In the *Entretien avec M. de Saci*, Pascal proposes an alternative to the "lumières imparfaites" of profane philosophy. The rival theories of Epicurus and Montaigne, because they fail to resolve the central enigma of the human condition, must "se brisent et s'anéantissent pour faire place à la vérité de l'Evangile." No formula penetrates quite so well to the heart of the apologetic strategy sketched by the *Pensées*. According to the plan revealed by the dossiers of 1658, Pascal programs profane philosophy for its own self-destruction. The conflicting theories of the Stoics and the Skeptics serve to cancel each other out in order to "faire place" for an examination of Christian Revelation as contained in Scripture.

The whole aim of Pascal's *Apology* would have been to prove "la vérité de l'Evangile." "La plus grande des preuves" of the veracity of the Gospel was to have been the argument proposed in "Prophéties" and elaborated in the dossiers subsequent to the *liasses* of 1658. Almost every other major theological and historical development in the *Pensées* anticipates, and in some way lays the groundwork for, this definitive proof. The chapters concerning the authenticity of the Pentateuch, the témoignage of the Jews, figures, and the obscurity of the historical Jesus all find their place in a chain of investigations designed to persuade the unbeliever to accept the testimony of the Bible.

Pascal's whole apologetic endeavor, Etienne Périer reminds us in the preface to the Edition de Port-Royal of the *Pensées*, was to demonstrate that "la religion chrétienne avait autant de marques de certitude et d'évidence que les choses qui sont reçues dans le monde pour les plus indubtables." The arguments of the historical *liasses*, and in particular those that would have constituted "la plus grande des preuves," serve to underscore the essentially empirical character that Pascal intended to give to his defense of Christianity. In Pascal's view, God's hidden nature means that human reason can never hope to penetrate the veil of Revelation. Yet in his infinite mercy, God has appended "marques visibles" to Revelation so that those who search with all their heart may believe. The most important of these outward and visible signs are the Old Testament prophecies and their
accomplishment in the New Testament. Because they are "solides et palpables" (221/189), the prophecies are subject to empirical analysis. Man's fallen reason may act upon their evidence without exceeding its inherent limits.

Henri Gouhier is surely correct when he attributes the empirical character of Pascal's definitive argument to "les habitudes que l'exercice des mathématiques, la pratique de la méthode expérimentale et l'observation des hommes ont imposées à sa pensée." Pascal's model in squaring the Old Testament prophecies with the evidence of the New Testament certainly takes its inspiration from geometrical reasoning. We have not failed to note, however, that the Pascal who meditates on the mysteries of the prophecies no longer strictly adheres to those epistemological principles we found him setting down in the preface to *Sur le Traité du vide*. No longer does he insist that the "droits séparés" of empirical and religious truth must never be confused.

In the preface to *Sur le Traité du vide*, Pascal had argued that no "autorité," theological or secular, should be allowed to interfere with the objective demonstration of empirical fact. In his exposition in the *Apology* of "la plus grande des preuves," however, the empirical facts themselves are selected and ordered on the basis of an unmistakable authority. It is the Bible itself, along with the exegetical tradition, that determines which Old Testament texts are to be examined in the first place. Pascal's model is no longer the strict scientific method proposed in the preface to *Sur le Traité du vide*. It cannot be because the evidence to be examined is not ordinary empirical evidence. Rather, it is those "marques visibles" that God has attached to Revelation. Scriptural exegesis cannot be numbered among those sciences that Pascal had described as requiring augmentation "pour devenir parfaites." There can be no innovation or augmentation in a science whose authority is that of Revelation itself.

