Pensées

BLAISE PASCAL
1623–1662

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Translated from the French with AI (Claude) and edited



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Pensées · Blaise Pascal (1623–1662)

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INTRODUCTION

When Blaise Pascal died in 1662, at thirty-nine, he left behind hundreds of slips of paper: notes for a great defense of the Christian religion that he never lived to write. Some are finished essays, some a single line, some a list of words. Mathematician, physicist and inventor of a calculating machine, Pascal had turned after a night of religious ecstasy in 1654 to the question he thought mattered most: why people who will certainly die do not care what happens to them.

The fragments move between two poles, the misery of man without God and his greatness. We are "a thinking reed," the weakest thing in nature and yet greater than the universe that crushes us, because we know that we die. We flee from ourselves into diversion; reason cannot prove or disprove God, so we must wager; and "the heart has its reasons, which reason does not know."

No one knows the order Pascal intended. This edition follows Léon Brunschvicg, who arranged the fragments by theme into fourteen sections and numbered them; his numbers are still the most widely cited, and are used here as references. The Memorial, the record of Pascal's night of fire that he kept sewn into his coat, is given at the end.

Section I: Thoughts on mind and style

Pensées sur l'esprit et sur le style
The mathematical and the intuitive mind, eloquence, order and the "decent man."

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[1] *Difference between the mathematical mind and the intuitive mind.*— In the one, the principles are tangible but remote from common use. So it is hard to turn one's head in that direction, for lack of habit; but if one turns it there even a little, one sees the principles in full. And one would need a thoroughly warped mind to reason badly on principles so coarse that it is almost impossible for them to escape notice.[1]

But in the intuitive mind, the principles are in common use and before everyone's eyes. There is no need to turn one's head, or to strain oneself. It is only a matter of having good sight, but it must be good, for the principles are so fine and so numerous that it is almost impossible for some not to escape. Now, omitting one principle leads to error. So one must have very clear sight to see all the principles, and then an accurate mind so as not to reason falsely on known principles.

All mathematicians would therefore be intuitive if they had good sight, for they do not reason falsely on the principles they know. And intuitive minds would be mathematicians if they could bend their sight toward the unfamiliar principles of mathematics.

So the reason certain intuitive minds are not mathematicians is that they cannot turn toward the principles of mathematics at

all. But the reason some mathematicians are not intuitive is that they do not see what is in front of them. They are used to the clear-cut, coarse principles of mathematics, and to reasoning only after they have thoroughly seen and handled their principles. So they get lost in matters of intuition, where the principles cannot be handled in this way. They are scarcely seen; they are felt rather than seen. It takes endless pains to make them felt by those who do not feel them for themselves. They are such delicate things, and so numerous, that it takes a very delicate and very clear sense to feel them, and to judge soundly and accurately according to that feeling. Most of the time one cannot demonstrate them in order, as in mathematics, because one does not possess their principles in that way, and it would be an endless task to attempt it. One must see the thing all at once, at a single glance, and not by the progress of reasoning—at least up to a certain degree. And so it is rare for mathematicians to be intuitive and for the intuitive to be mathematicians. Mathematicians want to treat these intuitive matters mathematically, and they make themselves ridiculous, wanting to begin with definitions and then with principles—which is not the way to proceed in this kind of reasoning. Not that the mind does not do so; but it does it tacitly, naturally and without art. For putting it into words is beyond all men, and the feeling of it belongs only to a few.

And intuitive minds, on the contrary, being used to judging at a single glance, are so bewildered—when they are presented with propositions of which they understand nothing, and which can be entered only through definitions and principles so sterile that they are not used to seeing them in such detail—that they are put off and disgusted.

But warped minds are never either intuitive or mathematical.

Mathematicians who are only mathematicians therefore have sound minds, but only provided that everything is thoroughly

1 Pascal's *esprit de géométrie* reasons from a few clear, abstract principles; his *esprit de finesse* grasps many subtle principles at a glance. "Géométrie" here covers mathematics in general.

explained to them by definitions and principles. Otherwise they are warped and unbearable, for they are sound only on principles that have been made quite clear.

And the intuitive who are only intuitive cannot have the patience to go down to the first principles of matters of speculation and imagination, which they have never seen in the world and which are entirely outside common use.

[2] Various kinds of sound sense: some people have it in a certain order of things, and not in the other orders, where they go wildly astray.

Some draw consequences well from few principles, and that is one soundness of sense.

Others draw consequences well in matters where there are many principles.

For example, some understand the effects of water well, a subject with few principles; but the consequences are so fine that only an extreme soundness of mind can reach them.

And such people would not, perhaps, be great mathematicians for all that, because mathematics involves a great number of principles. A mind may be of such a nature that it can penetrate a few principles to the bottom, and yet cannot penetrate in the least those matters where there are many principles.

There are therefore two kinds of mind. One penetrates the consequences of principles keenly and deeply, and that is the accurate mind. The other grasps a great number of principles without confusing them, and that is the mathematical mind. The one is strength and soundness of mind, the other is breadth of mind. Now, the one can well exist without the other: a mind can be strong and narrow, and can also be broad and weak.

[3] Those who are used to judging by feeling understand nothing of matters of reasoning, for they want to see to the bottom at a glance and are not used to looking for principles. And the others, on the contrary, who are used to reasoning from principles, understand nothing of matters of feeling: they look for principles in them and cannot see at a glance.

[4] *Mathematics, intuition.*—True eloquence mocks eloquence; true morality mocks morality. That is, the morality of judgment mocks the morality of the mind—which is without rules.

For it is to judgment that feeling belongs, as the sciences belong to the mind. Intuition is the province of judgment, mathematics that of the mind.

To mock philosophy is truly to philosophize.

[5] Those who judge a work without a rule are, compared with others, like people who [*do not*] have [*a*] watch compared with others. One says: It has been two hours. The other says: It has only been three quarters of an hour. I look at my watch, and I say to the first: You are bored; and to the second: Time hardly drags for you; for it has been an hour and a half. And I laugh at those who tell me that time drags for me, and that I judge by whim: they do not know that I judge by my watch.

[6] As we spoil the mind, so we spoil feeling too.

The mind and feeling are formed by conversation; the mind and feeling are spoiled by conversation. So good or bad conversation forms it or spoils it. It matters above everything, then, to know how to choose well, so as to form it and not spoil it; and one cannot make this choice unless it is already formed and not spoiled. So this makes a circle, and happy are those who get out of it.

[7] The more mind one has, the more original people one finds. Ordinary people find no difference between men.

[8] There are many people who listen to the sermon the same way they listen to vespers.[2]

[9] When we want to correct someone usefully, and show him that he is mistaken, we must observe from which side he is looking at the matter, for it is usually true from that side. We must grant him that truth, but show him the side from which it is false. He is satisfied with that, for he sees that he was not mistaken, and only failed to see all the sides. Now, no one is annoyed at not seeing everything, but no one wants to [*have*]

2 Vespers, the evening office, was sung in Latin, which most of the congregation did not understand.

been mistaken. Perhaps this comes from the fact that by nature man cannot see everything, and that by nature he cannot be mistaken on the side he is looking at—just as the perceptions of the senses are always true.

10 As a rule, we are better persuaded by reasons we have found ourselves than by those that have occurred to others.

AGAINST THE THEATER

Pascal argues that plays are the most dangerous diversion, because they make love seem innocent.

11 All great diversions are dangerous for the Christian life; but of all those the world has invented, none is more to be feared than the theater. It is so natural and so delicate a portrayal of the passions that it stirs them and gives them birth in our hearts—above all the passion of love, especially when [*it*] is portrayed as very chaste and very decent.[3] For the more innocent it appears to innocent souls, the more capable they are of being moved by it. Its violence pleases our self-love, which at once forms a desire to produce the same effects that we see so well portrayed. At the same time we fashion ourselves a conscience founded on the decency of the feelings we see there. These feelings remove the fear of pure souls, who imagine that it is no offense against purity to love with a love that seems to them so wise.

So we leave the theater with our hearts so full of all the beauties and all the sweetness of love, and our souls and minds so convinced of its innocence, that we are fully prepared to receive its first impressions—or rather to look for the chance to arouse them in someone's heart, so as to receive the same pleasures and the same sacrifices that we have seen so well depicted on the stage.

12 Scaramouche, who thinks of only one thing.[4]

3 Diversion (*divertissement*): for Pascal, whatever distracts us from thinking about ourselves; here, entertainments. *La comédie* meant stage plays of every kind.
4 Scaramouche and the Doctor are stock characters of the Italian comedy then playing in Paris; the Doctor is the long-winded pedant.

The Doctor, who goes on talking for a quarter of an hour after he has said everything, so full is he of the desire to talk.

[13] We like to see the error, the passion of Cleobuline, because she is unaware of it; she would be displeasing if she were not deceived.[5]

[14] When a natural discourse depicts a passion or an effect, we find within ourselves the truth of what we hear, which we did not know was there. So we are inclined to love the one who makes us feel it, for he has shown us not his own wealth but ours. And so this kindness makes him lovable to us; besides which, the community of understanding we share with him necessarily inclines the heart to love him.

[15] Eloquence that persuades by gentleness, not by command; as a tyrant, not as a king.

[17] Rivers are roads that move, and carry us where we want to go.

[18] When we do not know the truth of a thing, it is good that there should be a common error to settle men's minds—for example, the moon, to which people attribute the change of seasons, the progress of diseases, etc. For man's chief disease is restless curiosity about things he cannot know; and it is not so bad for him to be in error as to be in this useless curiosity.

The manner of writing of Epictetus, Montaigne and Salomon de Tultie is the most practical: it insinuates itself best, stays [*the*] longest in the memory, and is quoted most often, because it is made up entirely of thoughts born from the ordinary conversations of life. Thus, when people talk about the common error, widespread in the world, that the moon is the cause of everything, they will never fail to say that Salomon de Tultie says that when we do not know the truth of a thing, it is good that there should be a common error, etc.—which is the thought on the other side.[6]

5 Cleobuline, queen of Corinth in Madeleine de Scudéry's novel *Artamène, or the Great Cyrus* (1649–53), loves a man below her rank without realizing it.

6 Salomon de Tultie is an anagram of Louis de Montalte, the pseudonym of the Provincial Letters, i.e. Pascal himself. "The other side" is the reverse of the manuscript sheet, which holds the first paragraph of this fragment.

[19] The last thing we discover in writing a work is what to put first.

[20] *Order*.—Why should I choose to divide my moral teaching into four rather than six? Why should I set up virtue as four, as two, as one? Why as *abstain* and *endure* rather than as *follow nature*, or *do one's own business without injustice*, as Plato has it, or something else?—But there, you will say, is everything summed up in a word.—Yes, but that is useless unless it is explained. And when we come to explain it, as soon as we open this precept that contains all the others, they come out of it in the very confusion you wanted to avoid. So, when they are all enclosed in one, they are hidden and useless there, as in a chest, and only ever appear in their natural confusion.[7] Nature has established them all without enclosing one in another.

[21] Nature has placed each of her truths in itself; our art encloses them one inside another, but that is not natural: each keeps its own place.

[22] Let no one say that I have said nothing new: the arrangement of the material is new. When people play tennis, both play with the same ball, but one places it better.

I might as well be told that I have used old words. As if the same thoughts did not form a different body of discourse when differently arranged, just as the same words form different thoughts when differently arranged!

[23] Words differently arranged make a different meaning, and meanings differently arranged make different effects.

[24] *Language*.—We should not turn the mind elsewhere except to relax it, and then only at the right time: relax it when it needs it, and not otherwise. For whoever relaxes it at the wrong time tires it; and whoever tires it at the wrong time relaxes it, for then one drops everything. So much does the malice of concupiscence delight in doing the exact opposite of what people want

7 "Abstain and endure" was the motto of the Stoic Epictetus, reported by Aulus Gellius; "follow nature" is the Stoic formula, and doing one's own business is Plato's definition of justice (*Republic* 4).

from us without giving us pleasure—pleasure, the coin for which we give whatever is wanted.[8]

25 *Eloquence.*—There must be something pleasing and something real; but the pleasing must itself be drawn from the true.

26 Eloquence is a painting of thought; and so those who go on adding after they have painted make a picture instead of a portrait.

27 *Miscellan. Language.*—Those who make antitheses by forcing words are like those who put in false windows for symmetry: their rule is not to speak accurately, but to make accurate figures.

28 Symmetry, in what we see at a glance, founded on the fact that there is no reason to do otherwise, and founded also on the shape of man; which is why we want symmetry only in width, not in height or depth.

NATURAL STYLE

A natural style shows a man rather than an author, and false poetic beauty is mere jargon.

29 When we see a natural style, we are quite astonished and delighted, for we expected to see an author and we find a man. Whereas those with good taste who, on seeing a book, expect to find a man, are quite surprised to find an author: *You have spoken more like a poet than like a man*. Those do nature great honor who teach her that she can speak about everything, even theology.[9]

30 [Look at the speeches in the 2nd, 4th and 5th of the Jansenist; that is lofty and serious.[10]

I hate the buffoon and the bombastic alike]: one would make a friend of neither.

8 Concupiscence: the three lusts of 1 John 2:16 (of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of life), the disordered desire of fallen nature.

9 Petronius, *Satyricon* 90.

10 Pascal means his own Provincial Letters (1656–57), in several of which a Jansenist friend speaks. Jansenism was the rigorist Augustinian movement centered on the abbey of Port-Royal.

People consult only the ear, because they lack heart: the rule is decency. A poet and not a "decent man."[11]

[After my 8th, I thought I had replied enough.]

Beauty of omission, of judgment.[12]

[31] All the false beauties we censure in Cicero have admirers, and in great numbers.

[32] There is a certain model of charm and beauty which consists in a certain relation between our nature, weak or strong, such as it is, and the thing that pleases us.

Everything formed on this model pleases us, whether house, song, speech, verse, prose, woman, birds, rivers, trees, rooms, clothes, etc. Everything not made on this model displeases those with good taste.

And just as there is a perfect relation between a song and a house made on this good model, because they resemble this single model, though each after its own kind, so there is likewise a perfect relation between things made on the bad model. Not that the bad model is single, for there are infinitely many; but each bad sonnet, for example, whatever false model it is made on, perfectly resembles a woman dressed on that model.

Nothing shows better how ridiculous a false sonnet is than to consider its nature and its model, and then to imagine a woman or a house made on that model.

[33] *Poetic beauty*.—Just as we say poetic beauty, we ought also to say mathematical beauty and medical beauty; but we do not. The reason is that we know well what the object of mathematics is, and that it consists in proofs, and what the object of medicine is, and that it consists in healing; but we do not know what charm consists in, which is the object of poetry. We do not know what this natural model is that we must imitate; and for lack of this knowledge we have invented certain bizarre terms—"golden age," "wonder of our days," "fatal," etc.—and we call this jargon poetic beauty.

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11 *Honnête homme*: the seventeenth-century ideal of the cultivated, well-bred gentleman, at ease in every company.

12 The eighth of the Provincial Letters.

But whoever imagines a woman on this model, which consists in saying little things in big words, will see a pretty young lady all covered in mirrors and chains, and he will laugh at her, because we know better what a woman's charm consists in than the charm of verse. But those who knew nothing about it would admire her in this getup; and there are many villages where she would be taken for the queen. That is why we call sonnets made on this model village queens.

THE UNIVERSAL MAN

The ideal decent man is known for no single skill but can judge and speak of everything.

[34] In society one does not pass for a judge of verse unless one has hung out the sign of poet, mathematician, etc. But universal people want no sign, and make hardly any distinction between the trade of poet and that of embroiderer.

Universal people are called neither poets nor mathematicians, etc.; but they are all these things, and judges of them all. No one can guess what they are. They will talk about whatever was being talked about when they came in. One does not notice one quality in them rather than another, except when there is need to use it; but then one remembers it. For it is equally part of this character that people do not say of them that they speak well when language is not in question, and that people do say they speak well when it is.

So it is false praise to say of a man, when he comes in, that he is very skilled in poetry; and it is a bad sign when no one turns to a man when it comes to judging some verses.

[35] No one should be able to [*say*] of him: he is a mathematician, or a preacher, or eloquent—but: he is a decent man. That universal quality alone pleases me. When on seeing a man we remember his book, that is a bad sign. I would like no quality to be noticed except when chance brings the occasion to use it—*Nothing in excess*—for fear that one quality should prevail and give the man its name. Let no one think of his speaking well

except when speaking well is in question; but then let them think of it.[13]

[36] Man is full of needs: he loves only those who can satisfy them all. He is a good mathematician, someone will say.—But I have no use for mathematics: he would take me for a proposition.—He is a good soldier.—He would take me for a besieged fortress. What is needed, then, is a decent man who can adapt himself to all my needs in general.

[37] [*A little of everything*.—Since we cannot be universal and know everything that can be known about everything, we must know a little of everything. For it is much finer to know something about everything than to know everything about one thing; this universality is the finest. If we could have both, better still; but if we must choose, we must choose this one. And the world feels this and does it, for the world is often a good judge.]

[38] A poet and not a decent man.

[39] If lightning struck low places, etc., poets, and those who can reason only about things of that kind, would lack proofs.[14]

[40] The examples we take to prove other things: if we wanted to prove the examples, we would take the other things as examples of them. For since we always believe the difficulty lies in what we want to prove, we find the examples clearer and helpful in showing it.

So, when we want to show something general, we must give the particular rule of a case; but if we want to show a particular case, we will have to begin with the [*general*] rule. For we always find obscure the thing we want to prove, and clear the thing we use for the proof. When a thing is put forward to be proved, we are at once filled with the notion that it must therefore be obscure, and, on the contrary, that what is to prove it is clear; and so we understand it easily.

13 Terence, *Andria* 61, a Latin form of the Delphic maxim.

14 The poets' commonplace that lightning strikes the heights (Horace, *Odes* 2.10), used as proof that the great are most exposed.

[41] *Martial's epigrams*.—Man loves malice; but not against the one-eyed or the unfortunate—against the proud who are fortunate. Anyone who thinks otherwise is mistaken.[15]

For concupiscence is the source of all our impulses, and humanity, etc.

We must please those who have humane and tender feelings.

The one about the two one-eyed people is worthless, for it does not console them, and only adds a point to the author's glory. Everything that is only for the author is worthless. *He will cut back pretentious ornaments*.[16]

[42] *Prince*, said to a king, pleases, because it lowers his rank.

[43] Certain authors, speaking of their works, say: My book, my commentary, my history, etc.—They smack of solid citizens with a house of their own on the street, always with "my place" on their lips. They would do better to say: Our book, our commentary, our history, etc., since as a rule there is more of other people's property in them than of their own.

[44] Do you want people to think well of you? Do not speak well of yourself.

[45] Languages are ciphers in which it is not letters that are changed into letters, but words into words; so an unknown language can be deciphered.

[46] Makers of witticisms: bad character.

[47] Some people speak well and do not write well. That is because the place and the audience warm them up, and draw more from their minds than they find there without that warmth.

[48] When words are repeated in a piece of writing, and in trying to correct them we find them so apt that changing them would spoil it, we must leave them: that is the sign. The urge to change them is envy's share, and envy is blind: it does not know that repetition is no fault in this place. For there is no general rule.

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15 Martial (1st century AD), Roman poet, master of the satirical epigram.

16 Horace, *Art of Poetry* 447–448. The epigram meant is probably the Renaissance piece on a one-eyed brother and sister, Acon and Leonilla.

[49] Masking nature and disguising it. No more king, pope, bishop, but *august monarch*, etc.; no Paris: *capital of the kingdom*. There are places where Paris must be called Paris, and others where it must be called the capital of the kingdom.

[50] The same meaning changes according to the words that express it. Meanings receive their dignity from words instead of giving it to them. Examples should be found...

[51] Pyrrhonist for stubborn.[17]

[52] No one says "Cartesian" except those who are not; "pedant" except a pedant; "provincial" except a provincial. And I would bet it was the printer who put it in the title of the *Letters to the Provincial*.

[53] A coach *tipped over* or *overturned*, depending on the intention.[18]

Spill or *pour*, depending on the intention.—M. Le Maître's plea on the man made a Franciscan by force.[19]

[10] *Miscell.* Turn of phrase: I had wanted to apply myself to that.

[55] The *aperitive* virtue of a key, the *attractive* virtue of a hook.[20]

[56] Guessing: The share I take in your distress.—The Cardinal did not want to be guessed.[21]

My mind is full of anxiety.—*I am full of anxiety* is better.

[57] I have fared badly with these compliments: I have given you a lot of trouble; I fear I am boring you; I fear this is too long.—Either one carries people along, or one irritates them.

[58] You are behaving ungraciously: excuse me, please.—Without that apology I would not have noticed there was any

17 That is, the word was used to mean "obstinate." The Pyrrhonists were radical skeptics named after the Greek philosopher Pyrrho of Elis.

18 French *versé* and *renversé* are near-synonyms; the choice between them reveals what the speaker means to convey.

19 Antoine Le Maistre (1608–1658), celebrated barrister who retired to Port-Royal; one of his published pleas defended a young man forced to become a Franciscan (Cordelier).

20 Mockery of the scholastic "virtues" (hidden powers) used to explain effects: "aperitive" means having the power to open.

21 Probably Cardinal Mazarin, chief minister of France (d. 1661). The condolence formula presumes to guess another's feelings.

insult. Saving your reverence, there is nothing bad here but their apology.

[59] To extinguish the torch of sedition—too luxuriant.

The restlessness of his genius—two bold words too many.

Section II: The misery of man without God

Misère de l'homme sans Dieu
The two infinities, imagination, custom, self-love, diversion and the vanity of the world.

60 *First part*: Wretchedness of man without God.
Second part: Happiness of man with God.
Or else:
First part: That nature is corrupt, shown by nature itself.
Second part: That there is a Restorer, shown by Scripture.

61 *Order.*—I might well have arranged this discourse in an order like this: to show the vanity of every kind of condition, show the vanity of ordinary lives, and then the vanity of philosophical lives, Pyrrhonist and Stoic. But the order would not be kept. I know a little of what order is, and how few people understand it. No human science can keep it: Saint Thomas did not keep it. Mathematics keeps it, but it is useless in its depth.

62 *Preface to the first part.*—Speak of those who have treated self-knowledge; of Charron's divisions, which sadden and bore; of Montaigne's confusion; that he had clearly felt the want of [*a proper*] method; that he avoided it by jumping from subject to subject; that he was after the fashionable manner. What a foolish plan he has, to paint himself! And not in passing and against his own maxims, as everyone slips from time to time, but by his own maxims, as his first and principal design.[1] For to say foolish

1 Pierre Charron (1541–1603) set out Montaigne's ideas in numbered divisions in *Of Wisdom*; Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) wrote the *Essays*.

things by chance and through weakness is a common failing; but to say them by design is intolerable—and to say such things as these...

MONTAIGNE

Pascal criticizes Montaigne's lewdness and pagan view of death while admitting what he owes him.

63 *Montaigne*.—Montaigne's faults are great. Lewd words: that is worthless, whatever Mademoiselle de Gournay may say. Credulous: *people without eyes*. Ignorant: *squaring the circle, a larger world*. His views on voluntary homicide, on death. He instills indifference to salvation, *without fear and without repentance*. Since his book was not written to lead to piety, he was not obliged to do so; but one is always obliged not to turn people away from it.[2] One can excuse his rather free and sensual views on certain occasions of life (730, 331); but one cannot excuse his wholly pagan views on death. For we must renounce all piety unless we are at least willing to die as Christians; and throughout his book he thinks only of dying in a cowardly and soft way.[3]

64 It is not in Montaigne but in myself that I find everything I see there.

65 What is good in Montaigne can be acquired only with difficulty. What is bad in him—I mean apart from morals—could have been corrected in a moment, if someone had warned him that he told too many stories and talked too much about himself.

66 We must know ourselves. Even if this did not help us find the truth, it at least helps us regulate our lives, and nothing is more just.

67 *Vanity of the sciences.*—Knowledge of external things will not console me for ignorance of morality in time of affliction; but

2 Marie de Gournay (1565–1645), Montaigne's "adopted daughter" and editor, defended his frankness. The italic phrases point to passages of the *Essays*; "voluntary homicide" is suicide.

3 Page numbers in Pascal's edition of the *Essays*.

knowledge of morals will always console me for ignorance of the external sciences.

68 Men are not taught to be decent men, and they are taught everything else; yet they never pride themselves so much on knowing anything else as on being decent men. They pride themselves on knowing only the one thing they are never taught.

69 When we read too fast or too slowly, we understand nothing.

69 bis *Two infinities, the middle.*—When we read too fast or too slowly, we understand nothing.

70 *Nature cann...*—[Nature has placed us so exactly in the middle that if we change one side of the scale, we change the other too: *Je fesons, zôa trékei*. This makes me believe that there are springs in our head so arranged that whoever touches one touches the opposite too.][4]

71 Too much and too little wine: give him none, and he cannot find the truth; give him too much, the same.

THE TWO INFINITIES

Man stands between the infinitely great and the infinitely small, able to grasp neither extreme.

72 H. *Man's disproportion.*—[This is where natural knowledge leads us. If it is not true, there is no truth in man; and if it is, he finds in it a great cause for humiliation, forced to abase himself one way or another. And since he cannot go on living without believing it, I wish that, before entering into greater investigations of nature, he would consider nature once, seriously and at leisure, and that he would also look at

himself, and, knowing what proportion there is...] Let man, then, contemplate the whole of nature in its lofty and full majesty; let him turn his gaze away from the lowly objects

4 The heading breaks off ("Nature cannot..."). The examples are "I does" (peasant French, a singular subject with a plural verb) and "animals runs" (Greek, a neuter plural subject with a singular verb).

around him. Let him look at that brilliant light, set like an eternal lamp to illuminate the universe. Let the earth appear to him as a point compared with the vast circuit that this star describes, and let him be amazed that this vast circuit is itself only a very fine point compared with the circuit embraced by the stars that roll in the firmament. But if our sight stops there, let imagination pass beyond: it will tire of conceiving before nature tires of supplying. This whole visible world is only an imperceptible speck in the ample bosom of nature. No idea comes near it. However much we inflate our conceptions beyond all imaginable spaces, we bring forth only atoms compared with the reality of things. It is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. In short, it is the greatest perceptible sign of God's omnipotence that our imagination loses itself in this thought.[5]

Let man, coming back to himself, consider what he is compared with what exists. Let him regard himself as lost in this remote corner of nature; and from this little dungeon where he finds himself lodged—I mean the universe—let him learn to value the earth, kingdoms, cities and himself at their proper worth. What is a man in the infinite?

But to show him another marvel just as astonishing, let him seek out, among the things he knows, the most minute. Let a mite show him, in the smallness of its body, parts incomparably smaller: legs with joints, veins in its legs, blood in its veins, humors in this blood, drops in these humors, vapors in these drops. Let him divide these last things still further, until he exhausts his powers in these conceptions, and let the last object he can reach now be the subject of our discussion. He will perhaps think that here is the ultimate smallness in nature. I want to show him a new abyss within it.[6] I want to paint for him not only the visible universe, but the immensity of nature that can

5 The sphere formula comes from the medieval *Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers,* where it defines God.

6 The mite (*ciron*), a tiny creature found in cheese, was then thought the smallest of animals.

be conceived, within the bounds of this atom in miniature. Let him see in it an infinity of universes, each with its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same proportion as the visible world; on that earth, animals, and finally mites, in which he will find again what the first ones showed. And finding the same thing again in the others, without end and without rest, let him lose himself in these marvels, as astonishing in their smallness as the others in their vastness. For who will not marvel that our body, which a moment ago was not perceptible in the universe, itself imperceptible in the bosom of the whole, should now be a colossus, a world, or rather a whole, compared with the nothingness that can never be reached?

