divinity, expediency, wisdom, or utility of such and such passages of Scripture is not understood, and on this account their inspiration is denied. Is this an argument which can have any real value, we will not say in our eyes, but in your own? Who are you? “Keep thy foot (feeble child of man) when thou goest into the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil.—God is in heaven, and thou upon earth.” (Eccles. v. 1, 2.) Who are you who thus sit in judgment upon the oracles of God? Scripture has itself forewarned us, that it would be to some “a stumbling-block, and to others foolishness;” that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;” that “he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. ii. 14.) Man must take his proper position as a weak, ignorant, and depraved creature! He cannot understand God until he has humbled himself. Is an argument not well sustained because you fail to apprehend it?—is a doctrine a prejudice because you do not concur in it?—a quotation void of force because you do not understand its true sense? What would remain in our world if God had left us only what you can explain? The emperors of Rome, unable to understand either the life or the faith of the martyrs, threw them to be torn of beasts in the amphitheatre, or cast them into the Tiber. So they expose to scorn what they cannot understand, and have condemned.

Might the author here venture to state his own ex-

perience? He calls to mind with equal humiliation and gratitude his first and last impressions of the Epistles of St. Paul. In his youth he was enabled to acknowledge that the Bible was from God; but he could not then comprehend the doctrines it inculcated. He wished to respect the apostolic records, because he saw by other traits that the inimitable impress of the Most High God was upon them; but a secret perplexity agitated his mind as he perused them, and led him to consult other books. St. Paul appeared to him to reason falsely, to speak ambiguously, to avoid coming to the point by his constant circumlocution, and to speak altogether in a different way to that in which we might ourselves have expressed it. But as soon as Divine grace had revealed this doctrine of the righteousness of faith, which is the bright and effulgent glory of the Scripture, then every word became light, harmony, and life; the arguments of the apostle became transparent,—his ideas profound and practical,—all his epistles “the power of God unto salvation.” He then saw abundant proofs of Divinity break forth in the very portions of Scripture which had so long perplexed him, and he could exclaim with the joy of a discovery, and with lively gratitude and praise, on finding the hitherto silent chords within vibrate in unison with the Divine word, “Yes, my God, thy Scriptures are throughout divinely inspired!”

*Errors alleged to be in the Narratives, and
Contradictions in the Facts.*

We will begin by acknowledging that, if it were true that there are erroneous facts and contradictory narratives in the Holy Scriptures, we must renounce the defence of their plenary inspiration. But we can make no such admission. These pretended errors do not exist.

We admit that, among the numerous attacks levelled

at the most minute details of the narratives in the sacred books, there are some which at first sight may occasion a little perplexity; but on a closer examination these difficulties explain themselves and vanish. Of these we shall give some examples, taking care to select them from among those which the adversaries of a plenary inspiration appear to have regarded as the most insurmountable.

It is very easy to say, generally and peremptorily, that there are contradictions in the Bible; and it often happens that unreflecting though pious Christians, indisposed to the trouble of close examination, suffer their notions of inspiration to become relaxed, before on the one hand they have sufficiently examined the general testimony of Scripture on this point, or on the other the nature of the objections which have been opposed to it. They have thus been found seeking in their own minds, rather than in the Bible, a mitigated system of inspiration, which can be reconciled with the pretended existence of errors in the Word of God. This was in the sixteenth century the doctrine of Socinus, Castalio, and of some others; but it was at the time strenuously opposed by all pious men. One whose labours and reputation we otherwise honour, has not scrupled to say in his Lectures, that "all is not equally inspired in the Holy Bible, and that if error in the details of evangelical narratives were not admitted, their explanation would involve inextricable difficulties." And what examples does he give to justify such assertions? He quotes two of the passages which we shall presently review;—the first, relative to the two blind men of Jericho; and the second, to the taxing under Cyrenius. The reader may therefore judge of the facility with which the testimony borne by the Scriptures themselves to their own entire inspiration is abandoned.

We shall now present some examples, both of the contradictions which objectors think they can oppose to us, and of the causes of the rashness with which they

permit themselves to denounce as contradictory certain passages, which nevertheless only require a little reflection to be perfectly reconciled. We have already said, and we will repeat it, that being able here only to cite a small number, we have been careful to select those which our adversaries have appeared to think the most difficult.

One of the causes of this rashness, is the extreme brevity of the recitals of the sacred historians. As the narratives do not explain in what manner some of their features may be reconciled, they are precipitately denounced as contradictory! Nothing can be more irrational. Suppose a Hindoo Pundit had read three brief histories (but each of the three true) of Napoleon. The first would tell him that the taking of Paris, preceded by a great effusion of blood at the gates of the capital, compelled him to abdicate, and that an English frigate was ready forthwith to convey him to an island in the Mediterranean. A second would relate that this renowned captain was conquered by the English, who entered Paris without opposition, and conveyed him to St. Helena, that General Bertrand voluntarily proceeded thither with him; and that he there breathed his last in the arms of this faithful servant. A third would record that the fallen emperor was accompanied in his exile by Generals Gourgaud, Bertrand, and Montholon. Every one of these statements would be true; and yet, "What a mass of contradictions in a few words!" would the wise man of Benares exclaim. "St. Helena in the Mediterranean! Who does not know that this isle rises like a rock in the midst of the mighty ocean?—this is contradiction the first. One of these books is a lie, and must be rejected! But further, Paris taken without a contest! and Paris taken after a bloody battle at its gates!—contradiction the second. In one account we have one general; in another three!—contradiction the third."

Now let us compare the rash conclusions thus sup-

posed with the objections which are advanced against the narratives of our evangelists.

FIRST EXAMPLE.—Mark tells us, that *the woman* “saw A YOUNG MAN (one) *sitting on the right side, who said to them, Be not affrighted, ye seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified: he is risen.*”

And Luke narrates, that “TWO MEN *stood by them, who said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.*”

These two passages are objected against as irreconcilable; but with what justice? There is a difference, doubtless; but there is neither a contradiction nor a disagreement between the two accounts. If they are both true, why is it desired that they should both be identical? It is sufficient that they are true, especially in narrations which are so admirably concise. Does it not frequently occur among ourselves, that, without failing in accuracy, we relate the same circumstance to different persons as we meet with them, in two different ways? Why should not the apostles do the same? Luke records that “two men” stood by the women; while Mark only speaks of him of the two who had rolled away the stone, who was sitting alone on the right side of the sepulchre, and who addressed them. In like manner one of the historians of the life of Bonaparte mentions three generals; while the other, without any incorrectness, only speaks of one. It is thus that Moses (Gen. xviii.), after speaking of the appearance of three men as he sat in the tent door in the plains of Mamre, immediately afterwards (verses 2, 10, 17) speaks of one only, and this as if he were alone. It is thus that at two different times, and in two different ways, I could, with entire truth, relate the same circumstances. For instance: “I met three men who pointed out to me the direct road;” or, “I met a man who put me into the right road.” If there is in the passages in question a notable difference, there is not however even the semblance of a contradiction.

SECOND EXAMPLE.—Matthew says that *Judas* “*went and hanged himself.*” St. Peter says that “falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.”

This also has been held up as an evident contradiction.

We well remember the analogous features of a recent suicide. To make sure of accomplishing the dreadful deed, a wretched inhabitant of Lyons adopted the two-fold means of seating himself outside a window on the fourth story, and of firing a pistol into his mouth. The same narrator of this desperate act might give three different versions of it, and all three accurate ones. In the first he might have described the entire occurrence; in the second he could say that he terminated his existence by blowing out his brains; and in the third that he precipitated himself from an upper story upon the pavement, and was killed.

Such was also the voluntary punishment by which Judas “went to his own place.” He strangled himself, fell headlong, and burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. One single detail more, on the fearful circumstances of such a death, would have shown us the connection of the whole. It has not been given; but who on this account will dare to say that there is here a contradiction?

THIRD EXAMPLE.—Here let us enumerate the majority of those cases in which various numerical calculations may appear to be at variance; as, for instance, that of the talents of gold brought from Ophir to king Solomon (1 Kings ix. 28; 2 Chron. viii. 18); that of the numbering of the Israelites in the time of David (2 Sam. xxiv. 9; 1 Chron. xxi. 5); that of the children of the patriarch Jacob, transported into Egypt (Gen. xlv. 26, 27; Deut. x. 22; Acts vii. 14), &c. One single circumstance, in addition to these rapid recitals, will at once place them in accord before us. King Solomon might in one case have reckoned the gross

amount of his revenue, and in the other have deducted thirty talents therefrom for the expenses of the navy. The numbering of David might exhibit two results, according as it included, or was exclusive of, the ordinary military force (militia) already numbered throughout the kingdom (288,000 men, with their officers of every rank, 1 Chron. xxvii. 1; 2 Sam. xxiii. 8). Finally, there might be sixty-six, seventy, or seventy-five persons for the family of the patriarch, according as we reckon Joseph's sons, or the female members of the families, or add the wives of the eleven patriarchs. We abstain however from entering into the examination of these details; it is necessary only to point them out.

FOURTH EXAMPLE.—Matthew, in the twenty-seventh chapter of his Gospel (verses 9 and 10) quotes, as from Jeremiah, words which are not recorded in the book of that prophet. “*Then (he writes) was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they received the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value,*” &c.

This has been denounced as “an evident error!” these words being met, with only in the book of Zechariah (xi. 13).

We will not reply, with St. Augustine, that several Greek manuscripts have only the words, “Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet;” let us therefore follow those only which do contain the name of Jeremiah. It is true that, even in the present day, among the Greek manuscripts of our public libraries, there are two which do not record the name of this prophet;—and that among the most ancient versions, the Syriac and Persic also, it is not recorded. This solution however does not appear to us in harmony with the ordinary rules of sacred criticism; and St. Augustine himself ingenuously admits that he is not satisfied with it, because, even in his time, the majority

of the Latin and Greek copies contained in this sentence the name of *Jeremiah*.

Some learned men consequently presume that this name might easily by error have crept into the text; and that the transcribers, having remarked in the margin these letters, *Zou* (which are used as an abridgment of the name of Zechariah), may inadvertently have made it *Iou*, and thus run it into the text, thinking they read the name of *Jeremiah*. But neither are we satisfied with this explanation, because it only rests upon an hypothesis gratuitously opposed to the manuscripts themselves, and because it opens the door to rash conclusions. Let us respect the integrity of manuscripts.

I prefer therefore the explanation of Whitby, which is this: we know by St. Jerome, he observes, that there existed in his day an apocryphal book of the prophet Jeremiah, in which the words quoted by St. Matthew are found, letter for letter. It is also known that the Second Book of Maccabees (ii. 1—9) records many of the actions and words of Jeremiah, which are taken from another book, and not from his canonical prophecies. Why then should not the words quoted by the evangelist have really been pronounced by Jeremiah? and might they not have lived in the memory of the church down to the time of Zechariah, who would then himself give them an inspired place in holy writ? as is the case in the apocryphal words of Enoch, quoted in the Epistle of Jude (verses 14, 15); or the apocryphal words of Jesus Christ, quoted by St. Paul in the book of the Acts. (Acts xx. 35.) What confirms this supposition is, that the words cited by St. Matthew are only in part found in Zechariah. Moreover it is known that this prophet loved to record the words of Jeremiah. (See Zech. i. 4; Jer. xviii. 11; Zech. iii. 8; and Jer. xxiii. 5.)

FIFTH EXAMPLE.—There have recently been made, and particularly in Germany, many difficulties on the

quadruple recital which is given us of the *resurrection of the Lord.*

For brevity sake, we will treat of them all at the same time, taking care to designate objections and the answers by corresponding letters.

A. According to St. Luke (it is said) the Galileans, when they returned from the sepulchre, would have prepared their spices before the sabbath, (Luke xxiii. 56,) while according to St. Mark, (xvi. 1, 2,) they would only have bought them the Saturday evening, after the expiration of this sacred rest.

B. If you read St. Matthew, these women would be Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, while there would be also Salome, according to Mark, (xvi. 1,) and even according to Luke, (xxiv. 10,) there would also be found there John and others with them.

C. According to Mark, (xvi. 2,) they went to the sepulchre "at the rising of the sun;" according to John, (xxi. 1,) it was "yet dark."

D. If (according to Matthew alone) the Jews had put a guard on the sepulchre, we can hardly understand that the women would venture to visit and think of opening it.

E. In Matthew (xxviii. 5) and Mark (xvi. 5), the women saw only one angel at the sepulchre; in Luke (xxiv. 5) they saw two.

F. According to Matthew (xxviii. 8) and Luke (xxiv. 9, 10), "the women come out of the sepulchre with fear and great joy;" they run to relate to the disciples what they had seen: while according to Mark (xvi. 8), they fled, "they trembled and were amazed; neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid."

G. If, according to the first and the third Gospel, the women informed the disciples of what had passed, (Matt. xxviii. 8; Luke xxiv. 9,) according to the fourth, they would only have told it to Simon Peter and John.

H. According to the first three Gospels, Mary Mag-

dalene came to the sepulchre, saw there angels, who informed her of the resurrection of Jesus; while St. John says (xx. 2) she only said to the disciples, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre," and said nothing of the resurrection, nor even of the angels. "We know not where they have laid him," she adds.

I. According to Luke (xxiv. 12,) it would appear that Peter, on hearing this report, ran alone to the sepulchre: according to John, there was with Peter "the other disciple whom Jesus loved." (xx. 2.)

K. If you only read the first three evangelists, several women appear to have been witnesses of the apparition of the angels, and of the resurrection of Jesus; while if you read St. John, it will appear that Mary Magdalene was alone honoured with these revelations.

L. According to Luke (xxiv. 23, 24,) and even according to John (xx. 2,) Mary and the women returning from the sepulchre came to announce to the disciples only the removal of the body of Jesus, and the appearing of the angels; they had not then seen the Lord himself; while according to Matthew (xxviii. 9) Jesus would have appeared to them as they were on the way.

Here are then, it has been said to us, *eleven contradictions*, which do not, it is true, fundamentally affect the narrative, and which ought not in any way to disturb our faith, but which irresistibly rise in testimony against an entire Inspiration.

This objection, we confess, had appeared to us too ill-founded, and already too often solved, to find a place in the first edition of this work. However, it has been brought forward again to us, and we have thought it well to reply to it.

The day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for the disciples, began with the first dawn of the morning (John xx. 1), and was prolonged till midnight (Luke xxiv. 29, 33, 36). The sepulchre where their Master had been laid was not distant from their dwelling, since they place it to-day even within the enclosure of

modern Jerusalem. The disciples and the women could have gone there often, and in various ways, during the course of this incomparable Sunday. But as each one of the four evangelists seems to have prescribed to himself in the narration of this event a wonderful brevity, it is quite natural that at first sight their recitals present on the innumerable incidents of the day an apparent confusion. Each one must speak the truth and nothing but the truth, but no one has given the whole; and, because of this conciseness, you may not be able to perceive at once their perfect agreement. They relate each one on his part—following a special point of view, and without embarrassing himself with an agreement which they knew to be in the reality of the facts. What more did they want? One spoke above all of Mary Magdalene, because it was to her that Jesus deigned to grant his first appearing; the other of Peter, because Jesus showed himself to him notwithstanding his crime, and because he was called to one of the first ranks in the Church of God; two others of the wonderful meeting at Emmaus, because this manifestation was the most tender and significant; finally, three others of his appearing to the Eleven, because these were to be the foundations and pillars of the Church. Besides this, you may see in their narratives many features which will sufficiently indicate that in relating some scenes, they designedly abstain from mentioning others, the remembrance of which is not the less dear to them, but which they must be silent on, in order that their Gospels should be divinely brief. We will give some examples.

1. You will find St. Paul recalling to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 5) that Jesus “was seen first of Cephas, and afterwards of the Twelve.” Nevertheless neither of the four evangelists relates to us this appearance of Jesus to Simon Peter. It is certainly well that we read later in Luke (xxiv. 34) this word in passing, “The Lord has appeared to Simon;” without this

word, which is found incidentally in a dialogue of the Eleven and Cleopas; the adversaries of Inspiration would not have failed to say, that Paul was deceived on this fact, and that he had not carefully read his Gospels, since there is not a word said of this appearing in their quadruple relation of the resurrection.

2. It is thus again that St. Luke, who (ver. 12) only speaks of Peter, is careful nevertheless to relate its being said (ver. 24) by the disciples of Emmaus, "Some of us went to the sepulchre."

3. It is thus again that St. Mark, who mentions neither the appearing of Jesus to the women, nor that to Simon Peter, is careful to insert in his narrative (chap. xvi. ver. 9) one little word which explains to us other manifestations of which he will not speak. "Jesus," he says, "appeared first (first!) to Mary Magdalene."

4. Finally, it is thus that St. John, who only speaks of Mary Magdalene, points out to us *by a single pronoun* that she was not however alone. "They have taken away the Lord," she says, "and *we know not* where they have laid him." Thus, then, to establish contradiction between the several parts of the quadruple narration, they must be shown irreconcilable with all the suppositions which we are obliged to make on the unknown connection of the events of the day. But who can do this? On the contrary, it is easy to figure to oneself the order of the facts to be such that all the features of the recitals will agree. So far is the problem from being impossible to solve, that many have undertaken to do this, and by different ways. It was only necessary for them to make various suppositions, but all perfectly admissible, on the number and order of the visits of Mary, the disciples, and the women, to the tomb.

Such hypotheses, it will be said, do not necessarily remove the contradiction—they only show *there may not* have been any. And what do we require more?

The adversaries of Inspiration, in their turn, only suppose contrary hypotheses.

We shall now, then, instead of replying to each of the eleven objections given above, merely show the course of the events, such as we may conceive it to be, according to the whole of the four narratives. (The same letters which distinguished the different objections will be here placed before the corresponding paragraphs which serve to explain them.)

A. Jesus having died on the cross, on Friday evening, at the ninth hour of the day, the sabbath, which commenced three hours after, was of a double solemnity (sabbath of the week, and sabbath of the Passover). When the even was come (Matt. xxvii. 46—61; Mark xv. 34—47), Joseph of Arimathea went to ask of Pilate the body of the victim; he obtained it, and, accompanied by Nicodemus, who had brought to the sepulchre myrrh and aloes (John xix. 39), having bought a grave-cloth, he took down the body of Jesus from the cross, wrapped it with the spices and in the linen clothes (Mark xv. 46; Matt. xxvii. 59); and then, finally, the time being short, he hastened to lay it in a sepulchre near to Golgotha. We will conceive then that these holy women (who had contemplated from a distance these sorrowful scenes, until the moment they had shut, with a large stone, the entrance of the tomb) had only a little time left to return home, and to prepare there the perfumes they had for their use. The sabbath was about to commence, and whatever might be in their eyes the sanctity of their occupations, they ceased from them as soon as the sun had disappeared. Nothing could disturb them from the rest and silence of this day. (Luke xxiii. 56.) But as soon as it was ended (that is to say, at six o'clock on Saturday evening), they hastened to buy the spices, to complete the pious preparations which they had only been able to begin. This funeral work required a very considerable quantity of myrrh, aloes, and other substances; and no doubt, the

evening before, they had not perceived from such a distance that Nicodemus had already placed in the sepulchre a hundred pounds of perfumes.

All then even here is in perfect accord; and it is by these touching details that Luke and Mark have desired to exhibit, each on his part, the humble respect of these holy women for the law of the seventh day: the one (Luke xxiii. 56) by showing us with what submission they ceased from the most sacred cares—the other (Mark xvi. 1) with what scrupulosity they only took it up again at the hour that work was permitted.

B. Now as they went out to go to the sepulchre: John names only Mary Magdalene, because Jesus Christ had chosen her to be the first witness of the greatest of miracles, and she was the principal actor in his narration. He is careful however to make her say, "*We know not where they have laid him.*" (chap. xx. ver. 2.) In general the evangelists seem solicitous to accumulate witnesses. And if this appearance with which the holy women were favoured had not been the first, it is probable the sacred writers would not have made mention of it. This is what we may conclude from analogy, from the manner in which Paul proceeds (1 Cor. xv. 5—8), who only speaks of the apostles, and makes no mention of the women. His complete silence explains to us sufficiently the partial silence of the evangelists.

C. It was yet dark (John xx. 1) when the women left their dwelling, laden with their spices, *to go* to the sepulchre; but the sun had risen when they *arrived* there. (Mark xvi. 2.) We know that in these meridional latitudes the twilights of the evening and morning are very short.

D. They asked on the way, how they should roll away the enormous stone with which the sepulchral cavern was closed. (Mark xvi. 3.) During the rest and silence of the sabbath, how could they have known that guards had been placed there? (Matt. xxvii. 66.)

E. There had been, however, an earthquake. (Matt.

xxviii. 2.) An angel, brilliant as the light, and clothed with a resplendent robe, had descended from heaven, and had rolled away the stone; the keepers shook, became as dead men, and afterwards fled. But what was the astonishment of the women when, arrived at the tomb, they found it open and empty! Only a young man, clothed in a white robe, was seated in the sepulchre at the right side. (Mark xvi. 5.) Two men then presented themselves to them in dazzling raiment (Luke xxiv. 4); they were angels (Mark and Matthew only mention him who had rolled away the stone, and had spoken to them).