In the eighteenth *Provinciale*, Pascal had set down the principle that since "le rapport des sens est unique," the Bible must always be interpreted in a way "qui convient au rapport fidèle des sens." In the course of the *Pensées*, he never consciously violates this principle or bends empirical data to make his proofs more convincing. In the case of the temporal prophecy of Daniel 9, we find him a good deal more careful with the facts than Sacy. However, at several points in his notes we do find the apologist excluding any data that might cast doubt on the strict veracity of the Bible's account of sacred history. He dismisses the theories of Isaac de la Peyrère as "extravagances" (478/575) and relegates the evidence of the *Sinicae historiae* to the status of "roman" (688/436). The examples of La Peyrère and the *Sinicae historiae* are admittedly marginal to the larger concerns of the *Apology*. But so, too, Pascal insists in fragment 196/164, is the most burn-
ing scientific issue of the age. "Je trouve bon qu’on n’approfondisse pas l’opinion de Copernic, mais ceci—Il importe à toute la vie de savoir si l’âme est mortelle ou immortelle."

Pascal’s position could not be more clear. Even the question of the shape of the physical universe pales into insignificance when set up against the fate of a single human soul. Once awakened from the torpor of “divertissement,” the unbeliever has more important issues to ponder than those that pertain to the purely physical universe. Pascal’s refusal to grant a fair hearing to libertine, or even scientific,7 challenges to the infallibility of Bible history is at least comprehensible in the context of his larger apologetic strategy. As in his suppression of a literal exposition of Genesis in “A.P.R.,” the apologist seeks to avoid constellating opposing arguments in the mind of his interlocutor. Yet the student of the history of ideas is not wrong to be troubled by the fact that Pascal’s personal notes consistently rule out even the slightest alteration in the traditional biblical understanding of human history.

As misconceived as it was, La Peyrère’s theory of the “préAdamites” represented a growing awareness that man’s history had to be more complex, and more ancient, than the Christian chronologists had ever imagined. Pascal’s total lack of sensitivity to this new awareness is obvious from his reaction to the Sinicae Historiae. His only concern is to refute any potential challenge to biblical chronologies. Completely caught up in a defense of the Bible’s infallibility, the apologist does not pause for one moment to wonder if the chronologies of the Chinese might represent genuine empirical evidence. The way in which he states the question betrays the fact that the epistemological perspective of Sur le Traité du vide no longer holds: “Lequel est le plus croyable des deux: Moïse ou la Chine?” (663/822).

Even given the influence of the theology and theologians of Port-Royal, it still seems troubling that so critical and analytical a thinker as Pascal unquestioningly endorsed Sacy’s theory that only five generations of Patriarchs stood between Moses and the Creation. Sacy’s position is easier to understand. His training was entirely theological, his point of view intensely monastic. Pascal, on the other hand, had moved in scientific circles from childhood. Early in his scientific career, he had seen the necessity of distinguishing between empirical and religious truth, taking Père Noel to task for invoking the doctrine of the Eucharist against the results of his “expériences sur le vide.”8 Why is it then that the Pascal of the Apology does not hesitate to invoke the authority of Moses and the Pentateuch against the evidence of the Sinicae historiae? What change in his epistemological perspective was wrought by his great conversion to the “Dieu d’Abraham, Dieu d’Isaac, Dieu de Jacob, non des philosophes et des savants”??
The Pascal who arrived at Port-Royal-des-Champs in 1655 already had a considerable psychological investment in a passion for orthodoxy of doctrine. That much is clear from Mme Périer's account of the "affaire Saint-Ange." Pierre Courcelle establishes the fact that Sacy "a orienté Pascal, à cette date, vers la lecture des Confessions." Given everything we know about Monsieur de Sacy, it seems likely that he also sought to orient the future apologist toward the study of the Bible. It does not seem unreasonable to think that Sacy's vision of the unity, inviolability, and infallibility of the Bible could have served as a catalyst, focusing Pascal's fervor for dogmatic orthodoxy onto the sphere of sacred history.

It has not been possible to document the hypothesis that Pascal actually consulted Sacy concerning the historical focus of his Apology. Our study of the Pensées, however, has elucidated in Pascal's arguments the same sense of urgency regarding the need to prove the historical inerrancy of the Bible that animates Sacy's scriptural commentaries. Pascal's extreme hostility to any challenge to the historical authority of the Bible might well be the result of Sacy's influence. But it is just as much the result of his having fallen into a biblical vision of human history. The product of 1,700 years of typological exegesis, this vision must have so captured Pascal's imagination that he was rendered insensitive to the more complex understanding of human history that was germinating in the minds of his contemporaries.