Whoever considers himself in this way will be terrified at himself. Seeing himself suspended, in the mass that nature has given him, between these two abysses of the infinite and nothingness, he will tremble at the sight of its marvels. And I believe that, as his curiosity turns into wonder, he will be more inclined to contemplate them in silence than to investigate them with presumption.

For in the end, what is man in nature? A nothing compared with the infinite, an all compared with nothing, a middle between nothing and everything. Infinitely far from grasping the extremes, he finds the end of things and their beginnings invincibly hidden from him in an impenetrable secret. He is equally incapable of seeing the nothingness from which he was drawn and the infinite in which he is engulfed.

What then will he do, except perceive [*some*] appearance of the middle of things, in eternal despair of knowing either their beginning or their end? All things have come out of nothingness and are carried onward to the infinite. Who can follow these astonishing steps? The author of these marvels understands them. No one else can.

For lack of having contemplated these infinities, men have rashly set out to investigate nature, as if they bore some proportion to it. It is a strange thing that they wanted to understand the principles of things, and from there to reach knowledge of

everything, with a presumption as infinite as its object. For there is no doubt that one cannot form this plan without an infinite presumption, or an infinite capacity, like nature's.

When we are properly instructed, we understand that, since nature has engraved her own image and that of her author on all things, almost all things share in her double infinity. Thus we see that all the sciences are infinite in the scope of their inquiries. For who doubts that geometry, for example, has an infinity of infinities of propositions to set out? They are also infinite in the number and subtlety of their principles. For who does not see that those put forward as the last do not stand by themselves, but rest on others, which, resting on still others, never allow a last one? But we treat as last those that appear so to reason, just as we do with material things, where we call a point indivisible when our senses can perceive nothing beyond it, although by its nature it is infinitely divisible.

Of these two infinities of the sciences, that of greatness is much more perceptible, and that is why few people have claimed to know all things. "I am going to speak of everything," said Democritus.[7]

But the infinity of smallness is much less visible. The philosophers have far more readily claimed to reach it, and that is where they have all stumbled. This is what has given rise to those common titles, *On the Principles of Things*, *On the Principles of Philosophy*, and the like—as pretentious in fact, though less so in appearance, as that other one which is glaring: *On Everything Knowable*.[8]

We naturally believe ourselves far more capable of reaching the center of things than of embracing their circumference. The visible extent of the world visibly surpasses us; but since it is we who surpass small things, we believe ourselves more capable of possessing them. And yet it takes no less capacity to go as far as

7 Democritus of Abdera (5th–4th century BC), Greek philosopher and founder, with Leucippus, of atomism.

8 *Principles of Philosophy* recalls Descartes's book of that title (1644); "on everything knowable" was the boast attached to Pico della Mirandola's 900 theses (1486).

nothingness than as far as the whole. It takes an infinite capacity for both; and it seems to me that whoever had understood the ultimate principles of things could also come to know the infinite. The one depends on the other, and the one leads to the other. These extremes touch and unite by having gone so far from each other, and they meet again in God, and in God alone.

Let us know our reach, then. We are something, and we are not everything. What being we have robs us of the knowledge of first principles, which spring from nothingness; and the little being we have hides from us the sight of the infinite.

Our intelligence holds the same rank in the order of intelligible things as our body holds in the expanse of nature.

Limited as we are in every respect, we find this state, which holds the middle between two extremes, in all our faculties. Our senses perceive nothing extreme. Too much noise deafens us; too much light dazzles; too much distance and too much nearness hinder sight; too much length and too much brevity obscure a speech; too much truth bewilders us. I know some who cannot understand that if you take 4 from zero, zero remains. First principles are too evident for us. Too much pleasure is uncomfortable. Too many consonances displease in music. And too many kindnesses irritate us: we want to have the means to repay the debt with interest. *Kindnesses are welcome so long as it seems they can be repaid; when they go far beyond that, hatred is returned instead of gratitude.*[9] We feel neither extreme heat nor extreme cold. Excessive qualities are our enemies, not things we can sense: we no longer feel them, we suffer them. Too much youth and too much age hinder the mind; so do too much and too little learning. In short, extreme things are for us as if they did not exist, and we do not exist as far as they are concerned: they escape us, or we escape them.

This is our true state. This is what makes us incapable of knowing with certainty and of being wholly ignorant. We sail on a vast middle, always uncertain and drifting, pushed from one end toward the other. Whatever point we think to fasten on and

9 Tacitus, Annals 4.18, quoted by Montaigne.

steady ourselves by, it shifts and leaves us; and if we follow it, it slips from our grasp, slides away from us, and flees in an eternal flight. Nothing stays still for us. This is the state natural to us, and yet the one most contrary to our inclination. We burn with desire to find firm footing, and a final, constant base on which to build a tower rising to the infinite; but our whole foundation cracks, and the earth opens to the abyss.

Let us not look for assurance and stability, then. Our reason is always deceived by the inconstancy of appearances; nothing can fix the finite between the two infinities that enclose it and flee from it.

Once this is well understood, I think each of us will stay at rest in the state where nature has placed him. Since this middle that has fallen to our lot is always distant from the extremes, what does it matter if one man has a little more understanding of things? If he has, he takes them from a little higher up. But is he not always infinitely far from the end? And is the span of our life not equally infinitely far from eternity, for lasting ten years longer?

In view of these infinities, all finites are equal; and I do not see why we should settle our imagination on one rather than another. Merely comparing ourselves with the finite pains us.

If man studied himself first, he would see how incapable he is of going further. How could a part know the whole?—But perhaps he will aspire at least to know the parts with which he has some proportion?—But the parts of the world all have such a relation and such a connection with one another that I think it impossible to know one without the other and without the whole.

Man, for example, is related to everything he knows. He needs a place to contain him, time to last, motion to live, elements to compose him, warmth and food to nourish [*him*], air to breathe. He sees light, he feels bodies. In short, everything comes into alliance with him. To know man, then, we must know why he needs air to survive; and to know air, we must know how it comes to have this relation to human life, etc.

Flame does not survive without air; therefore, to know the one, we must know the other.

Therefore, since all things are caused and causing, aided and aiding, mediate and immediate, and all are held together by a natural and imperceptible bond that links the most distant and the most different, I hold it impossible to know the parts without knowing the whole, just as it is impossible to know the whole without knowing the parts in detail.

[The eternity of things in themselves or in God must also astound our little span. The fixed and constant immobility of nature, compared with the continual change that goes on in us, must have the same effect.]

And what completes our inability to know things is that they are simple in themselves, whereas we are composed of two opposed natures of different kinds, soul and body. For it is impossible that the part of us that reasons should be anything but spiritual. And even if it were claimed that we are simply bodily, that would exclude us far more from the knowledge of things, since nothing is so inconceivable as to say that matter knows itself: it is not possible for us to know how it would know itself.

And so, if we [*are*] simply material, we can know nothing at all; and if we are composed of mind and matter, we cannot know perfectly things that are simple, whether spiritual or bodily.

That is why almost all the philosophers confuse the ideas of things, and speak of bodily things in spiritual terms and of spiritual things in bodily terms. For they boldly say that bodies tend downward, that they aspire to their center, that they flee their destruction, that they fear a vacuum, that it has inclinations, sympathies, antipathies—all things that belong only to minds. And when they speak of minds, they consider them as being in a place, and attribute to them movement from one place to another—things that belong only to bodies.

Instead of receiving the ideas of these things in their purity, we tinge them with our own qualities, and stamp all the simple things we contemplate [*with*] our composite being.

Who would not think, seeing us compose all things of mind and body, that this mixture would be quite comprehensible to us? Yet it is the thing we understand least. Man is to himself the most prodigious object in nature; for he cannot conceive what body is, still less what mind is, and least of all how a body can be united with a mind. This is the height of his difficulties, and yet it is his very being: *The way in which spirits are joined to bodies cannot be understood by men, and yet this is man.*[10]

Finally, to complete the proof of our weakness, I shall end with these two considerations...

THE PHILOSOPHERS' FAILURES

The philosophers disagree about the sovereign good, the soul and matter, and reach nothing certain.

[73] [But perhaps this subject is beyond the reach of reason. Let us then examine its inventions concerning things within its power. If there is anything to which its own interest should have made it apply itself most seriously, it is the search for its sovereign good. Let us see, then, where these strong and clear-sighted souls have placed it, and whether they agree.

[One says the sovereign good lies in virtue, another places it in pleasure; one [*in*] the knowledge of nature, another in truth: *Happy the man who could know the causes of things*; another in total ignorance, another in freedom from pain, others in resisting appearances, another in wondering at nothing: *to wonder at nothing is almost the one thing that can make a man happy and keep him so*; and the true Pyrrhonists in their ataraxia, doubt and perpetual suspension; and others, wiser, think they can find something a little better. We are well paid indeed.[11]

[*Transpose after the laws, to the next heading*.

[Still, we must see whether this fine philosophy has acquired nothing certain by such long and strenuous labor; perhaps at

10 Augustine, City of God 21.10, quoted by Montaigne.

11 Virgil, Georgics 2.490; Horace, Epistles 1.6.1–2. Ataraxia is the untroubled calm the Pyrrhonists (ancient skeptics) sought by suspending judgment.

least the soul will know itself. Let us hear the rulers of the world on this subject. What have they thought of its substance? 395. Have they been more fortunate in housing it? 395. What have they discovered about its origin, its duration, and its departure? 399.[12]

[Is the soul, then, still too noble a subject for its feeble lights? Let us lower it to matter, then; let us see whether it knows what the very body it animates is made of, and the others it contemplates and moves at will. What have they known of it, these great dogmatists who are ignorant of nothing? 393, *Of these opinions*.[13]

[That would doubtless suffice if reason were reasonable. It is reasonable enough to admit that it has not yet been able to find anything firm; but it does not yet despair of getting there. On the contrary, it is as eager as ever in this search, and is confident that it has within itself the strength needed for this conquest. We must therefore finish the job; and having examined its powers in their effects, let us recognize them in themselves; let us see whether it has any forms and any holds capable of grasping truth.]

[74] A letter *on the folly of human knowledge and of philosophy*.

This letter before *diversion*.

Happy the man who could... To wonder at nothing.

280 kinds of sovereign good in Montaigne.

[74 bis] For the philosophers, 280 sovereign goods.

[75] Part I, book 2, ch. 1, section 4.

[*Conjecture*. It will not be hard to bring it down another step and make it look ridiculous. For, to begin with itself], what is more absurd than to say that inanimate bodies have passions, fears, horrors? That insensible bodies, without life and even incapable of life, have passions, which presuppose at least a sensitive soul to feel them? And, furthermore, that the object of

12 The numbers refer to pages of Pascal's copy of Montaigne's Essays (1652 edition), mostly the "Apology for Raymond Sebond".

13 Cicero, Tusculan Disputations 1.11, quoted by Montaigne: "Which of these opinions is true, only some god can see."

this horror should be the vacuum? What is there in a vacuum that could frighten them? What could be lower and more ridiculous?[14] Having within themselves a principle of motion to avoid the vacuum is not enough: do they have arms, legs, muscles, nerves?

76 Write against those who delve deep into the sciences: Descartes.[15]

77 I cannot forgive Descartes. In his whole philosophy he would dearly have liked to do without God; but he could not help making God give a flick of the finger to set the world in motion. After that, he has no further use for God.

78 Descartes useless and uncertain.

79 [*Descartes*.—We must say in broad terms: "This is done by shape and motion", for that is true. But to say which, and to assemble the machine, is ridiculous. For it is useless, uncertain and laborious. And even if it were true, we do not think the whole of philosophy worth an hour's trouble.]

80 Why is it that a lame man does not irritate us, but a lame mind does? Because a lame man recognizes that we walk straight, whereas a lame mind says that it is we who limp. Were it not for that, we would feel pity for it, not anger.

Epictetus asks much more forcefully: Why are we not annoyed if someone says we have a headache, yet annoyed if someone says we reason badly or choose badly?—The cause is that we are quite certain we do not have a headache and are not lame; but we are not so sure that we are choosing the truth.[16] So, since our only assurance of it is that we see it with our whole sight, when someone else sees the contrary with his whole sight, it leaves us in suspense and bewilders us—still more when a thousand others mock our choice. For then we must prefer our own lights to those of so many others, and that is bold and diffi-

14 The scholastic doctrine that nature "abhors a vacuum", which Pascal's own experiments on the vacuum (1647–48) had challenged.

15 René Descartes (1596–1650), philosopher, whose mechanical physics explained nature by matter and motion.

16 Epictetus (c. AD 50–135), Stoic philosopher; the question comes from his Discourses 4.6.

cult. There is never such a contradiction in the senses concerning a lame man.

81 The mind naturally believes, and the will naturally loves; so that, for want of true objects, they must attach themselves to false ones.

IMAGINATION

Imagination, mistress of error, rules reason and confers beauty, justice and reputation on the world.

82 *Imagination.*—It is that deceptive part in man, that mistress of error and falsehood, and all the more treacherous because it is not always so; for it would be an infallible rule of truth if it were an infallible rule of falsehood. But, being false most of the time, it gives no sign of its quality, marking true and false with the same stamp.

I am not speaking of fools; I am speaking of the wisest; and it is among them that imagination has the great gift of persuading men. Reason may protest all it likes; it cannot set a value on things.

This proud power, the enemy of reason, which delights in checking and dominating it to show how much it can do in all things, has established a second nature in man. It has its happy and its unhappy, its healthy, its sick, its rich, its poor. It makes reason believe, doubt, deny. It suspends the senses; it makes them feel. It has its fools and its wise men. And nothing vexes us more than to see that it fills its guests with a satisfaction far fuller and more complete than reason does. Those who are clever by imagination are pleased with themselves quite otherwise than the prudent can reasonably be pleased with themselves. They look at people with an air of command; they argue boldly and confidently, the others fearfully and diffidently; and this cheerfulness of face often gives them the advantage in the opinion of the listeners, so much favor do the imaginary wise enjoy with judges of the same kind. It cannot make fools wise; but it makes them happy, in rivalry with reason, which can only

make its friends wretched—the one covering them with glory, the other with shame.

Who dispenses reputation? Who gives respect and veneration to persons, to works, to laws, to the great, if not this imagining faculty? All the riches of the earth insufficient without its consent!

Would you not say that this magistrate, whose venerable age commands the respect of a whole people, governs himself by pure and sublime reason, and judges things by their nature without stopping at idle circumstances that affect only the imagination of the weak? See him go in to hear a sermon, bringing to it a thoroughly devout zeal, reinforcing the soundness of his reason with the ardor of his charity. There he is, ready to listen with exemplary respect. Let the preacher appear; let nature have given him a hoarse voice and an odd cast of face; let his barber have shaved him badly; if chance has also smudged him into the bargain—however great the truths he proclaims, I wager our senator loses his gravity.

The greatest philosopher in the world, on a plank wider than he needs: if there is a precipice below, though his reason convinces him he is safe, his imagination will prevail. Many could not bear the thought of it without turning pale and sweating.

I do not wish to list all its effects.

Who does not know that the sight of cats or rats, the crunching of a coal, etc., knock reason off its hinges? The tone of voice sways the wisest, and changes the force of a speech or a poem.

Affection or hatred alters the face of justice. And how much more just a lawyer, well paid in advance, finds the cause he pleads! How much better his bold gestures make it look to the judges, duped by this appearance! A fine reason, that a breath of wind can steer, and in any direction!

I could cite almost all the actions of men, which hardly move except under its jolts. For reason has been obliged to give way, and the wisest reason takes as its principles those that the imagination of men has rashly introduced in each place.

[Anyone who wished to follow reason alone would be a fool in the judgment of the common run of men. We must judge by the judgment of the greater part of the world. Since it has so pleased her, we must work all day and wear ourselves out for goods acknowledged to be imaginary; and when sleep has refreshed us from the fatigues of our reason, we must at once jump up with a start to go chasing after smoke and endure the impressions of this mistress of the world.—That is one of the principles of error, but it is not the only one. Man was quite right to ally the true with the false, even though in this peace imagination has by far the advantage; for in war it has much more: reason never overcomes imagination, whereas imagination often unseats reason completely.]

Our magistrates have well understood this mystery. Their red robes, the ermine in which they swaddle themselves like furry cats, the palaces where they judge, the fleurs-de-lis—all this august apparatus was very necessary. And if physicians did not have their cassocks and slippers, and doctors their square caps and gowns four times too full, they would never have duped the world, which cannot resist so authentic a display. If they had true justice, and if physicians had the true art of healing, they would have no need of square caps; the majesty of these sciences would be venerable enough in itself.[17] But having only imaginary sciences, they must take up these vain instruments that strike the imagination, which is what they deal with; and by this means, in fact, they win respect. Soldiers alone have not disguised themselves in this way, because in fact their role is more essential: they establish themselves by force, the others by playacting.

That is why our kings have not sought these disguises. They have not masked themselves in extraordinary clothes to appear kings; but they have surrounded themselves with guards and halberds. Those hard-faced men-at-arms whose hands and

17 "Furred cats" recalls Rabelais's satire of judges as the Furred Cats; the "doctors" are university doctors of theology and law. The fleurs-de-lis are the emblem of the French crown.

strength are for the king alone, the trumpets and drums marching ahead, and the legions around them, make the firmest tremble. They do not have the costume only; they have force. One would need a very refined reason to look upon the Grand Turk, surrounded in his superb seraglio by forty thousand janissaries, as just another man.[18]

We cannot even see a lawyer in his cassock with his cap on his head without a favorable opinion of his competence.

Imagination disposes of everything; it makes beauty, justice and happiness, which is everything in the world. I should very much like to see the Italian book, of which I know only the title, which alone is worth many books: *Of Opinion, Queen of the World*. I subscribe to it without knowing it, except for what is bad in it, if there is any.

Such, roughly, are the effects of this deceptive faculty, which seems to have been given us expressly to lead us into a necessary error. We have many other principles of error. Old impressions are not the only ones capable of misleading us: the charms of novelty have the same power. From this come all the disputes of men, who reproach one another either with following their false impressions from childhood or with rashly chasing after new ones. Who holds the right mean? Let him appear and prove it. There is no principle, however natural it may be, even one held since childhood, [that cannot] be passed off as a false impression, either of education or of the senses.

"Because," they say, "you have believed since childhood that a chest was empty when you saw nothing in it, you have believed a vacuum possible. That is an illusion of your senses, strengthened by custom, which science must correct."—And the others say: "Because you were told in the Schools that there is no vacuum, your common sense has been corrupted, though it understood the matter so clearly before this bad impression;

18 The Grand Turk ("Grand Seigneur") is the Ottoman sultan; the janissaries were his elite infantry.

you must correct it by returning to your original nature." Who, then, has deceived? The senses or education?[19]

We have another principle of error: illnesses. They spoil our judgment and our sense; and if serious ones alter them noticeably, I do not doubt that minor ones leave their mark in proportion.

Our own interest is another marvelous instrument for blinding us agreeably. The fairest man in the world is not allowed to be judge in his own cause. I know some who, so as not to fall into this self-love, have been the most unjust in the world by leaning the other way: the sure way to lose a perfectly just case was to have it recommended to them by their close relatives.

Justice and truth are two such fine points that our instruments are too blunt to touch them exactly. If they do reach them, they crush the point and press all around it, more on the false than on the true.

[Man, then, is so felicitously made that he has no accurate principle of the true, and several excellent ones of the false. Let us now see how much... But the most amusing cause of these errors is the war between the senses and reason.]

83 *The chapter on the deceptive powers must begin with this*. Man is nothing but a subject full of error, natural and ineffaceable without grace. Nothing shows him the truth. Everything deceives him. These two principles of truth, reason and the senses, besides each lacking sincerity, deceive each other in turn. The senses deceive reason with false appearances; and the same trickery they practice on reason, they receive from it in return: reason takes its revenge. The passions of the soul disturb the senses and make false impressions on them. They vie with each other in lying and deceiving.

But besides these errors, which come by accident and from want of understanding, with its heterogeneous faculties...

84 Imagination magnifies small objects until they fill our soul, by a fanciful estimation; and, with rash insolence, it shrinks great ones to its own measure, as when speaking of God.

19 The Schools: the scholastic philosophy taught in the universities.

[85] The things that matter most to us, such as hiding how little we own, are often almost nothing. It is a nothing that our imagination swells into a mountain; another turn of imagination makes us reveal it without difficulty.

[86] [My fancy makes me hate someone who croaks and someone who makes a mess when eating. Fancy carries great weight. What shall we gain from that? That we shall follow this weight because it is natural? No; but that we shall resist it...]

[87] *Truly, this man will say great trifles with great effort.*

583. *As if anything were more unhappy than a man ruled by his own imaginings.* (Plin.)[20]

[88] Children who are frightened by the face they themselves have daubed—they are children. But how can what is so weak as a child be really strong when older? We only change our fancies. Everything that improves by degrees also perishes by degrees; everything that has been weak can never be absolutely strong. It is no use saying, *he has grown, he has changed*; he is also the same.

CUSTOM

Custom is a second nature, and nature itself may be only a first custom.

[89] Custom is our nature. Whoever grows accustomed to the faith believes it, can no longer help fearing hell, and believes nothing else. Whoever grows accustomed to believing that the king is terrible..., etc. Who can doubt, then, that our soul, being accustomed to seeing number, space and motion, believes that and nothing but that?

[90] *What a man sees often he does not wonder at, even if he does not know why it happens; if something happens that he has not seen before, he thinks it a portent.* (Cic.)

[91] *Sponge of the sun.*—When we see an effect always happen in the same way, we conclude that it is a natural necessity, as that

20 The first quotation is from Terence, The Self-Tormentor 621, as quoted by Montaigne; 583 is a page of Pascal's Montaigne.

there will be daylight tomorrow, etc. But nature often proves us wrong, and does not submit to its own rules.[21]

92 What are our natural principles but our accustomed principles? And in children, those they have received from the custom of their fathers, as hunting is in animals?

A different custom will give us other natural principles; experience shows this. And if there are some that custom cannot efface, there are also some from custom, against nature, that neither nature nor a second custom can efface. It depends on the disposition.

93 Fathers fear that their children's natural love may fade. What kind of nature is this, then, that can be effaced? Custom is a second nature that destroys the first. But what is nature? Why is custom not natural? I am very much afraid that this nature is itself only a first custom, as custom is a second nature.

94 The nature of man is wholly nature, *every animal*.[22]

There is nothing we cannot make natural; there is nothing natural that cannot be lost.

94 bis Man is properly *every animal*.

95 Memory and joy are feelings; and even geometrical propositions become feelings, for reason makes feelings natural, and natural feelings are effaced by reason.

96 When we are accustomed to using bad reasons to prove effects of nature, we no longer want to accept the good ones when they are discovered. The example given was the circulation of the blood, used to explain why the vein swells below the ligature.[23]

97 The most important thing in all of life is the choice of a trade: chance decides it. Custom makes masons, soldiers, roofers. "He's an excellent roofer," people say; and, speaking of soldiers, "They are real fools," people say; and others say the oppos-

21 Latin *spongia solis*: probably the Bologna stone, a mineral that glows in the dark after exposure to sunlight, or possibly sunspots; either seemed to defy nature's usual rules.
22 Latin *omne animal*, "every animal": man can take on the nature of any creature.
23 William Harvey's account of the circulation of the blood (1628), long resisted by physicians.

ite: "There is nothing great but war; the rest of men are scoundrels." By dint of hearing these trades praised in childhood, and all the others scorned, we choose; for we naturally love truth and hate folly. These words move us: we go wrong only in applying them. So great is the force of custom that out of those whom nature has made merely men, we make men of every condition. For some regions are all masons, others all soldiers, etc. Nature is surely not so uniform. It is custom, then, that does this, for it constrains nature; and sometimes nature overcomes it and keeps man to his instinct, in spite of all custom, good or bad.

98 *Prejudice leading to error.*—It is a deplorable thing to see all men deliberating only about the means, and not at all about the end. Each thinks about how he will fulfill the duties of his station; but the choice of station, and of country, is given us by lot.

It is a pitiful thing to see so many Turks, heretics and unbelievers following in their fathers' tracks, for the sole reason that each of them has been prejudiced into believing it is the best. And it is this that settles each man in each condition, locksmith, soldier, etc.

That is why the peoples without cities have no use for Provence.[24]

99 There is a universal and essential difference between the actions of the will and all others.

The will is one of the chief organs of belief; not that it forms belief, but because things are true or false according to the side from which we look at them. The will, which likes one side more than the other, turns the mind away from considering the qualities of those it does not like to see; and so the mind, moving in step with the will, stops to look at the side the will likes, and so judges by what it sees there.

24 Provence, the sunny and fertile south of France, stands here for a pleasant, civilized land.

SELF-LOVE

Self-love hates the truth about itself, so human society rests on mutual flattery and deception.

100 *Self-love.*—The nature of self-love and of this human *self* is to love only itself and to consider only itself. But what will it do? It cannot prevent this object it loves from being full of faults and wretchedness. It wants to be great, and sees itself small; it wants to be happy, and sees itself wretched; it wants to be perfect, and sees itself full of imperfections; it wants to be the object of men's love and esteem, and sees that its faults deserve only their aversion and contempt. This predicament produces in it the most unjust and criminal passion imaginable; for it conceives a mortal hatred of the truth that rebukes it and convicts it of its faults. It would like to annihilate that truth; and, being unable to destroy it in itself, it destroys it, as far as it can, in its own knowledge and in that of others. That is to say, it takes every care to hide its faults both from others and from itself, and cannot bear to have them pointed out to it, or seen.

It is certainly an evil to be full of faults; but it is a still greater evil to be full of them and to refuse to recognize them, since that adds the further evil of a voluntary illusion. We do not want others to deceive us; we do not think it just that they should want to be esteemed by us more than they deserve. It is therefore not just either that we should deceive them and want them to esteem us more than we deserve.

Thus, when they uncover only imperfections and vices that we really have, it is plain that they do us no wrong, since it is not they who are the cause of them; and that they do us good, since they help us to free ourselves from an evil, namely ignorance of these imperfections. We should not be annoyed that they know them and that they despise us, since it is just both that they should know us for what we are and that they should despise us if we are despicable.

Such are the feelings that would arise in a heart full of equity and justice. What, then, must we say of ours, when we see in it a wholly contrary disposition? For is it not true that we hate the truth and those who tell it to us, that we like them to be deceived in our favor, and that we want to be esteemed by them as other than we really are?

Here is a proof of it that horrifies me. The Catholic religion does not oblige us to reveal our sins indiscriminately to everyone: it allows us to remain hidden from all other men. But it makes an exception of one alone, to whom it commands us to reveal the depths of our heart and to show ourselves as we are. This is the only man in the world whom it orders us to undeceive, and it binds him to inviolable secrecy, so that this knowledge is in him as if it were not there. Can anything more charitable and gentle be imagined? And yet the corruption of man is such that he still finds harshness in this law; and this is one of the chief reasons that has made a large part of Europe revolt against the Church.

How unjust and unreasonable the heart of man is, to resent being obliged to do toward one man what it would in some sense be just for him to do toward all men! For is it just that we should deceive them?

There are different degrees in this aversion to truth; but it may be said to be in everyone to some degree, because it is inseparable from self-love. It is this perverse delicacy that obliges those who must reprove others to choose so many detours and softenings to avoid offending them. They must diminish our faults, pretend to excuse them, mix in praise and marks of affection and esteem. For all that, this medicine is still bitter to self-love. It takes as little of it as it can, always with distaste, and often even with secret resentment against those who administer it.

It follows that, if someone has any interest in being loved by us, he shrinks from rendering us a service he knows we find unpleasant. We are treated as we wish to be treated: we hate the

truth, it is hidden from us; we want to be flattered, we are flattered; we like to be deceived, we are deceived.