F. Now, these holy women, going out quickly from the sepulchre, fled; overcome at the same time with both terror and joy (Matt. xxviii. 8; Mark xvi. 8); they took care, in returning to the city, to say nothing to any one of what had happened. Did they fear the wrath of the Sanhedrim? or at least, did they desire only to share their emotions among their brethren? Notwithstanding the early hour, they must have met a great number of Jews at the approaches and in the public places of this immense city, where, during the feasts, they did not reckon less than three millions of inhabitants.

G. Arrived where the *eleven* and other disciples were, the women relate to them all that they had seen. (Matt. xxviii. 8; Luke xxiv. 9—11.) But their words seem to them only as a tale; then Mary Magdalene, addressing herself more particularly to Peter and John, assured them that at least, if their Master was not risen, they must have taken him away. (John xx. 2.)

H. According to the narrative of St. John, Mary must necessarily have said more on it to these two disciples than this evangelist relates to us directly; for he adds that *they* ran together to the sepulchre, and when John saw the arrangement of the clothes, *he believed*. But ah! this language of Mary, "They have taken away the Lord, and I know not where they have laid

him," was it not too natural? The transient apparition of angels had not produced so strong a conviction as that her faith was unshaken by the cold and incredulous reception of the apostles. She saw them treat as a fiction her celestial vision; nothing then remained to her but the material and common part of the fact. At least, she says, the sepulchre is open, and the body is no longer there!

I. Meanwhile, on hearing these words, and while Cleopas was gone to Emmaus, Peter rising (St. Luke tells us, xxiv. 12) ran to the tomb; but he did not go alone (ver. 24), and John tells us that he was accompanied by the other disciple whom Jesus loved. (John xx. 2, 3.) John the younger, arrived first; he did not enter in, but, stooping down, saw the linen clothes lying, and the napkin for the head, wrapped up in a place by itself (John xx. 7.) Peter following, had courage to enter, and was astonished at what had occurred. (Luke xxiv. 12.) John entered in his turn and believed. Then they returned home. (John xx. 10; Luke xxiv. 12.) There is nothing again in all this which is not in accordance.

K. Now, Mary Magdalene, who had followed them, having returned to the sepulchre, remained alone at the place in tears, and full of sorrow at not having found the body of her Master. She stooped down to look into the tomb, and it was then that once more she saw two angels clothed in white; they were sitting, the one at the head, the other at the foot, where the body of the Lord had lain. (John xx. 11—13.) Soon after Mary turning round saw Jesus himself. "Go," said he to her, "to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Mary hastened to go to announce to the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had said these things (John xx. 18), but they believed her not. (Mark xvi. 10, 11.)

It is thus that, as St. Mark says, Jesus appeared *first*

to Mary Magdalene. All this recital is natural and harmonious; the historians agree in a way we can easily perceive; only they each relate some one of the great facts of this memorable day, without thinking himself called on to relate all.

L. The two disciples (Luke xxiv. 21—24), on their departure from Jerusalem for Emmaus, had only known of the events of the day, the first report of the women and the two disciples, the opening of the sepulchre, the taking away the Lord, and the apparition of angels; but they had not been informed of the last intelligence, the appearance of Jesus to Simon Peter, and the second report of Mary (John xx. 18; Mark xvi. 10); nevertheless this had occurred later. At the example of Mary Magdalene, who had returned a second time to the sepulchre, after relating to the disciples her first discoveries, the other women had gone again there while Mary returned to the disciples; they found the tomb empty, and returning to assure their brethren that the body of Jesus was no longer there, Jesus himself had deigned to appear to them, living and full of sympathy. They had worshipped him, and he had said to them, "Fear not; go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me." (Matt. xxviii. 8—10.)

ANOTHER SOURCE OF RASH CONCLUSIONS.—Certain reigns, as those of Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiakim, and Tiberius, have had two commencements; and the dates assigned to them are held to be irreconcilable! The first, previously to ascending the throne, reigned three years with his father; the second reigned ten years with his father; and the third was associated with Augustus in the government, from the 28th of August in the second year of the Christian era, but nevertheless did not succeed Augustus until the 19th of August in the year 14.

Some examples.—See 2 Kings xxiv. 8; and 2 Chron.

xxxvi. 9. See also Daniel i. 1; ii. 1; Jer. xxv. 1; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 5—7; and Luke iii. 1.

ANOTHER SOURCE OF RASH CONCLUSIONS.—The design of the Holy Ghost in one Gospel, is not often the same as in another where the same fact is narrated (see p. 100); and yet cavillers are looking for a similarity in wording and detail; and they make any difference a pretext for declaring them at variance, and for exhibiting them as in direct opposition.

Example.—The Holy Ghost, in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, recorded in St. Matthew (chap. i. 1—17), designs to show *the Jews* that, according to the full requirement of their law, he is the Son and Heir of all the kings of Judah, *by a legal descent*; while in Luke iii. 23—38, the same Holy Ghost designs to show *the Gentiles* that Jesus Christ is the son of David *by a natural descent*. And because, with these two distinct objects, one gives us his genealogy according to *the law*, through Solomon, the son of David, and through Jacob, the father of Joseph, who was the husband of Mary—and the other his genealogy *according to nature*, through Nathan, another son of David, and through Heli, the father of Mary—it has been most unwarrantably thought possible to place them in opposition to each other.

ANOTHER SOURCE OF RASH CONCLUSIONS.—A text *badly translated* produces a meaning opposed to reason and history; and forthwith the sacred writer is accused of the grossest error! They do not give themselves the trouble to see whether, by the simplicity of a literal translation, this passage, when better rendered, may not be divested of every difficulty.

FIRST EXAMPLE.—St. Luke, we are told, as soon as he has spoken of *the taxing* (ii. 1), the ordinance for which was published by Augustus Cæsar at the time of the birth of Jesus, adds these words (ver. 2), “And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of

Syria." Hence it would follow, that St. Luke would here be found in notorious contradiction with contemporaneous history; because, at the birth of Jesus Christ, Judea was governed by Herod, and Syria was either under the government of Saturninus, or rather (from the fifth year before the Christian era) that of Quintilius Varus, who succeeded him, and under whose administration Herod the Great died. The Cyrenius (Publius Sulpitius Quirinius) under whom the second numbering took place, was not sent into the East until eleven or twelve years, at least, after the birth of Jesus Christ. The historian Josephus (Ant. Jud. xvii. 15; xviii. 3) tells us, in express terms, that this numbering was made in the year 37 after the defeat of Antony; and the Saviour was born, at the latest, the 26th year after this great event. It is therefore asserted that St. Luke is eleven years in error, and that he has confounded these two periods and the two numberings!*

But let us come to the passage itself. There is nothing more simple than its translation: it is a parenthesis. According to the accent and breathing which is upon the first word (*αυτην*), it becomes either a demonstrative pronoun, or a pronominal adjective; and with this alternative, the sentence ought, in the first case, to be translated literally by "this first taxing," and in the second case, by "even the first same taxing."

There is therefore nothing that is not perfectly natural and quite accurate in the account given by St. Luke. After having, in the first verse, spoken of a decree of Augustus, which began to be executed in the reign of Herod, he warns us, (in a parenthesis, ver. 2,) that what was then done must not be confounded with the too celebrated numbering (Acts v. 37), of which all Judea yet retained so tragical a remembrance.—"*Even the first same taxing took place,*" says he, "whilst

* One solution of this is,—that the "enrolment" was in A. D. 1, and the taxing itself ten years later.

Cyrenius was governor of Syria." This is the simple and literal translation of the Greek. Others however translate, "This taxing was made before that Cyrenius," &c.

SECOND EXAMPLE.—St. Matthew (chap. iv. 5), immediately after the first temptation, says, *the devil THEN took Jesus into the holy city*; and at the end of the second temptation, adds, by way of beginning the account of the third, "AGAIN, *the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain*," &c.

St. Luke, on the contrary (chap. iv. 5), immediately after the first temptation, says, that the devil AFTERWARDS *took him to a high mountain*; and when the second temptation closes, adds, as a commencement of the account of the third, "and he brought him to Jerusalem," &c.

Thus we find the two evangelists in manifest disagreement respecting the order of the three temptations. One of the two must necessarily be mistaken in placing the last before the second. So stands the objection.

We shall see, however, that this difficulty at once disappears, when we betake ourselves to a more faithful translation of the original text. We might here cite a goodly number of other passages (especially in the Epistles) which the translators have rendered obscure, by not sufficiently discriminating the conjunctions and adverbs *καὶ, δὲ, γὰρ, οὖν, τότε,* &c.

It is well known that St. Luke, in writing his Gospel, has not bound himself to observe the order of time; and that his plan of record was rather to group events and instruction after the order of things. Both these biographical methods have their respective advantages. Among the profane writers, for instance, Nepos has followed the former, and Suetonius the latter plan. It is therefore imperative that the translators of St. Luke should carefully observe his language, and not supply it with adverbs of time, order, and place, which he did not himself intend to employ, and which give so incongruous a change to his meaning. In the passage

before us, we have only to restore the Greek conjunctions, and the contradiction presented in the two French versions will immediately disappear.

St. Matthew, who invariably follows the chronological order of facts, is very careful in his use of adverbs as he proceeds in his account of the temptation: *τότε, τότε, πάλιν, τότε, τότε, then, then, again, then, then*. But St. Luke, on the contrary,—who does not propose to follow the same course, and who has no other intention than that of communicating to us the three attacks which the holy humanity of the Son of God was to sustain,—St. Luke, we say, carefully abstains from employing any adverb, either of order or time, and contents himself with ten times connecting the facts of his narrative by the copulative *and* (*καί*), which our translators have so improperly rendered by the adverbs “*then*” and “*afterwards*.” It is only by tracing the distinct character (says another) of each of the four Gospels, that we can get a view of the Lord Jesus Christ in all his ways. We may see him in his Jewish descent, more especially in St. Matthew (chap. i. 1—18); or more abroad among men in St. Luke (chap. iv. traces his genealogy to Adam); as the solitary Son of God in St. John; or as the social Son of man, the servant of sinners, in St. Mark (this last Gospel not tracing his genealogy or birth, but at once presenting his ministry from the baptism of John): but all this is only variety, and not incongruity. The history of any individual may present the same features. One biographer may present him in his domestic, another in his public, life; and to suit their different designs, they will not only at times take different facts, but different circumstances in the same facts; and both these things we see in the Gospels. And how much more easily may we discern and admit this, when He who was such an one as the Lord Jesus,—God and Man in one person, and not a mere individual of the human family,—is the theme and object of the history! In the Chroni-

cles, also, we get David and Solomon in a different light from that in which we see them in Samuel and Kings. The Chronicles present him in a typical and not in an historical way. Many circumstances are omitted which an historian must have noticed, and which therefore we get in the Books of Samuel and Kings; but which it was not needful to notice as far as David and Solomon were types of Messiah.

The contradiction therefore does not belong to the sacred text.

ANOTHER SOURCE OF RASH CONCLUSIONS.—It is not sufficiently borne in mind, that there are words and acts which are more than once repeated in the course of the Saviour's ministry; so that it is utterly unjustifiable to view that as a contradiction, in certain narratives of the two evangelists, where there is merely an incomplete resemblance, but in which, nevertheless, the reader may imagine identical facts are recorded.

EXAMPLES.—We have, in the double miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, a striking example of the facility with which one may be led into error by this means. Twice Jesus Christ, being moved with compassion towards the people, fed the hungry multitude in the desert. The circumstances of both these miracles have numerous and striking relations between them. If it had happened that two of the evangelists had narrated the first, and two others the second, how eagerly would cavillers have exhibited the identity of the two facts, and the contradiction of their details! "What! (it would be said,) in one case, five thousand men fed with five loaves; in the other, four thousand men fed with seven loaves! In the one case, twelve baskets (*κόφινους*) used to gather up the fragments; in the other seven, but of a different construction (*σπυρίδας*). What opposite statements!" Happily, while Luke and John have only mentioned the first miracle, Matthew and Mark, who relate the second, have also

recorded the other. Had this not been so; what a shout would have been raised in the adversaries' host! •

This observation may be applied to various features in the New Testament; for instance, to the Lord's Prayer, which was given at least twice to the disciples during our Lord's ministry. See Matt. vi. 9; Luke xi. 2. See also Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 1—4; Luke viii. 21; xi. 27; and Matt. xii. 49. Luke ix. 1; x. 1; and Matt. x. 1.

We would propose *one more example*. It does not appear, upon a close examination, that the sermon generally called the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matt. v. vi. vii.), and that recorded by St. Luke, in the last part of his sixth chapter, were delivered on the same occasion. (See Whitby on Matt. v. 5.) In fact Luke omits many sentences recorded by Matthew (for example, Matt. v. 13—39; chapter vi.; and vii. 6—16), and he alone adds some others (chap. v. 24—26). Secondly, Matthew informs us (chap. viii. 3) that the sermon which he records preceded the healing of the leper; and Luke (chap. v. 12) that his followed it. And thirdly, Luke places Matthew among the number of those whom Jesus had already called to the apostleship, and who descended with him from the mountain previously to the delivery of his sermon: while Matthew himself conveys that the sermon in question preceded, by a long interval, his calling. Fourthly, and lastly, one of the sermons was delivered *on the mountain*, while Jesus, who was seated, had his disciples round him; the other, on the contrary, was delivered in the plain, and under other circumstances. We dwell upon this remark for the benefit of those who may have heard the doctrine of Inspiration questioned, on the strength of the assumed contradiction in the sentence where Matthew records (chap. v. 40), "If any man take away thy coat (*χιτῶνα*), let him also have thy cloak" (*ἱμάτιον*); and where, according to St. Luke, it is said (chap. vi. 29), "Him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to

take thy coat also." Our answer to this is, that this diversity can no longer form a ground of objection, because the two sentences were spoken at different periods of time.

But we may add,—because the remark may also apply to several other objections of the same nature,—that, even if it were true that the two sentences in question might be quoted as the same fragment of the same sermon, the difference between them would not cause us the slightest astonishment. We believe that the Holy Ghost, when quoting himself, is not restricted to the use of the same terms, provided that he preserves the same sense. When a man of accurate mind repeats or quotes his own writings, he does not in anywise feel compelled to preserve the identity of the phrase thus far. And we judge, in the case before us, that the mind of our Lord is *equally* expressed in these two sentences of Luke and Matthew.

ANOTHER SOURCE OF RASH CONCLUSIONS.—The import of certain features in a narrative is not comprehended, and the conclusion is eagerly come to that the author is in fault.

FIRST EXAMPLE.—Jesus, in St. Matthew (xxiii. 35, 36), denounces the Jews on account of their treatment of his saints, and threatens them with the most terrible judgments of God; "that (he remarks) upon this race (or generation, *γενεά*) may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." There is certainly here (we are told) a grievous inadvertence; not, doubtless, on the part of Jesus Christ, but on the part of the evangelist who reports his words, and whose memory must have failed. We know, from the Second Book of Chronicles, (xxiv. 21,) that this Zacharias, who was stoned by the Jews in the holy place, was the son, not of Barachias, but of

Jehoiada. This is therefore an evident error. It does not affect doctrine, and cannot, in the slightest degree, be a ground of disquietude to our faith; but it suffices to show that the Inspiration could not have descended, as has been pretended, to the choice of expressions, or into the indifferent details of inspired narrations.

The answer is simple. We wish it were as easy to render it as short as it seems to us conclusive: we will give it at once, briefly. There is no reference here to the Zacharias of whom you speak; the evangelist has not therefore erred in not naming him, since he had him not in his mind. In fact, do you not see the incompatibility of such a supposition with the thought of Jesus Christ? What has he in view?—to recall the long catalogue of homicides of which an account would be exacted from the race of the Jews. And while he takes up their first murder before the flood, at the very portal of paradise, to make them responsible for it,—would you desire that he should be content to refer, for the last, to a crime committed more than eight centuries before he spoke? He commences at the son of Adam, and would you imagine that he could conclude with the son of Jehoiada, and thus hold the Jews innocent of the blood shed during 873 years, the most shameful period of their history? Would it not have been more rational to commence, rather than to end, with this Jehoiada? Were not the Jews far more responsible for their homicides, committed in their last nine centuries, than they could be for blood which was shed before the deluge? Had they not, for instance, pursued and killed, with fearful fury, the prophet Urijah? (Jer. xxvi. 23.) “Which of the prophets (demands Stephen) have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which predicted the coming of the Just One.” (Acts vii. 52.) There is therefore no reference to the son of Jehoiada in the passage of St. Matthew.

Our answer might terminate here; but it will doubtless be asked, Who then was the Zacharias of whom

Jesus Christ spake? If we did not know this, it would not be a difficulty, and we might satisfy ourselves by replying:—It was a righteous man whom the Jews slew, not only in *the court of the temple* as the son of Jehoiada, but “*between the temple and the altar;*” and this righteous man was *the son of Barachias!* The point, nevertheless, may be carried farther; for history enumerates to us two or three others of the same name, sons of Barachias (*Βαραχίου* or *Βαρούχου*), about whom the opinions of learned men are divided.

The first was “a man of understanding in the visions of God,” as he is represented in the Second Book of Chronicles (chap. xxvi. 5), and who, it is believed, is the person spoken of by Isaiah in his eighth chapter. (Hieron. in *Isaiam*, viii. 2; in the Septuagint, *Ζαχαρίαν υἱὸν Βαραχίου*.) However, he lived too short a time after the son of Jehoiada, for our objections against the one not to have equal weight against the other.

The second is the prophet Zechariah, son of Berechiah, and grandson of Iddo (Zech. i. 1), who came from Babylon with Zerubbabel, 325 years after the days of Jehoiada, and whose writings form the last book but one of the Old Testament. Scripture, it is true, has not recorded to us his martyrdom, any more than that of the other prophets, who were almost all persecuted and put to death.

The temple and the altar had just been rebuilt by his instrumentality, as by that of the prophet Haggai (Ezra vi. 14); and Zacharias, as it appears, was killed “between the temple and this altar.” We read in the *Targum*, or the Chaldee Paraphrase of Jonathan Ben Uzziel, who, it is believed, was contemporary with Jesus Christ (Prolegom. of Walton, 12), the following passage, which proves to us that such was already, previously to the time of our Saviour, the tradition of the Jews concerning this prophet, who was indifferently called the son of Iddo and son of Barachias (Zech. i. 1; Ezra v. 1—vi. 14). The Paraphrast (Lam. ii. 20) in-

troduces the "House of Judgment," answering to that lament of Jeremiah, "The priest and the prophet, have they not been slain in the temple of the Lord?" "Was it well of you to kill a prophet, as you did Zacharias, the son of Iddo, in the house of the sanctuary of the Eternal, because he endeavoured to reclaim you from your evil ways?" (Whitby on Matthew, xxiii. 35.) It may therefore be seen that Jesus Christ might remind the Jews of the sacrilegious murder of this prophet, the son of Barachias, son of Iddo, with which the prophecy of the Old Testament was to close.

IN CONNECTION WITH THESE SOURCES OF RASH CONCLUSIONS,—there is a rule which has not been sufficiently kept in view, and we will set it before our readers in the words of Peter Martyr:—

"Although some passages may appear obscure, as respects chronology, we must be very careful of attempting to reconcile them by imputing faults to the inspired book. On this account, if it sometimes happen that we cannot clearly make out the number of years, we should simply confess our ignorance, and consider that the Scriptures express themselves with so much conciseness, that it is not always possible for us to discover at what period such or such a computation should be commenced. It often occurs that, in the history of the kings of Judah and of Israel, the respective number of their years is not easily reconciled; but these difficulties are explained and adjusted in various ways:—1. The same year commenced by one of the two, and ended by the other, is attributed to both.—2. The sons often reigned with their fathers, during a few years, which are imputed sometimes to the one and sometimes to the other.—3. There were often interregnums, which Scripture sometimes annexes to the reign of the predecessor, and sometimes to the successor.—4. Finally, it sometimes happens that certain years in which oppressive and profane princes have

reigned, are looked upon as void, and therefore are not reckoned."

We conceive that the examples which we have already cited will suffice, and that we need not multiply their number. What we have said fairly indicates the weight which is due, generally, to the difficulties which are advanced; for we have been careful to review those of them which have been characterised as the most serious. Warned by these examples and by many others, let us learn, when henceforth we meet with any difficulty of the same nature, to think as did, sixteen hundred years ago, Julius Africanus, the friend of Origen, and as have done all the men of God who have lived before and after him: "However it may be—(said he, in reference to the two genealogies of Jesus Christ which he had reconciled)—however it may be, assuredly the Gospel, in all and every part, speaks truly!" (Euseb. Eccles. Hist. book i. ch. vii.)

Errors contrary to the Philosophy of Nature.

It must be admitted (we are sometimes told) that though the apparent or real contradictions which are traced in the dates, quotations, and narratives of Scripture, are susceptible of removal by the resources of an explanatory review, more or less searching and laborious, yet that there are others which cannot be reconciled. These are, all those expressions in which the sacred writers present themselves in manifest opposition to the now better known laws of nature. Nevertheless (add they), if this argument is conclusive against the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, it in no respect compromises the Divinity of their doctrines, any more than the truth of the important religious facts which they record for us. In inspiring his apostles and prophets, God's design was not to make us learned men, but saints. He could, therefore, without danger, leave the sacred writers to speak with ignorance of the phe-

nomena of the material world; their prejudices on such matters were innocent but unquestionable. Do you not often find them expressing themselves as though the earth were immovable, and the sun in motion?—"His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it." (Psa. xix. 6.) The moon and stars are equally in motion. The sun, at the command of Joshua, stood still over Gibeon in the midst of the heavens, and the moon over the valley of Ajalon. (Josh. x. 12.) The earth is "founded upon the seas" (Psalm xxiv. 5); "standing out of the water and in the water" (2 Peter iii. 5): God has "laid its foundations, that it should not be removed for ever." (Psalm civ. 5.) Can you admit that this is really the language of the Creator of heaven and earth speaking to his creature?