However fascinating we find Pascal's exposition of the biblical drama of salvation, we still come away from the Pensées with the feeling that the historical proofs would constitute a major stumbling block for the modern chercheur. The whole force of what was to have been the definitive argument of the Apology seems to lack the enduring power of those other arguments designed to shock an agnostic temperament out of the folly of "divertissement." The predicament of "un homme dans un cachot, ne sachant si son arrêt est donné" (195/163) appeals to us in a way that "la plus grande des preuves" does not. The inaccessibility of Pascal's historical proofs may of course be attributed to the progress of biblical studies. Yet the modern reader's failure to be drawn into Pascal's line of reasoning may not be totally the product of the fact that he has read Bultmann or Tillich.

Since the time of the writing of the Pensées, there have been a number of fundamental shifts in the whole Western religious sensibility. The myth of "man's first disobedience," for instance, no longer holds a real grip on the popular religious imagination. A long tradition of humanistic and scientific ideas concerning the perfectibility of man and human society has diluted its essential pessimism. Even official Christianity has tended to seat the vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem a little closer to terra firma and to stress God's transcendence more than man's corruption.
Pascal's use of the Fall in the first stage of his apologetic itinerary still makes for a thought-provoking argument. His perception that man's universal search for happiness suggests "qu'il y a eu autrefois dans l'homme un véritable bonheur" (181/148) still seems at least plausible. The idea has a distinct affinity with the myth of a Golden Age and occurs in transmuted forms in both Marxist theories of history and in psychoanalytic theories concerning the origin of the psyche. On the other hand, what seems so alien to us in Pascal's argument is his notion that a historical Fall of all men in Adam can explain the central paradox of the human dilemma. Because it is rooted in a literal view of Genesis and wedded to a creationist theory that few still believe, Pascal's argument loses its coherence when taken as metaphor. It cannot easily be divorced from the Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin, from which it draws its emotional and psychological power.

Another idea that runs completely against the grain of Pascal's thought has emerged with particular force in the contemporary religious imagination. Long latent in the Christian mythos and perhaps resurfacing under the influence of Eastern thought, this notion holds that if God is to be found, He must be found within man himself. The modern Christian theologian might argue that the idea by no means contradicts the real meaning of the doctrine of the Incarnation. The fact remains, however, that this same principle was held in abhorrence by the entire Augustinian tradition. It is a commonplace of the popular spirituality of our age to speak of the human soul (or spirit) as containing "a spark of the divine." Pascal could not have taken a more contrary point of view. In the Entretien avec M. de Saci, he severely censures Epictetus for maintaining "que l'âme est une portion de la substance divine."10

Given their insistence on the total corruption of the human heart, the neo-Augustinian theologians of Port-Royal could provide no rationale for any such search for God inside man. One may search the Mémoires of Fontaine in vain for the slightest hint that the Solitaires ever intended to retire to Port-Royal-des-Champs in order to search for God in the depths of their own souls. Their entire purpose in fleeing the corruption of the world, Fontaine tells us over and over again, was to "faire pénitence." Pascal is equally emphatic concerning the corruption and emptiness of man's interior self: "Que le coeur de l'homme est creux et plein d'ordure" (171/139). His whole criticism of profane philosophy is that it urges men to seek "le souverain bien" (and hence God) within themselves:

Nous sommes pleins de choses qui nous jettent au-dehors.
Notre instinct nous fait sentir qu'il faut chercher notre bonheur hors de nous. Nos passions nous poussent au-dehors, quand même les objets ne s'offriraient pas pour les exciter. Les objets du dehors nous tentent d'eux-mêmes
et nous appellent, quand même nous n'y pensons pas. Et ainsi les philosophes ont beau dire: "Rentrez-vous en vous-mêmes, vous y trouverez votre bien;" on ne les croit pas. Et ceux qui les croient sont les plus vides et les plus sots. (176/143)