This is why each degree of good fortune that raises us in the world takes us further from the truth, because people are more afraid of wounding those whose affection is more useful and whose aversion is more dangerous. A prince will be the laughing-stock of all Europe, and he alone will know nothing of it. I am not surprised: telling the truth is useful to the one to whom it is told, but harmful to those who tell it, because they make themselves hated. Now those who live with princes love their own interests more than that of the prince they serve; and so they take good care not to procure him an advantage by harming themselves.

This misfortune is no doubt greater and more common in the highest fortunes; but the lesser ones are not exempt from it, because there is always some interest in making oneself loved by men. Thus human life is nothing but a perpetual illusion; we do nothing but deceive and flatter one another. No one speaks of us in our presence as he speaks of us in our absence. The union among men is founded only on this mutual deception; and few friendships would survive if each knew what his friend says of him when he is not there, even though he then speaks sincerely and dispassionately. Man is therefore nothing but disguise, lying and hypocrisy, both in himself and toward others. He does not want to be told the truth; he avoids telling it to others; and all these dispositions, so far removed from justice and reason, have a natural root in his heart.

[101] I lay it down as a fact that if all men knew what they say about one another, there would not be four friends in the world. This is apparent from the quarrels caused by the indiscreet reports of it that are sometimes made. [I say much more: all men would be...]

[102] There are vices that cling to us only through others, and which, when the trunk is removed, are carried off like branches.

[103] The example of Alexander's chastity has not made as many continent men as the example of his drunkenness has made

intemperate ones. It is not shameful not to be as virtuous as he was, and it seems excusable not to be more vicious than he was. We think we are not altogether in the vices of the common run of men when we see ourselves in the vices of these great men; and yet we do not notice that in this respect they belong to the common run of men. We are attached to them by the end by which they are attached to the people; for however exalted they may be, they are still united to the least of men at some point. They are not suspended in the air, quite detached from our society.[25] No, no; if they are greater than we are, it is because their heads are higher; but their feet are as low as ours. They are all on the same level, and stand on the same ground; and at that extremity they are as low as we are, as low as the smallest, as children, as beasts.

104 When our passion drives us to do something, we forget our duty: if we like a book, we read it when we ought to be doing something else. But to remember our duty, we must set ourselves to do something we hate; then we excuse ourselves on the ground that we have something else to do, and in this way we remember our duty.

105 How hard it is to put something to another person's judgment without corrupting his judgment by the way we put it! If we say, "I find it beautiful," "I find it obscure," or something of the kind, we either sway his imagination toward that judgment or provoke it to the opposite. It is better to say nothing; then he judges according to what he is, that is, according to what he is at that moment, and according to what other circumstances, of which we are not the author, will have added. But at least we will have added nothing—unless our silence also has its effect, according to the turn and interpretation he is in the mood to give it, or according to what he guesses from our movements and expression, or from our tone of voice, depending on how good he is at reading faces. So hard is it not to unseat a judgment

25 Alexander the Great (356–323 BC), praised for his restraint toward the captive women of the Persian king Darius and notorious for his heavy drinking.

from its natural position; or rather, so few judgments are firm and stable!

106 If we know each person's ruling passion, we are sure to please him; and yet everyone has his whims, contrary to his own good, even in his very idea of the good; and this is an oddity that throws everything out of tune.

107 *He lit the earth with his lamp*. The weather and my mood have little connection; I have my fogs and my fine weather within me; even whether my affairs go well or badly makes little difference to it. Sometimes I strive, of my own accord, against fortune; the glory of taming it makes me tame it cheerfully; whereas in good fortune I sometimes play the disdainful.[26]

108 Even though people have no interest in what they say, we must not conclude from this, without qualification, that they are not lying; for there are people who lie simply for the sake of lying.

109 When we are well, we wonder how we would manage if we were ill; when we are ill, we take our medicine cheerfully: the illness resolves us to it. We no longer have the passions and desires for diversions and outings that health gave us, and that are incompatible with the necessities of illness; nature then gives us passions and desires suited to our present state. It is only the fears we give ourselves, and not nature, that trouble us, because they join to the state we are in the passions of the state we are not in.

Since nature makes us unhappy in every state, our desires picture to us a happy state, because they join to the state we are in the pleasures of the state we are not in; and if we attained those pleasures, we would not be happy for all that, because we would have other desires suited to that new state.

This general proposition must be made particular...

110 The feeling of the falseness of present pleasures, and ignorance of the vanity of absent ones, cause inconstancy.

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26 Part of a line of Homer (Odyssey 18.136–37) in Cicero's Latin, quoted by Augustine and by Montaigne: men's minds change like the light with which Jupiter lights the earth.

INCONSTANCY AND DIVERSITY

Man is a strange, changeable instrument, and nature varies endlessly in every detail.

111 *Inconstancy*.—We think we are playing an ordinary organ when we play upon man. He is indeed an organ, but a strange, changeable, variable one [whose pipes do not follow one another by adjacent steps. Those who know how to play only ordinary organs] would make no harmonies on this one. You have to know where the [keys] are.

112 *Inconstancy*.—Things have various qualities, and the soul various inclinations; for nothing that presents itself to the soul is simple, and the soul never presents itself simple to any object. That is why we weep and laugh at the same thing.

113 *Inconstancy and oddity*.—To live only by one's own labor and to reign over the most powerful state in the world are very opposite things; they are united in the person of the Grand Seigneur of the Turks.[27]

114 Diversity is so vast that all tones of voice, all ways of walking, coughing, blowing one's nose, sneezing... Among fruits we distinguish grapes, and among them all the muscats, and then Condrieu, and then Desargues, and then this particular graft. Is that all? Has it ever produced two identical bunches? And does one bunch have two identical grapes? etc.[28]

I cannot judge the same thing in exactly the same way twice; I cannot judge my work while I am doing it. I must do as painters do and stand back from it—but not too far. How far, then? Guess.

115 *Diversity*.—Theology is one science, but at the same time how many sciences it is! A man is a single subject; but if we dissect him, will he be the head, the heart, the stomach, the veins,

27 The Ottoman sultan, who by tradition learned a manual trade and was said to live on its earnings.

28 Condrieu is a wine village on the Rhône; the mathematician Girard Desargues (1591–1661), Pascal's friend, had vineyards near it.

each vein, each portion of a vein, the blood, each humor of the blood?

A town or a countryside, seen from afar, is a town and a countryside; but as we draw nearer, they are houses, trees, tiles, leaves, grasses, ants, ants' legs, to infinity: all this is wrapped up in the word "countryside."

116 *Thoughts.*—All is one, all is diverse. How many natures in the nature of man! How many callings! And by what chance each man usually takes up the one he has heard praised! A well-turned heel.

117 *Shoe heel.*—"Oh, how well turned that is! What a skilled workman! How bold that soldier is!"—There is the source of our inclinations and of our choice of station in life. "How well that man drinks! How little that one drinks!" That is what makes people sober or drunkards, soldiers, cowards, etc.

118 A master talent, which governs all the others.

119 Nature imitates itself: a seed sown in good ground bears fruit; a principle sown in a good mind bears fruit; numbers imitate space, though they are of so different a nature.

All is made and directed by one and the same master: the root, the branches, the fruits; the principles, the consequences.

120 [Nature diversifies and imitates; artifice imitates and diversifies.]

121 Nature always begins the same things over again: years, days, hours; spaces likewise; and numbers follow end to end, one after another. Thus a kind of infinity and eternity is formed —not that anything in all this is infinite and eternal, but these finite beings multiply infinitely. So it seems to me that only the number that multiplies them is infinite.

122 Time heals griefs and quarrels, because we change: we are no longer the same person. Neither the offender nor the offended is himself any longer. It is like a people we have angered and see again two generations later: they are still the French, but not the same ones.

123 He no longer loves the woman he loved ten years ago. I can well believe it: she is no longer the same, nor is he. He was

young, and so was she; she is quite different now. He might still love her as she was then.

[124] Not only do we look at things from other sides, but with other eyes: we are not likely to find them the same.

[125] *Contrarieties*.—Man is naturally credulous, incredulous; timid, rash.

[126] Description of man: dependence, desire for independence, need.

[127] The condition of man: inconstancy, boredom, restlessness.

[128] The boredom we feel in leaving occupations to which we have become attached. A man lives contentedly at home; let him see a woman who attracts him, let him play happily for five or six days, and he is miserable if he goes back to his former occupation. Nothing is more common than that.

[129] Our nature lies in motion; complete rest is death.

[130] *Agitation*.—When a soldier, or a laborer, etc., complains of his hardships, let him be set to do nothing.

[131] *Boredom*.—Nothing is so unbearable to man as to be completely at rest, without passions, without business, without diversion, without effort. He then feels his nothingness, his abandonment, his insufficiency, his dependence, his powerlessness, his emptiness. At once there will rise from the depths of his soul boredom, gloom, sadness, sorrow, resentment, despair.

[132] Caesar was too old, it seems to me, to go off amusing himself by conquering the world. That amusement suited Augustus or Alexander; they were young men, who are hard to restrain; but Caesar should have been more mature.

[133] Two faces that look alike, neither of which makes us laugh on its own, make us laugh together by their likeness.

[134] How vain painting is, which wins admiration for resembling things whose originals we do not admire at all!

[135] Nothing pleases us but the fight, not the victory. We like to watch animals fight, not the victor savaging the vanquished; yet what did we want to see, if not the final victory? And as soon as it comes, we have had our fill. So it is in gambling, so it is in the search for truth: in debates we like to watch opinions clash, but

to contemplate truth once found—not at all. To make it welcome, we must show it being born out of the debate. Likewise with the passions: there is pleasure in watching two opposing ones collide; but when one of them is master, it is nothing but brutality. We never seek things, but the seeking of things. Thus in plays, contented scenes without fear are worthless, as are extreme miseries without hope, brutal loves, harsh severities.

136 Little consoles us, because little afflicts us.

137 Without examining every particular occupation, it is enough to include them all under diversion.

138 Men naturally roofers, and of every calling, except in a room.

DIVERSION

All human unhappiness comes from being unable to sit quietly in a room and face one's condition.

139 *Diversion.*—When I have sometimes set myself to consider the various agitations of men, and the dangers and hardships to which they expose themselves, at court and in war, from which arise so many quarrels, passions, bold and often wicked ventures, etc., I have discovered that all the unhappiness of men comes from one thing alone: not knowing how to stay quietly in a room. A man with enough to live on, if he knew how to stay at home contentedly, would not leave it to go to sea or to besiege a town. No one would pay so dearly for a commission in the army except that he would find it unbearable not to stir from the town; and people seek conversation and the diversions of gambling only because they cannot stay at home contentedly.

But when I thought more closely, and, having found the cause of all our unhappiness, wanted to discover its reason, I found that there is one very real reason, which lies in the natural unhappiness of our weak and mortal condition—so wretched that nothing can console us when we think about it closely.

Whatever condition we picture, if we gather together all the good things that can be ours, kingship is the finest position in

the world. And yet imagine a king, attended by every satisfaction that can touch him: if he is without diversion, and is left to consider and reflect on what he is, this listless happiness will not sustain him. He will inevitably fall to foreseeing what threatens him—the revolts that may occur, and finally death and illnesses, which are inevitable—so that, if he is without what is called diversion, he is unhappy, and [more] unhappy than the least of his subjects who gambles and amuses himself.

That is why gambling and the company of women, war, and high office are so sought after. Not that there is any real happiness in them, or that anyone imagines true bliss lies in having the money one can win at play, or in the hare one hunts: we would not want them if they were offered to us. It is not that soft and peaceful enjoyment, which leaves us free to think about our unhappy condition, that we seek, nor the dangers of war, nor the toil of office, but the bustle that turns us aside from thinking about it and diverts us.

Reasons why we prefer the hunt to the catch.

That is why men love noise and commotion so much; that is why prison is so horrible a punishment; that is why the pleasure of solitude is something incomprehensible. And in the end the greatest source of happiness in the condition of kings is [*that*] people are constantly trying to divert them and to procure them every kind of pleasure.

The king is surrounded by people who think only of diverting the king and keeping him from thinking about himself; for he is unhappy, king though he is, if he thinks about it.

That is all men have been able to invent to make themselves happy. And those who play the philosopher about it, and think the world very unreasonable to spend the whole day chasing a hare they would not have wanted to buy, hardly know our nature. The hare would not shield us from the sight of death and miseries, but the hunt—which turns us aside from them—does shield us. And so...

The advice given to Pyrrhus, to take the rest he was about to seek through so many labors, met with many difficulties.[29]

[To tell a man to live at rest is to tell him to live happily; it is to advise him to have a wholly happy condition, one he can consider at leisure without finding cause for distress in it. That is not to understand nature. So men who naturally feel their condition avoid nothing so much as rest; there is nothing they will not do to seek turmoil. Not that they lack an instinct that tells them true bliss...]—Vanity: the pleasure of showing it to others.

[So we go about it wrongly when we blame them. Their fault does not lie in seeking commotion, if they sought it only as a diversion; the trouble is that they seek it as if possessing the things they seek would make them truly happy, and that is where one is right to accuse their pursuit of vanity. So that in all this both those who blame and those who are blamed fail to understand the true nature of man.]

And so, when they are reproached that what they pursue so ardently could never satisfy them, if they replied—as they ought to, if they thought it through—that all they seek in it is a violent and headlong occupation that turns them aside from thinking about themselves, and that this is why they set before themselves an attractive object that charms them and draws them on ardently, they would leave their opponents with no answer. But they do not reply so, because they do not know themselves: they do not know that it is only the hunt, and not the catch, that they are after.

Dancing: you have to think hard about where to put your feet. —The gentleman sincerely believes that hunting is a great pleasure, a royal pleasure; but his huntsman does not feel the same.

They imagine that if they had obtained that office, they would then rest contentedly, and they do not feel the insatiable nature of their greed. They believe they are sincerely seeking rest, and in fact they are seeking only agitation.

They have a secret instinct that drives them to seek diversion and occupation outside themselves, which comes from the

sense of their continual miseries; and they have another secret instinct, a remnant of the greatness of our first nature, which tells them that happiness in fact lies only in rest, not in turmoil. From these two contrary instincts a confused plan forms in them, hidden from their sight in the depths of their soul, which drives them to aim at rest through agitation, and always to imagine that the satisfaction they lack will come to them if, by overcoming some difficulties they foresee, they can thereby open the door to rest.

So the whole of life slips away. We seek rest by struggling against some obstacles; and once we have overcome them, rest becomes unbearable, for we think either of the miseries we have or of those that threaten us. And even if we saw ourselves quite safe on every side, boredom, on its own authority, would not fail to rise from the depths of the heart, where it has natural roots, and fill the mind with its venom.

Thus man is so unhappy that he would be bored even without any cause for boredom, by the very nature of his constitution; and he is so vain that, though full of a thousand real causes for boredom, the least thing—a billiard table and a ball he knocks about—is enough to divert him.

"But," you will say, "what is his aim in all this?" To boast tomorrow among his friends that he played better than someone else. Likewise others sweat in their studies to show the learned that they have solved a problem in algebra no one had been able to solve before; and so many others expose themselves to the utmost dangers in order to boast afterward of a town they have taken—just as foolishly, in my view. And finally others wear themselves out observing all these things, not to become wiser by it, but merely to show that they know them; and these are the greatest fools of the lot, since they are fools knowingly, whereas one may think of the others that they would be fools no longer if they had this knowledge.

A certain man spends his life free of boredom by gambling for small stakes every day. Give him every morning the money

he might win that day, on condition that he does not gamble: you make him unhappy. It may be said that what he seeks is the amusement of the game, not the winnings. Then make him play for nothing: he will not get excited, and he will be bored. So it is not amusement alone that he seeks: a listless amusement without passion will bore him. He must get excited and fool himself, imagining that he would be happy to win what he would not want to be given on condition that he did not gamble, so that he can create an object of passion and stir up his desire, his anger, his fear for this object he has made for himself—like children who are frightened by the face they themselves have daubed.

How is it that this man, who lost his only son a few months ago, and who, overwhelmed with lawsuits and quarrels, was so troubled this morning, no longer thinks about it now? Do not be surprised: he is wholly occupied in seeing which way the boar will go that the hounds have been chasing so hotly for six hours. That is all it takes. A man, however full of sadness, if he can be persuaded to take up some diversion, is happy for as long as it lasts; and a man, however happy, if he is not diverted and occupied by some passion or amusement that keeps boredom from spreading, will soon be gloomy and unhappy. Without diversion there is no joy; with diversion there is no sadness. And that is also what makes up the happiness of people of high rank: they have a number of people to divert them, and they have the power to keep themselves in that state.

Consider this. What else is it to be superintendent, chancellor, first president, but to be in a position where, from early morning, a great many people come from all sides so as not to leave them a single hour in the day in which they can think about themselves? And when they fall into disgrace and are sent back to their country houses, where they lack neither wealth nor servants to help them in their needs, they are still wretched

29 Pyrrhus, king of Epirus (3rd century BC); Plutarch tells how his counselor Cineas asked why he did not rest now rather than after conquering the world.

and forsaken, because no one prevents them from thinking about themselves.[30]

[Diversion is so necessary to people of the world that they are wretched without it. Now some mishap befalls them, now they think of those that may befall them; or even if they did not think of them and had no cause for sorrow, boredom, on its own authority, does not fail to rise from the depths of the heart, where it has a natural root, and [*to*] fill the whole mind with its venom.]

140 [This man, so grieved by the death of his wife and his only son, who has this great quarrel tormenting him—how is it that at this moment he is not sad, and seems so free of all these painful and anxious thoughts? We need not be surprised: he has just been served a ball, and he must return it to his opponent; he is busy catching it as it drops off the roof, to win a chase. How can you expect him to think about his affairs when he has this other affair to handle? There is a concern worthy to occupy that great soul and to drive every other thought from his mind.[31] This man, born to know the universe, to judge all things, to govern a whole state, is here occupied and wholly taken up with the business of catching a hare. And if he will not stoop to this and wants always to be at full stretch, he will be all the more foolish, because he will want to raise himself above humanity; and after all he is only a man, that is, capable of little and of much, of everything and of nothing: he is neither angel nor beast, but man.]

141 Men busy themselves chasing a ball and a hare; it is the very pleasure of kings.

142 *Diversion*.—Is not royal dignity great enough in itself to make its possessor happy by the mere sight of what he is? Must he be diverted from this thought, like ordinary people? I can see that it makes a man happy to divert him from the sight of his

30 The superintendent of finances, the chancellor (head of the judiciary) and the first president of the Parlement of Paris held the highest offices in the French state.
31 The game is real tennis (jeu de paume), played in a court with a sloping roof along one side; a "chase" is a point won or lost according to where the ball falls.

domestic miseries by filling all his thoughts with the concern to dance well. But will it be the same with a king, and will he be happier attaching himself to these vain amusements than to the sight of his greatness? And what more satisfying object could be offered to his mind? would it not then spoil his joy to occupy his soul with fitting his steps to the rhythm of a tune, or placing a bar deftly, instead of leaving him to enjoy in peace the contemplation of the majestic glory that surrounds him? Let it be tried: leave a king all alone, with no satisfaction of the senses, no care on his mind, no company, to think about himself at his leisure; and you will see that a king without diversion is a man full of miseries. So this is carefully avoided, and there never fails to be, around the persons of kings, a great many people who see to it that diversion follows upon business, and who watch over all their leisure to supply them with pleasures and games, so that there is never an empty moment. That is, they are surrounded by people who take marvelous care that the king should not be alone and in a position to think about himself, knowing full well that he will be wretched, king though he is, if he thinks about it.

In all this I am not speaking of Christian kings as Christians, but only as kings.

143 *Diversion*.—From childhood men are burdened with the care of their honor, their property, their friends, and even of their friends' property and honor. They are overwhelmed with business, with learning languages, with physical training; and they are given to understand that they cannot be happy unless their health, their honor, their fortune and those of their friends are in good order, and that a single thing lacking would make them unhappy. So they are given offices and business that keep them bustling from daybreak.—There, you will say, is a strange way to make them happy! What better could one do to make them unhappy?—What! What could one do? One need only take away all these cares; for then they would see themselves, they would think about what they are, where they come from, where they are going. And so one cannot occupy them and turn them aside too much. And that is why, after so much business has

been prepared for them, if they have any time off, they are advised to spend it diverting themselves, gambling, and keeping themselves always wholly occupied.

How hollow and full of filth is the heart of man!

144 I had spent a long time studying the abstract sciences, and the little one can share of them with others had put me off them. When I began the study of man, I saw that these abstract sciences are not suited to man, and that I was straying further from my condition by delving into them than others were by not knowing them. I forgave others for knowing little of them; but I thought I would at least find many companions in the study of man, since it is the true study proper to him. I was mistaken: even fewer people study man than geometry. It is only for want of knowing how to study this that people seek out the rest. But is it not that even this is not the knowledge man ought to have, and that it is better for him not to know himself, in order to be happy?

145 [A single thought occupies us; we cannot think of two things at once—which is lucky for us by the world's reckoning, not by God's.]

146 Man is plainly made to think; that is all his dignity; and all his merit and all his duty is to think as he ought. Now the order of thought is to begin with oneself, and with one's author and one's end.

Now what does the world think about? Never about that; but about dancing, playing the lute, singing, writing verses, tilting at the ring, etc., fighting, making oneself king—without thinking what it is to be a king, and to be a man.

VANITY AND GLORY

People want to live in others' opinion of them and will even die for reputation.

147 We are not content with the life we have in ourselves and in our own being: we want to live an imaginary life in others' idea of us, and to that end we strive to make a show. We labor unceas-

ingly to adorn and preserve our imaginary being, and neglect the real one. And if we have calm, or magnanimity, or loyalty, we hasten to make it known, so as to attach these virtues to that other being of ours; we would sooner detach them from ourselves to join them to the other. We would gladly be cowards to gain a reputation for bravery. A great sign of the nothingness of our own being, that we are not satisfied with the one without the other, and often exchange the one for the other! For whoever would not die to preserve his honor would be infamous.

148 We are so presumptuous that we would like to be known to the whole world, and even to people who will come after we are gone; and we are so vain that the esteem of five or six people around us amuses and contents us.

149 In the towns we pass through, we do not care whether we are esteemed; but when we are to stay a little while, we do care. How long must it be? A time proportioned to our vain and paltry span.

150 Vanity is so anchored in the heart of man that a soldier, a camp servant, a cook, a porter boasts and wants his admirers; even philosophers want them; and those who write against it want the glory of having written well; and those who read them want the glory of having read it; and I who write this perhaps have this desire; and perhaps those who will read it...

151 *Glory*.—Admiration spoils everything from childhood on: "Oh, how well said! Oh, how well he did! How good he is!" etc.

The children at Port-Royal, who are not given this spur of envy and glory, fall into indifference.[32]

152 *Pride*.—Curiosity is nothing but vanity. Most often we want to know only so as to talk about it; otherwise we would not travel by sea, never to say a word about it, for the mere pleasure of seeing, with no hope of ever telling anyone.

153 *On the desire to be esteemed by those we are with*.—Pride holds us in so natural a possession, in the midst of our miseries,

32 The Little Schools of Port-Royal, the Jansenist abbey near Paris with which Pascal was closely associated.

errors, etc. We even lose our lives gladly, provided people talk about it.

Vanity: gambling, hunting, visits, plays, false perpetuity of one's name.

154 [I have no friends [to your advantage].

155 A true friend is so valuable a thing, even for the greatest lords—so that he may speak well of them and stand up for them even in their absence—that they should do everything to have one. But let them choose well; for if they spend all their efforts on fools, it will be of no use to them, however well these may speak of them; and indeed they will not speak well of them if they find themselves on the weaker side, for they have no authority; and so they will speak ill of them to go along with the company.

156 *A fierce people, who thought there was no life without arms.* They prefer death to peace; others prefer death to war.[33]

Any opinion can be preferred to life, though the love of life seems so strong and so natural.

157 Contradiction: contempt for our existence, dying for nothing, hatred of our existence.

158 *Trades.*—The sweetness of glory is so great that whatever object we attach it to, even death, we love it.

159 Fine deeds kept hidden are the most estimable. When I see some in history, as on page 184, they please me greatly; but after all they were not entirely hidden, since they became known; and though everything possible was done to hide them, the little by which they came to light spoils everything; for the finest thing about them was the wish to hide them.[34]

160 Sneezing absorbs all the functions of the soul, as does the act of love; but we do not draw the same conclusions from it against the greatness of man, because it happens against his will. And even when we bring it on ourselves, it is still against our will that we bring it on; it is not for the sake of the thing

33 Livy, History of Rome 34.17, on the Spaniards; quoted by Montaigne, Essays I.14.

34 Probably a page in Pascal's copy of Montaigne's Essays.

itself but for some other end. And so it is not a sign of man's weakness, or of his servitude to that act.[35]

It is not shameful for a man to give way under pain, and it is shameful for him to give way under pleasure. This is not because pain comes to us from outside while we seek out pleasure; for one can seek out pain and give way to it deliberately, without this kind of baseness. Why is it, then, that it is glorious for reason to give way under the force of pain, and shameful for it to give way under the force of pleasure? it is because it is not pain that tempts and attracts us; it is we ourselves who choose it voluntarily and want to let it rule over us, so that we are masters of the thing; and in this it is man who gives way to himself. But in pleasure it is man who gives way to pleasure. Now only mastery and command bring glory, and only servitude brings [the] shame.

161 *Vanity*.—That something as plain to see as the vanity of the world should be so little recognized that it is a strange and surprising thing to say that seeking greatness is folly—that is astonishing!

162 Anyone who wants to know the full extent of man's vanity need only consider the causes and effects of love. The cause is *an I-know-not-what* (Corneille), and the effects are frightful. This *I-know-not-what*, so slight a thing that it cannot be pinned down, stirs up the whole earth: princes, armies, the entire world.[36]

CLEOPATRA'S NOSE

Trivial causes produce vast effects, and man's frailty shows in illness, chance and misfortune.

Cleopatra's nose: had it been shorter, the whole face of the earth would have changed.

163 *Vanity*.—The cause and effects of love: Cleopatra.

35 Pascal says "la besogne" (literally "the business"), a period euphemism for sexual intercourse.

36 "Un je ne sais quoi" is used of the mysterious cause of love in Corneille's plays, e.g. Médée and Rodogune.

163 bis [Nothing shows the vanity of men better than considering what the cause and what the effects of love are; for the whole universe is changed by it: Cleopatra's nose.]

164 Whoever does not see the vanity of the world is very vain himself. And indeed who does not see it, except young people wholly caught up in noise, in diversion, and in thoughts of the future? But take away their diversion and you will see them wither with boredom; they then feel their nothingness without knowing it. For it is indeed to be unhappy, to fall into unbearable sadness as soon as one is reduced to contemplating oneself with nothing to divert one from it.

165 *Thoughts.—In all things I sought rest*. If our condition were truly happy, we would not need to divert ourselves from thinking about it in order to be happy.[37]

165 bis If our condition were truly happy, we would not need to divert ourselves from thinking about it.

166 *Diversion.*—Death is easier to bear without thinking about it than the thought of death without danger.

167 The miseries of human life are the foundation of all this; when men saw this, they took to diversion.

168 *Diversion.*—Since men have been unable to cure death, wretchedness and ignorance, they have decided, in order to be happy, not to think about them.

169 In spite of these miseries, he wants to be happy, and wants only to be happy, and cannot not want to be. But how will he go about it? To do it properly, he would have to make himself immortal; but since he cannot, he has hit upon keeping himself from thinking about it.

170 *Diversion.*—If man were happy, he would be the happier the less he was diverted, like the saints and God.—Yes; but is it not being happy, to be able to be cheered by diversion?—No; for it comes from elsewhere, from outside; and so it is dependent, and therefore liable to be disturbed by a thousand accidents, which make afflictions inevitable.

171 *Wretchedness.*—The only thing that consoles us for our miseries is diversion, and yet it is the greatest of our miseries. For it is chiefly this that keeps us from thinking about ourselves and makes us lose ourselves without noticing. Without it we would be bored, and this boredom would drive us to seek a more solid way out of it. But diversion beguiles us, and brings us, without our noticing, to death.