We proceed to reply to this objection, which we rejoice to meet with on our way, because its examination can have no other issue than the glory of the Scriptures.

We would fully admit that, if any physical errors could be proved to exist in sacred writ, it would not be a book from God; but we will demonstrate that it contains no such errors; and we venture to defy our adversaries to cite one from the entire Bible. We will even go much farther, and show, on the contrary, how large a store of science is latent in the very simplicity of its language.

Let us then examine this reproach. We will, in the first place, ask those who give it utterance, whether they desire that the Bible should speak as did Sir Isaac Newton? Would they forget that if God were to express himself about the scenes of nature,—I will not say according to their appearance in his sight, but according to what they may appear to the learned of future generations,—the great Newton himself would then have comprehended nothing? Moreover, the language even of those most advanced in science is now, and ever will be, after all, but the language of appear-

ances. Is it desirable that the Bible should speak to us concerning the scenes of nature in a manner different to that in which we speak to each other in our social or domestic relations?—otherwise even than two of the most enlightened men would converse? When Sir John Herschel gave directions to his servants that they should call him exactly at midnight to observe the passage of some star in its lunar meridian, would he feel himself obliged to speak to them of the earth, of its rotation, and of the moment when it shall have returned to the *nadir* in the course of its revolution? Surely not: and had you heard him converse, even in the Observatory at Greenwich, with the learned Airy, you would have found that even in the sanctuary of science the habitual language of these astronomers is still in close resemblance to that of the Scriptures. With them the stars rise, the equinoxes recede, the planets revolve, accelerate, stop, and retrograde in their courses. Would you then wish that Moses had spoken to all generations of men a more scientific language than that of La Place or Arago?

But there is far more than this. We would here bring into view two striking facts, which burn with vivid lustre as soon as they are examined, and which at once discover in the Scriptures the pen of the Omnipotent God. Here, as everywhere else, the objections when closely examined become arguments, and turn upon those who originate them, to the triumph of truth.

These two facts are analogous to what may be observed in the language of a learned astronomer conversing with his children of tender years, and pointing out to them with his finger the heavens and the earth. If you follow him in this intercourse, in which his tenderness stooping to their level presents to their opening intelligence images and words which they can understand, you will soon be struck with his respect for truth in two ways:—First, he will never tell them anything but what is true; and secondly, there will be in his

language very manifest indications that he knows more than he wishes to impart to them. He would undoubtedly not pretend to instruct them in science; but on the one hand, nothing in his communications would contradict its principles; and, on the other, much of what he said would show that what he was silent about he yet thoroughly understood. At a later period of time, when his children having attained to manhood would reconsider his instruction, not only would they find it exempt from all error, but they would moreover recognise that by its wise adaptation to their capacity it was already in pre-established harmony with science, and that its germ had been presented to their unconsciousness. In proportion as their own mental powers unfolded, they would with admiration discover under the reserve and simplicity of his language much concealed wisdom, learned and accurate observations, turns of phrase and expressions which harmonised with facts to them at the time unknown, but with which he had himself long been familiar.

Well, such is also the double character which every attentive reader may discern in the language of the Scriptures. They speak in poetry, but with precision, the true language of appearances. We there hear a Father who addresses himself to the youngest of his children; but in such a manner that the eldest of them can never find a single sentence contrary to the true condition of the things which he has created; and in such a manner also, that he frequently and unconstrainedly, as it were, suffers expressions to escape him which shall show them that what they have learned of his works during four thousand years, he knew before them and better than they. Thus it is that, in the Bible, Eternal Wisdom addresses itself to its children. In proportion as they advance to riper years, they find the Scripture suited to their age, adapted to their mental development, appearing to grow with their growth, and always exhibiting to them the two facts which we

have dwelt upon,—on the one hand, the absence of all error; and on the other, indirect but incontestable indications of a science which has preceded all that man ever possessed.

First fact.—There is no physical error in the Word of God.

If there were, as we have already said, the Bible could not be from God. “God is not man, that he should lie;” nor a son of man, that he should be mistaken. He must undoubtedly stoop even to our weakness, to be understood by us; but without however in any degree participating in it. His language always testifies of his condescension, but never of his ignorance.

This remark is more important than it appears to be before it has been reflected on. It becomes very forcible on a close examination.

Examine all the false theologies of both the ancients and moderns; read in Homer or Hesiod the religious code of the Greeks; examine that of Buddhists, Brahmins, or Mahomedans, and you will there find not only revolting systems as respects the Divinity, but the grossest errors relative to the natural world. Their theology would doubtless shock; but their natural philosophy and astronomy also, always associated with their religion, involve notions the most absurd.

Read further the philosophy of Grecian and Roman antiquity. What sentences do you not find there!—one of which would alone suffice to compromise all our doctrines of Inspiration, if it were met with in any book of the sacred Scripture. Read Mahomet’s Koran, creating the mountains “to prevent the earth from moving, and to hold it as by anchors and cables!” What do I say?—read even the descriptions of Buffon, or some of the sarcasms of Voltaire, on the subject of a deluge, or on the fossil animals of the primitive world. We will go much farther: read moreover we will not say the absurd reasonings of heathens,—of Lucretius, Pliny, and Plutarch, against the theory of the anti-

podes,—but of the Fathers themselves of the Christian Church. Hear the theological indignation of St. Augustine, who declares it to be opposed to the Scriptures; and the scientific eloquence of Lactantius, who believes it to be contrary to sound sense: he exclaims, “Is there any one so ignorant as to believe that there are men having legs above their heads; trees having fruit hanging upwards; and hail, rain, and snow falling from below upwards?” They answer (he adds) by affirming that the earth is a globe. “One knows not what to say of such men, who, once astray, plunge headlong in their folly, and defend one absurdity by another!”

Hear yet the legate Boniface accusing Virgilius to the pope as a heretic; hear Pope Zachary treating this unfortunate bishop as “a malignant.” “If it be proved (he writes) that Virgilius maintains that there are other men under this earth, assemble a council, condemn him, depose him from the priesthood, and expel him from the church!” Hear, at a later period, all the higher order of the clergy in Spain, and especially the grave and authoritative council of Salamanca, in its indignation against the geographical system by which Columbus sought a new world. Hear at the period of the birth of Newton the renowned Galileo,—who (says Kepler) scaled the highest walls of the universe, and who justified, by his genius as well as by his telescope, the forgotten and condemned system of Copernicus: behold him groaning at the age of eighty in the dungeons of Rome, for having discovered the earth’s motion, after having been compelled ten years previously (the 28th of June, 1633) to pronounce the following words before their Eminences, at the palace of the Holy Office:—“I, Galileo, in the seventieth year of my life, on my knees before your Eminences, having before my eyes and touching with my own hands the Holy Scriptures, abjure, curse, and abhor the error of the earth’s motion!”

What might not have been justly said against the Scriptures, if they had spoken of the phenomena of nature, as all the ancient sages have spoken of them? if they had resolved everything to four elements, as was done for so long a period?

But now open the Bible, examine the fifty sacred authors therein, from the admirable Moses—who wrote in the wilderness four hundred years before the siege of Troy—to the fisherman son of Zebedee, who wrote fifteen hundred years later in Ephesus and Patmos, under the reign of Domitian;—open the Bible, and see if you can find anything similar there. You cannot. None of those mistakes which the science of every century detects in the books of preceding generations,—none of those absurdities which modern astronomy brings to light in the writings of the ancients, in their sacred codes, in their philosophy, and even in the most attractive pages of the Fathers of the church,—not one of these errors can be found in our sacred books; nothing there will contradict anything that the investigations of the learned world during so many centuries have been able to disclose respecting the condition of our globe, or that of the heavens. Carefully go through our Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, in search of such faults, and as you carry on the investigation, remember that it is a book which treats of everything,—which describes nature, which recounts its wonders, which recites its creation, which tells us of the formation of the heavens, of the light, of the waters, of the air, of mountains, of animals, and of plants;—that it is a book which acquaints us with the first revolutions of the world, and which foretels also its last;—that it is a book which describes them with circumstantial details, invests them with sublime poetry, and chants them in fervent melodies;—that it is a book replete with eastern imagery, full of majesty, variety, and boldness;—that it is a book which treats of the earth and things visible, and at the same time of the celestial world and things

invisible;—that it is a book in which nearly fifty writers of every degree of cultivation, of every order, of every condition, and separated from one another by fifteen hundred years, have been engaged;—that it is a book written variously in the centre of Asia, in the sands of Arabia, in the deserts of Judea, in the porches of the Jewish temple, or in the rustic schools of the prophets of Bethel and Jericho; in the magnificent palaces of Babylon, and on the idolatrous banks of the Chebar; and afterwards in the centre of western civilisation, in the midst of the Jews and their ignorant conceits, among polytheism and its idols, and as it were in the bosom of pantheism and its foolish philosophy;—that it is a book whose first writer was during forty years the pupil of those magicians of Egypt, who regarded the sun, planets, and elements as endowed with intelligence, re-acting on the elements, and governing the world by continual effluvia;—that it is a book whose first pages preceded by more than NINE HUNDRED YEARS the most ancient philosophers of Greece and Asia, Thales, Pythagoras, Zaleucus, Xenophon, and Confucius;—that it is a book which carries its records into the scenes of the invisible world, the hierarchy of angels, the latest periods of futurity and the glorious consummation of all things. Well, search in its 50 authors, search in its 66 books, search in its 1189 chapters, and its 31,173 verses; search for a single one of the thousand errors with which every ancient and modern author abounds, when they speak of heaven or of the earth, of their revolutions or their elements, —and you will fail to find it.

Its language is unconstrained and without reserve; it speaks of everything, and in every form of words; it is the prototype, it is the inimitable model; it has inspired all that poetry has produced in its most elevated character. Ask Milton, Racine, or Young and Klopstock; they will tell you that its Divine strains are by far the most harmonious, commanding, and

sublime; it rides upon a cherub, and walks upon the wings of the wind! And yet this book never does violence to facts, nor to the principles of sound natural philosophy. Never in one single sentence will you find it in opposition to the just ideas which science has given us regarding the form of our globe, its magnitude and its geology; or respecting the void and vast expanse; or the inert and obedient materiality of all the stars; or the planets, their masses, courses, dimensions, and influences; or the suns which people the depths of space, their number, nature, and immensity. In like manner, in speaking of the invisible world, and on the new, unknown, and difficult subject of angels, this book will not exhibit even one of its authors who, in the course of the 1560 years which have been occupied in producing it, has varied in the character of love, humility, fervour, and purity, which belongs to these mysterious beings.

There is therefore no physical error whatever in the Scriptures; and this transcendant fact, which becomes more admirable in proportion as it is made the subject of closer investigation, is a striking proof of the inspiration which dictated them, even in the choice of their least expressions.

But we present the *Second fact*.

Not only has the Bible not admitted a false sentence or expression, but it has even often suffered words to escape which enable us to recognise, without the possibility of misapprehension, the omniscience of the Almighty. His great purpose without doubt was to reveal to us the eternal glories of the invisible world, not the barren secrets of that which is about to perish. Nevertheless it often happens that an attentive ear discovers in his language science which it is not his object to teach, but of which He cannot be ignorant whose knowledge is an unfathomable abyss. Not only does the Bible never tell us anything false, even incidentally, but you will often discover words which betray the

voice of the Creator of the world. Continually you will recognise a wisdom, a foreknowledge, and an exactness which former ages could not question, but which only the discoveries of the telescope, mathematics, and science have enabled the moderns to appreciate; so that its language bears in these features the indelible characters of the fullest inspiration. The wise and choice selection of its expressions,—the nature of certain accounts, whose perfect propriety and Divine accordance with the facts were not revealed until three thousand years afterwards,—the reserve of its language, sometimes its very boldness, and its unusual character for the times in which it was written,—all these signs bespeak the Wise One, the Ancient of Days, who undoubtedly addresses children, but who speaks like the father of the family, and who well knows all his household.

When the Scriptures speak of the form of our earth, they term it a **GLOBE**. (Isa. xl. 22; Job xxvi. 10; Prov. viii. 27.) When they speak of the position of the globe in the midst of the universe, it is **SUSPENDED UPON NOTHING**. (Job xxvi. 7.) When they speak of its age, not only do they put its creation, as well as that of the heavens, **AT THE BEGINNING**, that is to say before ages which they cannot or desire not to number; but they are careful to place before the arranging of chaos and the creation of man that of angels, archangels, principalities, and powers, their trial, the fall and ruin of some, and the preservation and glory of others.*—When afterwards they speak of the origin of our continents, and the later creation of plants, animals, and men, they then give to this new world and to our proud race so recent an existence, that in every age and among all nations, and even in our mo-

* Nehem. ix. 6. Col. i. 16. Dan. vii. 10, compare with Jude i. 6. Gen. iii. 1, 13, 15. Rev. xx. 2; xii. 9, 12. Gen. iii. 24. John viii. 44. 2 Pet. ii. 4, 9, 10. John xii. 3.

dern schools, there have been those who have daringly rebelled against it; but nevertheless an age to which the learned and the vulgar have been compelled alike to yield, since the labours of De Luc, Cuvier, and Buckland have so fully demonstrated that the state of the earth's surface, as well as the monuments of history and of science, incontestably authenticate it.—When they speak of the heavens, they employ to designate and define them the most sublime and philosophical expressions which the Greeks in the Septuagint, the Latins in the Vulgate, and all the Fathers of the church in their sermons, have pretended to improve, but which they have distorted because they appeared to them opposed to the science of their times. The heavens in the Bible are *the expanse, expansum* (Gen. i. 6; Psa. xix. 1); it is the void, the ether or boundless space, and not the *firmamentum* of St. Jerome; nor the *stereoma* of the Alexandrian interpreters; nor the firm, solid, crystalline and incorruptible *eighth heaven*, of Aristotle and all the ancients. And although this remarkable Hebrew term occurs seventeen times in the Old Testament, and although the LXX. uniformly renders it by *stereoma* (*firmament*), the New Testament Scripture has never once used it in the sense employed by the Greek interpreters.*—When they speak of light, it is presented as an element independent of the sun, and as anterior by three distinct periods to that in which this glorious luminary was lighted (Gen. i. 4, 14): anticipating thus the systems of moderns, which lead us to suppose with the great Newton, that the universe contains an ether perfectly subtle, highly elastic, existing everywhere, whose contractions and dilations produce not only the varied phenomena of light, but those even of gravitation.—When they speak of the creation of plants, they exhi-

* The New Testament Scripture has employed it once, but to designate something very different to the heavens. Col. ii. 5.

bit them vegetating, increasing, and bearing seed before the appearance of the sun, and under conditions of light, heat, and moisture, which differ much from those which sustain vegetation in the present day (Gen. i. 12); and it is thus that they reveal many thousand years since an order of things which fossil botany has in later times established as incontestable, the necessity of which is attested by the gigantic vegetable remains which have recently been discovered in Canada and Baffin's Bay.—When the Scriptures speak of air, whose gravity was unknown before Galileo, they tell us that God giveth to the air its WEIGHT, and to the seas their just measure.—When they speak of our atmosphere, and of “the waters which are above,” an importance is assigned to them which modern science alone could establish; since, according to its calculations, the force which nature annually employs in the formation of clouds is equal to a work which the whole human race could not accomplish in less than two hundred thousand years.—And when they separate the waters which are beneath from those which are above, it is by *an expanse*, and not by a solid sphere, as both Greek and Latin translators have sought to show.—When they speak of the mountains, they discriminate two classes of facts; they speak of them as *created*, and as *rising*, and as *melting* like wax; they speak of the sinking of the valleys; in a word, they speak of them as a geological poet would speak in our day: “The mountains ascend, O Lord! and the valleys descend to the place which thou hast appointed for them.”*—When they speak of the human race, of every tribe, colour, and language, they give them one sole origin; and although the philosophy of every age has determinedly revolted against this truth, moderns have at length been constrained to acknow-

* Psa. civ. 6—9 (marginal reading). Gen. ii. 14; viii. 4. Psa. xc. 2. Prov. viii. 25. Psa. xcvi. 5; cxliv. 5. Zech. iv. 4, 8. Ezek. xlvii.

ledge it.—When they speak of the internal state of our globe, they declare two great facts of which learned men were long ignorant, but which have been rendered incontestable by their late discoveries,—one relative to its solid crust, and the other to the abyss of water which it encloses.—When they speak of its solid covering, they inform us that if its surface yields us bread, yet, beneath, the earth is **ON FIRE**;^{*} that moreover “it is reserved for the fire,” and that at the last day “the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” (2 Pet. iii. 10.)—And when they speak of the waters which our globe contains, they render the sole explanation, at least in this relation, of the immense overflowings under which (upon the evidence of scientific men themselves) it has at various periods been long and completely submerged.—And while these men tell us of the little depth of the sea, and affirm that an uprising of only two hundred yards, or half as high again as the tower of Strasburg, would suffice to dissipate the Baltic, the North Sea, and St. George’s Channel; and that if Mont Blanc, or at least Chimborazo, were thrown into the Pacific Ocean, it would be lofty enough to constitute an island; while La Place has felt justified in concluding from the height of the tides that the mean depth of the ocean does not exceed a thousand yards (the height of Hecla), and while they would demonstrate to us the absolute insufficiency of the seas for the vast submersions which our globe has undergone, the Scriptures tell us “the earth has been drawn out of the water, and that it subsists among the waters” (2 Pet. iii. 5), and that its solid crust encloses a **GREAT ABYSS**, whose fountains were broken up at the time of the deluge (Gen. vii. 11), as at that of chaos, and the innumerable ages which preceded it.—When they speak of the Flood, they suppose inundations and disorder such as infidels of former times have ever con-

* Job xxvii., literally rendered.

sidered too mighty for belief; and yet in the present day geologists rather feel them to be insufficient to account for all the devastation they find in examining the earth.—When they recount the circumstances and the progress of this immense submersion, they reveal facts which the science of moderns has not yet universally adopted, but which it cannot contradict, any more than it can other facts,—an internal fire, which, by increasing the temperature of the mighty waters, would on the one hand cause an excessive evaporation and impetuous rains, as if the barriers of heaven were removed; and on the other, an irresistible rarefaction, which not only raised the waters from their retreat, broke up the fountains of the GREAT DEEP, and swelled the overwhelming waves to the level of the highest mountains, but which caused immense deposits of chalk, under the double action of excessive heat and of a pressure equal to 8000 atmospheres!—When they describe the state of our globe anterior to its being called into form, they attribute to it internal heat and fire, and cover it entirely with water in its state of liquidity.—When they narrate the creation of birds and fishes, they give them a common origin; and it is known that modern naturalists have proved that between these two classes of animals there exist very intimate relations; not indeed appearing outwardly to the eye, but which their anatomy has disclosed, and even to the microscopic form of the globules of their blood.—When they arrest the course of the sun (that is to say the earth's rotation), in the days of Joshua the son of Nun, they are careful to stay the moon also, in the same proportion and by the same cause,—a precaution which, as Chaubard shows, no astronomer ignorant of our diurnal motion could have imagined, since, after all that has been said, this miracle involves nothing more than the prolongation of the day. (Josh. x. 12.)—When they tell of the Lord's arrival as lightning, “in the twinkling of an eye,” at the last day, they bear an additional testimony to the

earth's rotation and to the existence of the antipodes; because at that solemn interval it will be the day for one part of the world's inhabitants, and night for the other. (Luke xvii. 31, 34; Matt. xxiv.)—When they describe the bygone and future riches of the land of Canaan, to which a marvellous power of vegetation is promised in the last days, it is termed rich, not only in fountains, but in "subterranean waters" (Deut. viii. 7); and they seem to anticipate the idea of draining, by which the moderns have learned to fertilise a barren country.—When they speak of the languages of men, they give them a primitive unity, which seems to be contradicted by a cursory view of the varied speech of nations, but which a deeper examination confirms.—When they narrate the deliverance of Noah, they give to the rainbow dimensions which at the first aspect we find too limited, which we should have multiplied a hundredfold had we been charged with the recital, but which mature study of the fact has established as sufficient.—When they speak of the number of the stars, instead of supposing a thousand (1022), like the catalogue of Hipparchus; or exactly 1026, like that of Ptolemy; while in the two hemispheres together the most experienced vision cannot discover more than 5000; while previously to the invention of the telescope the eye could not count more than a thousand under the most favourable circumstances;—the Scriptures declare that they are INNUMERABLE. (Gen. xv. 5.) They compare them, as Herschel has done, to the sand of the sea; they tell us that God has scattered them with his hand like dust throughout the immensity of space, and yet that "he calleth them all by their names."—When they speak of space, hear with what profound wisdom and sublimity it is pourtrayed; how careful in its noble poetry, how wise in its sublimity! "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the EXPANSE showeth his handywork. There is no speech nor language, nevertheless their voice is heard."—When they speak of the

relations which the stars bear to this sublunary world, instead of supposing them animated, as did the ancients; instead of even attributing to them any influence upon human affairs, as was so long persisted in by the Christian states of France and Italy, even to the period of the Reformation, they tell us that they are inert matter, luminous indeed, but arranged and dependent; the heavens, even the heaven of heavens, proceed with order, with the oneness and unity of an army which advances to the conflict. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath created all these things? He who bringeth out their host by order, and who calleth them all by their names; not one faileth. Why then sayest thou, O Jacob, My way is hid from the Lord, and my God sustains not my right?" (Isa. xl. 26, 27.) —When they describe the heavens, they carefully discriminate a threefold character:—in the first place, the heaven of the birds, of tempests, of the powers of the air, and of wicked spirits; then the heaven of the starry host; and lastly, *the third heaven, the heaven of heavens*. But when they speak of the God of all this, how exalted yet how gentle is their language! "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters." (Psa. lxxvii. 19.) "Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." (1 Kings viii. 27.) "Within what bounds will you confine Him?" "To what will ye liken God?" (Isa. xl. 18.) "He has set his glory above the heavens, and he humbleth himself even to behold the things that are in heaven." "If you would take the wings of the morning, and fly with the rapidity of light, whither would you go far from his face, or flee from his presence?" (Psalm cxxxix. 7.) And when they have thus dwelt upon these visible glories, they tell us further, "Lo; these are but parts of his ways; how little the portion that is known of him!" (Job xxvi. 14.) And finally, having as it were exhausted language in recounting all his greatness as Creator, they add, "He telleth the number of the stars, yet he healeth the

broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds" (Psalm cxlvii. 3); "admirable in counsel, and wonderful in means, yet he puts our tears into his bottle" (Psalm lvi. 8); "a sparrow falleth not to the ground without his permission, and the very hairs of our head are all numbered." (Matt. x. 29, 30.) "This eternal God (O righteous man!) is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deut. xxxiii. 27.) "O Lord, how manifold are thy works!" (Psa. civ. 24;) "but thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name!"