In a note in his edition of the *Pensées*, Philippe Sellier seizes upon a perspective that is critical to understanding Pascal's position. Man's search for God must take place *outside* the human heart:

Lorsqu'il imagine son espace intérieur, Pascal se le représente comme une citerne ténèbreuse et suintante, dont le fond est un "cloaque," un lieu de souillures et de boue, où croupit une végétation mauvaise, solidement enracinée, et dont l'arrachement est douloureux (fr. 457). Ces "racines" sont comme de fines griffes, un réseau de lianes, de "liens." Tel est le "vilain fond de l'homme" (fr. 244). Quand il se penche sur la margelle de son cœur, Pascal voit son "abîme d'orgueil, de curiosité, de concupiscence" (fr. 751).—Alors que saint Augustin rencontrait Dieu dans les espaces féeriques de son âme, Pascal insiste sur la haine de soi et rencontre presque toujours Dieu en quelque sorte "au-dehors": dans la nature, dans le Christ, dans l'Eucharistie, dans l'Ecriture, dans les pauvres (*Lettre 4 à Charlotte de Roannez*).

Pascal accords a special privilege to the faculty of intuition. It is "notre instinct" that contradicts the philosophers' admonition that the true search is an interior one. Pascal appeals to this same faculty in "Contrariétés," "Le Souverain Bien," and "A.P.R." in order to awaken his interlocutor's recognition that man is no longer in the state of his creation. This "instinct impuissant du bonheur de [sa] première nature" is the pitiful residue of man's former state of communication with God. A "lumière confuse de son auteur" (182/149), this instinct is itself the reason why men so paradoxically seek "le souverain bien" in "divertissement" and in created things:

Qu'est-ce donc que nous crie cette avidité et cette impuissance, sinon qu'il y a eu autrefois dans l'homme un véritable bonheur, dont il ne lui reste maintenant que la marque et la trace toute vide, et qu'il essaie inutilement de remplir de tout ce qui l'environne, recherchant des choses absentes le secours qu'il n'obtient pas des présentes, mais qui en sont toutes incapables, parce que ce gouffre infini ne peut être rempli que par un objet infini et immuable, c'est-à-dire que par Dieu même. (181/148)

The search for God in the *Pensées* winds its way through an ascending hierarchy of categories, from the "marque . . . toute vide" that the Fall has left in the human heart to those "marques visibles" that God has appended to Revelation. Intuitively, man recognizes that God must be sought "au-dehors." Ironically, the inward search advocated by the philosophers is even more misdirected than the folly of "divertissement." For at least in coveting created things, men follow the prompting of an instinct that is the "trace toute vide" of their "première nature." All men search for God with-
out knowing it—“jusqu'à ceux qui vont se pendre” (181/148). The most depraved sinners follow the same initial impulse as the holiest saints. “La vie ordinaire des hommes est semblable à celle des saints. Ils recherchent tous leur satisfaction et ne différent qu’en l’objet où ils la placent” (306/275).

Though Pascal shares Sacy's notion that God made the world in the first place “pour donner une grande idée de lui-[même],” the \textit{Pensées} consistently rule out searching for God in the design of the universe. God's having hidden himself in nature is a function of the corruption of human reason in the Fall. Those who have “la foi vive dedans le coeur” do not fail to recognize the truth that “tout ce qui est n'est autre chose que l'ouvrage du Dieu qu'ils adorent” (644/781). But the salvation of those whose hearts have yet to be filled with grace will in no way be advanced by natural proofs of God's existence. At most, reason can only deduce the God of the deists. The Christian God is not simply the author of geometrical truths. Nor does he simply exercise his Providence over human affairs. He is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of love and consolation. “C'est un Dieu qui remplit l'âme et le coeur de ceux qu'il possède” (690/449).