NEVER IN THE PRESENT

We live in the past and future, always preparing to be happy and never being so.

172 We never keep to the present. We anticipate the future as too slow in coming, as if to hurry it along; or we recall the past, to stop it as too swift. We are so imprudent that we wander in times that are not ours and never think of the only one that belongs to us. We are so vain that we dream of times that are nothing, and without reflection let slip the only one that exists. The truth is that the present usually hurts us. We hide it from our sight because it distresses us; and if it is pleasant, we regret seeing it slip away. We try to prop it up with the future, and think of arranging things that are not in our power, for a time we have no assurance of reaching.

Let each of us examine his thoughts: he will find them all taken up with the past and the future. We hardly think of the present at all; and if we do think of it, it is only to take light from it for arranging the future. The present is never our end: the past and the present are our means; the future alone is our end. So we never live, but we hope to live; and since we are always preparing to be happy, it is inevitable that we never are.

173 They say that eclipses portend misfortune, because misfortunes are common. Evil happens so often that they often guess right; whereas if they said eclipses portend good fortune, they would often be lying. They attribute good fortune only to rare conjunctions of the heavens; so they seldom fail to guess right.

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37 Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 24:11 in the Vulgate.

174 *Wretchedness.*—Solomon and Job knew man's wretchedness best and spoke of it best: the one the happiest of men, the other the unhappiest; the one knowing the vanity of pleasures by experience, the other the truth of ills.

174 bis *Wretchedness.* Job and Solomon.

175 We know ourselves so little that many think they are about to die when they are well, and many think they are well when they are close to death, not feeling the approaching fever, or the abscess about to form.

176 Cromwell was about to lay waste the whole of Christendom; the royal family was lost, and his own was powerful forever, but for a little grain of sand that lodged in his ureter. Rome itself was about to tremble before him; but once that little bit of gravel had got there, he died, his family was brought low, all was at peace, and the king was restored.[38]

177 [Three hosts.] Would anyone who had the friendship of the king of England, the king of Poland and the queen of Sweden have thought he could lack a refuge and a shelter in the world?[39]

178 Macrobius: on the innocents killed by Herod.[40]

179 When Augustus learned that among the children under two years old whom Herod had put to death was Herod's own son, he said it was better to be Herod's pig than his son. Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, book II, ch. 4.[41]

180 The great and the lowly have the same accidents, the same vexations and the same passions; but one is at the top of the wheel and the other near the center, and so less shaken by the same movements.

181 We are so unhappy that we can take pleasure in a thing only on condition of being upset if it turns out badly; which a

38 Oliver Cromwell died in 1658; the English monarchy was restored under Charles II in 1660.

39 Charles I of England, executed in 1649; John II Casimir of Poland, driven from his kingdom in 1655–56; Queen Christina of Sweden, who abdicated in 1654.

40 Macrobius (fl. c. AD 400), Latin author of the *Saturnalia*, which records the anecdote in the next fragment.

41 The joke turns on Herod's Jewish abstention from pork, which would have spared his pig.

thousand things can do, and do, every hour. [*Whoever*] found the secret of rejoicing in good without being upset by the contrary evil would have hit the mark; it is perpetual motion.

182 Those who, in troublesome affairs, are always hopeful and rejoice at lucky turns, if they are not equally distressed by the bad ones, are suspected of being glad that the affair is lost. They are delighted to find these pretexts for hope in order to show that they care, and to cover, with the joy they pretend to feel at them, the joy they feel at seeing the affair lost.

183 We run heedlessly into the precipice, after putting something in front of us to keep us from seeing it.

Section III: The necessity of the wager

De la nécessité du pari
Against indifference to religion, and the wager (fr. 233).

184 Letter to lead people to seek God.

And then have him seek among the philosophers, Pyrrhonists and dogmatists, who wear out anyone who consults them.

185 The way of God, who orders all things gently, is to put religion into the mind by reasons and into the heart by grace. But to try to put it into the mind and heart by force and threats is to put there not religion but terror: *terror rather than religion*.

186 *Lest, if they were frightened and not taught, it should seem a kind of wicked tyranny* (Augustine, Letter 48 or 49).

Vol. iv: *Against Lying—to Consentius*.[1]

187 *Order*.—Men despise religion; they hate it, and fear it may be true. To cure this, we must begin by showing that religion is not contrary to reason; that it is worthy of reverence, and so inspire respect for it; then make it lovable, make good people wish it were true; and then show that it is true. Worthy of reverence, because it has understood man well; lovable, because it promises the true good.

188 In every dialogue and discourse, one must be able to say to those who take offense: What are you complaining about?

189 Begin by pitying unbelievers; they are unhappy enough by their condition. One should insult them only if it did some good; but it does them harm.

1 A treatise by Augustine addressed to Consentius; "vol. iv" refers to the edition of Augustine's works Pascal used.

190 Pity atheists who are searching, for are they not unhappy enough?—Inveigh against those who boast of it.

191 And will that one mock the other? Who ought to mock? And yet this one does not mock the other, but pities him.

192 Reproach Mitton for not stirring himself, when God will reproach him.[2]

193 *What will become of men who despise the smallest things and do not believe the greater?*

AGAINST INDIFFERENCE

Pascal condemns those who are indifferent to whether the soul is immortal, and urges them to seek.

194 ... Let them at least learn what the religion they attack is, before attacking it. If this religion boasted of having a clear sight of God, and of possessing it openly and without a veil, it would be an attack on it to say that one sees nothing in the world that shows it so evidently. But it says, on the contrary, that men are in darkness and far from God; that he has hidden himself from their knowledge; that this is even the name he gives himself in the Scriptures, *the hidden God*. And finally it works equally to establish these two things: that God has set perceptible signs in the Church to make himself known to those who would seek him sincerely, and that he has nevertheless covered them in such a way that he will be perceived only by those who seek him with all their heart. If so, what advantage can they draw when, in the negligence they profess about seeking the truth, they cry out that nothing shows it to them? For this obscurity they are in, and which they hold against the Church, only establishes one of the things she maintains, without touching the other; far from ruining her doctrine, it establishes it.[3]

To attack it, they would have to cry out that they had made every effort to seek everywhere, even in what the Church offers

2 Damien Mitton (1618–1690), gambler and freethinker, a friend of Pascal's and a theorist of worldly decency.

3 Isa. 45:15 (Vulgate: *Vere tu es Deus absconditus*, "Truly you are a hidden God").

for instruction, but without any satisfaction. If they spoke like that, they would indeed be attacking one of its claims. But I hope to show here that no reasonable person could speak like that, and I even dare say that no one ever has. We know well enough how those of this frame of mind behave. They think they have made great efforts to learn when they have spent a few hours reading some book of Scripture and have questioned some churchman about the truths of the faith. After that, they boast of having searched without success in books and among men. But truly, I will tell them what I have often said: this negligence is intolerable. It is not a question here of the slight interest of some stranger, that we should treat it this way; it is a question of ourselves, and of our all.

The immortality of the soul is something that matters to us so greatly, that touches us so deeply, that one must have lost all feeling to be indifferent to knowing the truth of it. All our actions and thoughts must take such different paths according to whether there are eternal goods to hope for or not, that it is impossible to take a single step with sense and judgment unless it is guided by the view of this point, which must be our ultimate object.

So our first interest and our first duty is to enlighten ourselves on this subject, on which all our conduct depends. That is why, among those who are not convinced of it, I make an utter distinction between those who work with all their strength to learn about it and those who live without troubling about it or thinking of it.

I can have nothing but compassion for those who sincerely groan in this doubt, who regard it as the worst of misfortunes, and who, sparing nothing to escape it, make this search their chief and most serious occupation.

But there are those who spend their lives without thinking of this ultimate end of life; and who, for the sole reason that they do not find within themselves the lights that would convince them, neglect to seek them elsewhere, and to examine thoroughly whether this opinion is one of those the common people

accept out of credulous simplicity, or one of those which, though obscure in themselves, nevertheless have a very solid and unshakable foundation. These I regard in an entirely different way.

This negligence, in a matter that concerns themselves, their eternity, their all, angers me more than it moves me; it astonishes and appalls me; to me it is monstrous. I do not say this out of the pious zeal of spiritual devotion. On the contrary, I mean that one ought to have this feeling from a principle of human interest and from the interest of self-love; for this one need only see what the least enlightened people see.

One need not have a very lofty soul to understand that there is no true and solid satisfaction here; that all our pleasures are only vanity; that our ills are infinite; and that, finally, death, which threatens us at every moment, must infallibly, in a few years, place us in the horrible necessity of being forever either annihilated or unhappy.

There is nothing more real than this, nor more terrible. Let us play the brave as much as we like: that is the end awaiting the finest life in the world. Let people reflect on this, and then say whether it is not beyond doubt that there is no good in this life except in the hope of another life; that we are happy only in proportion as we draw near it; and that, just as there will be no more unhappiness for those who had complete assurance of eternity, so there is no happiness for those who have no light on it.

It is therefore certainly a great evil to be in this doubt; but it is at least an indispensable duty to seek when one is in this doubt. And so the one who doubts and does not seek is at once very unhappy and very unjust. But if with that he is calm and content, if he professes it, and finally if he boasts of it, and makes this very state the subject of his joy and his vanity, I have no words to describe so extravagant a creature.

Where can one get such feelings? What cause for joy is there in expecting nothing but hopeless miseries? What cause for van-

ity in seeing oneself in impenetrable darkness? And how can such reasoning take place in a reasonable man?

"I do not know who put me in the world, nor what the world is, nor what I am myself. I am in a terrible ignorance of everything. I do not know what my body is, or my senses, or my soul, or even that part of me which thinks what I am saying, which reflects on everything and on itself, and knows itself no better than the rest. I see these frightening spaces of the universe that enclose me, and I find myself attached to one corner of this vast expanse, without knowing why I am put in this place rather than another, nor why this little time given me to live is assigned to me at this point rather than at another in all the eternity that preceded me and all that follows me. I see nothing but infinities on every side, enclosing me like an atom, like a shadow that lasts only an instant and never returns. All I know is that I must soon die; but what I know least is this very death which I cannot escape.

"As I do not know where I come from, so I do not know where I am going. I know only that on leaving this world I fall forever either into nothingness or into the hands of an angry God, without knowing which of these two conditions is to be my lot for eternity. Such is my state, full of weakness and uncertainty. And from all this I conclude that I must therefore spend all the days of my life without a thought of seeking what is to happen to me. Perhaps I could find some light on my doubts; but I do not want to take the trouble, or take a single step to look for it. And then, treating with contempt those who will be troubling themselves over this, I mean to go without foresight and without fear to try out so great an event, and let myself be led softly to death, uncertain of the eternity of my future condition." (Whatever certainty they might have, it is a cause for despair rather than vanity.)

Who would wish to have as a friend a man who talks like that? Who would choose him over others to confide his affairs to? Who would turn to him in his afflictions? And finally, what use in life could he be put to?

Truly, it is a glory to religion to have such unreasonable men as enemies; and their opposition is so little dangerous to it that on the contrary it serves to establish its truths. For the Christian faith aims almost solely at establishing these two things: the corruption of nature and the redemption of Jesus Christ. Now I maintain that if they do not serve to show the truth of the redemption by the holiness of their morals, they at least serve admirably to show the corruption of nature by feelings so unnatural.

Nothing is so important to man as his state; nothing is so fearsome to him as eternity. And so, that there should be men indifferent to the loss of their being and to the danger of an eternity of miseries is not natural. They are quite different with regard to everything else: they fear even the slightest things, they foresee them, they feel them. And this same man who spends so many days and nights in rage and despair over the loss of an office, or over some imaginary insult to his honor, is the very one who knows, without anxiety and without emotion, that he is going to lose everything at death. It is a monstrous thing to see in the same heart, and at the same time, this sensitivity to the smallest things and this strange insensitivity to the greatest. It is an incomprehensible spell, a supernatural torpor, which points to an all-powerful force that causes it.

There must be a strange reversal in man's nature for him to glory in being in this state, in which it seems incredible that a single person could be. Yet experience shows me so many of them that it would be surprising, if we did not know that most of those who dabble in it are pretending and are not really so. They are people who have heard that fine worldly manners consist in acting the reckless free spirit; this is what they call having thrown off the yoke, and it is what they try to imitate. But it would not be hard to make them understand how much they deceive themselves in seeking esteem this way. It is not the way to acquire it—I say, even among people of the world who judge things soundly, and who know that the only way to succeed there is to show oneself decent, loyal, judicious and able to

serve one's friend usefully, because men naturally love only what can be useful to them. Now, what advantage is it to us to hear a man say that he has thrown off the yoke, that he does not believe there is a God watching over his actions, that he regards himself as sole master of his conduct, and that he expects to answer for it only to himself? Does he think that he has thereby brought us to have great confidence in him from now on, and to expect from him consolation, advice and help in all the needs of life? Do they claim to have delighted us by telling us that they hold our soul to be only a little wind and smoke—and by telling us so, moreover, in a proud and satisfied tone of voice? Is this, then, something to say cheerfully? Is it not, on the contrary, something to say sadly, as the saddest thing in the world?

If they thought about it seriously, they would see that this is so ill-judged, so contrary to good sense, so opposed to decency and so remote in every way from the good style they are after, that they would be more likely to reform than to corrupt those who might have some inclination to follow them. And indeed, make them give an account of their feelings and of their reasons for doubting religion: they will tell you things so feeble and so base that they will persuade you of the contrary. That is what someone once told them, very aptly. "If you go on arguing like this," he said to them, "you really will convert me." And he was right; for who would not be horrified to find himself holding views in which one has such contemptible people for companions?

So those who only pretend to these feelings would be very unfortunate to force their nature in order to make themselves the most senseless of men. If they are sorry, deep in their hearts, not to have more light, let them not hide it: that admission will be nothing to be ashamed of; the only shame is in having none. Nothing betrays greater weakness of mind than not knowing the unhappiness of a man without God; nothing is a surer sign of a bad disposition of heart than not wishing the eternal promises to be true; nothing is more cowardly than to play the brave against God. Let them leave these impieties, then, to those who

are ill-natured enough to be truly capable of them. Let them at least be decent people if they cannot be Christians; and let them recognize at last that there are only two kinds of people who can be called reasonable: those who serve God with all their heart because they know him, and those who seek him with all their heart because they do not know him.

But as for those who live without knowing him and without seeking him, they judge themselves so little worth their own care that they are not worth the care of others; and one must have all the charity of the religion they despise not to despise them to the point of abandoning them in their folly. But this religion obliges us always to regard them, as long as they are in this life, as capable of the grace that can enlighten them; and to believe that in a short time they may be fuller of faith than we are, while we on the contrary may fall into the blindness they are in. So we must do for them what we would want done for us if we were in their place: call them to have pity on themselves, and to take at least a few steps to try whether they may not find some light. Let them give to this reading some of the hours they spend so uselessly elsewhere. Whatever aversion they bring to it, perhaps they will come upon something; at the very least they will not lose much. But as for those who bring to it perfect sincerity and a real desire to find the truth, I hope they will be satisfied, and will be convinced by the proofs of so divine a religion, which I have gathered here, and in which I have followed roughly this order...

194 bis [We must pity both; but for the one we must have a pity born of tenderness, and for the other a pity born of contempt.]

[I do not take this up out of a system, but from the way man's heart is made; not out of a zeal of devotion and detachment, but from a purely human principle, from a movement of interest and self-love; and because it is something that concerns us enough to move us, to be assured that after all the ills of life, an inevitable death, which threatens us at every moment, must infallibly in a few years... in the horrible necessity...]

[It is beyond doubt that there is no good without the knowledge of God; that the nearer we come to him, the happier we are, and that the ultimate happiness is to know him with certainty; that the further we move from him, the unhappier we are, and that the ultimate unhappiness would be the certainty of the contrary.

It is therefore a misfortune to doubt, but it is an indispensable duty to seek when in doubt; and so the one who doubts and does not seek is at once unhappy and unjust. But if with that he is cheerful and presumptuous, I have no word to describe so extravagant a creature.]

[What cause for joy, to expect nothing more than hopeless miseries! What consolation, to despair of any consoler!]

But even those who seem most opposed to the glory of religion will not be useless to others in this. We will make of them the first argument that there is something supernatural: for a blindness of this kind is not a natural thing. And if their folly makes them so hostile to their own good, it will serve to protect others from it by the horror of so deplorable an example and of a folly so deserving of compassion.

Are they so firm that they are insensible to everything that affects them? Let us test it with the loss of goods or honor: what! it is a spell...

Yet it is certain that man is so unnatural that there is in his heart a seed of joy in this.

[People of this sort are academy pupils, schoolboys; and it is the worst type of man I know.][4]

Good style lies in showing no deference, and true piety in showing deference to others.

[A fine cause for rejoicing and boasting, head held high like this: So let us rejoice, live without fear or anxiety, and wait for death, since it is uncertain, and then we shall see what becomes of us... I do not see the logic of it.]

4 *Académistes*: young gentlemen trained in the riding and fencing academies of the day.

Is it something to say with joy? It is something, then, that one ought to say sadly.

That is not good style.

You will convert me.

[Not to be sorry about it, and not to love to... is an effect of weakness of mind, not of malice in the will.]

[Is it courage, for a dying man, to go in weakness and agony to confront an almighty and eternal God?]

[This shows there is nothing to say to them: not out of contempt, but because they lack common sense; God must touch them.]

[One really must belong to the religion they despise in order not to despise them.]

[How happy I would be, if I were in that state, if someone took pity on my foolishness and had the kindness to pull me out of it in spite of myself!]

Is it not enough that miracles are done in one place, and that Providence is seen over one people?

194 ter I would ask them whether it is not true that they bear out in themselves that foundation of the faith they attack, which is that man's nature is in corruption.

Nothing is important but that, and that is the only thing neglected.

That is all a man could do who was certain this news was false; and even then he ought not to be joyful, but downcast.

It must not be said of this that it is a mark of reason.

The three conditions.

195 Before entering upon the proofs of the Christian religion, I find it necessary to set out the injustice of men who live indifferent to seeking the truth of a thing so important to them and that touches them so closely.

Of all their errors, this is doubtless the one that most convicts them of folly and blindness, and in which it is easiest to confound them by the first glimmers of common sense and by the feelings of nature. For it is beyond doubt that the time of this life is only an instant; that the state of death is eternal, whatever its

nature may be; and that therefore all our actions and thoughts must take such different paths according to the state of this eternity, that it is impossible to take a single step with sense and judgment unless it is guided by the truth of that point, which must be our ultimate object.

Nothing is plainer than this; and so, by the principles of reason, men's conduct is utterly unreasonable if they do not take another path. Let us judge on this basis, then, those who live without a thought for this ultimate end of life; who let themselves be led by their inclinations and their pleasures without reflection and without anxiety; and who, as if they could annihilate eternity by turning their thoughts away from it, think only of making themselves happy in this instant alone.

Yet this eternity remains; and death, which is to open it and which threatens them every hour, must infallibly place them, in a short time, in the horrible necessity of being forever either annihilated or unhappy, without their knowing which of these eternities is prepared for them forever.

This is a doubt of terrible consequence. They are in danger of an eternity of miseries; and on that account, as if the matter were not worth the trouble, they neglect to examine whether this is one of those opinions that the common people accept with too credulous an ease, or one of those which, obscure in themselves, have a very solid though hidden foundation. Thus they do not know whether there is truth or falsehood in the matter, nor whether there is strength or weakness in the proofs. They have them before their eyes, and refuse to look at them. And in this ignorance they choose to do everything needed to fall into this misfortune, if it exists; to wait until death to put it to the test; meanwhile to be very satisfied in this state, to profess it, and finally to boast of it. Can one think seriously about the importance of this matter without being horrified at conduct so extravagant?

This repose in such ignorance is a monstrous thing. Its extravagance and stupidity must be brought home to those who spend their lives in it, by setting it before their own eyes, to con-

found them with the sight of their folly. For this is how men reason when they choose to live in this ignorance of what they are, without seeking any enlightenment. "I do not know," they say...

195 bis [Our imagination so magnifies the present, by dint of reflecting on it continually, and so diminishes eternity, for lack of reflecting on it, that we make eternity a nothing and nothing an eternity; and all this is so deeply rooted in us that all our reason cannot defend us against it, and that...]

196 These people lack heart; one would not make a friend of them.

197 To be so unfeeling as to despise the things that concern us, and to become unfeeling on the point that concerns us most.

198 Man's sensitivity to small things and his insensitivity to great things: the mark of a strange reversal.

199 Imagine a number of men in chains, all condemned to death. Each day some of them are slaughtered in the sight of the others; those who remain see their own condition in that of their fellows, and, looking at one another with grief and without hope, wait their turn. This is the image of the condition of men.

200 A man in a dungeon does not know whether his sentence has been passed; he has only an hour left to find out, and that hour is enough, if he learns it has been passed, to have it revoked. It is against nature for him to spend that hour not in finding out whether the sentence has been passed, but in playing piquet. So it is supernatural that man, etc.; it is the hand of God weighing heavily. So not only the zeal of those who seek him proves God, but also the blindness of those who do not seek him.

201 All the objections of either side go only against themselves, and not against religion.—All that the ungodly say...

202 [From those who are distressed to find themselves without faith, we see that God does not enlighten them; but from the others, we see that there is a God who blinds them.]

203 *The bewitchment of trifles*.—So that passion may do no harm, let us act as if we had only a week to live.[5]

204 If we must give a week of our life, we must give a hundred years.

204 bis If we must give a week, we must give our whole life.

FRIGHTENING SPACES

Pascal is terrified by his brief life lost in infinite space and time.

205 When I consider the brief span of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after it, the small space I fill and even can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I know nothing and which know nothing of me, I am frightened, and astonished to see myself here rather than there; for there is no reason why here rather than there, why now rather than then. Who put me here? By whose order and direction were this place and this time allotted to me? *The memory of a guest who stayed one day and passed on.*[6]

206 The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me.

207 How many kingdoms know nothing of us!

208 Why is my knowledge limited? My height? My lifespan to a hundred years rather than a thousand? What reason did nature have for giving it to me so, and for choosing this number rather than another, out of an infinity of them where there is no more reason to choose one than another, nothing making one more tempting than another?

209 Are you any less a slave for being loved and flattered by your master? You are well off indeed, slave: your master flatters you; soon he will beat you.

210 The last act is bloody, however fine the play may be in all the rest: in the end they throw earth over your head, and that is that, forever.

211 We are absurd to rest in the company of our fellows, wretched as we are, powerless as we are: they will not help us;

5 Wis. 4:12: "the bewitchment of trifles obscures what is good."
6 Wis. 5:15.

we shall die alone. We must therefore act as if we were alone; and then, would we build splendid houses, etc.? We would seek the truth without hesitation; and if we refuse to, we show that we value the esteem of men more than the search for truth.

212 *Flowing away*.—It is a horrible thing to feel everything one possesses flowing away.

213 Between us and hell or heaven there is only life, which is the most fragile thing in the world.

214 *Injustice*.—That presumption should be joined to wretchedness is an extreme injustice.

215 Fear death when out of danger, and not when in danger; for one must be a man.

216 Sudden death is the only thing to fear; and that is why confessors live in the households of the great.

217 He is an heir who finds the title deeds of his house. Will he say, "Perhaps they are forged"—and neglect to examine them?

218 *Dungeon*.—I think it fine that one should not go deeply into the opinion of Copernicus; but this! It matters to one's whole life to know whether the soul is mortal or immortal.[7]

219 It is beyond doubt that whether the soul is mortal or immortal must make an entire difference to morality. And yet the philosophers have worked out their morality independently of this: they deliberate on how to pass an hour.

Plato, to prepare for Christianity.

220 The falseness of the philosophers who did not discuss the immortality of the soul; the falseness of their dilemma in Montaigne.[8]

221 Atheists ought to say things that are perfectly clear; now it is not perfectly clear that the soul is material.

222 *Atheists*.—What reason have they for saying that one cannot rise from the dead? Which is harder, to be born or to rise again? For what has never been to be, or for what has been to be again? Is it harder to come into being than to return to it? Custom

7 Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543), who held that the earth moves around the sun.
8 The dilemma, reported from Socrates in Montaigne's *Essays*, that death is either extinction or a passage to a better state, and so nothing to fear.

makes the one easy for us; lack of custom makes the other impossible. The common people's way of judging!

Why can a virgin not bear a child? Does a hen not lay eggs without a cock? What distinguishes them outwardly from the others? And who has told us that the hen cannot form the germ in them as well as the cock?

223 What have they to say against the resurrection, and against the Virgin's giving birth? Which is harder, to produce a man or an animal, or to reproduce it? And if they had never seen a certain species of animal, could they guess whether they reproduce without each other's company?

224 How I hate these follies—not believing in the Eucharist, etc.! If the Gospel is true, if Jesus Christ is God, what difficulty is there in that?

225 Atheism: a mark of strength of mind, but only up to a certain point.

226 The ungodly, who profess to follow reason, must be remarkably strong in reason. What do they say, then? Do we not see, they say, beasts live and die like men, and Turks like Christians? They have their ceremonies, their prophets, their teachers, their saints, their monks, as we do, etc.—Is this contrary to Scripture? Does it not say all this?

If you care little about knowing the truth, that is enough to leave you in peace. But if you desire with all your heart to know it, it is not enough: look at the details. That would be enough for a question of philosophy; but here, where everything is at stake... And yet, after a slight reflection of this kind, people will go off and amuse themselves, etc. Let us ask this religion itself whether it does not account for this obscurity; perhaps it will teach us.

227 *Order by dialogues*.—What should I do? I see nothing but darkness everywhere. Shall I believe that I know nothing? Shall I believe that I am God?

All things change and follow one another.—You are wrong, there is....

228 Objection of the atheists: "But we have no light."

229 This is what I see, and what troubles me. I look in every direction, and everywhere I see only darkness. Nature offers me nothing that is not a matter for doubt and disquiet. If I saw nothing in it that pointed to a Divinity, I would settle on denial; if I saw the marks of a Creator everywhere, I would rest in peace in faith. But seeing too much to deny and too little to be sure, I am in a pitiable state. In it I have wished a hundred times that, if a God sustains nature, she would show it unambiguously; that, if the marks she gives of him are deceptive, she would suppress them altogether; that she would say everything or nothing, so that I might see which side I ought to take. As it is, in the state I am in, ignorant of what I am and of what I ought to do, I know neither my condition nor my duty. My whole heart strains to know where the true good lies, in order to follow it; nothing would be too dear for me, for the sake of eternity.

I envy those I see living in the faith with such carelessness, who make such poor use of a gift that, it seems to me, I would use so differently.

230 Incomprehensible that God should exist, and incomprehensible that he should not; that the soul should be joined to the body, that we should have no soul; that the world should be created, that it should not be, etc.; that original sin should exist, and that it should not.

231 Do you believe it impossible that God should be infinite and without parts?—Yes.—Then I will show you something infinite and indivisible. It is a point moving everywhere at infinite speed; for it is one in all places, and whole in each spot.

Let this effect of nature, which seemed impossible to you before, make you realize that there may be others you do not yet know. Do not draw from your apprenticeship the conclusion that nothing remains for you to know, but rather that infinitely much remains for you to know.

232 Infinite motion; the point that fills everything; the moment of rest: infinite without quantity, indivisible and infinite.

THE WAGER

Reason cannot decide whether God exists, but since we must wager, we should bet that he does.

233 *Infinite—nothing*.—Our soul is cast into the body, where it finds number, time, dimensions. It reasons about these, calls this nature, necessity, and can believe nothing else.