And now in the midst of all these marvels, "where shall we find wisdom,—and where is the place of understanding? The abyss saith, It is not in me; and the sea answers, It is not with me. God alone understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof; for he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven. When he gave to the air its weight, and to the waters their just measure; when he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder; then did he see wisdom, and explored its depths; then he said unto man, To fear the Lord, that is thy wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding." (Job xxviii.)

Such then is the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures: and it is thus we find only the reflection of heavenly radiance, where some have thought to discover a stain. If with a calm and reverential hand you draw aside the veil which appears sometimes to shroud these truths from your view, you will discover a majestic splendour; for the Scriptures descend, like Moses from the holy mount, bearing to us the tables of testimony. Where you have dreaded obscurity, there you find light; where there has been raised an objection, God converts it into a witness; where there has been a doubt, there rests an assurance.

We conclude therefore, in regard to this seventh objection, that the difficulties still become the proofs; and that on this point, as on all others, we must in every

page throughout the Bible recognise the utterance of God.

But now let us hear a final objection.

The Avowals of St. Paul.

We are sometimes told, it would be superfluous to attempt to dispute respecting the fact of a partial or occasional inspiration of the Scriptures, since the apostle Paul himself has cut short the question. Has he not, in fact, been careful to distinguish what he gave by inspiration from what he wrote in his own name, as a simple believer? And do we not perceive in his First Epistle to the Corinthians that he three times clearly expresses this distinction, on the occasion of several questions which had been addressed to him on the subject of marriage?

In the first place, in the twenty-fifth verse of the seventh chapter, he says, "Now, concerning virgins, I have **NO COMMANDMENT FROM THE LORD**; yet I express **A JUDGMENT**, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful."

Again, in the tenth verse of the same chapter, he writes, "And unto the married I command, **YET NOT I, BUT THE LORD**; let not the wife depart from her husband, and let not the husband put away his wife."

And finally in the twelfth verse, where he adds, "But to the rest speak I, **NOT THE LORD**: if any brother hath a wife that believeth not, let him not put her away," &c.

They see clearly in these three sentences that there are in the apostle's epistles some passages which are from Paul himself, and other passages which are from God; that is to say, some passages which are inspired, and others which are not.

The answer is easy.

As soon as these objections are looked into more closely, it will be found that it is not possible to em-

ploy them against the doctrine of a plenary inspiration.

Far from setting limits to the Divine character of the apostolic words, these verses on the contrary employ a language which the most entire and most supreme inspiration could alone justify. St. Paul could not have thus spoken otherwise than by placing his epistles, as St. Peter has done, (2 Pet. iii. 16,) I was going to say, "UPON A LEVEL with the rest of the Holy Scriptures;" but we must say, ABOVE them; inasmuch as he gives utterance in them to a more recent and more obligatory expression of the Lord's will. Of this we shall proceed to judge.

What does the apostle of Jesus Christ do in the seventh chapter?—He there treats of three cases of conscience. With regard to one of these, God says he has neither commanded anything, nor forbidden anything. "He who marries his virgin sins not. I am not herein charged with *any command*; but in my character of apostle, it is *an advice* only which I give you on the part of the Lord;" and he is careful to add, at verse 40, "and I think also that I have the Spirit of God." The Lord in this matter, says the apostle, leaves you free; he does not cast a snare in your way, and if you do not think fit to follow the general counsel which is given you, you do not thereby violate any commandment: you do not sin. Only he who marries does well; but he who marries not does better.

With regard to the second case, on the contrary, be careful; because THERE IS A COMMANDMENT FROM THE LORD. The Lord has already pronounced his will (Matt. v. 31, 32; Mal. ii. 14, 15), and I have nothing further to add to it. It is therefore NOT I the apostle of Jesus Christ, IT IS THE LORD HIMSELF who has already made known his will:—"To those among Christians who are married, I command, yet not I, but the Lord, that the wife separate not herself

from her husband, and that the husband put not away his wife." (1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.)

But with regard to the third case, I mean respecting brethren who are married to unbelieving wives, you had a commandment from the Lord in the Old Testament; I now revoke it, and "*I think also that I have the Spirit of the Lord.*" I abolish the ancient order, and I am charged to replace it by a contrary rule.

We have heard some persons oppose to us further (as an avowal of the intermission or imperfection of his inspiration), those words of St. Paul, in which, writing to the Corinthians (Second Epist. xii.) about his visions and revelation in the third heaven, he adds, "*Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth.*" Can it be supposed (we have heard it asked) that the Holy Spirit should be ignorant how this miracle was accomplished? Such a verse must therefore belong to Paul, and cannot be from God.

We answer, that if the Holy Spirit knew it well, Paul did not; and the Holy Spirit willed that he should himself inform us of his ignorance. Is it forgotten that God, in order to reveal himself to us, has never ceased to employ in the Scriptures the personality of the sacred writers; and that it is under this form that he has almost constantly willed to instruct his church? When David, speaking by the Spirit, exclaims in the Psalms that he knows his transgressions; that his sin is ever before him; and that he was shapen in iniquity; it is not certainly the Holy Spirit who speaks of knowing his own transgressions, and has his own sins before his eyes; but it is the Holy Spirit who for our advantage has put these words of repentance into the heart and upon the lips of the humbled prophet. And it is also in an analogous sense that he has caused St. Paul to say, "*Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth.*"

We have not, however, done with objections. There are three others, to which we have given the name of

evasions; because, instead of resting like the former upon any argument or fact, they partake more of the nature of systems, by which some have sought to separate portions of the Scriptures, as unaffected by Divine Inspiration. We proceed therefore to examine them.

CHAPTER IV.

EXAMINATION OF THE EVASIONS OF THOSE WHO REJECT THE PLENARY INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

SOME persons, while fully admitting that the subject-matter of Scripture has been given by God, at the same time maintain that the style and expressions are purely human;—others exclude from inspiration the books which are historical;—and others have wished at least to expunge certain details which to them appeared too trivial to be attributed to the Spirit of God.

May not Inspiration pertain to the Thoughts without extending to the Words?

In writing their sacred books, say some, the prophets and apostles were undoubtedly inspired with regard to their thoughts, but we must believe that they were afterwards left to themselves as regards their language; so that the ideas are given to us, in this written revelation, from God, but the expressions by man.—The Divine Spirit may have presented the sacred truths to the minds of the prophets and evangelists, only leaving to them the care of expressing them. And this manner of viewing their work, it is added, will very felicitously supply us with the reason of the striking differences of style which their respective records display. We answer:—

1. That this system is directly contrary to the testimony of the Scripture. The Bible declares itself to

have been written, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." (1 Cor. ii. 13.) It calls itself—the Word of God;—the words of God (throughout);—the voice of God;—the oracles of God (Rom. iii. 2);—the living oracles of God (Acts vii. 38);—the Holy Scripture (2 Tim. iii. 15);—the writing of God. A writing consists of letters and words, and not alone of invisible thoughts; now "all SCRIPTURE is inspired by God," we are told. (2 Tim. iii. 16.) What is WRITTEN is therefore inspired of God, and that which is inspired of God is "ALL SCRIPTURE;" this comprehends ALL that is written.

2. If this system is contrary to the Scripture, it is also irrational. The ideas of our fellow-men take a form in words; and in this way only can they be understood. Mind can only be revealed to us through the flesh. Its character is unknown; its desires, its experience, we know not; we do not even suspect their existence, nor can we trace their associations, until after they have been invested with a body (as it were), and received organs through which to manifest themselves to us.

Language is therefore the wondrous mirror which reflects to us the depths of our being.

It is easy to understand how very irrational is the supposition of receiving with exactitude and certainty the thoughts of another, through the medium of inexact and uncertain expressions. Are they received otherwise than by words? And without the words of God himself, how could we be sure of possessing the thoughts of God?

3. This theory of a Divine revelation, in which you would have the inspiration of the thought without the inspiration of the language, is so irrational, that it cannot be sincere: and it presently fails even those who advance it;—for they must see that it obliges them to descend much lower with their arguments than their first position seemed to indicate. Let us hear them.

The *words* are of man, say they, the *thoughts* are those of God. And how will they prove this to us? Alas! once more by attributing to this written Word of God contradictions, mistakes, and misconceptions! Is it then only the words which they impeach?—and are not these pretended errors much more in the thoughts than in the words? So true it is that we cannot separate the one from the other; and that a revelation of the thought of God ever demands an inspiration of the WORD of God.

4. This theory is not only unscriptural, irrational, and mischievous, but it is moreover arbitrarily assumed; and is a mere gratuitous hypothesis.

5. It is moreover very useless, for it determines nothing. You have a difficulty, say you, in conceiving how the Holy Spirit could have given the words of the Holy Scriptures; but can you better tell us how he gave the thoughts to which they give expression? Would it for instance be more easy for you to explain how God suggested to Moses a knowledge of the operations of the creation, or communicated to St. John that of all the scenes of the last day, than to conceive how he dictated to them the recital in the Hebrew or Greek language?

6. But we add further:—That which in this theory ought especially to strike the attentive mind, is its extremely inconsistent character; since those who most strenuously insist upon it are yet obliged to admit that by far the greater proportion of Scripture must have been given to men of God by inspiration, **EVEN IN ITS WORDS.**

Suppose that the Holy Ghost this morning called you to stand in a public place, to proclaim the marvellous things of God in Russian or in Kalmuc, what would become of you if he deemed it sufficient to supply with thoughts, without giving you words? You might have before your eyes the third heaven, and in your heart the emotions of archangels, but you must

nevertheless remain silent and abashed before the assembled multitude. In order that your inspiration should in any degree avail them, it would be necessary that the sentences, phrases, and least words of your address should be entirely supplied to you. Indeed they would readily dispense with your own thoughts, provided that you gave utterance (even without your understanding them) to the thoughts of God in his own words. Well, carry this supposition to Jerusalem and to the persons of the apostles. When the fishermen of Capernaum and Bethsaida, assembled together in their upper room on the day of Pentecost, received the order to go forth and proclaim to every region under heaven the tidings of God's salvation, in the Latin, Parthian, Elamite, Chaldean, Coptic, and Arabic dialects, must not the words have been supplied to them? What could they have done then with the thoughts without the words? Nothing; while with their words they could convert the world!

When at a later period in the church of Corinth believers who had received miraculous powers spake in the assemblies in unknown tongues, and required a brother gifted to interpret, to translate after them the unknown words which they had addressed to the brethren, was it not equally requisite that the words, as well as phrases, should be dictated to them? (1 Cor. xiv.) When the prophets one and all, after having penned their sacred pages, applied themselves to study them with as much reverence and care as they would have studied the oracles of a stranger prophet;—when they meditated night and day (as we are told by St. Peter, 2 Pet. i. 10, 11), “searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow;”—must not their every word under those circumstances have been supplied to them? When Moses narrates the creation, and the formation of the world from chaos;—when

Solomon describes Eternal Wisdom;—when David a thousand years beforehand gives utterance to the prayer of the Son of God upon the cross;—when Daniel records in detail, and without himself well understanding them, the future destinies of the world and of the Jews;—and when finally St. John continues, in his own prophecies, the revelations of the prophet Daniel;—was it not necessary that even the least important words should have been given to them? and does not every interpreter in reading them acknowledge how far we may be led astray from the true sense by a change in the position of even the most trivial word, by the defective rendering of the tense of a verb, or by the inconsiderate collocation of a single particle?

We are bound therefore to conclude that, since so considerable a portion of the Scriptures is necessarily inspired even in its words, the system of an inspiration of the thoughts without the inspiration of the language is entirely inconsistent. There are not two species of the Word of God in the Holy Scriptures;—there are not two kinds of oracles of God. If “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” ALL the sacred writings are divinely inspired; and that which is divinely inspired in the sacred writings is nothing less than “ALL SCRIPTURE.”

We have said that the question is with the BOOK, and not with its WRITERS. You think that God always gave them the thoughts, but not the words; but the Scripture tells us the contrary, that God always supplied the words, and not always the thoughts. With regard to their thoughts, God might have inspired these to them, while they were writing, with more or less vigour or elevation: this however only concerns my love, not my faith. The SCRIPTURE—the Scripture which they have transmitted to me, perhaps without having themselves caught its meaning, at least without having always fully understood it—this is what concerns me.

St. Paul may have been mistaken in his thoughts when, on being brought before the Jewish council, and not knowing the person of "God's high priest," he went so far as to say to him, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!" This matters little, provided I know that, **WHEN HE WROTE THE WORD OF GOD,** it was Jesus Christ speaking in him.*

St. Peter may have been mistaken in his thoughts when, refusing to believe that God designed to send him among the heathen, he did not acknowledge that "in every nation the men who turn to God are accepted of him." He might be still more seriously mistaken when at Antioch he obliged St. Paul to "withstand him to the face," before all, "because he was worthy of blame," and "walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel." (Gal. ii. 11—14.) But again we ask, what, after all, matters this to our faith? Faith is not concerned to know at all at what moment or in what measure Paul, John, Mark, James, or Peter were inspired in their thoughts, or sanctified in their conduct: what especially concerns it is,—to know that their written words were the words of God, and that in giving them to us they spake "not in the words suggested by man's wisdom, but in those dictated by the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii. 13.) Thus then it is not they who speak, but the Holy Ghost (Mark xiii. 11); in a word, it is "God who hath spoken **BY THE MOUTH** of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii. 21.)

The sacred Writers were only **SOMETIMES** inspired, but the Holy Scriptures **ALWAYS**. The time, measure, degree, and intervals of the inspiration of the men of God are not therefore an object of our faith; but the

* "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing," &c.—thus affirming that his words were the words of Christ, as from the same Spirit. (1 Tim. vi. 3.)

object of faith is this, that the Scripture is divinely inspired, and that it is the entire Scripture which is divinely inspired.—“A *tittle* of it can never fail.”

There is unquestionably an inspiration of thoughts, as there is an inspiration of words; but the former makes **THE CHRISTIAN**, while it is the latter which makes **THE PROPHET**.

A true Christian is inspired in his thoughts: the Spirit of God reveals to him “the deep things of God” (2 Cor. ii. 10); flesh and blood hath not revealed to him the counsels of God and the glory of Jesus, but the Father (Matt. xvi. 17); for the Spirit guides him into all truth (John xvi. 13); and he could not truly in heart acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord (the Lord of lords), but by the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. xii. 3.) The thoughts of every true believer are therefore more or less inspired of God, but his words are not. He is a Christian; but he is not a prophet. The most sanctified productions of Cyprian, Augustine, Bernard, Luther, Calvin, Beza, and Leighton are but the words of men about the truths of God—words of venerable character no doubt, precious and powerful, and worthy of our attention on account of the wisdom with which they were endowed, and of the abundant expression which they give of the mind of God; but after all they are the words of men. It is altogether different with the prophet. At one time he may have, and at another he may not have, the mind of God in his thoughts. **WHENEVER HE SHALL SPEAK AS A PROPHET**, he will assuredly have the word of God **IN HIS MOUTH**. “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and the word of **JEHOVAH** was in my tongue” (2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2), said David. He will be the mouth of God; whether intelligent or unintelligent, voluntary or involuntary, it matters not, provided the oracles of God are imparted through him, and that I hereby receive the mind of my God in his own words.

In the language of the Bible (which we will pre-

sently show), a prophet is a man in whose mouth God puts for a season the words which he deigns to promulgate on the earth. Such a man may prophesy only at intervals, as the Spirit gives utterance. (Acts ii. 4.) He may, like king Saul, prophesy twice only in the course of his life (1 Sam. x. 10); or, like Saul's messengers, but a single time. (1 Sam. xix. 20.) The words of God may therefore be uttered intelligently; or *without understanding them*; often even without *forethought*; and sometimes even *unwillingly*.

When Daniel had completed his testimony, he tells us himself (Dan. xii. 8) that he did not understand what the Spirit had caused him to write. When Caiaphas uttered those prophetic words, he said them "*not of himself*;" he had the *will*, but he neither *knew* nor *understood* what God would have him utter. (John xi. 49—52.) When Balaam advanced three times to the summit of the rock to curse Israel, and three times successively words of blessing flowed from his lips, as it were, in spite of himself, it was because "the Lord had met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth" (Num. xxiii. 16); he had the *conscience*, but he had neither full *intelligence* nor entire *control* with regard to his prophecy. When the soldiers of Saul sought David in Ramah, and the Eternal Spirit came upon them, so that they themselves also prophesied; and when he sent others even three times in succession, who also prophesied like the first; and when Saul profanely went thither himself, as far as the great well of Naioth, and when God (to display his own power, and to manifest to us more clearly what is the character of a prophet, and what the importance of his word,) caused his Spirit to fall also upon this faithless man; when he then pursued his journey prophesying; when the word of the Lord was in his mouth (at other times so profane); and when he prophesied before Samuel during the whole day and all the night;—what had happened to this son of Kish? "Is Saul also among the pro-

phets?" (1 Sam. xix. 18, 24.) Yes;—and Saul was conscious of his state, and of the part he was acting as prophet; but he neither willed, nor foreknew, nor understood fully what he uttered. When the old prophet was amicably seated at table with the man of God, whom he had turned out of his way by a faithless act of natural kindness; and when suddenly by a power from on high he loudly predicted the displeasure of the Lord against his imprudent and culpable guest; he prophesied with a *consciousness* of what he was doing, but without having *desired* to do it. (1 Kings xiii. 21.)

Let it then be well understood that the *sacred writings* are *all that is written*, and that it is the sentences and the words which are divinely inspired. The question is therefore as to the *word*, and not as to the *men* who wrote it. With regard to these latter we are little concerned. The Spirit may have more or less associated their individuality, conscience, recollections, and affections with what he caused them to say; it is not material that we should know this; but we are called upon especially to know (as St. Peter has recorded) that "*no WRITTEN PROPHECY came to us by the will of man;*" but that "*holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" (2 Pet. i. 21.) And as it was at the feast of Belshazzar, they were little concerned to ascertain what was in the fingers of the terrible hand which came from the wall over against the candlestick; every eye was rather riveted upon the fearful record which it traced there, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, because they well knew that these words were from God; so in like manner it matters little to us, as far as faith is concerned, to know what was passing in the minds of the four evangelists while they were engaged in writing the scroll of their Gospels: our attention should rather be turned to the words which they have written, because we know that these words are from God. Let the prophet be as holy as Moses,—wise as Daniel,—an enemy to God

as Caiaphas,—ignorant of the language in which he speaks to us, as the prophets of Corinth,—polluted as Balaam,—I may say, insensible as the hand upon the palace wall at Babylon,—formless, soulless as was the air through which sounded the voice of God at Sinai, on the banks of the Jordan, and on Mount Tabor,—we repeat, all is of little consequence, except where the personality of a writer might become an essential part of his revelation. Thy thoughts, O my God, thy mind and thy words, are what concern me!