In Pascal's view, God is paradoxically even more hidden in the Incarnation of Jesus than beneath the veil of nature. “Il s'est encore plus caché en se couvrant de l'humanité.” Just as the Risen Christ is veiled in the Eucharist by the species of bread and wine, so too God was veiled in human flesh by the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Pascal pushes this traditional analogy one step further. Just as the historical Jesus is for the modern unbeliever veiled in the mists of historical obscurity, so too is the unique message of the Gospel obscured by the letter of Scripture. “Comme Jésus-Christ est demeuré inconnu parmi les hommes, ainsi sa vérité parmi les opinions communes, sans différence à l'extérieur. Ainsi l'Eucharistie parmi le pain commun” (258/225). Yet for those who have the eyes to see Him, both the Eucharist and the person of Jesus are “saint, saint, saint à Dieu” (339/308).

The believing Christian whose heart is filled with God himself need go no further. By faith, he glimpses God's hidden presence not in himself but in the Eucharist, the Bible, and the person of Jesus. The unbeliever, however, must ascend to another level if he hopes to be permitted to share in the same perception. He must examine those “marques visibles” that God has attached to sacred history so that he too may believe. In the last analysis, those “marques divines” of which Divine Wisdom speaks in “A.P.R.” are the only exception to the rule that God has hidden himself from the sight of men. Given the apologist's conviction that God must be sought outside man, Pascal's \textit{Apology} must have a historical focus. The historical proofs are not marginal to some larger apologetic concern. Nor were they meant
simply to buttress Pascal's so-called philosophical arguments. They are the core of Pascal's projected Apology and the ultimate argument upon which he intended to rest his case.

"LA FOLIE DE LA CROIX": THE LIMITS OF APOLOGETIC DIALOGUE

At the end of part one of Sacy's Précéa à la Genèse stands an idea of capital relevance to the meaning of the Pensées. Christian apologetics, Sacy asserts, is in the last analysis of limited utility. Many of the greatest of the saints and martyrs lacked sufficient "lumière d'esprit" to appreciate historical or rational proofs of Christianity. In "Conclusion," the final chapter of the dossiers of 1658, Pascal adopts precisely the same position. "Ne vous étonnez pas," he admonishes his libertin, "de voir des personnes simples croire sans raisonnement" (412/380). "Ceux que nous voyons chrétiens sans la connaissance des prophéties et des preuves ne laissent pas d'en juger aussi bien que ceux qui ont cette connaissance" (414/382).

Pascal's position perhaps takes us entirely by surprise. The whole force of the Apology is based upon the premise that Christianity is historically demonstrable. The prophecies, empirical evidence on which reason can act without exceeding its inherent limitations, serve as the final proof in an argument designed to bring about reason's abdication in the face of Revelation. Yet most Christians, Pascal is the first to point out, have no knowledge of the prophecies. The ultimate source of "la véritable religion" is the Bible. Yet the great majority of believers adhere to Christianity "sans avoir lu les Testaments" (413/381).

In the course of this study, I have attempted to demonstrate that Pascal's final position is far removed from the fideism of the Essais of Montaigne. The ultimate proofs of Christianity are empirical. Not only is "la véritable religion" reasonable. Not to believe the testimony of Holy Writ is profoundly unreasonable. "Ce sera une des confusions des damnés de voir qu'ils seront condamnés par leur propre raison par laquelle ils ont prétendu condamner la religion chrétienne" (206/175). Yet ordinary Christians believe "sans raisonnement." God grants to "des personnes simples" what he so often denies to those of high estate. "Il incline leur coeur à croire" (412/380).

Pascal admits that the Christian who believes "sans preuve n'aura peut-être pas de quoi convaincre un infidèle." Therein lies the true raison d'être of Christian apologetics. "Ceux qui savent les preuves de la religion prouveront sans difficulté que ce fidèle est véritablement inspiré de Dieu, quoiqu'il ne peut le prouver lui-même" (414/382). The true aim of apologetics is to vindicate the faith of those who already believe. Those empirical proofs that constitute a historical demonstration of Christianity are but figures of
more profound spiritual realities. Those who believe “sans avoir lu les Testaments” have instinctively seized these truths through the mechanism of the heart. “Ils en jugent par le coeur comme les autres en jugent par l’esprit” (414/382).