The number one added to the infinite does not increase it at all, any more than one foot added to an infinite length. The finite is annihilated in the presence of the infinite and becomes pure nothingness. So it is with our mind before God; so with our justice before divine justice. There is not so great a disproportion between our justice and God's as between one and infinity. God's justice must be as vast as his mercy. Now, justice toward the reprobate is less vast, and ought to shock us less, than mercy toward the elect.

We know that there is an infinite, and are ignorant of its nature. We know it is false that numbers are finite; therefore it is true that there is an infinite in number. But we do not know what it is. It is false that it is even, it is false that it is odd; for adding one does not change its nature. Yet it is a number, and every number is even or odd (true, this is understood of every finite number). So we may well know that there is a God without knowing what he is.

Is there not a substantial truth, seeing that there are so many true things which are not truth itself?

We know, then, the existence and the nature of the finite, because we are finite and extended like it. We know the existence of the infinite and are ignorant of its nature, because it has extension like us, but not limits like us. But we know neither the existence nor the nature of God, because he has neither extension nor limits.

But by faith we know his existence; in glory we shall know his nature. Now, I have already shown that we can know the existence of a thing without knowing its nature.

Let us now speak according to natural lights.

If there is a God, he is infinitely incomprehensible, since, having neither parts nor limits, he bears no relation to us. We are therefore incapable of knowing either what he is or whether he is. This being so, who will dare to undertake to settle the question? Not we, who bear no relation to him.

Who, then, will blame Christians for being unable to give a reason for their belief, when they profess a religion for which they cannot give a reason? In setting it before the world, they declare that it is foolishness, *a folly*; and then you complain that they do not prove it! If they proved it, they would not be keeping their word: it is by lacking proofs that they show they do not lack sense.—Yes; but though this excuses those who offer it as such, and clears them of blame for putting it forward without reason, it does not excuse those who accept it.—Let us examine this point, then, and say: God is, or he is not. But to which side shall we lean?[9] Reason can decide nothing here: there is an infinite chaos separating us. At the far end of this infinite distance a game is being played, where heads or tails will turn up. What will you wager? By reason, you can make neither choice; by reason, you can defend neither.

Do not, then, accuse of falsehood those who have made a choice, for you know nothing about it.—No; but I will blame them for having made, not this choice, but a choice. For though the one who calls heads and the other are equally at fault, they are both at fault: the right thing is not to wager at all.

—Yes; but you must wager. It is not voluntary: you are already committed. Which will you take, then? Let us see. Since you must choose, let us see which concerns you least. You have two things to lose, the true and the good; and two things to stake, your reason and your will, your knowledge and your happiness; and your nature has two things to shun, error and wretchedness. Since you must necessarily choose, your reason is no more offended by choosing one than the other. That point is settled.

9 The Latin *stultitiam* echoes 1 Cor. 1:18–23, where Paul calls the preaching of the cross foolishness.

But your happiness? Let us weigh the gain and the loss in calling heads that God exists.[10] Let us assess these two cases: if you win, you win everything; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, then, that he exists, without hesitating.—That is wonderful. Yes, I must wager; but perhaps I am wagering too much.—Let us see. Since there is an equal chance of gain and of loss, if you stood to win only two lives for one, you could still wager. But if there were three to win, you would have to play (since you are under the necessity of playing); and when you are forced to play, you would be imprudent not to risk your life to win three in a game where the chances of loss and gain are equal. But there is an eternity of life and happiness. This being so, even if there were an infinity of chances of which only one was in your favor, you would still be right to wager one to have two; and, being obliged to play, you would act senselessly if you refused to stake one life against three in a game where, out of an infinity of chances, one is in your favor—if there were an infinity of infinitely happy life to win. But here there is an infinity of infinitely happy life to win, one chance of gain against a finite number of chances of loss, and what you are staking is finite. This leaves no choice: wherever the infinite is in play, and there is not an infinity of chances of loss against the one of gain, there is no room for hesitation; you must give everything. And so, when one is forced to play, one would have to renounce reason to keep one's life rather than risk it for the infinite gain, which is as likely to come about as the loss of nothingness.

For it is no use saying that it is uncertain whether one will win, and certain that one is taking a risk, and that the infinite distance between the *certainty* of what one is staking and the *uncertainty* of what one will win makes the finite good one certainly stakes equal to the infinite, which is uncertain. That is not so. Every gambler risks with certainty in order to win with uncertainty; and yet he certainly risks the finite to win the finite uncertainly, without sinning against reason. There is not an infinite distance between this certainty of what one stakes and

10 Literally "you are embarked", as on a ship already under way.

the uncertainty of the gain: that is false. There is, in truth, an infinite distance between the certainty of winning and the certainty of losing. But the uncertainty of winning is proportioned to the certainty of what one stakes, according to the proportion of the chances of gain and loss. Hence, if there are as many chances on one side as on the other, the game is to be played even against even; and then the certainty of what one stakes is equal to the uncertainty of the gain—so far is it from being infinitely distant from it. And thus our proposition has infinite force when there is the finite to stake, in a game where the chances of gain and loss are equal, and the infinite to win. This is demonstrative; and if men are capable of any truth, this is one. —I confess it, I admit it. But still, is there no way of seeing the hidden side of the game?—Yes: Scripture, and the rest, etc.

—Yes; but my hands are tied and my mouth is silenced. I am forced to wager, and I am not free; I am not let go, and I am made in such a way that I cannot believe. What, then, do you want me to do?

—That is true. But at least realize that your inability to believe —since reason leads you to it, and yet you cannot—[comes only from the fault of your passions]. Work, then, at convincing yourself not by adding more proofs of God, but by diminishing your passions. You want to reach faith, and you do not know the way; you want to cure yourself of unbelief, and you ask for the remedy. Learn from those who were bound like you, and who now wager all they have. These are people who know the way you would like to follow, and who have been cured of an illness you wish to be cured of. Follow the way in which they began: it was by doing everything as if they believed, by taking holy water, by having masses said, etc. Quite naturally, this will make you believe, and will make you tame.—But that is what I am afraid of.—And why? What have you to lose? But to show you that this leads there: it will diminish the passions, which are your great obstacles, etc. *End of this discourse*.—Now, what harm will come to you from taking this side? You will be faithful, decent, humble, grateful, generous, a true friend, sincere, truthful. It is

true that you will not be in poisonous pleasures, in glory, in luxuries; but will you not have others?[11] I tell you that you will gain by it in this life; and that at every step you take along this road, you will see so much certainty of gain, and so much nothingness in what you are risking, that you will realize in the end that you have wagered on something certain and infinite, for which you have given nothing.

4]—"Oh! This discourse carries me away, enraptures me, etc., etc."

—If this discourse pleases you and seems strong to you, know that it is made by a man who knelt, before and after, to pray to that infinite Being without parts, to whom he submits all of his own, that he would also submit yours to himself, for your own good and for his glory; and that thus strength is reconciled with this baseness.

WORKING FOR THE UNCERTAIN

We rightly act for uncertain ends every day, and the rule of stakes shows why.

234 If we should do nothing except for what is certain, we ought to do nothing for religion, for it is not certain. But how many things we do for the uncertain: sea voyages, battles! I say, then, that we would have to do nothing at all, for nothing is certain; and that there is more certainty in religion than there is that we shall see tomorrow. For it is not certain that we shall see tomorrow, but it is certainly possible that we shall not. The same cannot be said of religion. It is not certain that it is true; but who will dare say that it is certainly possible that it is not? Now, when we work for tomorrow, and for the uncertain, we act reasonably; for we ought to work for the uncertain, by the rule of stakes, which has been demonstrated.[12]

11 "Make you tame": literally "stupefy you", that is, quiet the resisting intellect.
12 The "rule of stakes" (règle des partis) is Pascal's method for fairly dividing the stakes of an interrupted game, worked out with Fermat in 1654 and a founding result of probability theory.

Saint Augustine saw that we work for the uncertain, at sea, in battle, etc.; but he did not see the rule of stakes, which proves that we ought to. Montaigne saw that we are offended by a lame mind, and that custom can do anything; but he did not see the reason for this effect.[13]

All these people saw the effects, but they did not see the causes. Compared with those who have discovered the causes, they are like those who have only eyes compared with those who have minds; for effects are, as it were, perceptible to the senses, and causes are visible only to the mind. And though these effects are seen by the mind, that mind is to the mind that sees the causes as the bodily senses are to the mind.

235 *They saw the thing; they did not see the cause.*

236 By the rule of stakes, you ought to take the trouble to search for the truth; for if you die without worshipping the true Principle, you are lost.—But, you say, if he had wanted me to worship him, he would have left me signs of his will.—And so he has; but you ignore them. Look for them, then: it is well worth it.

237 *Stakes.*—One must live differently in the world according to these different suppositions: 1. if one could be in it forever; 5. if it is certain that one will not be in it long, and uncertain whether one will be in it one hour. This last supposition is ours.

238 What, in the end, do you promise me (for ten years is the stake), except ten years of self-love, of trying hard to please without succeeding, besides the certain pains?

239 *Objection.*—Those who hope for their salvation are happy in that, but they have the fear of hell as a counterweight.

Answer.—Who has more reason to fear hell: the one who does not know whether there is a hell, and is certain of damnation if there is; or the one who is firmly persuaded that there is a hell, and hopes to be saved if there is?

240 —I would soon have given up pleasures, they say, if I had faith.—And I tell you: you would soon have faith if you had given

13 See Montaigne, Essays III, 11 ("Of the Lame"), and fr. 80: "Why is it that a lame man does not irritate us, but a lame mind does?"

up pleasures.—Now, it is for you to begin. If I could, I would give you faith; I cannot, and so I cannot test the truth of what you say. But you can certainly give up pleasures and test whether what I say is true.

241 *Order*.—I would be much more afraid of being mistaken, and of finding that the Christian religion is true, than of being mistaken in believing it true.

Section IV: The means of belief

Des moyens de croire
Reason, the heart and custom: "The heart has its reasons."

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[242] *Preface to the second part*: Speak of those who have dealt with this subject.

I marvel at the boldness with which these people undertake to speak of God. Addressing their discourses to the ungodly, their first chapter is to prove the Divinity from the works of nature. I would not be surprised at their undertaking if they addressed their discourses to believers; for it is certain [*that those*] who have living faith in their heart see at once that everything that exists is nothing other than the work of the God they worship. But take those in whom this light has gone out, and in whom one means to revive it: people destitute of faith and grace, who search with all their light through everything they see in nature that might lead them to this knowledge, and find only obscurity and darkness. To tell them that they have only to look at the least of the things around them and they will see God unveiled; to give them, as the whole proof of this great and important subject, the course of the moon and the planets; and to claim to have completed the proof with such a discourse —this is to give them reason to believe that the proofs of our religion are very weak. And I see, by reason and by experience, that nothing is better suited to breed contempt for it in them.

That is not how Scripture, which knows better the things that are of God, speaks of them. It says, on the contrary, that God is a hidden God; and that, since the corruption of nature, he has left men in a blindness from which they can escape only through

Jesus Christ, apart from whom all communication with God is cut off: *No one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.*[1]

This is what Scripture points to when it says in so many places that those who seek God find him. It is not light of this kind that it speaks of, like daylight at noon. No one says that those who seek daylight at noon, or water in the sea, will find it; and so the evidence of God in nature must not be of that kind. So it tells us elsewhere: *Truly you are a hidden God.*

243 It is a remarkable thing that no canonical author has ever used nature to prove God. They all aim to make people believe in him. David, Solomon, etc., never said: "There is no vacuum, therefore there is a God." They must have been cleverer than the cleverest people who came after them, all of whom have used it. This is well worth considering.

244 What! Do you not say yourself that the heavens and the birds prove God?—No.—And does your religion not say so?—No. For though this is true in a sense for some souls to whom God gives this light, it is nevertheless false for most people.

REASON, CUSTOM, INSPIRATION

Belief comes by reason, custom and inspiration; the body, like a machine, must be trained by habit.

245 There are three means of believing: reason, custom, inspiration. The Christian religion, which alone has reason, does not accept as its true children those who believe without inspiration. Not that it excludes reason and custom—on the contrary. But one must open one's mind to the proofs, confirm oneself in them by custom, and offer oneself through humiliations to inspirations, which alone can produce the true and saving effect: *Lest the cross of Christ be made void.*[2]

246 *Order.*—After the letter saying that we must seek God, write the letter about removing the obstacles, which is the discourse

1 Matt. 11:27.
2 1 Cor. 1:17.

on the machine: about preparing the machine, about seeking by reason.[3]

247 *Order*.—A letter of exhortation to a friend, to urge him to seek.—And he will reply: But what good will seeking do me? Nothing appears.—And reply to him: Do not despair.—And he would reply that he would be glad to find some light, but that, according to this very religion, even if he believed in this way it would do him no good, and so he would just as soon not seek.—And to that, reply to him: The machine.

248 *Letter showing the usefulness of proofs, by means of the machine.*—Faith is different from proof: the one is human, the other is a gift of God. *The just man lives by faith*: it is by that faith which God himself puts into the heart, of which proof is often the instrument, *faith comes by hearing*; but this faith is in the heart, and makes us say not *I know*, but *I believe*.[4]

249 To put one's hope in formalities is to be superstitious; but to refuse to submit to them is to be proud.

250 The outward must be joined to the inward to obtain anything from God; that is to say, we must kneel, pray with our lips, etc., so that proud man, who would not submit to God, may now be submitted to the creature. To expect help from this outward act is to be superstitious; to refuse to join it to the inward is to be proud.

251 Other religions, like the pagan ones, are more popular, for they consist in outward things; but they are not for clever people. A purely intellectual religion would be better suited to the clever; but it would be of no use to the common people. The Christian religion alone is suited to all, being a mixture of outward and inward. It raises the common people to the inward, and humbles the proud to the outward; and it is not complete without both, for the people must understand the spirit of the letter, and the clever must submit their minds to the letter.

252 For we must not mistake ourselves: we are as much automaton as mind. Hence the instrument by which persuasion is

3 The "machine" is the body and its habits, the automatic part of us (see fr. 252).
4 Rom. 1:17; Rom. 10:17.

brought about is not demonstration alone. How few things are demonstrated! Proofs convince only the mind; custom makes our strongest and most firmly believed proofs. It bends the automaton, which carries the mind along without its thinking about it. Who has demonstrated that there will be a tomorrow, and that we shall die? And what is more firmly believed? It is custom, then, that persuades us of it; it is custom that makes so many Christians; it is custom that makes Turks, pagans, trades, soldiers, etc. (Christians have, beyond what pagans have, the faith received in baptism.) In short, we must have recourse to custom once the mind has seen where the truth lies, in order to steep and dye ourselves in this belief, which escapes us at every hour; for to keep the proofs always present is too much trouble. We must acquire an easier belief, that of habit, which, without violence, without art, without argument, makes us believe things, and inclines all our faculties to this belief, so that our soul falls into it naturally. When we believe only by the force of conviction, and the automaton is inclined to believe the contrary, it is not enough. We must therefore make both our parts believe: the mind by reasons, which it is enough to have seen once in one's life; and the automaton by custom, and by not allowing it to incline to the contrary. *Incline my heart, O God.*[5]

Reason acts slowly, and with so many views, on so many principles, which must always be present, that at every hour it dozes off or goes astray, for want of having all its principles present. Feeling does not act so: it acts in an instant, and is always ready to act. We must therefore place our faith in feeling; otherwise it will always waver.

253 Two excesses: to exclude reason, to admit nothing but reason.

254 It is not a rare thing for people to need reproving for being too docile. It is a natural vice, like unbelief, and just as pernicious. Superstition.

255 Piety is different from superstition.

To carry piety as far as superstition is to destroy it.

5 Ps. 119:36 (Vulgate 118:36).

Heretics reproach us for this superstitious submission; to practice it is to do what they reproach us for.

Impiety: not to believe in the Eucharist, on the grounds that one does not see it.

Superstition: to believe propositions, etc.

Faith, etc.[6]

256 There are few true Christians—I mean even as regards faith. There are plenty who believe, but out of superstition; there are plenty who do not believe, but out of freethinking. Few are in between.

I do not include here those who live in true piety of conduct, nor all those who believe by a feeling of the heart.

257 There are three kinds of people: those who serve God, having found him; others who strive to seek him, not having found him; others who live without seeking him or having found him. The first are reasonable and happy; the last are fools, and unhappy; those in between are unhappy, and reasonable.

258 *Everyone fashions a God for himself.*

Distaste.[7]

259 Ordinary people have the power not to think about what they do not want to think about. "Do not think about the passages concerning the Messiah," said the Jew to his son. Our own people often do the same. This is how false religions are preserved—and even the true one, as far as many people are concerned.

But there are some who do not have the power to keep themselves from thinking in this way, and who think all the more for having been forbidden. These people rid themselves of false religions, and even of the true one, if they do not find solid arguments.

260 They hide in the crowd, and call on numbers to help them. Tumult.

6 The "propositions" are probably the five propositions attributed to Jansen and condemned by Rome in 1653.

7 Cf. Wis. 15:8–16, on men who fashion gods for themselves.

Authority.—So far from hearsay being the rule of your belief, you ought to believe nothing without putting yourself in the state of never having heard it.

It is your own agreement with yourself, and the constant voice of your reason, not of others, that ought to make you believe.

Believing is so important! A hundred contradictions would be true.

If antiquity were the rule of belief, then the ancients had no rule? If general consent, what if men had perished?

False humility, pride.

Raise the curtain. Try as you will, you must either believe, or deny, or doubt. Shall we then have no rule? We judge of animals that they do well what they do. Will there be no rule for judging men?

To deny, to believe, and to doubt well are to man what running is to the horse.

Punishment of those who sin: error.

261 Those who do not love the truth take as their pretext that it is disputed, and that a multitude deny it. And so their error comes only from their not loving the truth, or charity; and so they are not excused by it.

262 Superstition and concupiscence.

Scruples, evil desires.

Evil fear: fear that comes not from believing in God, but from doubting whether he exists or not. Good fear comes from faith; false fear comes from doubt. Good fear is joined to hope, because it is born of faith, and we hope in the God we believe in. Evil fear is joined to despair, because we fear the God in whom we have no faith. The first fear to lose him; the others fear to find him.

263 A miracle, they say, would strengthen my belief. People say this when they do not see one. Reasons which, seen from afar, seem to bound our view—but when we reach them, we begin to see beyond them again; nothing stops the restlessness of our mind. There is no rule, they say, without some exception, and no

truth so general that it does not have some side on which it fails. It is enough that it is not absolutely universal to give us grounds for applying the exception to the case at hand, and for saying: "This is not always true; so there are cases where it is not." It then remains only to show that this is one of them; and one must be very clumsy or very unlucky not to find some opening for it someday.

264 We do not tire of eating and sleeping every day, for hunger comes back, and sleepiness; without that we would tire of them. So, without hunger for spiritual things, we tire of them: hunger for justice, the eighth beatitude.[8]

265 Faith does indeed say what the senses do not say, but not the contrary of what they see. It is above them, not against them.

266 How many stars telescopes have revealed to us that did not exist for our philosophers of old! People boldly attacked Holy Scripture over the great number of the stars, saying: "There are only one thousand and twenty-two; we know it."[9]

There are plants on the earth; we see them.—From the moon we would not see them.—And on these plants there are hairs, and in these hairs tiny animals; but beyond that, nothing more. —O presumptuous man!—Compound bodies are made of elements; and the elements are not.—O presumptuous man, here is a subtle point. We must not say that there is what we do not see. —We must therefore speak like the others, but not think like them.

267 The last step of reason is to recognize that there is an infinity of things beyond it. It is merely weak if it does not go as far as knowing that.

And if natural things are beyond it, what shall we say of supernatural ones?

268 *Submission*.—We must know how to doubt where we should, to affirm where we should, and to [*submit*] where we should.

8 Matt. 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Latin *justitia*); in the usual count it is the fourth beatitude.

9 1,022 is the number of stars in Ptolemy's catalogue (2nd century AD).

Whoever does not do so does not understand the force of reason. There are [*some*] who offend against these three principles: either by affirming everything as demonstrative, for lack of understanding demonstration; or by doubting everything, for lack of knowing where we must submit; or by submitting in everything, for lack of knowing where we must judge.

269 Submission and use of reason: that is what true Christianity consists in.

270 Saint Augustine: reason would never submit if it did not judge that there are occasions when it ought to submit. It is right, then, that it should submit when it judges that it ought to submit.

271 Wisdom sends us back to childhood: *Unless you become like little children.*[10]

272 There is nothing so consistent with reason as this disavowal of reason.

273 If we submit everything to reason, our religion will have nothing mysterious or supernatural about it. If we offend the principles of reason, our religion will be absurd and ridiculous.

274 All our reasoning comes down to yielding to feeling.

But fancy is both like feeling and contrary to it, so that we cannot distinguish between these contraries. One person says that my feeling is fancy, another that his fancy is feeling. We would need a rule. Reason offers itself, but it can be bent in any direction; and so there is none.

275 Men often take their imagination for their heart; and they believe they are converted as soon as they think of being converted.

276 M. de Roannez used to say: "The reasons come to me afterward, but at first the thing pleases or shocks me without my knowing why; and yet it shocks me for the very reason that I discover only later."—But I believe, not that it shocked him for the reasons found afterward, but that those reasons are found only because it shocks.[11]

10 Matt. 18:3.

11 Artus Gouffier, duc de Roannez (1627–1696), Pascal's close friend.

THE HEART'S REASONS

The heart knows first principles and feels God directly, which reason cannot do.

277 The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know; we know this in a thousand things. I say that the heart naturally loves the universal being, and naturally loves itself, according as it gives itself to either; and it hardens itself against the one or the other, as it chooses. You have rejected the one and kept the other: is it by reason that you love yourself?

278 It is the heart that feels God, not reason. That is what faith is: God perceptible to the heart, not to reason.

279 Faith is a gift of God; do not think that we say it is a gift of reasoning. Other religions do not say this of their faith; they offered only reasoning as the way to it, and yet reasoning does not lead there.

280 How far it is from knowing God to loving him!

281 Heart, instinct, principles.

282 We know the truth not only by reason but also by the heart. It is in this latter way that we know first principles, and it is in vain that reasoning, which has no part in it, tries to fight them. The Pyrrhonists, whose only aim this is, labor at it uselessly. We know that we are not dreaming, however powerless we may be to prove it by reason. This powerlessness proves nothing but the weakness of our reason—not the uncertainty of all our knowledge, as they claim. For the knowledge of first principles, such as that there is space, time, motion, number, [*is*] as firm as any that our reasonings give us. And it is on this knowledge of the heart and of instinct that reason must rely, and on it that reason must base all its discourse. The heart feels that there are three dimensions in space, and that numbers are infinite; and reason then demonstrates that there are no two square numbers one of which is double the other. Principles are felt, propositions are concluded; and all with certainty, though by different routes. And it is as useless and as ridiculous for reason to demand

proofs of these first principles from the heart before it will agree to them, as it would be ridiculous for the heart to demand from reason a feeling of all the propositions it demonstrates before it will accept them.

This powerlessness, then, should serve only to humble reason, which would like to judge everything—not to fight our certainty, as if reason alone were capable of instructing us. Would to God, on the contrary, that we never needed it, and that we knew everything by instinct and by feeling! But nature has refused us this blessing; on the contrary, it has given us very little knowledge of this kind. All the rest can be acquired only by reasoning.

And that is why those to whom God has given religion by feeling of the heart are very fortunate, and very rightly persuaded. But [*to*] those who do not have it, we can give it only by reasoning, until God gives it to them by feeling of the heart; without that, faith is merely human, and useless for salvation.

283 *Order; against the objection that Scripture has no order*.—The heart has its order; the mind has its own, which proceeds by principle and demonstration; the heart has another. We do not prove that we ought to be loved by setting out in order the causes of love: that would be ridiculous.

Jesus Christ and Saint Paul follow the order of charity, not of the mind; for they wanted to kindle, not to instruct. Saint Augustine likewise. This order consists chiefly in digressing on each point that relates to the end, so as to keep pointing to it always.

284 Do not be surprised to see simple people believe without reasoning. God gives them love of him and hatred of themselves; he inclines their heart to believe. No one will ever believe with a belief that is profitable and a matter of faith unless God inclines the heart; and we shall believe as soon as he inclines it. And this is what David knew well: *Incline my heart to...*[12]

12 Ps. 119:36 (Vulgate 118:36), as in fr. 252: "Incline my heart ... to your testimonies."

285 Religion is suited to every kind of mind. The first kind stop at its establishment alone; and this religion is such that its establishment alone is enough to prove its truth. Others go back as far as the apostles. The best-informed go back to the beginning of the world. The angels see it better still, and from further off.

286 Those who believe without having read the Testaments do so because they have an inward disposition that is wholly holy, and what they hear said of our religion agrees with it. They feel that a God made them; they want to love only God; they want to hate only themselves. They feel that they do not have the strength for this by themselves, that they are incapable of going to God, and that unless God comes to them they are incapable of any communication with him. And they hear it said in our religion that we must love only God and hate only ourselves, but that, since we are all corrupt and incapable of God, God became man in order to unite himself with us. Nothing more is needed to persuade men who have this disposition in their heart, and who have this knowledge of their duty and of their incapacity.

287 Those we see who are Christians without knowledge of the prophecies and the proofs nonetheless judge of them as well as those who have that knowledge. They judge by the heart, as the others judge by the mind. It is God himself who inclines them to believe; and so they are very effectively persuaded.

I readily admit that one of these Christians who believe without proofs will perhaps have nothing with which to convince an unbeliever who says as much about himself. But those who know the proofs of religion will prove without difficulty that this believer is truly inspired by God, though he could not prove it himself.

For since God said in his prophecies (which are beyond doubt prophecies) that in the reign of Jesus Christ he would pour out his spirit on the nations, and that the sons, the daughters and the children of the Church would prophesy, there is no doubt

that the spirit of God is on these people, and that it is not on the others.[13]

288 Instead of complaining that God has hidden himself, you will give him thanks for having revealed himself so much; and you will give him thanks too for not having revealed himself to the proud sages, unworthy to know so holy a God.

Two kinds of people know: those who have a humbled heart and who love baseness, whatever degree of mind they have, high or low; or those who have enough mind to see the truth, whatever resistance they have to it.

289 Proof.—1. The Christian religion, by its establishment: established so strongly, so gently, though so contrary to nature. —2. The holiness, the loftiness and the humility of a Christian soul.—3. The wonders of Holy Scripture.—4. Jesus Christ in particular.—5. The apostles in particular.—6. Moses and the prophets in particular.—7. The Jewish people.—8. The prophecies.—9. Perpetuity: no other religion has perpetuity.—10. The doctrine, which accounts for everything.—11. The holiness of this law.—12. By the government of the world.

There is no doubt that after this, considering what life is and what this religion is, we should not refuse to follow the inclination to follow it, if that inclination comes into our heart; and it is certain that there is no ground for mocking those who follow it.

290 *Proofs of religion*: Morality—Doctrine—Miracles—Prophecies —Figures.[14]

13 Joel 2:28, quoted by Peter in Acts 2:17.

14 In Pascal's typology a "figure" is an Old Testament person, event or law that foreshadows Christ and the Church; "figurative" is used accordingly.

Section V: Justice and the reason of effects

La justice et la raison des effets
Law, force, custom and the sound opinions of the people.

[291] In the letter *On Injustice* could come the joke about elder sons who get everything: "My friend, you were born on this side of the mountain; so it is just that your elder brother should have everything."[1]

Why are you killing me?

[292] He lives on the other side of the water.

[293] Why are you killing me?—What! Don't you live on the other side of the water? My friend, if you lived on this side, I would be a murderer, and it would be unjust to kill you like this; but since you live on the other side, I am a brave man, and it is just.

JUSTICE AND CUSTOM

Laws change with borders and climates, so justice rests on nothing but established custom.

[294] On what will he base it, the order of the world he wants to govern? On the whim of each individual? What confusion! On justice? He does not know what it is.