*Ought the Historical Books to be excepted from
Inspiration?*

It will be admitted (we are told) that inspiration may extend even to the choice of expressions, wherever this miraculous work may have been necessary; in the framing of doctrines, for instance, or in order to prophesy the history of an age more ancient than the birth of the mountains, or to announce a future event which God alone could know. But would you venture to maintain that men, contemporary with the facts they wrote of, needed the Holy Ghost to assist them to record events of which they had themselves been witnesses, or which they had heard from others?—to narrate to us the humble marriage of Ruth in the village of Bethlehem; or the feelings of Esther in the palace of Shushan; or the names of the kings of Israel and Judah; their reigns, their lives, their deaths, and genealogies? Luke, for instance, who from Troas had accompanied the apostle to Jerusalem, to Cæsarea, to the island of Malta, and even to Rome; had he not sufficient recollection to tell us how Paul was seized under the porticos of the temple,—how his nephew disclosed to him in the castle the conspiracy of the forty Jews,—how the officer led the young man to the chief captain, and how the latter took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and inquired

of him all that he knew? For the narration of facts so simple and so well known to him, was there any need of the continual intervention of a power from on high? We think not, and persist that it is neither necessary nor reasonable to believe that all the historical chapters of the two Testaments are divinely inspired.

To such objections our first answer will be always very simple:—"ALL Scripture," we say, "is divinely inspired." Thou hast knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, O Timothy!—well: "All these holy writings, all the Scripture, is given by inspiration of God." (2 Tim. iii. 14—16.) We know not that the Holy Spirit excepts any part from this declaration; and we cannot admit the right of either man or angel to hazard any exception.

But further. If it were lawful to put one book of God before another book of God,—if we might distinguish in the firmament of the Scriptures constellations of exceeding glory, and stars of the first magnitude,—we should certainly give preference to the historical books. In fact—

1. It is to the historical books that the most striking and reverential testimony is rendered by the prophets in the Old Testament, and by the apostles in the New. What is there more sacred in the Old Testament than the Pentateuch? and what is there greater in the New than the four Gospels? Is it not of the historical books of the Bible that it is written, "The law of the Lord is perfect;—thy testimonies are wonderful; they stand fast for ever and ever,—they give wisdom to the simple,—they are pure, more to be desired than gold,—the words of the Lord are pure words, as gold seven times purified,—blessed is he that hath such delight in thy law as to meditate therein day and night"?

2. Moreover, remark with what respect our Saviour himself quotes them; and in citing them he delights to honour the Divine decrees even in their least details, and sometimes even in the use of a single word.

3. The histories of the Bible have not been given merely to transmit to future ages the record of accomplished events; they are presented to the Church through all time, to make known to her by recorded facts the character of her God. They are there as a mirror of providence and grace. They are designed to make known to her the mind of God, his purposes, and the invisible things which belong to him;—the heaven where he dwells, his glory, his angels, and those mysteries which “the angels desire to look into.” (1 Pet. i. 12.) All this therefore requires the fullest *Divine Inspiration*.

4. But yet more remains to be said:—the historical Scriptures are given to reveal to us the deep things of man. It is said of the Word of God, that it “pierces like a sword, even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit; that it is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” This is true of the written word, as of God’s own word, because one is the language of the other; but it is especially true of the historical part. Do you not perceive in its narratives that it is a two-edged sword, and that it searches the conscience? And in the same manner that it describes to you what passed on our globe when all was chaos, and when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep; so it equally brings to light what is passing in the depths of the human heart, the mysteries of the invisible world: it discloses secret motives, concealed faults, and human thoughts, which otherwise would never have been known but in the light which shall manifest everything at the last day. Is it thus that mere men write history?

5. The historical Scriptures also required the most entire inspiration, in order to relate to us without any error the mysterious intervention of *angels* in the affairs of this world, in those of the church and in those of heaven. This is a subject novel, delicate, and difficult. These creatures, ardent and pure, humble and sublime,

whose existence the Bible alone has revealed to us—do they not differ from men as much as the heavens differ from the earth? Was anything like unto angels ever conceived by the minds of any race of men, by their poets or their sages? No! their imaginations have not even come near them. It will then be understood how impossible it would have been, without the continual operation of God, that the biblical recitals, in treating of such a subject, should not have often borne the too human stamp of our narrow conceptions, and that the sacred historians should not frequently have allowed unsuited expressions to escape from their pen—by giving to angels by turns attributes too Divine, or affections too human.

People at all times have taken pleasure in painting invisible beings, inhabitants of celestial regions, adorned with all those superior qualities which charm the heart of man. But how low, puerile, and vulgar are all their conceptions when compared with angels! How have all these beings of our fancy been in comparison earthly, impassioned, selfish, impure, and often odious! Look at the gods, the demi-gods, and the whole Olympus of the ancients; look at the fairies, genii, and sylphs of the moderns; look at even the angels of Scripture, too quickly disfigured in the books of man; in the apocrypha of Enoch, for example, in many of the Fathers, in the legends of Rome, and even in the more recent creations of the French poets—winged passions, devout puerilities, profane idols, immortal egotists, celestial wickednesses, deified impurities!

But study the angels of the Scriptures: not only is everything there grand, holy, and worthy of God; not only is their character at once ardent and sublime, compassionate and majestic, constantly brought before us there by their names, their attributes, their employments, their habitations, their songs, their contemplation of the depths of redemption, and the ineffable joys of their love; but what must strike us more than all

is the perfect harmony of the whole, that all these features agree, and that all these attributes correspond to each other, and are maintained in the justest proportions.

In a word, all this doctrine, sustained from one end of Scripture to the other, during fifteen hundred years, presents a uniformity which not merely attests the immutable reality of its object, but which bears the most striking testimony to their entire inspiration. While all the mythologies tell us of the inhabitants of the moon and of the planets, the Bible does not contain one word on it: it tells us nothing of the second heaven, but it depicts with as much fulness as precision the sublime inhabitants of the third heaven, or the heaven of heavens. This subject is there constantly referred to, and under the most varied forms. Descriptions of the angels are numerous without wearying, and full of distinct and separate details. They are exhibited to us in every situation, in heaven and upon earth, before God and with men; ministers of mercy, and sometimes also executors of vengeance. Plunged in the beams of the glory of God, standing before him, adoring him day and night; but also employed in the service of the humblest believers, assisting them in their distresses, in their journeys, in their prisons; and finally coming at the last day upon the clouds of heaven with the Son of Man, to take out of his kingdom all that work iniquity, and to gather together his elect from the four winds.

And what were these historians of the angels? Let us not forget: some shepherds, others kings, or soldiers, or priests, or fishermen, or tax-gatherers; some writing in the days of Hercules, of Jason, and of the Argonauts, three hundred years before the siege of Troy; others in the age of Seneca, of Tacitus, and of Juvenal. And notwithstanding we find that he who writes has everywhere the same being before his eyes; dissimilar from men—they ever resemble themselves; we are defiled, they are perfect; we are selfish, they melt with charity;

we are haughty, they are gentle; we are vain and proud in bodies which the worms will consume, they are humble in their glory and their immortality. We sometimes desire to worship them: See thou do it not, they say unto us: "I am thy fellow-servant." We are disturbed by passions, they are fervent in spirit; neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die. We are unfeeling, they are compassionate; we allow the poor Lazarus to lie hungry at our gate, and our dogs lick his sores, but they, when he dies, bear him to Abraham's bosom. They joy in the conversion of a sinner; and more, Jesus himself has said, "The angels of these little ones always behold the face of my Father, who is in heaven." Once more this uniformity, this purity, this comes not from man, it is from God; and we must recognise here, as elsewhere, the need that the Holy Spirit himself should watch over the writings of his historians, and become the guardian of their expressions.

6. But this is not all. Notice further the fact that, unknown even to their authors, the historical parts of the Bible are full of the future. While they narrate to us events which are passed, "they become (says St. Paul) types to us who live in these last days." (1 Cor. x. 11.) They narrate, it is true, national or domestic scenes; but throughout they tell of Jesus Christ, and unceasingly portray him prophetically in every feature and in every character. Look at the history of Adam, of Noah, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Joseph, and Moses; the account of the offered lamb, the deliverance from Egypt, the fiery cloudy pillar, the manna, the rock which was Christ (1 Cor. x. 4); of the scape-goat (Azazel), and of all the sacrifices; of Joshua, David, Solomon, Jonah, and Zerubbabel. I must present the entire history to do justice to this great truth. But to appreciate it the more fully, turn to what Paul has written of Hagar, of Sarah, of Aaron, and Melchisedec.

If we carefully study the Scriptures we shall speedily recognise and admire the ceaseless power of inspiration in every part; and we shall not fail to feel that if there are in the Bible pages which especially require to be inspired in every line and word, they are those of the historical books. They especially preach, they reveal, they teach, they legislate, and they prophesy.

The Scriptures then must not be compared with other historical books: they have quite another object and bearing.

This plenary inspiration was absolutely necessary for the relation of facts which were inaccessible to the knowledge of man. It was necessary to the sacred writers in recording the creation of the universe, the arrangement of chaos, the birth of light, the upheaving of the mountains, the ministry of angels, the purposes of God, the thoughts of the heart of man, and his hidden faults. It was necessary, that they might prefigure the Anointed One by a thousand types, unperceived by the writer himself; and thus to show forth, even from the past, the character of the Messiah, his sufferings, death, and the glory which should follow. It was necessary, that they might suitably treat even of events known to them; to be silent on some, to record others, to characterise and judge of them, so as to unfold to us therein the mind of God. It was necessary, to enable them correctly to describe, in the just proportion of God's estimate and of the need of the future church, the scenes, either national or domestic, which were typically to represent the work of redemption, or to foretel the character of the last times, and take a comprehensive view of the ages after them. And finally, it was necessary, as the ground of their confidence, as also to determine their reserve; for the wise use of their expressions, and for that remarkable self-possession which they have always maintained.

7. We could wish we had time here to speak of their dramatic power (if such an expression may be allowed)

—of that Divine and undefinable power, that mysterious and ever-fresh attractiveness which belongs to all their narratives, which captivates the mind in every clime; in which throughout life we find, as in the scenes of nature, a charm always new; and which, after having arrested and engaged our affections in early youth, have a still stronger hold upon the heart when hoary hairs find us on the verge of the tomb. There must surely be something superhuman in the very humanity of terms so familiar and so artless. Men know not how to write thus. Who will tell us the secret of this captivating power? Where is it to be found? We should find it difficult to explain, perhaps: it seems to consist in an ineffable blending of simplicity and depth, of what is wonderful and what is natural, of local colouring and of spirituality: it is because the recitals are at once rapid and natural; present details, yet are concise; it is in the harmony and truth of the sentiments; it is man, it is nature, in unaffected reality. In a word, we must be sensible (even without being able to account for it) that he who speaks here knows all the most secret and intimate chords of the human heart, and touches them at will, with a hand light and yet powerful, in the exact degree which his spirit purposes. Repereuse the scenes of Ruth and Boaz in the fields of Bethlehem, those of Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah, of David and Jonathan, of Elijah and Elisha, of Naaman the Syrian, of the widow of Sarepta, or the Shunammite; and far above all these, of the life and death of the Son of Man; afterwards search through the whole range of human writings, and see if you can discover anything at all comparable.

8. Their Divine conciseness has perhaps neither been sufficiently remarked nor admired. If in this respect you would appreciate the Scriptures, compare them with the biographical works of men, or with the code of doctrines which men put forth when left to themselves. Look, for instance, at the modern church of

the Jews, and that of the Latins: while the former has added its two Talmuds to the Scripture (by attributing to them the same Divine authority), one of which (that of Jerusalem) forms a large folio volume, and the other (that of Babylon), which is the more esteemed, and which all her doctors are bound to study, is a work of twelve folio volumes; and while the Roman church in her Council of Trent has declared that she "receives with the same affection and reverence as holy Scripture her own traditions concerning faith and morals"—that is to say, the ponderous repertory of her synodical statutes and decretals, her bulls, canons, and the writings of the Fathers; and then see what the Holy Spirit has accomplished in the Bible, and there admire the heavenly wisdom of its inimitable brevity.

Who among ourselves, having been during three years and a half the constant witness and ardent friend of a man like Jesus Christ, could have given in sixteen or twenty short chapters the history of that entire life,—of his birth, youth, ministry, miracles, sermons, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven? Which of us could be silent on the first thirty years of such a life? Who among us could have recorded so much goodness, without an exclamation; so many miracles, without a passing reflection; so many sublime thoughts, without any emphasis; so much suffering without a complaint; so much injustice, without bitterness; so many blameless infirmities in the Master, and so many guilty infirmities in his disciples, without any reserve; such ingratitude in their shameful abandonment of him; and such contradiction, ignorance, and hardness of heart, without any apology or comment? Is it thus that men narrate?

Who among us would have known how to distinguish between what might be stated cursorily, and what should be given in detail? Who among us, for instance, would have felt that he ought to record the entire creation of the world in a single chapter of

thirty-one verses; and then the temptation, fall, and condemnation of our race in another chapter of twenty-four verses; while so many chapters and pages are devoted to the construction of the tabernacle and of its vessels; that these might be for future ages a continual typical representation of Jesus Christ and of his redemption? Who among us, for the same reason, would have occupied a fifth part of the Book of Genesis with the history of one only of the twelve children of Jacob, and have considered that two chapters would be sufficient for seventeen hundred years of the history of man, from the Fall of Adam to the Flood? Who among ourselves would have thought of mentioning only four women (and such women!) in the forty-two generations of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, and have told of the incestuous Tamar, the impure Rahab, of Ruth the Moabitess, and the adulterous wife of the injured Uriah, without a single accompanying reflection? Who among us, after having shared during ten years the labours of St. Paul, his perils, imprisonments, preachings, and prophetic gifts, could have penned the history of twenty-two years of such a life without saying a word of himself, and without making known to others (otherwise than by a change of the personal pronoun, Acts xvi. 10) that from Troas to Jerusalem and Cæsarea, and from thence to Malta, and on to Rome, he had been the suffering, faithful, and indefatigable companion of the apostle? It must be learned from the pen of St. Paul himself, who in his last imprisonment thus writes to Timothy: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me. Only Luke is with me." (2 Tim. iv. 11, 16; Phile. 24; Col. iv. 14.) Holy and heavenly moderation! humble and noble silence! the Divine Spirit alone could have taught it!

Where among all uninspired historians could you find a man who would have written the Acts of the Apostles in the manner St. Luke has done? Who would have known how to condense into thirty pages the

ecclesiastical history of thirty of the brightest years of Christianity, from the ascension of the Son of Man into heaven, to the imprisonment of St. Paul in the capital of the Roman world? Incomparable history! At once how concise and yet extensive! What is there that is not found in it? Sermons to Jews, to Greeks, before tribunals, in the Areopagus, the Sanhedrim, in the public places and synagogues, before a pro-consul and before kings:—delightful descriptions of the primitive church;—the miraculous and vividly-depicted scenes of her history;—the interposition of angels to deliver, to warn, and to punish;—controversies and divisions in Christian assemblies:—new institutions in the church;—the history of a first council, and its synodical epistle;—comments on Scripture;—accounts of heresies;—solemn and terrible judgments of God;—appearances of the Lord in the way, in the temple, and in the prison;—details of conversions, often miraculous and surprisingly varied—such as those of Eneas, the Eunuch, the centurion Cornelius, the Roman gaoler, the pro-consul, Lydia, Apollos, and that of a multitude at Jerusalem, without noticing those incipient workings which are apparent in the emotions of king Agrippa, the disquietude of Festus, the professions of Simon Magus, the terrors of Felix, and the courtesy of the centurion Julius. In it we also read of missionary enterprises;—various solutions of divers cases of conscience;—the common possession of external things by Christians of various classes;—mutual prepossessions;—disputes among brethren, and between apostles;—outbreaks of natural temper, explanations, and still the triumph of love over all;—communications between military authorities, and between one pro-consul and another;—risings from the dead;—revelations made to the church connected with the immediate calling in of the Gentiles;—collections in one church for the poor of another;—prophecies;—national scenes;—punishments inflicted or prepared;—arraignments before

Jewish councils or Roman authorities, before governors and kings;—Christians meeting from house to house;—their emotions, their prayers, their love, and their doubtings;—a persecuting monarch smitten by an angel and eaten of worms, at a time when to please the populace he had put one apostle to death, and had doomed another to a like fate;—persecutions under every form, by synagogues, by princes, by municipal authorities, by the Jews, and by popular insurrections;—deliverances of the men of God, at one time by a child, at another by an angel, at others by a Roman centurion, or by the captain of a ship, by heathen magistrates and idolatrous soldiers;—tempests and shipwrecks, whose accurate details still delight (as I have witnessed) the mariners of our own day. And all this recorded in thirty pages, or twenty-eight short chapters! Admirable brevity! Must it not have been the Spirit of God who wrote with such conciseness?—who selected the details, who caused the devout, varied, brief, and richly-significant manner in which so few words are employed, and so many things set forth? Plenitude, brevity, clearness, unction, simplicity, elevation, and practical richness;—such a book of ecclesiastical history the people of God required. True is it, and we again repeat it, it is not thus that mere men write history.

Could you find upon earth a man capable of relating the assassination of his mother with the calmness, method, sobriety, and apparent insensibility which mark the fourfold record of the crucifixion of Jesus by the evangelists;—of that Jesus whom they loved more than a mother is loved, yea, more than life is loved;—of that Jesus whom they had seen prostrate at Gethsemane, then betrayed, abandoned, dragged bound into Jerusalem, and at last nailed naked upon a cross; while the sun was darkened, the earth rent, and he who had been the restorer of the dead was himself bowed down to death? Was not the Spirit of God required for every line and every word of such a recital, and in the

selection of suitable details from such an age and world of memorable scenes?

8. It was necessary, moreover, that the sacred writers should be entirely under this Divine direction, in order to possess that prophetic reserve which they have maintained in so many respects; and that heavenly prudence which is evident, not only in what they have written, but in that upon which they have preserved silence; not only in the terms which they have employed, but in those which they have avoided.

And, in order to estimate this in some degree, consider for instance when they speak of the mother of Jesus; what Divine foresight, and what prophetic wisdom! whether we look at their narratives or their expressions. In their ardent adoration of the Son, how easily might they be betrayed into speaking in too reverential terms of the mother! Would not a single word, which the natural incautiousness of first emotions might have let fall, for ever have authorised the idolatries of future generations towards Mary, and the criminal adoration which is paid to her? But not a word of this character have they ever recorded. What! have they not even called her "the mother of God?" No, not even by this title; although Jesus is with them Emmanuel, the God-man, the Word which was from the beginning, which was with God, which was God, and which was made flesh! Hear themselves. What do they say of Mary, after the death and resurrection of the Saviour? One single sentence, and then they are silent respecting her, viz., "These all continued in prayer with the women, and with Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." She is neither named first nor last; she appears as "the mother of Jesus," among the brethren of Jesus and the women of Galilee. And what do they say of her before the death of the Lord? Mark it well. Ah! it is not thus that men relate. Of all the intercourse which Jesus Christ had with his mother, from the commencement of his min-

istry, they have only selected three sentences to be handed down to us. The first is on the occasion when she interfered at the commencement of his ministry, and looked to him for a miracle; viz., "Woman, (*woman!*) what have I to do with thee?" (John ii. 4.) When afterwards one from among the crowd in her enthusiasm exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee!" he replied, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." (Luke xi. 27, 28.) This was the second occasion; and now mark the third. His mother and brethren were shaken in their faith: they had been heard to say, "He is beside himself;" and they came and told him, "Thy mother and thy brethren are without, desiring to speak with thee." "Who is my mother?" answered he; and stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said, "Behold my mother! every woman who shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my mother." And when finally he looked upon her from the cross, he calls her no more by the term "mother," but bequeaths her to the care of the disciple whom he loved, saying, "Woman, behold thy son!" and to John, "Behold thy mother!" and from that hour this disciple received her into his house, not to adore, but to protect her, as a weak and suffering being, whose heart a sword had pierced.

Again we ask, is it thus that men write history? and was it not indispensable that the Holy Spirit should be the sole narrator of these facts?

We delight in citing other examples: they crowd upon our mind while we are writing, and it is with pain we pass them over; for the more closely these historical books are examined, the more does the prophetic wisdom of God, who dictated them, become manifest, in details which are at first unperceived. We delight particularly in dwelling upon the marked prophetic wisdom with which the Holy Spirit, when he has more than once related some important fact, is

constantly careful to vary his expressions in order to prevent the false interpretations which would be given to them, and to condemn beforehand the errors which long after might be associated with them. We would for instance cite the surprising and unexpected manner in which the tenth commandment of the Decalogue has been repeated in the Book of Deuteronomy (Deut. v. 21; Exod. xx. 17), with a remarkable transposition of its terms,—the Holy Spirit thereby prophetically designing to confound the artifice by which the doctors of Rome would endeavour, fifteen centuries later, to divide this commandment into two parts, thereby to conceal their culpable retrenchment of the second:—“Thou shalt not make to thee any graven image, nor any likeness—thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them.” We delight in remarking, moreover, the varied expressions in which the Holy Spirit has recorded the institution of taking bread and wine in remembrance of the Lord’s death, which is several times paraphrased, to enable us the better to understand the mind of Jesus Christ, and learn the Spirit’s condemnation of the carnal sense which would be given to the words, “THIS IS my blood;” “This cup is the new COVENANT in my blood;” also, “This cup is the COMMUNION of the blood of the new covenant.” We would further remark, with what prophetic wisdom, in order to confound those who in after times should affirm that Judas took no part in the last supper (that he went out before, or did not enter until it was over), the Holy Spirit has been careful to make known to us by Mark and Matthew (Matt. xxvi. 21—26; Mark xiv. 19—23), that Jesus announced the treason of Judas before the supper, Judas being present; and by Luke (Luke xxii. 19, 23) it is announced also after supper, in his presence. We delight in observing in all the writers of the New Testament the uniform soberness of their language, whenever it is a question of the relations between pastors and churches, and the admirable

prudence with which they have always abstained from applying even once to the ministers of the Christian Church the title of *priests* or *sacrificers*, and have only retained for them the title of *elders*, which was given to the laity in Israel, as always distinguishing them from the sacerdotal order (which represented Jesus Christ, and was never to cease until the only and true Priest should appear). We love, too, to magnify that prudence by which no soul is ever directed to any other pastor or director (Matt. xxiii. 8—10) than Jesus Christ; and with which, in recommending deference towards spiritual guides, they are careful always to speak of them in the plural, in order that the Scripture might supply no authority to support the notion, so natural to pastors and congregations, that every soul ought to have *its pastor* among men: "Call no man upon earth your father, and be not ye called master, for Christ only is your Master." What precaution is here! what reserve in their narratives, in order never to give too much to man, and "to rehearse all that God had done by the hands of the apostles"! (Acts xiv. 27; Rom. xv. 18; 1 Cor. iii. 6); so that, abasing themselves, all the glory might redound to God, and every servant of the Lord might learn to say, with the last prophet of the Old Testament, and with the first of the New, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

We say again, with the Bible before us, we can scarcely abstain from further quotation.