In the last analysis, an intellectual submission to the doctrines of Christianity is insufficient. “Qu’il y a loin de la connaissance de Dieu à l’aimer” (409/377). Apology cannot attempt to force God’s hand. It can only hope to awaken a grace that God has already dispensed. From the perspective of Augustinian theology, in which all things are preordained by God, apology is but another vehicle for the working out of predestination and election.

Those who stand outside Christianity misunderstand the meaning of conversion. They imagine that it consists of a two-way contract between an individual and God. “‘Si j’avais vu un miracle,’ disent-ils, ‘je me convertirais.’” “Comment assurent-ils,” Pascal can only reply, “qu’ils feraient ce qu’ils ignorent?”

Ils s’imaginent que cette conversion consiste en une adoration qui se fait de Dieu comme un commerce et une conversation telle qu’ils se la figurent. La conversion véritable consiste à s’anéantir devant cet être universel qu’on a irrité tant de fois et qui peut vous perdre légitimement à toute heure, à reconnaître qu’on ne peut rien sans lui et qu’on n’a rien mérité de lui que sa disgrâce. Elle consiste à connaître qu’il y a une opposition invincible entre Dieu et nous et que sans un médiateur il ne peut y avoir de commerce. (410/378)

In the “prosopopée” of “A.P.R.,” Divine Wisdom reassures the libertin that accepting Revelation will not mean abandoning reason. “Je n’entends pas que vous soumettiez votre créance à moi sans raison, et ne prétends point vous assujettir avec tyrannie” (182/149). At the end of the Apology, we find Pascal defining conversion to Christianity in a way that seems to exclude not only the exercise of reason but the very utility of apologetic dialogue. God is no longer portrayed as Divine Wisdom, who gently guides the unbeliever to the light of Revelation. He is “cet être universel . . . qui peut vous perdre légitimement à toute heure” (410/378). The libertin, who has presumably accepted the historical arguments in favor of Christianity, must now “s’anéantir” in order to experience a genuine conversion of the heart.

When he concludes his defense of Christianity by insisting that conversion is an essentially irrational act, Pascal recapitulates a paradox fundamental to the meaning of the Pensées. Pascal’s whole enterprise rests on the premise that the unbelief of his interlocutor may be altered through rational argument. Augustinian theology, however, holds that belief or unbelief, like salvation or damnation, is preordained and unalterable. Pascal is writing an apology within a theological tradition that, if its fundamental positions are taken to their logical conclusion, does not admit the utility of
apologetic dialogue. The unique character and enduring fascination of the *Pensées* are in large measure the product of this fundamental paradox.

Pascal's understanding of the nature of Scripture reflects an antirationalism inherent in neo-Augustinian theology. At Port-Royal, no scriptural injunction received greater emphasis than Saint Paul's warning that the wisdom of this world can only serve to empty the cross of Christ. Reason, Pascal observes in the fragment titled "Préface de la seconde partie," misleads those seeking God. Assuming that God is made in its own image, reason prompts men to search for evidence of God's presence in the visible universe. "Ce n'est pas de cette sorte que l'Ecriture, qui connaît mieux les choses qui sont de Dieu, en parle. Elle dit au contraire que Dieu est un Dieu caché; et que, depuis la corruption de la nature, il les a laissés dans un aveuglement dont ils ne peuvent sortir que par Jésus-Christ, hors duquel toute communication avec Dieu est ôtée: *Nemo novit Patrem, nisi Filius, et cui Filius voluerit revelare*" (644/781).

Pascal is acutely aware that the doctrine of the Incarnation, the assertion that God is knowable only in the person of Jesus, is in every way a scandal to reason. Yet nowhere in the *Apology* does he ever attempt to mitigate its irrationality. To the contrary, he rejoices that Christ came to "aveugler les sages et les savants" and to "annoncer l'Évangile aux pauvres et aux petits" (734/487). With Saint Paul, he gives thanks that God has "made foolish the wisdom of this world." The whole of Revelation, he reminds the libertin, ultimately points toward "la folie de la croix":

Cette religion si grande en miracles; saints, purs, irréprochables, savants et grands témoins; martyrs; rois—David—établis, Isaïe prince du sang; si grande en science; après avoir étalé tous ses miracles et toute sa sagesse, elle reprouve tout cela et dit qu'elle n'a ni sagesse ni signe, mais la croix et la folie.