Certainly, if he knew it, he would not have laid down this maxim, the most general of all those found among men: that everyone should follow the customs of his own country. The brilliance of true equity would have brought all peoples under its sway, and lawgivers would not have taken as their model,

1 Inheritance customs varied by region in France; in many, the eldest son took nearly all the estate.

instead of that constant justice, the fancies and whims of Persians and Germans. We would see it planted in every state in the world and in every age, whereas we see nothing just or unjust that does not change its quality with a change of climate. Three degrees of latitude overturn the whole of jurisprudence; a meridian decides what is true. After a few years of possession, fundamental laws change. Law has its epochs; the entry of Saturn into Leo marks for us the origin of such-and-such a crime. A fine justice, whose boundary is a river! Truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on the other.

They admit that justice does not lie in these customs, but that it resides in natural laws, known in every country. They would certainly maintain this stubbornly if the recklessness of chance, which has scattered human laws about, had hit upon even one that was universal. But the joke is that human whim has diversified itself so thoroughly that there is not one.

Theft, incest, the killing of children and of fathers—all have had their place among virtuous actions. Can anything be more ridiculous than that a man should have the right to kill me because he lives on the other side of the water, and his prince has a quarrel with mine, though I have none with him?

There are no doubt natural laws; but this fine reason, once corrupted, has corrupted everything. *Nothing is ours any longer; what we call ours is a matter of artifice. It is by decrees of the senate and votes of the people that crimes are committed. As once we suffered from vices, so now we suffer from laws.*[2]

From this confusion it comes about that one man says the essence of justice is the lawgiver's authority, another the sovereign's convenience, another present custom; and this last is the surest. Nothing, by reason alone, is just in itself; everything shifts with time. Custom makes all equity, for the sole reason that it is accepted: that is the mystical foundation of its authority. Whoever traces it back to its origin destroys it. Nothing is so faulty as those laws that correct faults. Whoever obeys them

2 Cicero, *On Ends* 5.21; Seneca, *Letters* 95.30; Tacitus, *Annals* 3.25, all quoted by Montaigne.

because they are just obeys the justice he imagines, but not the essence of the law: it is wholly contained in itself; it is law, and nothing more. Whoever sets out to examine its grounds will find them so weak and flimsy that, unless he is used to contemplating the prodigies of the human imagination, he will marvel that a single century has won it so much pomp and reverence. The art of rebellion, of overthrowing states, is to shake established customs by probing them down to their source, in order to show their lack of authority and justice. "We must," they say, "go back to the fundamental and original laws of the state, which an unjust custom has abolished." It is a sure way to lose everything; nothing will be just on those scales. Yet the people readily lend an ear to such talk.[3] They shake off the yoke as soon as they recognize it; and the great profit from it, to the ruin of the people and of those inquisitive examiners of accepted customs. That is why the wisest of lawgivers said that, for men's good, they must often be deceived; and another good politician: *Since he does not know the truth that would set him free, it is expedient that he be deceived.* The people must not feel the truth of the usurpation: it was introduced long ago without reason, and has become reasonable. We must make it be regarded as authentic and eternal, and hide its beginning, if we do not want it soon to come to an end.[4]

295 *Mine, yours.* "This dog is mine," said those poor children; "that is my place in the sun."—There is the beginning and the image of the usurpation of the whole earth.

296 When it is a question of deciding whether to make war and kill so many men, to condemn so many Spaniards to death, it is one man alone who decides, and an interested party at that. It ought to be a disinterested third party.

297 *Of true right.* We no longer have any. If we had, we would not take as our rule of justice that everyone should follow the

3 The verb Pascal uses, *fronder*, recalls the Fronde, the revolts against royal government in France in 1648–53.

4 The lawgiver is Plato (*Republic* 3), as cited by Montaigne; the Latin is adapted from Augustine, *City of God* 4.27.

customs of his own country. It is there that, unable to find what is just, men have found what is strong, etc.[5]

JUSTICE AND FORCE

Unable to make justice strong, men have made force just, for the sake of peace.

298 *Justice, force.*—It is just that what is just should be followed; it is necessary that what is strongest should be followed. Justice without force is powerless; force without justice is tyrannical. Justice without force is challenged, because there are always wicked men; force without justice is condemned. We must therefore put justice and force together; and to do this, make what is just strong, or what is strong just.

Justice is open to dispute; force is easily recognized and beyond dispute. So it has not been possible to give force to justice, because force contradicted justice and said that it was unjust, and said that it was force itself that was just. And so, being unable to make what is just strong, we have made what is strong just.

299 The only universal rules are the laws of the country in ordinary matters, and the majority in others. Where does this come from? From the force that lies in them. And that is why kings, who have force from elsewhere, do not follow the majority of their ministers.

No doubt equality of goods is just. But, being unable to make obedience to justice a matter of force, men have made obedience to force a matter of justice. Unable to fortify justice, they have justified force, so that the just and the strong might be together, and there might be peace, which is the sovereign good.

300 "When a strong man, armed, guards his goods, what he possesses is at peace."[6]

5 Echoing Cicero, *On Duties* 3.17: "Of true right and genuine justice we possess no solid and exact likeness."
6 Luke 11:21.

[301] Why do we follow the majority? Is it because they have more reason? No, but more force.

Why do we follow ancient laws and ancient opinions? Is it because they are the soundest? No, but because they are unique, and remove from us the root of diversity.

[302] ... It is the effect of force, not of custom. For those capable of inventing are rare; the strongest in number want only to follow, and refuse glory to the inventors who seek it through their inventions. And if these persist in wanting to obtain it, and in despising those who do not invent, the others will call them ridiculous names, would give them a beating. So let no one pride himself on this subtlety, or let him be content within himself.

[303] Force is the queen of the world, and not opinion.—But opinion is what uses force.—It is force that makes opinion. Softness is fine, in our opinion. Why? Because whoever wants to dance on the tightrope will be alone; and I will form a stronger faction of people who will say that it is not fine.

[304] The cords that [*bind*] the respect of some toward others are, in general, cords of necessity. For there must be different degrees, since all men want to dominate, and not all can, but some can.

Let us imagine, then, that we see them beginning to form. There is no doubt that they will fight until the stronger party oppresses the weaker, and at last there is a dominant party. But once this is settled, the masters, who do not want the war to continue, ordain that the force in their hands shall pass on as they please: some entrust it to election by the people, others to succession by birth, etc.

And this is where imagination begins to play its part. Until then, power forces the fact; here it is force that is held, through imagination, in a certain party—in France the nobles, in Switzerland the commoners, etc.

These cords, then, that bind respect to this or that person in particular, are cords of imagination.

305 The Swiss are offended at being called noblemen, and prove their common descent in order to be judged worthy of high office.

306 Since duchies, kingships and magistracies are real and necessary (because force rules everything), they exist everywhere and always. But because it is only fancy that makes this man or that one hold them, this is not constant; it is liable to vary, etc.

307 The chancellor is solemn and decked in finery, for his position is false; not so the king: he has force, he has no need of imagination. Judges, physicians, etc., have only imagination.

308 The custom of seeing kings accompanied by guards, drums, officers, and all the things that bend the machine toward respect and terror, [*makes*] their face, when it is sometimes alone and without these trappings, impress respect and terror on their subjects; for in our thought we do not separate their persons from the retinues we usually see joined to them. And the world, not knowing that this effect comes from this custom, believes it comes from a natural force; hence those words: "The mark of the Divinity is stamped on his face," etc.

309 *Justice*.—As fashion makes what is pleasing, so it makes what is just.

310 King and tyrant.

I too will keep my thoughts at the back of my mind.

I will be on my guard on every journey.

Established greatness, established respect.

The pleasure of the great is to be able to make people happy.

What is proper to wealth is to be given freely.

What is proper to each thing must be sought. What is proper to power is to protect.

When force attacks pretense: when a common soldier takes the square cap of a first president and sends it flying out of the window.

310 bis Obedience—of fancy.

311 The empire founded on opinion and imagination reigns for a time, and this empire is gentle and voluntary; the empire of

force reigns always. Thus opinion is like the queen of the world, but force is its tyrant.

312 Justice is what is established; and so all our established laws will necessarily be held to be just without being examined, since they are established.

313 *Sound opinions of the people.*—The greatest of evils is civil war. It is certain if we try to reward merit, for all will say they deserve it. The evil to be feared from a fool who succeeds by right of birth is neither so great nor so certain.

314 God created everything for himself; he has given the power to punish and to do good for himself.

You can apply it to God or to yourself. If to God, the Gospel is the rule. If to yourself, you will be taking the place of God. As God is surrounded by people full of charity, who ask him for the goods of charity that are in his power, so...

Know yourself, then, and know that you are only a king of concupiscence, and take the ways of concupiscence.

THE REASON OF EFFECTS

Seemingly foolish popular customs, like honoring rank and dress, turn out to be well founded.

315 *The reason of effects.*—This is admirable: they would not have me honor a man dressed in brocade and followed by seven or eight lackeys! Why, he will have me thrashed if I do not bow to him. That coat is a force. It is just the same as with one horse well harnessed compared with another! Montaigne is amusing in not seeing what difference there is, and in marveling that people find one, and asking the reason for it. "Truly," he says, "where does it come from," etc.[7]

316 *Sound opinions of the people.*—Dressing finely is not altogether vain; for it shows that a great number of people work for you. It shows by your hair that you have a valet, a perfumer,

7 "The reason of effects" is Pascal's label for explaining why seemingly foolish popular behavior is well founded. Montaigne, *Essays* 1.42, "Of the inequality among us."

etc.; by your collar, the thread, the lace, etc. Now it is not mere surface, nor mere harness, to have many arms. The more arms one has, the stronger one is. To dress finely is to show one's force.

317 Respect means: Put yourself out. This seems vain, but it is very just; for it is to say: I would certainly put myself out if you needed it, since I do so when it is of no use to you.—Besides, respect serves to distinguish the great. Now if respect consisted in sitting in an armchair, we would be respecting everyone, and so would make no distinction; but by putting ourselves out, we make the distinction very well.

317 bis *Vanity*. Respect means: Put yourself out.

318 He has four lackeys.

319 How right it was to distinguish men by externals rather than by inner qualities! Which of us two shall go first? Who shall give way to the other? The less able? But I am as able as he; we shall have to fight over it. He has four lackeys, and I have only one: that is visible; one has only to count. It is for me to give way, and I am a fool if I dispute it. By this means we are at peace, which is the greatest of goods.

320 To steer a ship, we do not choose the passenger from the best family.

320 bis The most unreasonable things in the world become the most reasonable because of men's disorder. What could be less reasonable than to choose the eldest son of a queen to govern a state? To steer a boat, we do not choose the passenger from the best family. Such a law would be ridiculous and unjust. But because men are so, and always will be, it becomes reasonable and just. For whom shall we choose? The most virtuous and the most able? At once we come to blows: each claims to be that most virtuous and most able man. Let us then attach this quality to something indisputable. It is the king's eldest son: that is clear, there is no dispute. Reason can do no better, for civil war is the greatest of evils.

321 Children, astonished, see their companions respected.

322 What a great advantage nobility is: from the age of eighteen it puts a man in the running, known and respected, as another might have earned at fifty. That is thirty years gained without effort.

WHAT IS THE SELF?

We never love a person's self, only borrowed and perishable qualities.

323 What is the *self*?

A man stands at the window to watch the passers-by; if I pass by, can I say that he stood there to see me? No, for he is not thinking of me in particular. But does someone who loves a person for her beauty love that person? No, for smallpox, which will kill the beauty without killing the person, will make him love her no longer.

And if someone loves me for my judgment, for my memory, does he love *me*? No, for I can lose these qualities without losing myself. Where, then, is this *self*, if it is neither in the body nor in the soul? And how can one love the body or the soul except for these qualities, which are not what makes the self, since they are perishable? For would one love the substance of a person's soul in the abstract, whatever qualities were in it? That cannot be, and would be unjust. So we never love anyone, but only qualities.

Let us no longer mock, then, those who have themselves honored for their posts and offices; for we love no one except for borrowed qualities.

324 The people have very sound opinions: for example,

1. in having chosen diversion and hunting rather than poetry. The half-learned mock this, and triumph in showing the folly of the world by it; but for a reason they do not grasp, the people are right;

2. in having distinguished men by externals, such as nobility or wealth. The world again triumphs in showing how unreason-

able this is; but it is very reasonable—cannibals laugh at a child king;[8]

3. in taking offense at receiving a slap in the face, or in desiring glory so much. But this is very desirable, because of the other essential goods attached to it; and a man who has received a slap without resenting it is overwhelmed with insults and hardships;

4. working for what is uncertain; going to sea; crossing on a plank.

325 Montaigne is wrong. Custom should be followed only because it is custom, and not because it is reasonable or just; but the people follow it for the sole reason that they believe it is just. Otherwise they would no longer follow it, even though it were custom; for we are willing to be subject only to reason or justice. Without that, custom would pass for tyranny; but the rule of reason and justice is no more tyrannical than that of delight: these are principles natural to man.

It would therefore be good for people to obey laws and customs because they are laws; for them to know that there are no true and just ones to introduce, that we know nothing about it, and that therefore we must simply follow those that are accepted. In this way we would never abandon them. But the people are not open to this doctrine; and so, since they believe that truth can be found and that it lies in laws and customs, they believe them, and take their antiquity as a proof of their truth (and not merely of their authority without truth). So they obey them; but they are liable to revolt as soon as they are shown that the laws are worth nothing—which can be shown of all of them, if they are looked at from a certain angle.

326 *Injustice*.—It is dangerous to tell the people that the laws are not just, for they obey them only because they believe them just. That is why they must be told at the same time that they must obey them because they are laws, just as they must obey their superiors, not because they are just, but because they are super-

8 Montaigne, *Essays* 1.31, "Of cannibals": Brazilians brought to Rouen marveled that grown men obeyed a boy king (Charles IX).

iors. In this way all sedition is forestalled, if this can be made understood, and [*what*] the definition of justice properly [*is*].

327 The world judges things well, for it is in natural ignorance, which is man's true seat. The sciences have two extremes that meet. The first is the pure natural ignorance in which all men find themselves at birth. The other extreme is the one reached by great souls who, having run through everything men can know, find that they know nothing, and meet again in the same ignorance from which they set out; but it is a learned ignorance that knows itself. Those in between, who have left natural ignorance and have not been able to reach the other, have some smattering of this self-satisfied knowledge and play the expert. These people disturb the world and judge everything badly. The people and the truly able make up the way of the world; those others despise it and are despised. They judge everything badly, and the world judges it well.

328 *The reason of effects.*—Continual reversal from for to against.

We have shown, then, that man is vain, by the esteem he has for things that are not essential; and all these opinions are demolished. We have shown next that all these opinions are very sound, and that therefore, since all these vanities are very well founded, the people are not as vain as they are said to be. And so we have demolished the opinion that demolished the people's.

But now we must demolish this last proposition, and show that it remains true that the people are vain, although their opinions are sound: because they do not feel their truth where it lies, and, placing it where it does not, their opinions are always very false and very unsound.

329 *The reason of effects.*—Man's weakness is the cause of so many beauties that we set up, such as knowing how to play the lute well.

It is an evil only because of our weakness.

330 The power of kings is founded on the reason and on the folly of the people, and much more on the folly. The greatest and most important thing in the world has weakness for its founda-

tion; and this foundation is wonderfully sure, for nothing is more [*sure*] than this: that the people will be weak. What is founded on sound reason is very ill founded, like the esteem of wisdom.

331 We imagine Plato and Aristotle only in the long gowns of pedants. They were decent men, and like others laughed with their friends; and when they amused themselves by writing their *Laws* and their *Politics*, they did it in play. It was the least philosophical and least serious part of their lives; the most philosophical part was living simply and quietly. If they wrote on politics, it was as if to lay down rules for an asylum full of fools; and if they pretended to speak of it as a great matter, it was because they knew that the fools they were addressing thought they were kings and emperors. They entered into their principles in order to moderate their folly as harmlessly as possible.

TYRANNY

Tyranny is seeking in one order what belongs only to another, such as fear for beauty.

332 Tyranny consists in the desire for domination, universal and outside its own order.

Various chambers—of the strong, the handsome, good minds, the pious—each of which reigns in its own house, not elsewhere. And sometimes they meet, and the strong and the handsome fight, foolishly, over which shall be master of the other; for their mastery is of different kinds. They do not understand one another, and their fault is wanting to reign everywhere. Nothing can do that, not even force: it achieves nothing in the kingdom of the learned; it is master only of outward actions.

Tyranny.—... So these statements are false and tyrannical: "I am handsome, so people must fear me."—"I am strong, so people must love me."—"I am..."

Tyranny is wanting to have by one route what can be had only by another. We render different duties to different merits:

the duty of love to charm; the duty of fear to force; the duty of belief to knowledge.

These duties must be rendered; it is unjust to refuse them, and unjust to demand others. And likewise it is false and tyrannical to say: "He is not strong, so I will not esteem him; he is not clever, so I will not fear him."

333 Have you never seen people who, to complain of how little you think of them, parade before you the example of people of rank who esteem them? I would answer them: "Show me the merit by which you charmed those persons, and I will esteem you likewise."

334 *The reason of effects.*—Concupiscence and force are the sources of all our actions: concupiscence produces the voluntary ones; force, the involuntary.

335 *The reason of effects.*—It is true, then, to say that everyone is under an illusion: for although the opinions of the people are sound, they are not sound in their heads, for they think the truth is where it is not. The truth is indeed in their opinions, but not at the point where they imagine it. It is true that noblemen must be honored, but not because birth is a real advantage, etc.

336 *The reason of effects.*—One must have a thought at the back of one's mind, and judge everything by it, while talking meanwhile like the people.

337 *The reason of effects.*—Gradation. The people honor persons of high birth. The half-clever despise them, saying that birth is not an advantage of the person but of chance. The clever honor them, not for the people's reason but for the thought at the back of their mind. The devout, who have more zeal than knowledge, despise them in spite of the consideration that makes the clever honor them, because they judge by a new light that piety gives them. But perfect Christians honor them by another, higher light. Thus opinions go on succeeding one another, from for to against, according to the light one has.

338 True Christians nevertheless obey follies; not that they respect follies, but the order of God, who, to punish men, has made them subject to these follies: *Every creature was made sub-*

ject to vanity. It shall be set free. So Saint Thomas explains the passage in Saint James on preferring the rich: that if they do not do it with God in view, they depart from the order of religion.[9]

9 Rom. 8:20–21; Jas. 2:1–4; Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 63, a. 3.

Section VI: The philosophers

Les philosophes
The thinking reed, Stoics and Pyrrhonists, the greatness and misery of man.

339 I can well conceive of a man without hands, feet, head (for it is only experience that teaches us that the head is more necessary than the feet). But I cannot conceive of man without thought: he would be a stone or a brute.

339 bis What is it in us that feels pleasure? Is it the hand? Is it the arm? Is it the flesh? Is it the blood? We shall see that it must be something immaterial.

340 The arithmetical machine produces effects that come closer to thought than anything animals do; but it does nothing that would allow us to say it has will, as animals do.[1]

341 The story of the pike and the frog of Liancourt: they always do it, and never otherwise, nor anything else that shows mind.[2]

342 If an animal did by mind what it does by instinct, and if it spoke by mind what it speaks by instinct, in hunting and in warning its companions that the prey is found or lost, it would surely also speak about things it cares about more, and say, for instance: "Gnaw through this cord that is hurting me, and that I cannot reach."

343 The parrot's beak, which it wipes although it is clean.

344 Instinct and reason, marks of two natures.

1 Pascal's own calculating machine, which he designed and built in the 1640s.
2 Liancourt was the estate of the duc de Liancourt, a friend of Port-Royal; the anecdote itself is lost.

345 Reason commands us far more imperiously than a master; for in disobeying the one we are unhappy, and in disobeying the other we are fools.

346 Thought makes the greatness of man.

THE THINKING REED

Man is the weakest thing in nature, but thought makes him nobler than the universe that kills him.

347 *H. 3.* Man is only a reed, the weakest in nature; but he is a thinking reed. The whole universe need not arm itself to crush him: a vapor, a drop of water, is enough to kill him. But even if the universe were to crush him, man would still be nobler than what kills him, because he knows that he dies, and knows the advantage the universe has over him; the universe knows nothing of this.[3]

All our dignity, then, consists in thought. It is from there that we must raise ourselves, and not from space and time, which we could never fill. Let us work, then, at thinking well: that is the principle of morality.

348 *Thinking reed.*—It is not from space that I must seek my dignity, but from the ordering of my thought. I would have no more by owning land. Through space the universe comprehends me and swallows me up like a point; through thought, I comprehend it.

349 *Immateriality of the soul.*—Philosophers who have mastered their passions: what matter could have done that?

350 *Stoics.*—They conclude that we can always do what we can sometimes do; and that, since the desire for glory makes those it possesses do something well, others will be able to do it too.—These are feverish movements, which health cannot imitate.

Epictetus concludes, from the fact that there are steadfast Christians, that everyone can be so.[4]

3 *H.* is a classification mark in Pascal's manuscript, probably for *Homme* (Man).
4 Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.7, where he cites the fearlessness of the "Galileans."

351 Those great efforts of the mind, which the soul sometimes attains, are things in which it does not remain. It only leaps up to them—not as onto a throne, forever, but for an instant only.

352 What a man's virtue can do must not be measured by his efforts, but by his ordinary conduct.

353 I do not admire the excess of one virtue, such as valor, unless I see at the same time the excess of the opposite virtue, as in Epaminondas, who had extreme valor and extreme kindness. For otherwise it is not rising, it is falling. We do not show our greatness by being at one extreme, but by touching both at once and filling all the space between. But perhaps it is only a sudden movement of the soul from one of these extremes to the other, and in fact it is only ever at one point, like a whirled firebrand. So be it; but at least this shows the soul's agility, if not its extent.[5]

354 Man's nature is not to go forward all the time; it has its comings and goings.

Fever has its chills and its burnings; and the cold shows the height of the fever's heat as well as the heat itself.

Men's inventions from age to age go the same way. So too with the goodness and the malice of the world in general: *Change is mostly pleasing to the great.*[6]

355 Continuous eloquence bores.

Princes and kings sometimes play. They are not always on their thrones; they get bored there. Greatness has to be left in order to be felt. Continuity palls in everything; cold is pleasant for getting warm.

Nature proceeds by advances, *going and returning*. It goes and comes back, then goes further, then half as far, then further than ever, etc.

The tide of the sea goes like this; the sun seems to move like this:

356 The body is nourished little by little. Fullness of food and little substance.

5 Epaminondas: Theban general of the 4th century BC, praised by Montaigne as the most excellent of men.

6 Horace, *Odes* 3.29.13, quoted by Montaigne.

357 When we try to pursue the virtues to their extremes on either side, vices appear that creep in imperceptibly, along their imperceptible paths, on the side of the infinitely small; and vices appear in crowds on the side of the infinitely great, so that we lose ourselves in the vices and no longer see the virtues. We end up finding fault with perfection itself.

358 Man is neither angel nor beast, and the misfortune is that whoever would play the angel plays the beast.

359 We do not keep ourselves in virtue by our own strength, but by the counterweight of two opposing vices, as we stay upright between two contrary winds. Take away one of these vices, and we fall into the other.

360 What the Stoics propose is so difficult and so vain!

The Stoics lay it down: all those who are not at the highest degree of wisdom are equally foolish and vicious, like those who are two inches under water.

361 *The sovereign good. Dispute over the sovereign good.—That you may be content with yourself and with the goods that spring from you.* There is a contradiction, for in the end they advise us to kill ourselves. Oh! what a happy life, which we are rid of as we would be rid of the plague![7]

362 *By decrees of the Senate and votes of the people…*

Ask for similar passages.[8]

363 *Crimes are committed by decrees of the Senate and votes of the people.* Sen., 588.

Nothing can be said so absurd that it is not said by one of the philosophers. Divin.

Bound to certain fixed opinions, they are forced to defend what they do not approve. Cic.

As in all things, so in letters too we suffer from excess. Senec.

What best befits each man is what is most his own. Sen. 588.

These were the ways nature first gave. Georg.

7 The Latin is from Seneca, Letters to Lucilius 20.8; "they" are the Stoics.

8 From Seneca, Letters 95.30, quoted in full in the next fragment.

Few letters are needed for a sound mind.[9]

Even if a thing is not shameful, it is still not free of shame when the multitude praises it.[10]

That is my way; you do whatever you need to do. Ter.

364 *For it is rare for anyone to respect himself enough.*

So many gods clamoring around a single head.

Nothing is more shameful than to let assertion run ahead of knowledge. Cic.

Nor am I ashamed, as they are, to admit that I do not know what I do not know.

Better for them not to begin.[11]

365 *Thought.*—All man's dignity lies in thought. But what is this thought? How foolish it is!

Thought, then, is an admirable and incomparable thing by its nature. It would have to have strange defects to be contemptible; but it has defects such that nothing is more ridiculous. How great it is by its nature! How base by its defects!

366 The mind of this sovereign judge of the world is not so independent that it cannot be disturbed by the first din made around it. It does not take the roar of a cannon to hinder his thoughts: the creak of a weathervane or a pulley is enough. Do not be surprised if he is not reasoning well just now: a fly is buzzing in his ears. That is enough to make him incapable of good counsel. If you want him to be able to find the truth, drive away that creature which holds his reason in check and disturbs that mighty intelligence which governs cities and kingdoms. What a fine god we have here! *O most ridiculous hero!*

367 The power of flies: they win battles, keep our soul from acting, eat our body.

368 When we are told that heat is nothing but the movement of certain globules, and light the *tendency to recede* that we feel, it astonishes us. What! that pleasure should be nothing but the

9 "Divin." is Cicero's On Divination and "Georg." Virgil's Georgics; the last line is from Seneca, Letters 106.12. Pascal found most of these in Montaigne.
10 Cicero, On Ends 2.15, quoted by Montaigne.
11 Sources, mostly via Montaigne: Quintilian 10.7; Seneca the Elder, Suasoriae 1; Cicero, Academics 1.12; Cicero, Tusculan Disputations 1.25; Seneca, Letters 72.

ballet of the spirits? We had formed so different an idea of it! And these feelings seem to us so remote from those others which we say are the same as the ones we compare them with! The feeling of fire, that warmth which affects us in a way quite unlike touch, the reception of sound and light—all this seems mysterious to us, and yet it is as crude as a blow from a stone.[12] It is true that the smallness of the spirits entering the pores touches different nerves, but they are still nerves being touched.

369 Memory is necessary for all the operations of reason.

370 [Chance gives thoughts, and chance takes them away: there is no art for keeping them or for acquiring them.

A thought escaped: I meant to write it down; instead I write that it escaped me.]

[Digression].

371 [When I was little, I used to put my book away; and because it sometimes happened that I... when I thought I had put it away, I distrusted...]

372 As I write down my thought, it sometimes escapes me. But that reminds me of my weakness, which I forget at every hour; and this teaches me as much as my forgotten thought, for my only aim is to know my nothingness.

PYRRHONISM

Pascal writes without order to show that man cannot find certain truth or justice.

373 *Pyrrhonism.*—I shall write my thoughts here without order, though perhaps not in aimless confusion. This is the true order, and it will always show my purpose by its very disorder. I should be doing my subject too much honor if I treated it in order, since I want to show that it is incapable of order.

374 What astonishes me most is to see that not everyone is astonished at his own weakness. People act in earnest. Each fol-

12 The Latin *conatus recedendi* is Descartes's term for the tendency of particles to move away from a center, by which he explained light; the "spirits" are the animal spirits, fine fluids thought to run through the nerves.

lows his station, not because it is in fact good to follow it, since that is the fashion, but as if each knew for certain where reason and justice lie. They find themselves deceived at every turn; and, with a comical humility, they think it is their own fault, and not the fault of the art they always boast of possessing. But it is good that there are so many such people in the world who are not Pyrrhonists, for the glory of Pyrrhonism. It shows that man is quite capable of the most extravagant opinions, since he is capable of believing that he is not in this natural and inevitable weakness, and of believing that he is, on the contrary, in natural wisdom.