From all these features combined, we are bound to conclude that if all Scripture is divinely inspired, the historical books are pre-eminently radiant with this Divine interference. They more especially show its necessity—they especially attest that it was indispensable that the invisible and all-powerful hand of the Holy Ghost should rest upon the sacred writer, to guide him from the first line to the last. It required more than scholars, more than saints, more than enlightened minds, more than angels and archangels—IT REQUIRED GOD!

EVASIONS OF OBJECTORS, CONTINUED.

Does not the apparent Insignificance of certain Scriptural Details authorise their Exception from Inspiration?

Was it consistent with the dignity of inspiration to be associated with the thoughts of the apostle Paul, even in the trivial details into which we see him descend in some of his epistles? Would the Holy Spirit go so far as to dictate to him the common salutations with which he concludes them?—or the sanitary counsel which he has given to Timothy concerning his frequent indisposition?—or the commissions with which he charges him respecting his parchments, and a certain cloak that he had left at Troas with Carpus, when he quitted Asia?

Will the reader here permit us to beseech him to take heed, whenever, with the Bible before him, he does not at a first perusal, recognise traces of the Deity in any portion of the Word, lest with profane hands he should think to cast out a single verse from the temple of the Scriptures. Your hands hold an eternal book, of which all the authors have said with St. Paul,—"I think also that I have the Spirit of God." So long therefore as Divine features therein pourtrayed are not seen, the fault is in the reader, and not in the passage. Let him rather say with Jacob, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." (Gen. xxviii. 16.)

Let us now examine somewhat more closely the passages referred to.

St. Paul in the dungeon of a prison asks for his cloak. He had left it with Carpus at Troas; he begs Timothy to endeavour to come to him before the winter, and not to forget to bring it with him. This domestic detail, which (since the time of Anomenes, of whom St. Jerome makes mention) has so many thousand

times been advanced as an objection against the inspiration of Scripture,—this detail appears to you too trivial for an apostolic pen, or at least too insignificant and unedifying for the dignity of inspiration. Unhappy however is he who does not discern its touching grandeur!

Jesus Christ also on the day of his death spoke of his cloak and vesture. Would you have this passage erased from the number of inspired words? It was after a night of fatigue and anguish: infuriated men had been ruthlessly hurrying him blindfolded about Jerusalem; from street to street, from tribunal to tribunal, by torch-light, during seven successive hours, and striking him continually on the head with their staves: ere sunrise the following morning, his hands bound with cords; they bring him again into the high-priest's palace, and afterwards before Pilate in the Prætorian hall: there, lacerated with rods and streaming with blood, he is delivered to the ferocious soldiery to be put to death: they strip him of his garments, put on him a scarlet robe, spit upon him, place a reed in his hands, and in mockery of worship bow the knee before him: then, before placing the cross on his mangled shoulders, they cover his wounds with his own clothes, and lead him forth to Calvary; but when about to proceed to the last act of execution, they for the third time strip him of his raiment, and without garment or vesture, stript of everything, he suffers the death of a malefactor on the cross, in the sight of the immense assembly. Was there ever a man under heaven's canopy who did not find these details soul-moving, sublime, and inimitable? Or one who, from the account of such a dying scene, would retrench as useless or trivial a notice of the vesture which was parted, and of the garment for which the soldiers cast lots? And if Divine Inspiration had been confined to a portion only of the sacred book, would it not have been these very details? Would it not have been the

history of that love which, after having sojourned upon earth, more destitute than the birds of the air and the foxes of the field, had been willing to die yet more wretched still, despoiled of everything, even of his garment and his vesture,—his naked body stretched and nailed like that of a malefactor to the cross?

Ah! be not anxious on the Holy Spirit's account! He has not compromised his dignity. Far from thinking it humiliating to transmit these facts to us, he has even hastened to relate them. More than a thousand years before, in the times of the siege of Troy, he already sang on the harp of David,—“They look and stare upon me,—they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” (Psa. xxii. 18, 19; John xix. 23, 24.)

Well; it is the same Spirit who has shown to us St. Paul writing to Timothy and requiring his cloak. Hear what is said. Paul also is despoiled of all: while yet young, great among men, favoured by princes, admired of all,—he forsook all for Christ. During thirty years and upwards he had been poor; in labours more abundant than others, in stripes above their measure, and in prisons more frequent; of the Jews he had five times received forty stripes save one; thrice he had been beaten with rods; once he had been stoned; three times he had suffered shipwreck; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils in the towns, in perils in deserts, in perils by sea; oft in watchings, in hunger, in thirst, and nakedness. These are his own words. (2 Cor. xi. 23—26.) Let us hear him further. He is Paul the aged: he is at Rome, in his last prison, expecting sentence of death; he has fought the good fight; he has finished his course; he has kept the faith; but he is suffering from cold as the winter sets in, and lacks clothing. Thrust into a dungeon of the Mamertine prisons, he bore a name so vile, that even the Christians of Rome were ashamed to acknowledge him; so that on his first arraignment no man stood with

him. Ten years before this period, when a prisoner at Rome and loaded with chains, he had at least received some relief from the Philippians, who knowing his miserable condition had, notwithstanding their own need, laid themselves under restraint in order to minister to his wants; but now he is altogether friendless,— Luke only is with him; he is forsaken of all others, and the winter about to set in. He would need a cloak; he had left his own with Carpus, at Troas, two hundred leagues away; there was no one in the chilly dungeons of Rome to lend him one. Had he not joyfully quitted all for Jesus? Had he not counted all the honour of the world but dung, that he might win Christ? and was he not prepared to “endure all things for the elect’s sake”? (Phil. iii. 8.)

Who is there that would now remove from the inspired epistles so striking and touching a feature? Does not the Holy Ghost thereby introduce us into Paul’s prison, to catch a sight of his affecting self-denial and his sublime poverty? just as he enables us to see, as it were with our own eyes, his earnest love, when a short time previously writing to the Philippians he says:—“ I weep as I write, because there are many among you who mind earthly things, whose end is destruction.” Do we not feel as if we beheld him in the prison, bound with his chain, his tears falling upon the parchment while thus writing? Can we not see his poor body? to-day ill clad, suffering, and benumbed; to-morrow beheaded and floating down the Tiber, awaiting the day when the earth shall yield her dead, and the sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and Christ shall transform our vile body and make it like unto his own glorious body? And if these details are attractive, can you think they are not useful? And if they profit those who read them as a simple history, what do they not become to him who believes in their inspiration! Who can tell the power and consolation which their very familiarity and tangibility may convey

to the occupant of a dungeon or a hovel? Who can reckon the poor and the martyred to whom such traits have been a source of encouragement, example, and joy? Venerated brethren! happy martyrs! you have doubtless called to mind your brother Paul, shut up in the dungeons of Rome, suffering from cold and lack of raiment, (2 Tim. iv. 13.) asking for his cloak! Oh, how unhappy must he be who is insensible to such feelings, the affecting greatness of such details, the provident and Divine sympathy they display, the depth and the charm of such a mode of instruction!—but more unhappy still, he who declares it to be human, because he does not understand it. We would here quote the beautiful language of the excellent Haldane on this verse of St. Paul. He observes, “If the place which this passage occupies in the epistle, and in the solemn farewell of St. Paul to the disciples, be considered, it presents the apostle to our view in the situation of all others the most calculated to awaken the feelings. He has just been arraigned before the emperor; he is about to finish his days as a martyr; the hour of his departure is at hand, and the crown of righteousness is laid up for him: behold him on the confines of two worlds.—Looking at this he is about to leave—doomed to be beheaded like a malefactor by the orders of Nero; and to that which he is hastening to possess—crowned as a righteous man by the King of kings and Lord of lords: in this, forsaken by men; in that, welcomed by angels: in this, wanting a worthless cloak for a covering; in that, covered with the righteousness of saints, ‘clothed upon’ with his heavenly mansion of light and joy, and every vestige of mortality swallowed up of life.”

Ah! rather than object to such passages, in order to rob the Scriptures of their infallibility, surely we must acknowledge here that wisdom of God, which so often by a single touch has known how to communicate instruction to us, without which long pages might have

been necessary. We must adore that compassionate condescension which stoops even to our weakness ; which has been pleased not only to reveal to us the highest thoughts of heaven in the simplest words of earth, but which moreover exhibits them to us in forms so vivid, so dramatic, and so touching, often condensing them within some single verse, that we may seize them the more readily.

It is thus that St. Paul, by these words, thrown as it were negligently among the closing commissions of a familiar epistle, sheds a flood of light upon his ministry, and in a passing remark enables us to see the character of his whole apostolical life, as a flash of lightning will sometimes in the darkness irradiate the summits of the Alps, or like some persons who utter their whole soul in a single look.

What striking examples might we not adduce ! They crowd upon us : but we must forbear ; feeling it rather our duty to take up the particular passages against which objections are advanced.

Before proceeding further, however, we are constrained to avow, that we are almost ashamed of defending the Word of the Lord in this way. Can we pursue it without some irreverence?—We must ever be careful in what manner we defend the things of God, lest we imitate the rashness of Uzzah, who, having extended his hand to stay the ark of God when the stumbling oxen shook it, thereby kindled the Lord's anger. (2 Sam. vi. 6, 7.)

If it be fully acknowledged on both sides that a word is *in the canon of God's oracles*, why defend it by human arguments as worthy of him? This doubtless may be done to persuade those who are incredulous ; but with such as admit the Divinity of Scripture, is it not doing injury to this word ; is it not, as we have said, like putting Uzzah's hand to the ark ? Does the word present itself to your eyes like a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness, or

any beauty to make it desirable? You ought still to venerate it, and to wait entirely upon Him who gave it. When it asserts its own claim, are we acting judiciously in endeavouring to prove that respect is due to it? Should I not have been ashamed, when shown my Saviour and my God, rising from supper, laying aside his garment, taking a towel and washing the feet of his disciples,—should I not have shrunk from attempting to prove, that, notwithstanding all this, he was indeed the Christ? Oh! I ought rather to have bowed lower in adoring him. Just so the majesty of the Scriptures seeks to descend even unto us!

We consider that there is no arrogance comparable to that of the man who, acknowledging the Bible as a book from God, yet pretends to discriminate the inspired from the uninspired, that which is from God from among what is human! This is to overthrow all the foundations of faith; it is to make it consist, not in believing in God, but in believing self. That a chapter or a word is part of the Scriptures, should suffice to prove it divinely good; for God has pronounced concerning it, as upon creation, "I have seen all that I have made, and behold all is good." We must never then say,—I find this portion admirable, therefore it is from God; and still less,—This portion seems useless, therefore it is of man. The Lord preserve us from it! But we will say,—It is in the Scriptures, therefore it is from God: it is from God, therefore it is profitable, wise, and admirable; and if yet I do not see it such, the fault is only in myself. We view the protection which the wisdom of man would extend over that of God as ill advised; we regard as an outrage the defiled impress with which men pretend to legalise the Holy Scriptures, and the senseless signature with which they dare to endorse its pages.

If therefore we proceed further in the attempt to demonstrate the Divine wisdom in some passages,

which men have daringly held up as human, it is neither to establish their Divine character on the judgment of our better-informed wisdom, nor tardily to secure for them respect, solely on account of the beauty which they may reveal. Our veneration has preceded; it rests upon the fact that the passage is written in the oracles of God. Knowing this, without having seen we have believed. Our only object therefore is to refute the objection by some proofs of its rashness. Let us examine then two or three other passages to which the honours of inspiration have been denied, because they have at first view been considered destitute of spiritual bearing. We can here only refer to a very limited number. It is easy to denounce a sentence as useless or trivial; but to show that the objection is groundless may require pages.

One of the passages which we have most frequently heard brought forward to justify a distinction between what is inspired in the Word of God and what is not, is the recommendation of Paul to Timothy respecting the weakness of stomach, and other ailments with which this youthful disciple was afflicted. "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thy frequent infirmities." (1 Tim. v. 23.)

If however we look into this passage, what an admirable and lively revelation do we not find of the greatness of the apostolic vocation, and of the amiability of the Christian character! Remark in the first place that it is as it were in the temple of God that it has been uttered; for, immediately before, we have these solemn words:—"I charge thee in the presence of God and the Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man; keep thyself pure. Drink no longer water," &c. We here see that it is in the presence of their common Master and of the holy angels that St. Paul would address himself to his disciple: let us therefore enter

into the same temple, in order to understand him, and place ourselves on the same heights, "before the Lord Jesus and his elect angels;" we shall then quickly recognise how much these words reflect the beauty of the apostolic ministry, and the gracious dealings of the Lord towards his servants. The celebrated Chrysostom well understood this, when, preaching from these very words, he remarked,—The most useful servants of God ought to be little surprised if it frequently happen that their Lord judged it expedient to try them, as Timothy, by various bodily infirmities and weaknesses; by putting some thorn in their flesh, and thus permitting an emissary of Satan to buffet them, in order, on the one hand, that they might be stirred up to the exercise of sympathy, gentleness, cordial affection, and tender compassion; and on the other, to patience, self-denial, self-renunciation, and especially to prayer. Re-peruse with seriousness, and by the light of the last day, this beautiful passage of the apostle, and you will have to admire how much precious instruction the Holy Ghost has given us in the small space of a single verse, above what the pious Jerome has pointed out. How many words, and even chapters, would have been necessary to teach as much in any other form! You there learn besides, for instance, the sobriety of the young and ardent Timothy; he had desired like St. Paul to bring his body into subjection; he drank only water, and refrained from using wine.—You will there see also with what tender and paternal delicacy the apostle reproves either his imprudence or austerity carried too far.—You will there see with what wisdom the Lord authorises and invites by these words men of God to take all necessary care of their health; at the same time nevertheless that he sees fit to visit them with bodily sickness.—You will see too with what prophetic foresight this word, put into the mouth of an apostle, antecedently condemns those human traditions, which in the lapse of time would deny to the faithful as an

impurity the use of wine.—You will there see, sixthly, with what tender solicitude, sympathy, and truly paternal vigilance, the apostle Paul, in the midst of his high functions, and notwithstanding the overwhelming care of all the churches (from Jerusalem to Illyria, and from Illyria as far as Spain), kept his eye upon the personal circumstances of his much-loved Timothy, and felt for his weakness of stomach, his frequent infirmities, and his imprudent neglect of needful aliment. And finally, you will there learn an historical fact, which throws great light upon the nature of miraculous gifts. In spite of all St. Paul's interest for the ailments of Timothy, he had not the power of restoring him to health; not even Paul, who had so often healed the sick, and who had even raised the dead; because the apostles (and we learn it in this verse, as well as by the sickness of Epaphroditus, Phil. ii. 27) had not received the permanent gift of miracles, any more than that of *Divine Inspiration*; because it was necessary that this power should be renewed to them on each particular occasion.

But if all these lessons of the apostle are important, and if we thus receive them all so briefly, and in a manner so calculated to affect us, oh! how attractive and full of light do they become to a simple Christian's mind, as soon as he is convinced that it is not here the word of a good man merely; that it is not even that of an apostle only; but that it is the voice of his God, who would teach him so affectingly, sobriety, brotherly love, a tender interest for the health of others, and the utility of afflictions and infirmities to the most zealous of the servants of God: and who, to teach us all these precious lessons, deigns to address us by the mouth of a frail creature!

We are often assailed in connection with the salutations with which St. Paul concludes his epistles, and which (we are told) are, after all, but as the vain compliments which we habitually use at the close of

our letters. There is nothing (it is added) in these unworthy of an apostle, but neither is there anything inspired. The Holy Spirit has therein left the pen of St. Paul at liberty, that he might give free expression to his personal affection, as a secretary would be left to himself to close in the usual complimentary style a letter, the subject-matter of which had been dictated to him. Look for example at the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Is it not evident that the apostle devotes sixteen verses to the remembrance of his own personal friendships? Did the dry catalogue of all those individuals require the Holy Spirit's aid? The apostle mentions eighteen persons by name, without reckoning all those to whom he sends collective salutations in the households of Aquila, Narcissus, and Aristobulus. These verses cannot have required inspiration; at the utmost they needed only that oversight of the Spirit of the Lord which was still exercised, even when the sacred writers were left to their own personalities.

We must avow that it gives us pleasure to review these sixteen verses which have been so repeatedly objected to: for they are of the number of those passages in which Divine wisdom is conspicuous; and if you examine them, you will soon admire with us the exceeding richness, the condescension, and dignity of this mode of instruction; you will there find, under the most practical and artless form, the living picture of a primitive church; you will there discover with lively interest the relations of its members to one another; and you will see to what high estimation the weakest and most ignorant among them could attain within its bosom.

See, in the first place, with what tender interest the apostle recommends to the love of the church at Rome the humble woman who from Corinth, it would appear, was journeying into Italy about her temporal affairs. She was a well-beloved sister, who had been devoted

to the service of the saints, and who did not fear to open her house to many of the faithful, and to St. Paul himself, notwithstanding the perils of such hospitality. She was the servant of the church at Cenchrea. The brethren at Rome are therefore called upon to receive her in the Lord, and to assist her in whatsoever she has need. See, in what follows, how forcible an example the apostle gives us, in a few words, of that Christian courtesy which ought to characterise the mutual relations of the children of God. Admire how, while passing so rapidly in review the brethren and sisters of the church at Rome, he remembers to shed upon this "dry nomenclature," as it has been termed, the refreshing unction of his love! For each one of them there are a few words of encouragement and tender esteem. He there recalls the generous hospitality of Phœbe; the risking of life on his behalf by Aquila and his companion; the honour of Epenetus, in being the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ; the "much labour" bestowed on him by Mary; the recollection that his kinsmen, Andronicus and Junia, were in Christ before him; his Christian love for Amplias; the evangelical labours of Urbane; the tried fidelity of Apelles; the multiplied labours of Tryphena and Tryphosa in the Lord, and those of the beloved Persis. What an appeal moreover to the conscience of every serious reader is this rapid catalogue! Behold, he should say to himself, the character of the faithful in the church at Rome, to whom salutations were sent! And if the apostle were to address an epistle to the church in which for a season I myself occupy a place, what would he say of me? Would my name have a place in it? Could he add that, like Phœbe, I welcomed the saints to my house?—that, like Aquila and Priscilla, I had meetings of Christians under my happy roof?—that, like Mary, I bestowed much labour on the ministers of the Lord; that I have suffered for Christ, like Andronicus and Junia; that I am a man approved in

Christ, like Apelles; that I am elect in the Lord, like Rufus; that I am his fellow-helper, like Urbane; that I am in much service for the Lord, like Tryphena and Tryphosa; and that I labour much therein, like the beloved Persis?

But, above all, see what a lesson for Christian women is set forth in these admirable verses! In the simple familiarity of the salutations which close the epistle, how he shows them the high character of their vocation! What an important part is assigned them in the church, and what a place in the heavens! Without having as yet even seen the city of Rome, Paul there mentions, by their own names, and as his fellow-helpers, as many as nine or ten women. Besides Phœbe, whom he first commends to them, there is this admirable Priscilla, who went so far as to expose herself to the suffering of death for the apostle, and who enjoyed the gratitude of all the Gentile churches; next Mary, who had been very zealous in ministering to the apostles; then Tryphena and Tryphosa, who continued to labour in the Lord; then Persis, who was especially dear to him, and who had laboured much in the Lord; then Julia; then the sister of Nereus, who is perhaps Olympia; and finally, we have the venerable mother of Rufus. And remark, by the way, with what respect he mentions this lady, and with what delicacy he salutes her with the tender name of MOTHER: "Salute Rufus, elect in the Lord, and his mother and mine!" Is not this an example of the Christian courtesy which he had recommended to the same Romans in the twelfth chapter of the epistle? "Salute Rufus, elect of God," he writes, "and his mother, WHO IS ALSO MINE!" What a lovely pattern do these verses exhibit to husbands and wives, in the persons of Aquila and Priscilla! You here see them at Rome; you might have seen them five years previously driven out of Italy by the emperor Claudius, arriving at Corinth, and receiving into their dwelling the apostle Paul; then eighteen months after-

wards accompanying him into Asia, and dwelling at Ephesus, where they had a church in their house (1 Cor. xvi. 19), and where they assisted with so much effect the young and eloquent Apollos, who, notwithstanding his talents, was glad to draw instruction from their Christian conversation and love; and now that the death of Claudius had allowed the accession of Nero, you see them scarcely returned to Rome ere they consecrate their new abode to the Church of God. It was there that the saints assembled; and you here learn, from a passing expression, that both husband and wife had not hesitated to lay down their own necks for the life of Paul.