Car ceux qui par ces signes et cette sagesse ont mérité votre créance et qui vous ont prouvé leur caractère vous déclarent que rien de tout cela ne peut nous changer et nous rendre capable de connaître et aimer Dieu que la vertu de la folie de la croix, sans sagesse ni signe. (323/291)

According to the theologians of Port-Royal, reason's inability to penetrate the mysteries of Revelation is a function of the Incarnation. "Cet étrange secret," Pascal explains in a letter to Mlle de Roannez, "dans lequel Dieu s'est retiré, impénétrable à la vue des hommes, est une grande leçon":

[Dieu] est demeuré caché sous le voile de la nature qui nous le couvre jusqu'à l'Incarnation; et quand il a fallu qu'il ait paru, il s'est encore plus caché en se couvrant de l'humanité. Il était bien plus reconnaissable quand il était invisible, que non pas quand il s'est rendu visible. Et enfin quand il a voulu accomplir la promesse qu'il fit à ses Apôtres de demeurer avec les hommes jusqu'à son dernier avènement, il a choisi d'y demeurer dans le plus étrange et le plus obscur secret de tous, qui sont les espèces de l'Eucharistie. . . . On peut ajouter à ces considérations le secret de l'Esprit de Dieu caché encore dans l'Ecriture."
Reason is incapable of perceiving the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist (258/225). Nor was it reason that led the Apostles and the early Church to acknowledge the divinity of Jesus. The Bible, because it participates in the mystery of the Word Incarnate, is not subject to rational analysis. The wisdom of this world can only serve to empty the cross of Christ, to divest Scripture of its power to save. "Qui doute," writes Sacy, "qu'une sainteté rustique et ignorante . . . ne soit préférable sans comparaison à une science stérile et superbe?"18

Exegesis, at least when it takes its models from Scripture itself, is not a science of human invention. Its authority is that of Revelation. Yet, in order to truly understand the meaning of the Bible, one must look beyond the principles of exegesis to their ultimate source. "Ne dites pas que vous ne pouvez pas comprendre l'Écriture," Sacy advises the readers of the Nouveau Testament de Mons, "aimez Dieu et il n'y aura rien que vous n'entendiez. . . . Celui qui aime sait tout: parce qu'il possède la fin à laquelle tout se rapporte."19 The same principle stands at the heart of Pascal's epistemology. "Jésus-Christ est l'objet de tout et le centre où tout tend. Qui le connaît connaît la raison de toutes choses" (690/449).

1. Bédier, pp. 74–75.
2. Lafuma, p. 495.
5. Lafuma, p. 467.
6. See p. 204, above.
7. The Copernican theory of the solar system called into question, among other things, the strict veracity of the Bible's account that Joshua stopped the sun in the sky for a whole day (Joshua 10:13).
8. See pp. 19–20, above.
11. Pensées, p. 100 n. 10.
14. I Corinthians 1:17–18: "For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with worldly wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (Revised Standard translation). Cf. fragment 655/808: "Ne evacuetur crux Christi." See also Colossians 2:8, where Saint Paul restates the same idea with even greater force: "Make sure that no one traps you . . . by some secondhand, empty, rational philosophy based on the principles of this world instead of on Christ" (Jerusalem Bible translation).
15. Matthew 11:27: ". . . No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Jerusalem Bible translation).
16. I Corinthians 1:20–21: ". . . If it was God's wisdom that human wisdom should not know God, it was because God wanted to save those who have faith through the foolishness of
the message that we preach" (Jerusalem Bible translation). Cf. fragment 221/189: "Quia non
cognovit per sapientiam, placuit Deo per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere."

18. Daniel, p. 244.