Nothing strengthens Pyrrhonism more than the fact that there are some who are not Pyrrhonists: if all were, they would be wrong.

375 [I spent a long part of my life believing that there was a justice, and in that I was not mistaken; for there is one, insofar as God has chosen to reveal it to us. But I did not take it that way, and that is where I was mistaken; for I believed that our justice was essentially just, and that I had the means to know it and judge it. But I found myself so often lacking in right judgment that at last I came to distrust myself, and then others. I saw all countries and all men changing. And so, after many changes of judgment about true justice, I came to know that our nature was nothing but continual change, and I have not changed since; and if I did change, I would confirm my opinion.

The Pyrrhonist Arcesilaus, who became a dogmatist again.][13]

376 This sect is strengthened by its enemies more than by its friends; for man's weakness is far more apparent in those who do not know it than in those who do.

377 Talk of humility is matter for pride to the vainglorious, and for humility to the humble. So talk of Pyrrhonism is matter for assertion to the assertive. Few speak of humility humbly; few of chastity chastely; few of Pyrrhonism doubtingly. We are nothing

13 Arcesilaus (c. 316–241 BC) turned Plato's Academy to skepticism; some ancient writers claimed he secretly taught Plato's doctrines.

but lies, duplicity, contradiction; we hide and disguise ourselves from ourselves.

[378] *Pyrrhonism*.—Too much mind is accused of madness, just like too little. Nothing but the middle is good. It is the majority that has established this, and it bites anyone who escapes from it at either end. I shall not be stubborn about it; I am quite willing to be put there, and I refuse to be at the low end, not because it is low but because it is an end; for I would equally refuse to be put at the top. To leave the middle is to leave humanity. The greatness of the human soul consists in knowing how to keep to it; so far is greatness from lying in leaving it that it lies in not leaving it.

[379] It is not good to be too free. It is not good to have everything one needs.

[380] All the good maxims are already in the world; we only fail to apply them. For example, no one doubts that we must risk our lives to defend the public good, and many do so; but for religion, no.

There must be inequality among men, that is true; but once that is granted, the door is open not only to the highest domination but to the highest tyranny.

The mind must be relaxed a little; but that opens the door to the greatest excesses.

Let the limits be marked. There are no boundaries in things: laws try to set some, and the mind cannot bear it.

[381] If one is too young, one does not judge well; too old, the same.

If one does not think about it enough, or thinks about it too much, one grows stubborn and infatuated with it.

If one looks at one's work immediately after doing it, one is still wholly prejudiced in its favor; if too long afterward, one can [*no*] longer enter into it.

So with pictures seen from too far—and from too near. There is only one indivisible point that is the true place: the others are too near, too far, too high or too low. Perspective fixes it in the art of painting; but in truth and in morals, who will fix it?

382 When everything is moving equally, nothing seems to move, as on a ship. When all are heading into excess, no one seems to be doing so. The one who stops shows up the headlong rush of the others, like a fixed point.

383 Those who live in disorder tell those who live in order that it is they who are straying from nature, and think they are following it themselves: just as those on a ship think that those on the shore are moving away. The language is the same on all sides. One needs a fixed point to judge. The harbor judges those on a ship; but where shall we find a harbor in morals?

384 Contradiction is a poor sign of truth. Many certain things are contradicted; many false ones pass without contradiction. Contradiction is no sign of falsehood, nor is the absence of contradiction a sign of truth.

385 *Pyrrhonism*.—Each thing here is partly true, partly false. Essential truth is not like that: it is wholly pure and wholly true; this mixture dishonors and destroys it. Nothing is purely true; and so nothing is true, if we mean the purely true. It will be said that it is true that homicide is wrong. Yes, for we know evil and falsehood well. But what will be said to be good? Chastity? I say no, for the world would come to an end.—Marriage? No: continence is better.—Not to kill? No, for the disorders would be horrible, and the wicked would kill all the good.—To kill? No, for that destroys nature. —We have truth and goodness only in part, and mixed with evil and falsehood.

386 If we dreamed the same thing every night, it would affect us as much as the objects we see every day. And if a craftsman were sure of dreaming every night, for twelve hours on end, that he was king, I believe he would be almost as happy as a king who dreamed every night, for twelve hours on end, that he was a craftsman.

If we dreamed every night that we were pursued by enemies and tormented by these painful phantoms, and spent every day in various occupations, as when we are traveling, we would suffer almost as much as if it were real, and we would dread sleep, as we dread waking when we fear that we are actually about to

meet such misfortunes. And indeed it would do much the same harm as reality.

But because dreams are all different, and even a single one keeps varying, what we see in them affects us much less than what we see awake. This is because of continuity—which is not, however, so continuous and even that it does not change too, only less abruptly, except on rare occasions, as when we travel; and then we say: I feel as if I were dreaming. For life is a dream, a little less inconstant.

387 [It may be that there are true demonstrations; but that is not certain. So this shows nothing except that it is not certain that everything is uncertain—to the glory of Pyrrhonism.]

388 *Good sense.*—They are forced to say: You are not acting in good faith; we are not asleep, etc.—How I love to see this proud reason humbled and pleading! For that is not the language of a man whose right is disputed and who defends it weapon in hand, by force. He does not bother saying that the other is not acting in good faith; he punishes that bad faith by force.

389 Ecclesiastes shows that man without God is ignorant of everything and in inevitable unhappiness; for to will and not be able is to be unhappy. Now he wants to be happy, and sure of some truth; and yet he can neither know, nor stop desiring to know. He cannot even doubt.

390 My God! what foolish talk this is: Would God have made the world in order to damn it? Would he demand so much of people so weak? etc.—Pyrrhonism is the remedy for this evil, and will bring this vanity down.

391 *Conversation.*—Big words: Religion, I deny it.

Conversation.—Pyrrhonism serves Religion.

392 *Against Pyrrhonism.*—[... It is a strange thing, then, that we cannot define these things without obscuring them. We speak of them with complete assurance.] We suppose that everyone conceives them in the same way; but we suppose it quite gratuitously, for we have no proof of it. I see clearly that these words are applied on the same occasions, and that every time two men see a body change its place, they both express their sight of the

same object by the same word, each saying that it has moved. And from this conformity of application we draw a strong conjecture that there is a conformity of ideas. But this is not absolutely convincing, with the ultimate conviction, although one would do well to wager on the affirmative, since we know that the same conclusions are often drawn from different suppositions.

That is enough at least to confuse the matter. Not that it absolutely extinguishes the natural clarity that assures us of these things—the Academics would have wagered so; but it dims it, and troubles the dogmatists, to the glory of the Pyrrhonian cabal, which consists in this ambiguous ambiguity, and in a certain doubtful obscurity, from which our doubts cannot take away all the clarity, nor our natural lights drive out all the darkness.[14]

393 It is an amusing thing to consider that there are people in the world who, having renounced all the laws of God and of nature, have made laws for themselves which they obey exactly: for example, the soldiers of Muhammad, thieves, heretics, etc. And so with logicians.

It seems that their license ought to have no limits or barriers at all, seeing that they have overstepped so many that are so just and so holy.

394 All their principles are true—the Pyrrhonists', the Stoics', the atheists', etc. But their conclusions are false, because the opposite principles are true as well.

395 *Instinct, Reason*.—We have an inability to prove that no dogmatism can overcome. We have an idea of truth that no Pyrrhonism can overcome.

396 Two things teach man his whole nature: instinct and experience.

14 The Academics were the skeptical philosophers of Plato's later Academy, such as Arcesilaus and Carneades.

GREATNESS IN WRETCHEDNESS

Man is great because he knows he is wretched, like a king who has lost his throne.

397 Man's greatness is great in that he knows himself to be wretched. A tree does not know itself to be wretched.

So to know [*oneself*] wretched is to be wretched; but to know that one is wretched is to be great.

398 All these very miseries prove his greatness. They are the miseries of a great lord, the miseries of a dispossessed king.

399 There is no wretchedness without feeling: a ruined house is not wretched. Only man is wretched: *I am the man who sees*.[15]

400 *Greatness of man*.—We have so great an idea of the soul of man that we cannot bear to be despised by it, or not to be esteemed by a soul; and all the happiness of men consists in this esteem.

401 *Glory*.—Beasts do not admire one another. A horse does not admire its companion. Not that there is no rivalry between them in a race, but it has no consequence; for, back in the stable, the heaviest and worst-built does not give up its oats to the other, as men want others to do for them. Their virtue is satisfied with itself.

402 Greatness of man even in his concupiscence: that he has been able to draw from it an admirable order, and to make of it a picture of charity.

403 *Greatness*.—The reasons of effects show the greatness of man, in having drawn so fine an order from concupiscence.

404 Man's greatest baseness is the pursuit of glory, but that is the very greatest mark of his excellence. For whatever possessions he has on earth, whatever health and essential comfort, he is not satisfied unless he is esteemed by men. He rates human reason so highly that, whatever advantage he has on earth, if he is not also advantageously placed in human reason, he is not content. It is the finest place in the world; nothing can turn him

15 Lam. 3:1: "I am the man who has seen affliction."

from this desire, and it is the most indelible quality of the human heart.

And those who most despise men, and put them on a level with the beasts, still want to be admired and believed by them, and contradict themselves by their own feeling. Their nature, which is stronger than anything, convinces them of man's greatness more strongly than reason convinces them of his baseness.

405 *Contradiction.*—Pride, counterbalancing all miseries: either he hides his miseries, or, if he reveals them, he glories in knowing them.

406 Pride counterbalances and outweighs all miseries. Here is a strange monster, and a very visible aberration. There he is, fallen from his place, anxiously seeking it. That is what all men do. Let us see who will have found it.

407 When malice has reason on its side, it grows proud and displays reason in all its luster.

When austerity or a severe choice has not succeeded in reaching the true good, and one must go back to following nature, it grows proud of this return.

408 Evil is easy; there is an infinite amount of it. Good is almost unique. But a certain kind of evil is as hard to find as what is called good, and this particular evil is often passed off as good by that mark. It even takes an extraordinary greatness of soul to attain it, just as it does to attain good.

409 *The greatness of man.*—The greatness of man is so visible that it can be drawn even from his wretchedness. For what is nature in animals we call wretchedness in man; by which we recognize that, his nature being now like that of the animals, he has fallen from a better nature which was once his own. For who finds himself unhappy at not being a king, except a dispossessed king? Did anyone think Aemilius Paulus unhappy at no longer being consul? On the contrary, everyone thought he was happy to have been consul, because his condition was not to be consul forever.[16] But Perseus was thought so unhappy at no

16 Aemilius Paulus: Roman general and consul who defeated Perseus of Macedon at Pydna in 168 BC.

longer being king, because his condition was to be king forever, that people found it strange that he could bear to live. Who finds himself unhappy at having only one mouth? And who will not find himself unhappy at having only one eye? Perhaps no one has ever thought of grieving at not having three eyes, but one is inconsolable at having none.[17]

410 *Perseus, king of Macedon, Aemilius Paulus.*—Perseus was reproached for not killing himself.

411 Despite the sight of all our miseries, which touch us, which have us by the throat, we have an instinct we cannot suppress, which lifts us up.

412 Civil war in man between reason and the passions.

If he had only reason, without passions...

If he had only the passions, without reason...

But having both, he cannot be without war, since he can be at peace with the one only by being at war with the other. So he is always divided and opposed to himself.

413 This inner war of reason against the passions has split those who wanted peace into two sects. Some wanted to renounce the passions and become gods; the others wanted to renounce reason and become brute beasts: Des Barreaux. But neither side could do it. Reason always remains, denouncing the baseness and injustice of the passions and troubling the repose of those who give themselves up to them; and the passions are always alive in those who want to renounce them.[18]

414 Men are so necessarily mad that not to be mad would be to be mad by another twist of madness.

415 The nature of man can be considered in two ways: one according to his end, and then he is great and incomparable; the other according to the majority, as we judge the nature of the horse and the dog by the majority, seeing in them speed *and the spirit to drive others off*; and then man is abject and vile. These are

17 Perseus: the last king of Macedon, led in Paulus's triumph at Rome; he died in captivity.

18 Jacques Vallée des Barreaux (1599–1673), a libertine poet notorious for his debauchery and irreligion.

the two ways that lead to such different judgments of him, and make the philosophers argue so much.

For each denies the other's supposition. One says: He was not born for this end, for all his actions go against it. The other says: He strays from his end when he does these base actions.

416 A. P. R. *Greatness and wretchedness.*—Wretchedness being inferred from greatness, and greatness from wretchedness, some have inferred wretchedness all the more because they took greatness as its proof, and others have inferred greatness all the more forcefully because they inferred it from wretchedness itself. All that the one side could say to show greatness has only served the other as an argument for inferring wretchedness, since the higher one has fallen, the more wretched one is; and the other side the reverse.[19] They have driven one another round in an endless circle; for it is certain that the more light men have, the more they find both greatness and wretchedness in man. In a word, man knows that he is wretched: he is therefore wretched, since he is so; but he is truly great, since he knows it.

417 This duplicity of man is so visible that some have thought we had two souls. A single subject seemed to them incapable of such great and sudden variations, from boundless presumption to a horrible dejection of heart.

418 It is dangerous to show man too clearly how equal he is to the beasts without showing him his greatness. It is dangerous, too, to show him his greatness too clearly without his baseness. It is more dangerous still to leave him ignorant of both. But it is very profitable to set both before him.

Man must not believe that he is equal to the beasts, or to the angels, nor must he be ignorant of both; he must know both.

419 I will not allow him to rest in either, so that, being without footing and without rest...

19 "A. P. R." probably stands for "À Port-Royal": notes for the talk in which Pascal outlined his apology at Port-Royal, the Jansenist convent.

420 If he boasts, I humble him; if he humbles himself, I praise him; and I keep contradicting him until he understands that he is an incomprehensible monster.

421 I blame equally those who take the side of praising man, those who take the side of blaming him, and those who take the side of diverting themselves; and I can approve only those who seek, groaning.

422 It is good to be weary and worn out by the vain search for the true good, so that we may stretch out our arms to the Deliverer.

423 *Contradictions. After showing the baseness and the greatness of man.*—Let man now value himself at his true worth. Let him love himself, for there is in him a nature capable of good; but let him not on that account love the baseness that is in it. Let him despise himself, because this capacity is empty; but let him not on that account despise this natural capacity. Let him hate himself, let him love himself: he has in him the capacity to know truth and to be happy; but he has no truth that is either lasting or satisfying.

I would therefore like to bring man to desire to find it, to be ready, and free of passions, to follow it wherever he finds it, knowing how far his knowledge has been clouded by the passions. I would very much like him to hate in himself the concupiscence that determines him of its own accord, so that it does not blind him in making his choice, nor stop him once he has chosen.

424 All these contradictions, which seemed to take me furthest from knowledge, from religion, are what led me soonest to the true one.

Section VII: Morality and doctrine

La morale et la doctrine
Original sin, the self, the three concupiscences, and the Mystery of Jesus.

425 *Second part. That man without faith cannot know the true good, nor justice.*—All men seek to be happy. There is no exception. Whatever different means they use, they all tend toward this end. What makes some go to war and others not is the same desire, present in both, accompanied by different views. The will [*never*] takes the slightest step except toward this object. It is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who go and hang themselves.

And yet, over so great a number of years, no one without faith has ever reached the point at which all continually aim. All complain: princes, subjects; nobles, commoners; old, young; strong, weak; learned, ignorant; healthy, sick; of every country, every time, every age and every condition.

A trial so long, so continual and so uniform ought surely to convince us that we are unable to reach the good by our own efforts. But example teaches us little. It is never so perfectly alike that there is not some subtle difference; and that is what makes us expect that our expectation will not be disappointed this time as it was the last. And so, the present never satisfying us, experience dupes us, and leads us from misfortune to misfortune until death, their eternal culmination.

What, then, do this craving and this helplessness cry out to us, if not that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains to him is the mark and the wholly empty

trace? He tries in vain to fill it with everything around him, seeking from things absent the help he does not get from things present; but none of them can give it, because this infinite abyss can be filled only by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only by God himself.

He alone is man's true good; and since man abandoned him, it is a strange thing that there is nothing in nature that has not been able to take his place: stars, sky, earth, elements, plants, cabbages, leeks, animals, insects, calves, serpents, fever, plague, war, famine, vices, adultery, incest. And since he lost the true good, anything at all can seem to him to be it, even his own destruction, though it is so contrary to God, to reason and to nature all at once.

Some seek it in authority, others in curiosities and the sciences, others in pleasures. Others, who have in fact come closer to it, have considered that the universal good which all men desire cannot lie in any of the particular things that can be possessed by only one person. Such things, when shared, afflict their possessor more by the lack of the part [*he*] does not [*have*] than they satisfy him by the enjoyment of the part that comes to him. These people understood that the true good must be such that all could possess it at once, without diminution and without envy, and that no one could lose it against his will. And their reason is that, this desire being natural to man, since it is necessarily in everyone and he cannot help having it, they conclude from it...

[426] True nature being lost, everything becomes his nature; just as, the true good being lost, everything becomes his true good.

[427] Man does not know in what rank to place himself. He has visibly gone astray and fallen from his true place, and cannot find it again. He seeks it everywhere, anxiously and without success, in impenetrable darkness.

[428] If it is a sign of weakness to prove God from nature, do not despise Scripture for it; if it is a sign of strength to have known these contradictions, esteem Scripture for it.

[429] Baseness of man, to the point of submitting to beasts, to the point of worshipping them.

THE WISDOM OF GOD SPEAKS

God's Wisdom explains man's contradictions by his creation in glory and his fall.

[430] A. P. R. (*Beginning, after explaining incomprehensibility*).—The greatnesses and miseries of man are so visible that the true religion must necessarily teach us both that there is some great principle of greatness in man and that there is a great principle of wretchedness. It must therefore account for these astonishing contradictions.

To make man happy, it must show him that there is a God; that we are obliged to love him; that our true happiness is to be in him, and our only evil to be separated from him. It must acknowledge that we are full of darkness which keeps us from knowing and loving him; and that thus, since our duties oblige us to love God and our concupiscences turn us away from him, we are full of injustice. It must account for this opposition of ours to God and to our own good. It must teach us the remedies for our helplessness, and the means of obtaining these remedies. Let all the religions of the world be examined on this point, and let us see whether there is any other than the Christian that meets it.

Will it be the philosophers, who offer us as our whole good the goods that are within us? Is that the true good? Have they found the remedy for our ills? Is it curing man's presumption to have set him on a level with God? Those who have made us equal to the beasts, and the Muslims, who have given us the pleasures of the earth as our whole good, even in eternity—have they brought the remedy for our concupiscences? What religion, then, will teach us to cure pride and concupiscence? What religion, in short, will teach us our good, our duties, the weaknesses that turn us from them, the cause of these weaknesses, the rem-

edies that can cure them, and the means of obtaining these remedies?

All the other religions have been unable to do it. Let us see what the Wisdom of God will do:

Do not expect, she says, either truth or consolation from men. I am she who formed you, and I alone can teach you who you are. But you are no longer in the state in which I formed you. I created man holy, innocent, perfect; I filled him with light and understanding; I shared with him my glory and my wonders. The eye of man then saw the majesty of God. He was not then in the darkness that blinds him, nor in the mortality and the miseries that afflict him. But he could not bear so much glory without falling into presumption. He wanted to make himself his own center, and independent of my help. He withdrew from my rule; and, as he made himself equal to me by desiring to find his happiness in himself, I abandoned him to himself. I stirred up the creatures that were subject to him and made them his enemies: so that today man has become like the beasts, and so far removed from me that barely a confused light of his author remains to him—so thoroughly has all his knowledge been extinguished or clouded! The senses, independent of reason and often masters of reason, have swept him off in pursuit of pleasures. All creatures either afflict him or tempt him, and dominate him, either subduing him by their strength or charming him by their sweetness, which is a more terrible and more imperious domination.

That is the state men are in today. They retain some powerless instinct of the happiness of their first nature, and they are plunged in the miseries of their blindness and their concupiscence, which has become their second nature.

From this principle that I disclose to you, you can recognize the cause of so many contradictions that have astonished all men and divided them into such differing views. Observe now all the impulses of greatness and glory that the experience of so many miseries cannot stifle, and see whether their cause must not lie in another nature.

A. P. R. for tomorrow (Prosopopoeia).—It is in vain, O men, that you seek within yourselves the remedy for your miseries. All your lights can bring you only to know that it is not in yourselves that you will find either truth or the good. The philosophers promised it to you, and they could not do it. They know neither what your true good is, nor what [your true state] is. How could they have given remedies for your ills, when they did not even know them? Your principal maladies are pride, which withdraws you from God, and concupiscence, which binds you to the earth; and they have done nothing but feed at least one of these maladies.[1] If they gave you God as your object, it was only to exercise your pride: they made you think that you were like him and conformed to him by your nature. And those who saw the vanity of this claim threw you over the other precipice, by making you believe that your nature was like that of the beasts, and led you to seek your good in the concupiscences that are the lot of animals. That is not the way to cure you of your injustices, which these sages never knew. I alone can make you understand who you are, to....

Adam, Jesus Christ.

If you are united to God, it is by grace, not by nature. If you are humbled, it is by penitence, not by nature.

So this double capacity...

You are not in the state in which you were created.

These two states being laid open, you cannot fail to recognize them. Follow your impulses, observe yourself, and see whether you do not find in them the living marks of these two natures.

Could so many contradictions be found in a single subject?

—Incomprehensible.—Whatever is incomprehensible does not cease to be for that: Infinite number. An infinite space, equal to the finite.

—Incredible that God should unite himself to us.—This consideration is drawn only from the sight of our baseness. But if you hold it quite sincerely, follow it as far as I do, and recognize

1 Prosopopoeia: the rhetorical figure in which an absent or abstract being speaks—here the Wisdom of God.

that we are in fact so low that we are by ourselves incapable of knowing whether his mercy cannot make us capable of him. For I would like to know where this animal, which knows itself to be so weak, gets the right to measure the mercy of God and to set on it the limits his fancy suggests. He knows so little what God is that he does not know what he is himself; and, all troubled by the sight of his own state, he dares to say that God cannot make him capable of communion with him.

But I would like to ask him whether God asks anything else of him than that he love him by knowing him; and why he believes that God cannot make himself knowable and lovable to him, since he is naturally capable of love and of knowledge. There is no doubt that he knows at least that he exists, and that he loves something. So if he sees something in the darkness where he is, and if he finds some object of love among the things of the earth, why, if God gives him some ray of his essence, will he not be capable of knowing him and loving him in whatever way it pleases God to communicate himself to us? There is therefore, no doubt, an intolerable presumption in these kinds of reasoning, although they seem founded on an apparent humility. That humility is neither sincere nor reasonable unless it makes us confess that, not knowing of ourselves who we are, we can learn it only from God.

I do not mean that you should submit your belief to me without reason, and I do not claim to subject you by tyranny; nor do I claim to give you the reason for everything. And to reconcile these contradictions, I mean to show you clearly, by convincing proofs, divine marks in me that will convince you of what I am, and win me authority by wonders and proofs that you cannot refuse; and then I mean you to believe without... the things I teach you, when you find no other reason for refusing them except that you cannot know by yourselves whether they are so or not.

God wished to redeem men and to open salvation to those who sought it; but men make themselves so unworthy of it that it is just for God to refuse to some, because of their hardness of

heart, what he grants to others by a mercy that is not their due. Had he wished to overcome the obstinacy of the most hardened, he could have done so by revealing himself so plainly to them that they could not have doubted the truth of his essence. So he will appear on the last day, with such a blaze of lightning and such an overturning of nature that the dead will rise and the blindest will see him.

It is not in this way that he chose to appear in his coming in gentleness; because, since so many men make themselves unworthy of his clemency, he chose to leave them deprived of the good they do not want. It was therefore not just that he should appear in a manner manifestly divine and absolutely capable of convincing all men; but neither was it just that he should come in a manner so hidden that he could not be recognized by those who would seek him sincerely. He chose to make himself perfectly knowable to these. And so, wishing to appear openly to those who seek him with all their heart, and hidden from those who flee him with all their heart, he tempers the knowledge of himself: he has given signs of himself that are visible to those who seek him, and not to those who do not seek him. There is enough light for those who desire only to see, and enough darkness for those of the opposite disposition.

430 bis Everything that is incomprehensible nonetheless exists.

431 No other has known that man is the most excellent creature. Some, who fully recognized the reality of his excellence, took for cowardice and ingratitude the low feelings that men naturally have about themselves; and others, who fully recognized how real this baseness is, treated as ridiculous pride those feelings of greatness which are just as natural to man.

Lift your eyes to God, say some: see him whom you resemble, and who made you to worship him. You can make yourself like him; wisdom will make you his equal, if you are willing to follow him. “Hold up your heads, free men,” says Epictetus. And the others say to him: Lower your eyes to the earth, puny worm that you are, and look at the beasts whose companion you are.

What then will become of man? Will he be equal to God or to the beasts? What a frightful distance! What then shall we be? Who does not see from all this that man has gone astray, that he has fallen from his place, that he seeks it anxiously, that he can no longer find it? And who then will direct him to it? The greatest men have not been able to.

432 Pyrrhonism is the truth; for, after all, men before Jesus Christ did not know where they stood, nor whether they were great or small. And those who said one or the other knew nothing about it, and guessed without reason and by chance; and indeed they always erred, by excluding one or the other.

What therefore you seek in ignorance, religion proclaims to you.[2]

433 *After having understood the whole nature of man.*—For a religion to be true, it must have known our nature. It must have known its greatness and its smallness, and the reason for both. What religion but the Christian has known it?

PYRRHONISTS AND DOGMATISTS

Neither doubt nor certainty holds, and man is a chimera, glory and refuse of the universe.

434 The principal strengths of the Pyrrhonists—I leave aside the lesser ones—are these: that we have no certainty of the truth of these principles, apart from faith and revelation, except in [*that*] we feel them naturally in us. Now this natural feeling is not a convincing proof of their truth. For since there is no certainty, apart from faith, whether man was created by a good God, by an evil demon, or by chance, it is doubtful whether these principles are given to us as true, or false, or uncertain—according to our origin.[3] Further: that no one, apart from faith, has any assurance whether he is awake or asleep, seeing that during sleep we believe we are awake just as firmly as we do now. We believe we see spaces, shapes, movements; we feel time passing,

2 Adapted from Paul's speech at Athens, Acts 17:23 ("Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you").

3 The "evil demon" echoes Descartes's First Meditation (1641).

we measure it; in short, we act just as when awake. So, since half of life is spent in sleep, by our own admission—a sleep in which, whatever it may seem to us, we have no idea of the truth, all our feelings then being illusions—who knows whether that other half of life, in which we think we are awake, is not another sleep a little different from the first, from which we wake when we think we are sleeping?

[And who doubts that, if we dreamed in company, and the dreams happened to agree, which is common enough, and if we were awake in solitude, we would believe that things had been turned upside down? Finally, as we often dream that we are dreaming, piling one dream on another, life itself is only a dream, on which the others are grafted, and from which we wake at death. During life we have as little hold on the principles of the true and the good as during natural sleep: these various thoughts that stir us there are perhaps only illusions, like the passing of time and the empty fancies of our dreams?]

These are the principal strengths on either side.

I leave aside the lesser ones, such as the arguments the Pyrrhonists make against the impressions of custom, of education, of the ways of different countries, and other such things. Although these carry along the greater part of ordinary men, who dogmatize only on these empty foundations, they are overthrown by the slightest breath of the Pyrrhonists. One has only to look at their books, if one is not sufficiently persuaded of this; one will soon become so, and perhaps too much.