But besides all the lessons which are presented to our consciences in these sixteen brief verses, you may there further learn two facts of paramount importance in the history of the church. And, in the first place, you have the most unintentional and convincing evidence that at this period there was no question at Rome either of St. Peter, or of his episcopacy, of his popedom, or of his primacy, or even of his presence. Do we not recognise a prophetic foresight in the care which the Holy Spirit has here taken to do in this Epistle to the Romans what is not done in either of the other fourteen of Paul's epistles—closing it with a long list of the men and women most esteemed at that time throughout the church at Rome? We have here the apostle of the Gentiles, twenty years after the commencement of his ministry, writing to the saints at Rome, saluting as many as twenty-eight of them by name, and numerous others by collective designations, yet not sending a word to the Prince of the Apostles, or, as he is styled, the Vicar of Jesus Christ—to his superior, the head of the Universal Church and founder of the Roman hierarchy! St. Peter was the apostle of the circumcision, and not of the Gentiles (Gal. ii.): his post was at Jerusalem; it is there he must be sought; and it was there that St. Paul had always found him. On his first journey, three

years after his conversion, Paul there visited him and remained fifteen days in his house. (Gal. i. 18.) On his second journey (to be present at the first council) he again met him there. On his third journey thither, in the year 44, at the period of the death of Herod Agrippa, it was still there that Peter was dwelling. (Acts xii. 1, 3.) On his fourth journey, seventeen years after his conversion (Gal. ii. 7), St. Paul again finds him there, discharging the office (and let this be especially noted) of an apostle, not of the Gentiles, but of the circumcision. And when finally he is on his fifth and last journey, he writes to the Romans and to the Galatians; and then, in order that the whole church might distinctly know that Peter is not at Rome, and never had been there, Paul takes care to salute by name all those who were most eminent among the saints in that city, even among the women. Where is the bishop of the Latin sect in our day who would venture to write an epistle of sixteen chapters to the church of Rome without saying a single word either of the Pope, or of St. Peter, or of the vicar of Jesus Christ?

But there is another historical fact yet more interesting, to the knowledge of which these same sixteen verses, which have been termed useless, particularly direct us. We see in the details of these brief salutations by what humble instruments, and yet to what an extent, the gospel had been established in so short a time in mighty Rome! No apostle had there set foot (Rom. i. 11, 13, 14, 15; xv. 22); yet behold what had been accomplished by the unaided labours of travellers, artisans, merchants, women, slaves, and freedmen—what progress the Word of God had made! Jesus Christ had disciples already in the palaces of the Jewish princes who were attached to the imperial court, and even among the Roman officers who were nearest to the person of Nero. Among those to whom St. Paul first desires his salutations are “those of Aristobulus’ household;” and secondly, “they of the household of

Narcissus, which are in the Lord." Now the first of these was the distinguished brother of Agrippa the Great, and of Herodias; the second was the powerful favourite of the emperor Claudius, who was not poisoned by Agrippina until the close of the year 54.

Oh! that all who are called Christians would for ever renounce the rash systems in which the words of Scripture are arraigned, and their fitness questioned; in which men dare to prune God's Bible of this word and that passage, to make (at least as far as such words and passages are concerned) a Bible of their own; in which they render themselves responsible for any amount of tampering with the word which daring commentators may ever venture upon. Why should not others do with an entire book what you have dared to do with a verse? What idea do they form of the sacred writers, to suppose them capable of the senseless audacity of blending their own oracles with the oracles of the Almighty? We remember a poor idiot, a pensioner of one of our hospitals, whose hand-writing was nevertheless so good that a minister of Geneva employed him to transcribe his sermons. Great, however, was the confusion of the latter when the manuscript was returned, to find that the poor fellow had thought proper to enrich every page by the introduction of his own thoughts. There is, however, far less distance between the idiot and the minister, though the latter should be holy as Daniel and sublime as Isaiah, than from Daniel or Isaiah to the Eternal Wisdom.

CHAPTER V.

SACRED CRITICISM MUST OCCUPY THE POSITION OF AN INQUIRER, NOT OF A JUDGE.

CRITICAL science no longer maintains its proper sphere, when it takes the place of judgment; when not content to gather from the oracles of God, it composes and separates, canonises and rejects, making itself the Oracle!

Devote your reason, your time, and all your intellectual resources, to assure yourself that the book which has been put into your hands under the title of the Bible, really contains those very oracles of God, of which under Divine Providence the Jews were made the first depositaries (Rom. iii. 1, 2), and which, under the same guarantee, were secondarily confided to the Universal Church, since the apostolic period. Assure yourself afterwards whether this book is authentic, or whether transcribers have not altered it. All this labour is legitimate, rational, and honourable. It has been extensively entered upon by those who have preceded us; and if the investigations of others have failed to satisfy you, renew them, pursue them, instruct us; all the churches of God will thankfully acknowledge your work.

But when this labour is accomplished; when you have established the fact that the Bible is an authentic book; that it bears the authoritative seal of the Most High, and shines with the glory of his own signature;—then hear what science and what reason cry; Sons of men, hear God! Then to your knees! and with eyes and hearts uplifted, bow with reverence and humility. Then science and reason have no longer to judge,

but to receive,—no longer to pass sentence, but to understand.

But if, after having received the Bible as authentic, you presume to sit in judgment upon its contents; if from this Scripture, which bears the impress of inspiration, and which declares that it is destined to judge yourself at the last day, you dare to retrench aught; then science no longer clears away the mists which envelope truth, but itself obscures it. “If ever, in reading Scripture,” Origen remarks, “thou encounterest an idea which becomes to thee a stone of stumbling or a rock of offence, accuse only thyself; doubt not that this stone of stumbling and rock of offence has an important meaning; and concerning it must the promise be accomplished, ‘Whosoever believeth shall not be ashamed.’ (Rom. ix. 33.) Begin then by believing, and thou shalt soon find under this imaginary offence *an abundant and hallowed utility.*”

That a soul may receive life, it is necessary that it should receive faith; that it may have faith, it must believe God; to believe God, it must begin by renouncing the prepossessions of its own wisdom about sin, about futurity, about judgment, about grace, about self, about the world, about God, and all things else. Is it not written that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; that he cannot receive them, for they are foolishness unto him”? (1 Cor. ii. 14.) The gospel therefore must shock either his reason or his conscience; perhaps both. Nevertheless he is bound, on the testimony of God alone, to submit to it; and it is only in receiving it thus that it will be found to be “the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation, to all them that believe.” We perceive, then, that without seeing he is bound to believe; that is to say, before he has understood the gospel it must have confounded his own wisdom, repulsed his natural heart, have blown upon his pride, and condemned his self-righteousness. How could men who should un-

happily imitate such, and wait until they have approved of all ere they received all, be ever induced to accept the gospel? Imbued with such principles, they would impute everything in Scripture which shocks their carnal sense to man. They would think they must exclude the *prejudices* of the apostles about the consequences of the sin of Adam, about the Trinity, the atonement; about eternal punishments, hell, the resurrection of the body; about the doctrine of evil spirits, election, the free justification of the sinner by faith, and perhaps also as to miracles. How could any one with such thoughts ever find life, peace, and joy through faith? How could he hope against hope? How could he believe in salvation for a wretch like himself? He would necessarily pass his days in brooding over vague imaginations and uncertain doctrines; and his life, his peace, his love, and obedience, would, until death, continue of a character with his doctrines! We conclude, therefore, with the first advice: "Make critical science an inquirer, and not a judge."

Let Criticism not be the Oracle.

There is connected with the inspiration of the Scriptures another caution not less important, which it behoves us to notice in the employment of science.

The part of sacred criticism is to collect facts connected with the Scriptures: let it not therefore lead us into vain hypotheses: it will in this case prove most injurious. Science ought to be an historian; do not make it a prophetess. When it assumes the latter character, hear it not; turn your back upon it; you will lose your time, and more than your time. The safeguard of a believer, here, is still in the doctrine of Inspiration; the inspiration not of the men, but of the book.

"All Scripture is divinely inspired" is what the authenticated book of the Scriptures declares to us. But we

are asked, What was passing in the understanding and conscience of the sacred writer? This is what is scarcely ever revealed to us, and the knowledge of which is not required of us. Ignorance of this great principle has occasioned much loss of time and words. The writing is inspired, whether the author had previous knowledge of what God was causing him to write, or whether he had not. Let us study in each book of the Bible the peculiarities of the style, language, and reasoning, together with all the circumstances of its sacred writers; we shall find nothing but what is valuable in such researches; they are useful, legitimate, and consistent with due respect; and so far they come within the limits of science. Let us afterwards endeavour by these same characters to fix the date and occasion; we should still see nothing but what was instructive and expedient in such study. It may, for instance, be useful to know that it was under a Nero that St. Paul wrote this precept to the Jews—"Be subject to the powers that be" (Rom. xiii. 1); it may be well to know that St. Peter was married upwards of twenty-three years, when Paul reminded the Corinthians (1 Cor. ix. 5) that this apostle (the first of the popes as he has been called) took his wife with him in all his apostolical journeyings; and that the other apostles, even St. James himself (who is ranked first among the pillars of the church, Gal. ii. 9), did likewise. This is still science. We highly prize on behalf of the Church of God every labour which renders any passage better understood by her members; yes, be it but one sentence, or even one word of holy Scripture. But that men should go on to visionary hypotheses, to indulge in a thousand conjectures respecting the sacred writers, to make their words depend upon the chance of their presumed circumstances, instead of considering their circumstances as prepared and designed of God for the ends of their ministry;—that men should subject the nature, quantity, or conciseness of their teachings to the concurrence, more or less for-

tuitous, of their ignorances or recollections,—this is to degrade inspiration, and to depreciate the character of the Word of God; it is to lay deeply the foundations of incredulity; it is to forget that these “men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, not in the words which man’s wisdom taught, but in those taught by the Holy Ghost.” (1 Cor. ii. 13; 2 Pet. i. 21.)

It has been asked, Did the evangelists read each other’s writings? What matters this to me, if they were “moved by the Holy Ghost,” and if, like the Thessalonians, I receive their book, “not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God”? (1 Thess. ii. 13.) This question put in passing may indeed be a very innocent one; but it is no longer harmless, on account of the manner in which it has been treated, and because of the importance assigned to it.

Would to God that we had here only to lament men’s fantasies, and their enormous waste of time! But the consequences are worse: shipwreck has been made of faith; the eyes of the understanding have been dazzled; and young students’ feet have been turned aside from the first great Author of the Scriptures. It is manifest that these idle researches could only proceed from a want of faith in the Scriptures. Believe for a moment; admit that Jesus Christ has given his apostles the *what* and the *how*, of that which they were to record; admit that God has caused the life of Jesus Christ to be related, as he has caused them to record his sitting down at his own right hand;—and you will immediately feel that all these hypotheses shrink into nothingness. Not only do they not teach you anything (for they cannot), but they give an unhappy bias to your mind respecting faith; they imperceptibly undermine the doctrine of Inspiration; they indirectly weaken the testimony of God, its certainty and perfection; they divert your pious thoughts from their true course; they cause youth to wander when seeking to draw living water from the

wells of Scripture, and leave them among the burning sands far from the fountain of eternal life. What, after all, do these systems offer to us?—Broken cisterns, clouds without water; at the utmost, perhaps, those imaginary rivulets which the sun of vain-glory will picture to them for a season, like an illusive mirage over the sandy deserts of their natural thoughts.

What would be said of a philosopher who should pretend to seek from Joseph the carpenter, or in the schools of Nazareth, the interpretation of the sayings and doctrines of Jesus Christ? Idle and pernicious! you would exclaim. The same must be said of all those conjectural systems which seek humanly to account for the composition of the Scriptures. Idle and pernicious! say we. Admit inspiration, and all this labour becomes foolish. The Scriptures are the Word of God; they are dictated by Him; and we know that “no prophecy of Scripture came by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Pet. i. 20, 21.)

The account of the nephew of St. Paul, warning his uncle in the Antonian prison of the conspiracy against him, is inspired of God, although Luke may possibly have heard it twenty times from the mouth of the apostle, before he had received it from the Holy Spirit: this account is as much inspired as what is recorded of the invisible messenger who smote Herod upon his throne in the town of Cæsarea. The history of Jacob’s ring-straked and speckled sheep is as much dictated by God as the record of the creation of the heavens and the earth. The account of the doom of Ananias and Sapphira is as much inspired as that of the fall of Satan and his angels.

Yes, doubtless, there was a standard document, according to which these holy men of God spake; but, as Bishop Gleig has so well observed, this document was none other than the ministry and life of our Divine Saviour. He was their Prototype.

When, therefore, we hear it asked, From what documents did Matthew derive his account of the birth of Jesus Christ; Luke, that of his early years; Paul, the Saviour's manifestation of himself to St. James, or the words of the Lord on the blessedness of giving; Hosea, the tears of Jacob; and Jude, the prophecy of Enoch, and Michael's contention about the body of Moses? Let us answer, They obtained them from the source where Moses learned the creation of the heavens and the earth. "The Holy Spirit," says the illustrious Claude, "has used the pen of the evangelists and apostles, of Moses and of the prophets; he instructed them when to write; and he gave them the desire and the strength for the work. The matter, the order, the method, and the expressions, are by his immediate inspiration and direction."

We have just shown how a sound apprehension of the nature of the inspiration of the Scriptures will shield the young from two considerable errors of modern criticism, and at the same time enable them to derive from Science all the benefit which she can bestow. The first of these aberrations we have said is to pretend to judge the Scriptures, after having received them collectively as authentic: the second is to give way to dangerous speculations upon the sacred books. But we have yet to consider one important relation existing between science and the great question before us.

Sacred Criticism is only the doorway of the Temple.

Science is a portico which leads to the temple of the Scriptures: never forget that she is not the deity within it, and that her residence is not within the edifice. In other terms, be careful when you study sacred criticism not to carry it beyond its proper boundary, even in its connection with science; dismiss it ere you enter the temple.

Here, then, is our argument. If, indeed, you enter the temple of the Scriptures, then not only will you find it written by the hand of God on all its walls that God fills it, and that he is everywhere; but you will moreover experience the proof of this: you will see him everywhere, you will feel him to be everywhere. That is, when you read attentively the oracles of God, you not only find the frequent declaration of their entire inspiration by God, but you receive through unexpected touches, and often by the power of a verse, or even of a word, a conviction of the Divinity which pervades the whole.

It must not be imagined that we depreciate the investigations of science. It happens, however, but too often that a prolonged study of the outworks of the sacred book—of its history, manuscripts, versions, language, &c.—so absorbs the attention of those who devote themselves to it, that they become inattentive to its more intimate characteristics, its import, its aim, the moral power displayed, the beauties disclosed, and the life which flows from it; yet as there exists an essential relation between these characteristics and those which are external, there result to one so exercised two grievous evils. As a mortal, he stifles his spiritual life, and perils his eternal life (but it is not of this evil that we speak in these pages);—as a scholar, he compromises Science, and renders himself incapable of a sound appreciation of the very objects with which she is occupied. Alone, science remains incoherent and crippled, and thereby restricted and abased. Can such an one be acquainted with the temple? He has seen only its stones—he knows nothing of the Shekinah! Can he understand the types? He has no intelligence of the Antitype—he has seen nothing but the altars, the sheep, the knives, the vessels, the blood, the fire, the incense, the garments, and the ceremonies—he has never seen the redemption of the world, futurity, heaven, and the glory of Jesus Christ! In this condition he cannot

even trace the relations which these external objects have with each other, because he has entirely failed to understand their harmony with the whole.

A learned man devoid of faith, who in the days of Noah might have acquainted himself with the construction of the ark, would not only himself have perished, but would have remained in ignorance of a great many of the very objects which he pretended to appreciate.

Would you know the qualifications of a physician?—You will doubtless inform yourself of his country, of the universities in which he has studied, and examine the testimonials by which he is recommended: but when he shall come and speak of your most occult ailments, and define to you all the symptoms of your malady; when he shall tell you of feelings, of which, though vaguely felt, you had the conscious reality; and especially when he administers to your lips the only medicine which had ever given you relief; oh! then would not such experience bespeak his skill far better than his diplomas?

Well; this is the advice which we venture to give to all those of our readers who have acquired any knowledge of sacred criticism:—Read the Bible; study the Bible in itself and for itself; inquire, if you will, where it has taken degrees, and in what schools its writers have studied; but come to its consultations like a sick man eager to be cured; take as much pains to understand its words as you would to understand its credentials, its history, and its language; and then not only will you be cured (which is not here the question), but you will be enlightened:—“He that healed me said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk. Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.” (John v. 11; ix. 25.)

Read then the Bible: complete your science by adding this to it. It is the Bible which will convince you; it is that which will tell you whether it is from God:

and when you have heard its voice, now more powerful than the noise of mighty waters, and anon sweet and winning like that which greeted the ear of Moses—"The Lord merciful and gracious, pitiful and of tender mercy, abounding in grace, the God of consolation, the God who pardons abundantly:" oh! then, we take upon ourselves to affirm it, you will experience that the simple reading of a psalm, a narrative, a precept, a verse, and even one word of a verse, will more powerfully prove to you the Divine Inspiration of the entire Scripture than could the most eloquent and profound among philosophers or books. You will then see, hear, and feel that God is everywhere in it; you will no longer inquire whether it is throughout inspired, for you will feel it to be powerful and efficacious, "discerning the thoughts and affections of the heart, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow;" causing tears to flow from deep and secret sources, overwhelming you with irresistible power, and restoring you with a tenderness and sympathy which can be found only in God.

What we have here said is only in the way of counsel; but we are about to show in what respect these considerations may be presented, if not as a proof, at least as a powerful presumption in favour of the inspiration even of the words of Scripture. We will, indeed, point out to our readers a three-fold experience in it, which has ever produced deep conviction in the hearts of Christians, whose testimony ought at least to appear worthy of the most serious consideration.

Undoubtedly one of the strongest proofs of the Divinity of the Scriptures is that inherent sublimity which fills us with amazement and reverence. It is the imposing unity of this book, composed during a period of fifteen hundred years by so many authors, some of whom wrote two centuries before the fabled times of Hercules, Jason, and the Argonauts; others in the

heroic days of Priam, Achilles, and Agamemnon; others in the times of Thales and Pythagoras; others in those of Seneca, Tacitus, Plutarch, Tiberius, and Domitian; who all, nevertheless, pursue the same plan, and undeviatingly move forward, as if by common consent, to one single transcendent object—the history of the redemption of the world by the Son of God:—it is this vast harmony of the entire Scriptures,—this Old Testament filled with Jesus Christ, like the New, this universal history uninterruptedly pursuing its onward course, which records the revolutions of empires to the end of time, and which, when the picture of present scenes is finished, carries our view over those of futurity, even until the period when the kingdoms of this world become the possession of Jesus Christ and his saints. On the first page we have the world created to receive the sinless man; in the following pages, the earth cursed to receive man sinning continually; and in the last page, a new earth to receive man who will sin no more. On the first page we have the forbidden tree of life, paradise forfeited, sin entering into the world by the first Adam, and death by sin;—in the last page, paradise regained, life re-entering the world through the second Adam, death vanquished, sorrow and sighs no more seen, the image of God restored in man, and the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. Surely in this majestic whole, which had its beginning ere man was formed, and which continues to the end of time, there is a powerful and altogether celestial unity, developing throughout ages a universal and mighty convergent operation, whose sublimity arrests the mind, surpasses all human conceptions, and proclaims the Divinity of its author as irresistibly as a view of the star-spangled heavens on a summer's night, and the contemplation of all the luminous orbs which circle day and night in the boundless expanse! “Myriads of objects in one close band of perfect harmony,” said one of the earliest

fathers. But besides these beauties which the Scriptures present, we have further to contemplate something not less glorious, which also reveals to us the operation of God in their minutest details, and which attests to us their verbal inspiration.*

There are three classes of persons, or rather three kinds of experience, which bear testimony to this:—

1. And, first, if you consult those whose entire lives have been occupied in meditating upon the Scriptures, in order to feed daily the flocks of the Lord, they will tell you that the more they have devoted themselves to this blessed study, and applied themselves to examine closely the oracles of God, the more their admiration of the letter of Scripture has increased. Surprised gradually by unexpected beauties, they have recognised, even in its least expressions, Divine foresight, profound relations, and spiritual grandeur, which are often brought to light by some slight corrections of the translation, or by a protracted consideration of the details of some single verse. He who has occupied his soul with the study of some text of Scripture will tell you that soon he has been constrained to use the language of the naturalist, while closely examining with the microscope the delicate and wondrous structure of a leaf of the forest. He who made the forest made the leaf, cries the one;—Yes, exclaims the other, and He who made the Bible made the verses also which compose it.

2. A second order of experience, whose testimony

* We may add to this the seasonable language of one of other days:—"Wouldst thou know that the matters contained in the word of Christ are real things? Then never read them for mere knowledge' sake. Look for some beams of Christ's glory and power in every verse. Account nothing knowledge, but as it is seasoned with some revelation of the glorious presence of Christ and his quickening Spirit. Use no conference about spiritual truths for conference' sake, but still mind the promotion of edification."

we would also invoke, is that of the interpreters of the prophecies. They will all tell you, as soon as they had devoted some time to the study of the Bible, how manifestly they recognised that in its miraculous pages every verse and word, without exception, even to a particle apparently the most indifferent, must have been given by God. The slightest alteration in a verb or adverb, or in the most simple conjunction, might betray the interpreter into very serious error. It has often been remarked, that wherever the prophecies which are now accomplished were misunderstood before the event, it mainly resulted from the details of the text not having been studied with sufficient attention. Of this we could here cite many instances.

3. But there is yet a class of persons who, if it be possible, attest still more triumphantly the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, even in their least details. These are Christians who have felt their power in the first place in the conversion of their souls, and afterwards in the conflicts which have ensued. Go to the biography of those who were great in the kingdom of God, and see the moment when they passed from death unto life; and interrogate those around you who in their turn have felt this power of the Word of God, and they will all render unanimous testimony. When the holy Scriptures laid hold upon their consciences, bowed them at the foot of the cross, revealed to them the love of God, that which first arrested them was not the whole Bible, nor a chapter, but a verse; it was indeed almost always one word of this verse. Yes, we say, one word was to them as the slender point of the connecting wire of some vast battery, or as the keen edge of a sword wielded by the omnipotent hand of God. They felt it to be living and efficacious, searching the thoughts and affections of the heart, "piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." It was a power from God, concentrated in a single word, which made it become

to them "like as a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces."* In the moment of their need they had read a psalm, or some words in the prophets, or some sentences in the epistles, or some narrative of sacred history; and as they read, lo! a voice sounded in the ear of their consciences with a hitherto unfelt, yet constraining and irresistible power. It was but a word, perhaps; but this word took possession of the soul; spoke there, preached there, and reverberated there like the pealing of unnumbered bells, calling to fasting and to supplication ere the coming of Jesus Christ! It was only a word; but that word was from God. It was but one apparently of the most insignificant of the strings of that heaven-descended harp, but it sounded in unison with the heart of man; it produced unexpected thrilling harmony, which excited their every emotion, and they felt that God himself had strung and tuned it; they recognised in it the call of Jesus.

Such is the voice of the church; such through all time has been the unanimous testimony of the saints. The inspiration which the Bible claims for itself (say they) we have acknowledged. We unquestionably believe it because of its own attestation thereto; but we also believe it because we have seen it, and are ourselves enabled to bear witness to it by blessed experience and an irresistible conviction of its truth.

A thousand similar examples might be adduced. Let us content ourselves by referring here to two of the most distinguished minds that ever served as guides to their fellow-men. Call to remembrance in what way light was given to the two greatest luminaries of ancient and modern times; and that it was a single

* Jer. xxiii. 29. And in contrast with all words that are not his, however venerable, the Lord asks in the verse preceding, "What is the chaff to the wheat?" We may then place the best writings and traditions beside the Scriptures and say, "What is the chaff to the wheat?"

word in the Scriptures which, at a moment appointed by God, introduced into their minds the enlightening power of the Holy Ghost.

Luther, while yet a monk, was on his way to Rome. He was on a sick-bed at Bologna, in a foreign land, overwhelmed with the burden of his sins, and thinking himself just about to appear before God. It was in this condition that the seventeenth verse of the first chapter of Romans, "The just shall live by faith," came to irradiate his whole being, as it were, with heavenly light. This single word was twice fastened upon his mind with irresistible power: in the first place at Bologna, where it imparted to him strength and unspeakable joy; and afterwards in Rome itself, to arrest and raise him up, while with an idolatrous multitude he was on his knees dragging his body up the fabled staircase of Pilate. This word was the commencement of the Reformation of the West. "Creative word, both for the Reformer and the Reformation! (emphatically observes D'Aubigné). It was by it that God then said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.'" In truth, says the Reformer himself, I felt myself entirely re-born; and this word was to me the true gate of paradise.

Shall we not here be reminded, further, of the greatest among the learned of Christian antiquity, Augustine, who, lying in his garden near Milan; dejected, without peace, feeling, like Luther, a tempest in his soul—prostrate under a fig-tree, groaning and weeping bitterly,—heard from a neighbouring house a youthful voice singing and rapidly repeating by way of chorus, "*Tolle, lege! Tolle, lege!*"—"Take and read! Take and read!" He went to Alypius to get the scroll of Paul's epistles which he had left there; he seized it, opened it, and read in silence the chapter which first met his eye; and when he came to the thirteenth verse of the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, all was decided by a word. Jesus had

conquered, and the great career of the most holy of learned men then commenced. One word, but that a word from God, had kindled that brilliant luminary whose lustre was to extend over ten centuries of the Church's existence, and whose radiance cheers her even now. After thirty-one years of rebellion, conflicts, relapses, and wretchedness, faith, life, and peace had descended into this erring soul; a new day, an eternal day had arisen upon it. Having read these words, he desired no more; he closed the book; all doubt (he declares) was dispelled; for "with the close of this sentence a stream of light and security was poured upon his mind, and his long night of doubts and fears had passed away."

There is yet one other experience of the same character which we think too striking to pass over, although its testimony may be lightly esteemed, except among those who already believe. The further an individual advances in the Christian life, receiving a more abundant measure of the Spirit of God, the more remarkable will be the character of opposition which, on the one hand, the Scripture, and on the other the most esteemed writings of men, will assume in his mind. He will be observed to be increasingly independent of the works and words of men, because he has learnt that they can yield him no continuous instruction; after a few times' perusal, he has received all they have to give him. How blessedly otherwise is it with the Scriptures; how contrasted the attention he will pay to them; ever more and more convinced of the wisdom they reveal, and of their Divine power,—ever increasingly affected by their smallest word,—ever better able to feed upon and enjoy by day or by night their single passages and fragments! There is in this fact, for those who can appreciate it, much that is impressive and interesting.

Such is, then, the triple testimony which we would invoke, and by which the church attests to us that

there is energy from God pervading the very least details of the holy word, and that the whole of Scripture is divinely inspired.

We are, however, anxious to be rightly understood. In making this appeal we do not pretend to impose the experience of some upon others.

Evidences which result from feelings are, we are aware, only evidences to those who have felt them. These have doubtless an irresistible power with those who, having experienced them, have thus seen the testimonies of the Word of God evidently confirmed; but nothing could be less logical than to present them as demonstrations to those who are as yet strangers to them. If you had enjoyed these experiences, you would already be more than convinced, and we should have nothing further to tell you. We have only therefore presented them to you as strong historical presumptions, thereby to dispose you to receive with a readier submission the scriptural proofs which we have already placed before you. A numerous multitude of instructed and pious people, we say, attest to you through past ages, by a varied experience, that in studying the Word of God they have been led to acknowledge the manifest inspiration of Scripture even in its least words; let this at least serve as a powerful recommendation to listen with respect and without prejudice to the testimonies to its own character which the Bible itself contains. We ask that at least this voice from the church may be to you the cry from a neighbouring house—*Take and read! Take and read!* Go and take your Bible; read it in solitude! and you will yourself feel how far its inspiration extends; you, too, will say, like Augustine, I doubt no more, for the day-star has arisen in my heart!

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

FROM all that has been said, it results, that the Christian world contains but two schools, or two systems of religion:—that which sets the Bible above everything, and that which sets something above the Bible. The former was evidently that of Jesus Christ; the latter that of the rationalists of all denominations and times.

The motto of the former is—“All the written word is inspired by God, even to a single iota and particle of a letter: the Scripture cannot be destroyed.”

The device of the latter is—The Word of God is amenable to human judgment.

Instead of setting the Bible above all,—it is on the contrary either knowledge or reason, or the traditions of men, or some new inspiration, which it places above the Bible. Hence the whole body of rationalists and all their false religions. They correct the Word of God, or complete it; they contradict or they interdict it; they cause it to be irreverently read by their pupils; or they forbid them its perusal.

The rationalists, for instance, who in our day profess Judaism, set above the Bible, if not their own reason, at least that of the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries; that is to say the human traditions of their Targums, the Mishna and the Gemara of their two enormous Talmuds. Beneath the weight of these they have crushed the Law and the Prophets.

The rationalists who profess the religion of Rome will, in their turn, set above the Bible, the reason of

the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, which they call *tradition*.

Those rationalists who profess a corrupt Protestantism, and who reject the doctrines of the Reformation, will set above the Bible, the reason of Socinus and Priestley, of Eichhorn and Paulus, of Strauss and Hegel, or at least their own. The Word of God, say they, is mingled with error. They try it, and correct it; and it is with the Bible in their hands that they come and say, There is no Divinity in Christ, no resurrection of the body, no Holy Ghost, no devil, no spirits, no hell, no atonement in the death of Jesus, no innate corruption in man, no eternal punishments, no miracle in the deeds, and (must I even add?) no reality in Jesus Christ.

Finally, those rationalists who profess mysticism will set above the sacred text their own hallucinations, their inward word, their revelations, and the Christ who, they say, is within them. They will speak with contempt of the letter of Scripture, of its literal sense, of gospel facts, of the man Jesus, or of the external Christ (as they term him), of the Cross of Golgotha, of preaching, of worship, and of sacraments. They are above these carnal helps! Hence their dislike to the doctrines of the judicial justice of God, of the reality of sin, of Divine wrath against wickedness, of grace, of election, of atonement, of the imputed righteousness of Christ, and of future punishments.

Disciples of the Saviour, hear him in his Word; it is there He speaks to us; there is our reason, there our wisdom, there our inspiration and safe tradition; it is the lamp of our feet. "Sanctify me, O Lord, by thy truth: thy word is truth!"

Let our reason then employ all its powers, in the sight of God, to recognise, in the first place, that the Scriptures are from him, and afterwards to study them. Let it bend daily more closely over its Divine oracles,

to correct itself by them, not to correct them by it; to search therein the meaning of God, not to substitute its own; to present itself before their holy word as a respectful, gentle, docile handmaid, and not as a noisy vain-glorious sibyl! Let our daily prayer, while these shades of night surround us, be constantly that of the child of the tabernacle, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!" The law of the Lord is perfect; the words of the Lord are pure words; it is "as silver refined in a furnace of earth, and purified seven times in the crucible." (Psalm xii. 6.)

And, on the other hand, let us seek the Holy Spirit in greater power; for as Christians we are anointed, yea, baptized of the Holy One. It is the Spirit alone that leads us into all the truth of Scripture, which sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, and bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, by enabling us to realise the promises of our inheritance, and giving us the earnest of our adoption. In vain, without this Spirit, should we for eighteen hundred years have had this Scripture in our possession, as have the Jews: we could not understand therein the things of the Spirit of God; "they would be foolishness unto us; for the natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But, at the same time, in always distinguishing the spirit from the letter, let us be careful never to separate them. Let it be always before the word, in the word, and by the word, that we seek this Divine Spirit. It is by the word that He acts, enlightens, affects, casts down, and raises up. His constant operation is to make our souls comprehend it, and to induce us to love it.

The Bible therefore is from God in all its parts.

The light of the last day will at once unveil the splendour of any passages which may appear to us now as less important. The glory of the day of Jesus will

spread refulgence over all, penetrating the entire Scriptures, disclosing to us the yet hidden treasures, and causing them to shine with resplendent lustre. Then will the beauty, wisdom, proportions, and harmony of all their revelations be manifested; and the sight will fill the elect of God with rapturous admiration, with ever-increasing emotions of love, and joy unspeakable.

The history of the past in connection with this subject ought to lead us even now to anticipate that of the future; and we may judge, by what has been accomplished, of the glory of the light which will be shed on the Scriptures at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Observe what vivid brightness was cast upon all parts of the Old Testament at the first appearing of the Son of God; and learn from this what will be the radiance of the two Testaments at his second advent. Then the plan of God will be consummated; then will our Lord and King, "fairer than the children of men, borne on the word of truth, meekness, and righteousness," be revealed from heaven; then will his light fill the hearts of his ransomed ones, and the imposing grandeur of the work of redemption will be exhibited in all its glory to the gaze of the children of God.

Observe already how many chapters of Scripture in the time of Jeremiah, or later, in the long reign of the Maccabees, and during the existence of the second temple from Malachi to John the Baptist,—observe, we say, how many chapters of Scripture which are now sparkling before our eyes with Divine splendour must in those days have appeared dull and insignificant to the eyes of the rationalists of the ancient synagogue. How unmeaning must have appeared to them many chapters and verses which now feed our faith, fill us with admiration of the majestic unity of the Scriptures, cause our tears to flow, and which have already brought so many weary and heavy-laden souls to the feet of Jesus! What did they say of Isaiah liii.?—doubtless,

with the Ethiopian minister of queen Candace: "How should I understand, except some one explain it to me?—of whom speaks the prophet; of himself, or of some other man?" What could have appeared to be the use of that mysterious history of Melchizedec? Why those long details respecting the Tabernacle, Aaron's garments, things clean and unclean, the worship and sacrifices? What would they say of the words, "the legs* thereof shall not be broken"? In what sense could they have regarded Psalms xxii., lxix., and many others? "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—"They pierced my hands and my feet." Why (must they have thought) does David in his Psalms occupy us at such length with the common details of his adventurous life? When moreover did they divide his garments and cast lots for his vesture? What mean the words, "All they that see me wag their heads, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him, seeing he delighted in him"? What is signified by the vinegar and the gall?—"They gave me gall for my repast, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink"? What is the import of these exaggerated and inexplicable expressions, "I hid not my face from shame and spitting. They smote me on the cheek, and they ploughed upon my back"? And what could the prophet mean by saying, "A virgin shall conceive"? Who again is this lowly king seated on an ass?—"Zion, behold thy king cometh to deliver thee, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." And whose burial is alluded to in the sentence, "His grave was ordained with the wicked; but he was with the rich in his death"?

How strange and little worthy of the Lord must all these expressions, and so many others, have appeared to the presumptuous scribes of bygone days! "What

* The translation is *bone* in the English version. See Exod. xii. 46, and Numb. ix. 12.

humanity, what individuality, what occasionality!" they would exclaim, if we may put into their mouths the current terms of our own day. No doubt very learned systems, and abundant conjecture about the intention of the prophets who wrote these details, were professed in the academies of that period; nought however could be discerned in their language but the ordinary impression of the exclusively personal circumstances by which they supposed them to be affected.

But what were ye then doing, true disciples of the word of life?—Hezekiah, Daniel, Josiah, Nehemiah, and Ezra—our brethren in the same hope and faith; and ye, too, holy women who hoped in God, and looked for the consolation of Israel? Oh! like the angels of light, ye were reverently contemplating the depths of these truths and awaiting their development.—Yes, they waited! They knew that the most insignificant passage in their eyes might be pregnant (as one of the fathers of the church has observed) with "mountains of doctrine." On this account "searching to discover," as St. Peter says, "what the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, had caused them to write concerning the time and circumstances of the sufferings of the Messiah, and the glory which should follow," they did not doubt that at a later period, when time and events should have unveiled these mysteries, they would be found marvellously glorious in the light of the Divine mind, and rich in all the consolations of the gospel. The day was coming on when, after the Messiah's first appearing, the least in the kingdom of God would be greater than the greatest of the prophets. That day has dawned. But we ourselves also know that, after the second appearance of Jesus, the day will come when the least of the redeemed will be greater in knowledge than were Augustine, Calvin, Pascal, and Leighton; for then the ears of babes will hear, and their eyes will see things which even the apostles desired to see and have not seen, and to hear and have not heard.

Well ; what prophets and saints did concerning passages then obscure to them, but now made luminous to us, we will do with regard to the passages which we cannot as yet comprehend, but which will soon be clearly revealed to the heirs of eternal life, when all prophecy shall be accomplished, and when Jesus shall appear in the clouds in the last manifestation of his glorious coming.

With what splendour have many passages, psalms, prophecies, types, and descriptions presented themselves to our view as soon as we have discovered the beauty which had previously been veiled ! What gospel truth has come forth from them ! What appeals to conscience ! What unfolding of redeeming love ! Let us therefore await similar but more glorious revelations on the day when our Master will again descend from heaven ; “ for,” says Irenæus, “ there are in the Scriptures difficulties which through the grace of God we are now able to resolve ; but there are others which we leave to him, not only as respects this generation, but those to come, in order that God may be perpetually teaching and man perpetually learning from God the things that are of God.”

If the lights of grace have dimmed those of nature, what will it be when the lights of glory in their turn shall cast those of grace into the shade ! What stars of the first magnitude now unseen will be lighted up in the firmament of the Scriptures at the approach of that great day ! And when, at last, it shall burst unveiled upon the redeemed, what harmonies, what heavenly tints, what new glories, what unanticipated splendours will be revealed to the heirs of eternal life !

Then shall we see the full meaning of many prophecies, facts, and instructions, whose Divine character is now only seen in detached features, but whose evangelical beauty will at that day be fully displayed. Then will be known the import of those parables, even now so impressive, of the fig-tree—of the master returning

from the far country—of the bridegroom and bride—of the net drawn to the shore of eternity—of Lazarus—of the guests—of the talents—of the husbandmen—of the virgins—and of the marriage feast. Then will be known all the glory of such expressions as these:—"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool:"—"Thy people, Lord, shall be willing in the day when thou shalt assemble thine army in holy pomp:"—"The dew of thy youth shall be to thee from the dawn of the day:"—"He shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath:"—"He shall wound the head of him who rules over a great country:"—"He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head."

Then also wilt thou reveal Thyself to us in all thy glory, Lord Jesus, Saviour, Comforter, Friend of the desolate, our Lord and our God! Thou who hast seen death, but who art "He that is alive for evermore!" Then will all the knowledge of heaven be centred in Thyself. This was ever the wisdom of the Holy Ghost which came down from heaven; and always that of Scripture, for "the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." It is already the entire life of the saints: "their eternal life is to know Thee."

The whole written word is, then, inspired of God.

"Open thou mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see the wonders of thy law!"

"Thy testimonies are wonderful, therefore doth my soul keep them. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple. I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for thy commandments." (Psa. cxix. 129—131.)

NOTE.

Our author has dwelt with so much power on the first clause of 2 Tim. iii. 16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," that we greatly regret he has not pursued the passage energetically throughout; as each clause would have very happily formed the basis of the several chapters, furnishing perhaps the strongest proofs in the Divine volume of the doctrine advocated in this valuable work. The apostle, after stating that all Scripture is inspired, proceeds to show those things for which it is profitable. First, "for doctrine" or instruction (*διδασκαλίαν*). This word is derived from verbs which signify to know, to show. The Scripture is the source and foundation, then, whence the instruction is drawn, which the Holy Ghost can call profitable. Men may call much profitable in religion that is not according to it, asserting that antiquity bears them out, as Job's friends said, "With us are both the gray-headed and very aged men, much older than thy father" (xv. 10). But God's reply will be, as at that time, "My wrath is kindled against thee and thy friends" (xlii. 7). Secondly, "for reproof," or proof over again (*ἐλεγχου*). (The word is not now used in this sense.) The force of this statement is, that whatsoever may be profitably received or rejected as the rule of faith or action, may be established from Scripture by evident and convincing proofs. Thirdly, "for correction." The simple meaning of the Greek word *ἐπανόρθωσις* is, making straight what has become crooked; so that whatsoever deviation or error in things may exist, the Word of God is profitable for the correction of it. Fourthly, "for instruction in righteousness," properly education or discipline (*παιδείαν*) in righteousness; and where, but in that volume which opens with the old creation and ends with the new, will that skilful observation of the past, and that long foresight of the future be found, which constitute the true science of education, supplying in every page a precept of moral discipline? Fifthly, "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The word

here rendered perfect (*ἄριος*) is not to be understood of moral perfection, or such as characterises the actings of God in grace, as, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Its meaning is "qualified, accomplished, furnished," as also the participle *ἐξηρητισμένος* in the same sentence, accurately translated "thoroughly furnished;" and the force of this passage is, that from the stock of Scripture with which the man of God is furnished, every work worthy of being called good by the Holy Ghost is derived. The whole statement is therefore one of the strongest, if not the very strongest Divine declaration upon the entire sufficiency of Scripture, in enabling the instructed to meet every case and circumstance that could be presented to the spiritual mind, in the infinite variety of possible combinations.



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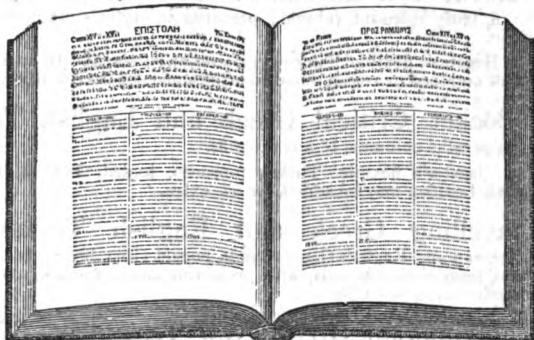
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