I stop at the dogmatists' only strong point, which is that, speaking in good faith and sincerely, one cannot doubt natural principles. Against this the Pyrrhonists set, in a word, the uncertainty of our origin, which includes that of our nature; and to this the dogmatists have still not replied, for as long as the world has lasted.

This is the open war among men, in which each must take sides and necessarily join either dogmatism or Pyrrhonism. For whoever thinks he can remain neutral will be a Pyrrhonist par excellence; this neutrality is the essence of the cabal: whoever is

not against them is supremely for them [in which their advantage appears]. They are not for themselves: they are neutral, indifferent, suspending judgment on everything, not excepting themselves.

What then will man do in this state? Will he doubt everything? Will he doubt whether he is awake, whether he is being pinched, whether he is being burned? Will he doubt whether he doubts? Will he doubt whether he exists? One cannot go that far; and I maintain that there has never been a real, complete Pyrrhonist. Nature sustains powerless reason and keeps it from raving to that extent.

Will he say, then, on the contrary, that he certainly possesses the truth—he who, if pressed in the slightest, can show no title to it and is forced to let go?

What kind of chimera, then, is man? What a novelty, what a monster, what chaos, what a subject of contradiction, what a prodigy! Judge of all things, feeble earthworm; repository of truth, sewer of uncertainty and error; glory and refuse of the universe.

Who will unravel this tangle? Nature confounds the Pyrrhonists, and reason confounds the dogmatists. What then will become of you, O men, who seek by your natural reason what your true condition is? You cannot avoid one of these sects, nor survive in any of them.

Know, then, proud man, what a paradox you are to yourself. Humble yourself, powerless reason; be silent, feeble nature: learn that man infinitely surpasses man, and hear from your master your true condition, of which you are ignorant. Listen to God.

For in the end, if man had never been corrupted, he would enjoy in his innocence both truth and happiness with assurance; and if man had never been anything but corrupt, he would have no idea either of truth or of bliss. But unhappy as we are—and more so than if there were no greatness in our condition—we have an idea of happiness and cannot attain it; we sense an image of truth and possess only falsehood. We are incapable of

being wholly ignorant and of knowing with certainty—so plain is it that we once stood at a degree of perfection from which we have unhappily fallen!

Yet it is an astonishing thing that the mystery furthest from our knowledge, that of the transmission of sin, should be something without which we can have no knowledge of ourselves! For there is no doubt that nothing shocks our reason more than to say that the sin of the first man made guilty those who, being so far from that source, seem incapable of sharing in it. This flowing-down seems to us not only impossible but even most unjust. For what is more contrary to the rules of our wretched justice than to damn eternally a child incapable of will, for a sin in which he seems to have so little part that it was committed six thousand years before he came into being? Certainly nothing strikes us more harshly than this doctrine; and yet without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves. The knot of our condition takes its twists and turns in this abyss; so that man is more inconceivable without this mystery than this mystery is inconceivable to man.

[From which it appears that God, wishing to make the difficulty of our being unintelligible to ourselves, hid its knot so high, or rather so low, that we were quite incapable of reaching it; so that it is not by the proud agitations of our reason, but by the simple submission of reason, that we can truly know ourselves.

[These foundations, firmly established on the inviolable authority of religion, show us that there are two truths of faith, equally constant. One, that man in the state of creation, or in that of grace, is raised above all nature, made like God, as it were, and a sharer in his divinity; the other, that in the state of corruption and sin he has fallen from that state and been made like the beasts.

[These two propositions are equally firm and certain. Scripture declares them to us plainly when it says in some places: *My delight is to be with the children of men. I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. You are gods*, etc., and when it says in others: *All*

flesh is grass. Man has been compared to the senseless beasts, and made like them. I said in my heart concerning the children of men, Eccles. 3.[4]

[From which it clearly appears that man, by grace, is made like God, as it were, and a sharer in his divinity, and that without grace he is, as it were, like the brute beasts.]

435 Without this divine knowledge, what could men do but either exalt themselves in the inner feeling that remains to them of their past greatness, or sink down at the sight of their present weakness? For, not seeing the whole truth, they could not attain perfect virtue. Some regarding nature as uncorrupted, others as beyond repair, they could not escape either pride or sloth, which are the two sources of all the vices; since [*they*] [*can*] only either abandon themselves to them out of cowardice, or escape from them through pride. For if they knew man's excellence, they were ignorant of his corruption; so that they did indeed avoid sloth, but lost themselves in pride. And if they recognized the infirmity of nature, they were ignorant of its dignity; so that they could indeed avoid vanity, but only by plunging into despair. Hence the various sects of the Stoics and the Epicureans, the dogmatists and the Academics, etc.

The Christian religion alone has been able to cure these two vices, not by driving out one with the other through earthly wisdom, but by driving out both through the simplicity of the Gospel. For it teaches the righteous, whom it raises even to a share in divinity itself, that in this sublime state they still carry the source of all corruption, which makes them subject all their lives to error, wretchedness, death and sin; and it cries out to the most ungodly that they are capable of the grace of their Redeemer. Thus, making [*to*] tremble those whom it justifies, and consoling those whom it condemns, it tempers fear with hope so precisely, through this double capacity for both grace and sin that is common to all, that it humbles infinitely more than reason alone can, but without driving to despair; and exalts infinitely more than the pride of nature, but without puffing up.

4 Prov. 8:31; Joel 2:28; Ps. 82:6; Isa. 40:6; Ps. 49:12 (Vulgate 48:13); Eccles. 3:18.

It shows clearly thereby that, being alone free from error and vice, it alone has the right both to instruct and to correct men.

Who, then, can refuse to believe and adore these heavenly lights? For is it not clearer than day that we feel within ourselves indelible marks of excellence? And is it not equally true that we experience every hour the effects of our deplorable condition? What then does this chaos and monstrous confusion cry out to us, if not the truth of these two states, with a voice so powerful that it cannot be resisted?

436 *Weakness.*—All men's occupations are aimed at acquiring wealth; and they could have no title to show that they possess it justly—for they have only the fancy of men—nor force to possess it securely. It is the same with knowledge, for illness takes it away. We are incapable of both the true and the good.

436 bis All men's occupations are aimed at acquiring wealth; and they have neither title to possess it justly, nor force to possess it securely; the same with knowledge and pleasures. We have neither the true nor the good.

437 We desire truth, and find in ourselves only uncertainty.

We seek happiness, and find only wretchedness and death.

We are incapable of not desiring truth and happiness, and incapable of either certainty or happiness. This desire is left to us as much to punish us as to make us feel from where we have fallen.

438 If man is not made for God, why is he happy only in God? If man is made for God, why is he so opposed to God?

439 *Corrupt nature.*—Man does not act by reason, which constitutes his being.

440 The corruption of reason shows itself in so many different and extravagant ways of life; truth had to come, so that man would no longer live within himself.

441 For my part, I confess that as soon as the Christian religion reveals this principle, that the nature of men is corrupt and fallen away from God, it opens one's eyes to see the mark of this truth everywhere. For nature is such that it points everywhere

to a lost God, both in man and outside man, and to a corrupt nature.

442 The true nature of man, his true good, and true virtue, and true religion are things whose knowledge is inseparable.

443 *Greatness, wretchedness*.—The more light one has, the more greatness and the more baseness one discovers in man. Ordinary men—; those who are higher, the philosophers: they astonish ordinary men;—the Christians: they astonish the philosophers.

Who, then, will be surprised to see that religion only knows thoroughly what one recognizes all the more, the more light one has?

444 What men had been able to know by their greatest lights, this religion taught its children.

445 Original sin is folly to men, but it is presented as such. So you must not reproach me for the lack of reason in this doctrine, since I present it as being without reason. But this folly is wiser than all the wisdom of men, *it is wiser than men*; for without it, what shall we say that man is? His whole state hinges on this imperceptible point. And how could he have perceived it by his reason, since it is something against reason, and since his reason, far from discovering it by its own ways, draws away from it when it is presented to him?[5]

ORIGINAL SIN AMONG THE JEWS

Pascal gathers rabbinic sayings about the evil inclination born in every man.

446 *On original sin. Ample tradition of original sin according to the Jews.*[6]

5 1 Cor. 1:25: "the foolishness of God is wiser than men."

6 Pascal took the rabbinic texts that follow from Raymond Martin's *Pugio fidei* (13th century), a Latin compendium of Talmudic and midrashic passages.

On the words of *Genesis* 8: the composition of man's heart is evil from his childhood. *R. Moses Haddarshan*: This evil leaven is placed in man from the hour he is formed.[7]

Massechet Succa: This evil leaven has seven names in Scripture; it is called *evil, foreskin, unclean, enemy, stumbling block, heart of stone, north wind*: all this signifies the malignity that is hidden in man's heart and stamped upon it.

Misdrach Tillim says the same thing, and that God will deliver the good nature of man from the evil one.[8]

This malignity renews itself against man every day, as it is written in *Ps.* 37: "The wicked watches the righteous and seeks to slay him; but God will not abandon him." This malignity tempts man's heart in this life, and will accuse him in the next. All this is found in the *Talmud*.

Misdrach Tillim on *Ps.* 4: "Tremble, and you shall not sin": Tremble, and terrify your concupiscence, and it will not lead you into sin. And on *Ps.* 36: "The wicked has said in his heart: Let not the fear of God be before me"; that is, the malignity natural to man has said this to the wicked.

Misdrach el Kohelet. "Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king who cannot foresee the future." The child is virtue, and the king is the malignity of man. It is called king because all the members obey it; old, because it is in man's heart from childhood to old age; and foolish, because it leads man in the way of [*perdition*], which he does not foresee.[9]

The same thing is in *Misdrach Tillim*.

Bereschit Rabba on *Ps.* 35: "Lord, all my bones shall bless you, because you deliver the poor from the tyrant": And is there a greater tyrant than the evil leaven?—And on *Prov.* 25: "If your enemy is hungry, give him food"; that is, if the evil leaven is hungry, give it the bread of wisdom spoken of in *Prov.* 9; and if it is thirsty, give it the water spoken of in *Isa.* 55.[10]

7 Gen. 8:21. Moses ha-Darshan was an 11th-century rabbi of Narbonne; the "evil leaven" renders the rabbinic *yetzer ha-ra*, the evil inclination.
8 The Midrash Tehillim, a rabbinic commentary on the Psalms.
9 The midrash on Ecclesiastes (Kohelet); the verse is Eccles. 4:13.
10 Bereshit Rabbah, the rabbinic midrash on Genesis.

Misdrach Tillim says the same thing; and that Scripture in this passage, speaking of our enemy, means the evil leaven; and that in [*giving*] it this bread and this water, one will heap coals on its head.

Misdrach el Kohelet, on *Eccles.* 9: "A great king besieged a little city." This great king is the evil leaven; the great engines with which he surrounds it are the temptations; and there was found a poor wise man who delivered it, that is, virtue.

And on *Ps.* 41: "Blessed is he who considers the poor."

And on *Ps.* 78: "The spirit goes away and does not return"; from which some have taken occasion to err against the immortality of the soul. But the meaning is that this spirit is the evil leaven, which goes with man until death and will not return at the resurrection.

And on *Ps.* 103, the same thing.

And on *Ps.* 16.

447 Will it be said that, because they said justice had left the earth, men knew of original sin?—*No one is happy before his death*; does that mean they knew that eternal and essential bliss begins at death?[11]

448 [*Mitton*] sees clearly that nature is corrupt and that men are opposed to decency; but he does not know why they cannot fly higher.

449 *Order*.—After corruption, say: it is just that all those who are in this state should know it, both those who are pleased with it and those who are displeased with it; but it is not just that all should see redemption.

450 If one does not know oneself to be full of pride, ambition, concupiscence, weakness, wretchedness and injustice, one is very blind. And if, knowing it, one does not desire to be delivered from it, what can one say of a man...?

What can one feel, then, but esteem for a religion that knows the defects of man so well, and but desire for the truth of a religion that promises such desirable remedies for them?

11 Justice leaving the earth alludes to the myth of Astraea (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.150); the Latin is from Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.135–37, after Solon.

451 All men naturally hate one another. Concupiscence has been used as well as possible to make it serve the public good; but this is only [*pretense*] and a false image of charity; for at bottom it is only hatred.

452 To pity the unfortunate is not contrary to concupiscence. On the contrary, one is very glad to have to give this token of friendship, and to gain a reputation for tenderness, without giving anything.

453 Admirable rules of civil order, morality and justice have been founded on concupiscence and drawn from it; but deep down, this vile depth in man, this *evil fashioning*, is only covered over: it is not removed.[12]

454 *Injustice*.—They have found no other means of satisfying concupiscence without wronging others.

THE SELF IS HATEFUL

The self is unjust because it makes itself the center of everything.

455 The *self* is hateful: you, Mitton, cover it up; you do not remove it for all that; so you are still hateful.—Not so, for by acting obligingly toward everyone, as we do, we give no one any further reason to hate us.—That is true, if what we hated in the *self* were only the unpleasantness it causes us. But if I hate it because it is unjust, because it makes itself the center of everything, I shall always hate it.

In a word, the *self* has two qualities. It is unjust in itself, in that it makes itself the center of everything; it is troublesome to others, in that it wants to enslave them: for each *self* is the enemy of all the others, and would like to be their tyrant. You remove its troublesomeness, but not its injustice; and so you do not make it lovable to those who hate its injustice. You make it lovable only to the unjust, who no longer find in it their enemy; and so you remain unjust, and can please only the unjust.

456 What a derangement of judgment, by which there is no one who does not set himself above all the rest of the world, and

who does not prefer his own good, and the duration of his happiness and of his life, to that of all the rest of the world!

457 Each person is a whole to himself, for when he is dead, the whole is dead for him. And hence each believes himself to be everything to everyone. We must not judge nature according to ourselves, but according to itself.

THE THREE CONCUPISCENCES

Lust of the flesh, of the eyes and pride divide men into three orders and sects.

458 "All that is in the world is concupiscence of the flesh, or concupiscence of the eyes, or pride of life: *lust for feeling, lust for knowing, lust for ruling*." Unhappy the accursed land that these three rivers of fire set ablaze rather than water![13] Happy are those who, being on these rivers, not plunged in, not swept away, but motionless, but steadfast; not standing, but seated in a low and secure seat, from which they do not rise before the light, but, having rested there in peace, stretch out their hand to him who is to raise them up, to make them stand upright and firm in the porches of holy Jerusalem, where pride will no longer be able to fight them and bring them down; and who meanwhile weep, not at seeing all the perishable things that the torrents sweep away flow past, but at the memory of their dear homeland, the heavenly Jerusalem, which they remember unceasingly through the length of their exile!

459 The rivers of Babylon flow, and fall, and sweep away.

O holy Zion, where all is stable and nothing falls![14]

We must sit on the rivers, not under them or in them, but on them; and not standing, but seated: to be humble, by being seated, and safe, by being on them. But we shall stand in the porches of Jerusalem.

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12 *Figmentum malum,* the Latin rendering of the rabbinic *yetzer ha-ra,* the "evil leaven" of fr. 446.

13 1 John 2:16; the Latin triad follows Augustine and Jansenius.

14 The imagery follows Psalm 137 ("By the rivers of Babylon") as interpreted by Augustine.

Let us see whether this pleasure is stable or flowing: if it passes, it is a river of Babylon.

460 *Concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, pride*, etc. —There are three orders of things: the flesh, the mind, the will. The carnal are the rich, and kings: their object is the body. The curious and the learned: their object is the mind. The wise: their object is justice.

God must reign over everything, and everything must be referred to him. In things of the flesh, concupiscence properly reigns; in things of the mind, curiosity properly; in wisdom, pride properly. Not that one cannot be vain of wealth or of knowledge, but that is not the proper place of pride: for while granting a man that he is learned, one can still convince him that he is wrong to be proud. The proper place of pride is wisdom, for one cannot grant a man that he has made himself wise and also that he is wrong to be vain of it; for that is just. So God alone gives wisdom; and that is why: *Let him who glories, glory in the Lord.*[15]

461 The three concupiscences have made three sects, and the philosophers have done nothing but follow one of the three concupiscences.

462 *Search for the true good.*—The common run of men place the good in fortune and outward goods, or at least in diversion. The philosophers have shown the vanity of all that, and placed it where they could.

463 [*Against the philosophers who have God without Jesus Christ.*]

Philosophers.—They believe that God alone is worthy of being loved and admired, and they have desired to be loved and admired by men; and they do not know their corruption. If they feel full of feelings moving them to love and adore him, and find their chief joy in them, let them think themselves good, well and good. But if they find themselves averse to it, if [*they*] [*have*] no inclination except to want to establish themselves in men's esteem, and if their whole perfection consists merely in making men, without forcing them, find their happiness in loving them,

15 1 Cor. 1:31.

I shall say that this perfection is horrible. What! They have known God, and have not desired solely that men should love him, but that men should stop at them! They have wanted to be the object of men's freely chosen happiness!

464 *Philosophers*.—We are full of things that throw us outward.

Our instinct makes us feel that we must seek our happiness outside ourselves. Our passions push us outward, even when no objects present themselves to excite them; outward objects tempt us of themselves and call to us, even when we are not thinking of them. And so it is no use for the philosophers to say: Withdraw into yourselves, you will find your good there. No one believes them, and those who do believe them are the emptiest and the most foolish of all.

465 The Stoics say: Go back within yourselves; it is there that you will find your rest: and that is not true.

The others say: Go outside; seek happiness in diverting yourselves: and that is not true: illnesses come.

Happiness is neither outside us nor within us; it is in God, and both outside and within us.

466 Even if Epictetus had seen the way perfectly well, he says to men: You are following a false one. He shows that it is another, but he does not lead there. It is the way of willing what God wills; Jesus Christ alone leads to it: *The way, the truth*.[16]

The vices of Zeno himself.[17]

467 *Reason of effects*.—Epictetus. Those who say: You have a headache...; it is not the same thing. One is certain of health, and not of justice; and in fact his was a piece of foolishness.

And yet he thought it conclusive, saying: "Either in our power or not." But he did not notice that it is not in our power to govern the heart; and he was wrong to conclude it from the fact that there were Christians.

468 No other religion has proposed that we hate ourselves. No other religion, then, can please those who hate themselves and who seek a being truly lovable. And these, if they had never

16 John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life."
17 Zeno of Citium (c. 334–262 BC), founder of Stoicism.

heard of the religion of a humbled God, would embrace it at once.

469 I feel that I might never have been, for the self consists in my thought; therefore I who think would never have been if my mother had been killed before I had been given a soul; therefore I am not a necessary being. Nor am I eternal, or infinite; but I see clearly that there is in nature a necessary, eternal and infinite being.

470 If I had seen a miracle, they say, I would be converted.—How can they be sure they would do what they know nothing of? They imagine that this conversion consists in a worship of God carried on like a transaction and a conversation, such as they picture it. True conversion consists in annihilating oneself before that universal being whom one has angered so many times, and who can rightfully destroy you at any hour; in recognizing that one can do nothing without him, and that one has deserved nothing from him but his disfavor. It consists in knowing that there is an invincible opposition between God and us, and that without a mediator there can be no dealings with him.

471 It is unjust that anyone should become attached to me, even though they do it gladly and willingly. I would be deceiving those in whom I aroused this desire, for I am no one's end and have nothing to satisfy them with. Am I not bound to die? And so the object of their attachment will die. So, just as I would be guilty of making someone believe a falsehood, even if I persuaded them gently, and they believed it with pleasure, and gave me pleasure by doing so, in the same way I am guilty of making myself loved. And if I draw people to become attached to me, I must warn those who would be ready to consent to the lie that they must not believe it, whatever advantage might come to me from it; and likewise that they must not become attached to me; for they must spend their lives and their efforts in pleasing God, or in seeking him.

472 Self-will will never be satisfied, even if it had power over everything it wants; but one is satisfied from the moment one

renounces it. Without it, one cannot be discontented; with it, one cannot be content.

THINKING MEMBERS

Man should love himself as a member loves itself for the sake of the whole body.

473 Imagine a body full of thinking members.

474 *Members. Begin there.*—To regulate the love that one owes to oneself, one must imagine a body full of thinking members, for we are members of the whole, and see how each member ought to love itself, etc.

475 If the feet and the hands had a particular will, they would never be in their proper order except by submitting this particular will to the primary will that governs the whole body. Apart from that, they are in disorder and unhappiness; but in willing only the good of the body, they achieve their own good.

476 We must love God alone and hate ourselves alone.

If the foot had always been unaware that it belonged to the body, and that there was a body on which it depended; if it had had only knowledge and love of itself, and then came to know that it belongs to a body on which it depends—what regret, what shame for its past life, for having been useless to the body that poured life into it, and that would have annihilated it if it had rejected it and cut it off from itself, as the foot was cutting itself off from the body! What prayers to be kept in it! And with what submission it would let itself be governed by the will that rules the body, even to consenting to be cut off if need be! or it would lose its quality as a member; for every member must be willing to perish for the body, which alone is that for which everything exists.

477 It is false that we are worthy of being loved by others; it is unjust that we should want it. If we were born reasonable and impartial, knowing ourselves and others, we would not give our will this inclination. Yet we are born with it; we are therefore born unjust, for everything tends toward itself. This is contrary

to all order: we must tend toward the general; and the inclination toward self is the beginning of all disorder, in war, in civil government, in the household, in the individual body of man. The will is therefore depraved.

If the members of natural and civil communities tend toward the good of the body, the communities themselves must tend toward another, more general body, of which they are members. We must therefore tend toward the general. We are therefore born unjust and depraved.

478 When we want to think of God, is there not something that turns us away, that tempts us to think of something else? All that is evil, and born with us.

479 If there is a God, we must love him alone, and not transient creatures. The reasoning of the ungodly in *Wisdom* rests solely on the claim that there is no God. "That granted," it says, "let us then enjoy creatures."—That is the last resort. But if there were a God to love, it would not have concluded that, but quite the opposite; and this is the conclusion of the wise: There is a God, so let us not enjoy creatures.[18]

So everything that urges us to attach ourselves to creatures is bad, since it prevents us either from serving God, if we know him, or from seeking him, if we do not. Now we are full of concupiscence; therefore we are full of evil; therefore we must hate ourselves, and everything that stirs us to any attachment other than to God alone.

480 For the members to be happy, they must have a will and conform it to the body.

481 Examples of noble deaths among the Spartans and others hardly move us; for what do they bring us? But the example of the martyrs' deaths moves us; for they are our members. We have a common bond with them; their resolve can shape ours, not only by example, but because it has perhaps merited ours. There is nothing of this in the examples of the pagans: we have no connection with them; just as one does not become rich by

18 The Book of Wisdom 2:1–9, where the ungodly argue that life is short and should be enjoyed.

seeing a stranger who is rich, but rather by seeing one's father or husband who is.

482 *Morality*.—God, having made the heavens and the earth, which do not feel the happiness of their being, willed to make beings who would know it, and who would compose a body of thinking members. For our members do not feel the happiness of their union, of their wonderful harmony, of the care nature takes to infuse the spirits into them and to make them grow and last. How happy they would be if they felt it, if they saw it! But for that they would need intelligence to know it, and good will to consent to the will of the universal soul. And if, having received intelligence, they used it to keep nourishment within themselves, without letting it pass to the other members, they would be not only unjust but also wretched, and would hate rather than love themselves; for their blessedness, as well as their duty, consists in consenting to the guidance of the whole soul to which they belong, which loves them better than they love themselves.

483 To be a member is to have life, being and movement only through the spirit of the body and for the body.

The separated member, no longer seeing the body to which it belongs, has only a perishing and dying being left; yet it believes itself a whole, and, seeing no body on which it depends, it believes it depends only on itself, and wants to make itself its own center and body. But having no principle of life in itself, it only goes astray, and is bewildered by the uncertainty of its being, sensing clearly that it is not a body, and yet not seeing that it is a member of a body. At last, when it comes to know itself, it is as if it has come home, and it loves itself only for the sake of the body; it laments its past wanderings.

By its nature it could not love anything else except for its own sake and to make it serve itself, because each thing loves itself more than all else. But in loving the body, it loves itself, because it has being only in it, through it and for it: *he who cleaves to God is one spirit*.[19]

19 1 Cor. 6:17.

The body loves the hand; and the hand, if it had a will, ought to love itself in the same way that the soul loves it. All love that goes beyond this is unjust.

He who cleaves to God is one spirit. We love ourselves because we are members of Jesus Christ; we love Jesus Christ because he is the body of which we are members. All is one; the one is in the other, like the three Persons.

484 Two laws are enough to govern the whole Christian Republic, better than all political laws.[20]

485 The true and only virtue, then, is to hate oneself, for one is hateful through one's concupiscence, and to seek a being truly worthy of love, in order to love it. But since we cannot love what is outside us, we must love a being that is within us and is not us; and that is true of each and every man. Now only the universal Being is such. The kingdom of God is within us: the universal good is within us, is ourselves, and is not us.

486 Man's dignity, in his innocence, lay in using and ruling over creatures; but today it lies in separating himself from them and subjecting himself to them.

487 Every religion is false that, in its faith, does not worship one God as the principle of all things, and that, in its morality, does not love one God alone as the object of all things.

488 ... But it is impossible that God should ever be the end if he is not the principle. We direct our gaze upward, but we lean on sand: and the earth will melt, and we shall fall while looking at heaven.

489 If there is a single principle of all things, a single end of all things, all things through him, all things for him. So the true religion must teach us to worship him alone and to love him alone. But since we find ourselves unable to worship what we do not know, or to love anything other than ourselves, the religion that instructs us in these duties must also instruct us in these inabilities, and teach us the remedies as well. It teaches us that

20 The two commandments to love God and to love one's neighbor (Matt. 22:37–40).

through one man all was lost, and the bond between God and us broken, and that through one man the bond is restored.

We are born so opposed to this love of God, and it is so necessary, that we must be born guilty, or God would be unjust.

490 Men, not being accustomed to create merit but only to reward it where they find it already formed, judge God by themselves.

491 The true religion must have as its mark that it obliges us to love its God. That is only right, and yet no religion has commanded it: ours has. It must also have known concupiscence and our powerlessness; ours has. It must have brought remedies for them; one is prayer. No religion has asked God that we may love him and follow him.

492 Whoever does not hate in himself his self-love, and that instinct which leads him to make himself God, is truly blind. Who does not see that nothing is so opposed to justice and truth? For it is false that we deserve it; and it is unjust and impossible to attain it, since everyone demands the same thing. It is therefore a manifest injustice into which we are born, of which we cannot rid ourselves, and of which we must rid ourselves.

Yet no religion has observed that this was a sin, or that we were born in it, or that we were obliged to resist it, or has thought of giving us the remedies for it.

493 The true religion teaches our duties; our inabilities: pride and concupiscence; and the remedies: humility, mortification.

494 The true religion would have to teach greatness and wretchedness, and lead to both self-esteem and self-contempt, to love and to hatred.

495 If it is a supernatural blindness to live without seeking what one is, it is a terrible one to live badly while believing in God.

496 Experience shows us an enormous difference between devotion and goodness.

497 *Against those who, trusting in the mercy of God, remain idle and do no good works.*—As the two sources of our sins are pride and sloth, God has revealed to us two qualities in himself to cure

them: his mercy and his justice. The property of justice is to cast down pride, however holy our works may be, *and do not enter into judgment,* etc.; and the property of mercy is to combat sloth by inviting us to good works, according to this passage: "The mercy of God invites to repentance"; and that other passage about the Ninevites: "Let us repent, to see if perhaps he will have pity on us.[21] " And so, far from mercy authorizing slackness, it is on the contrary the very quality that expressly combats it; so that instead of saying, If there were no mercy in God, we would have to make every kind of effort toward virtue, we must say, on the contrary, that it is because there is mercy in God that we must make every kind of effort.

498 It is true that there is pain in entering on piety; but this pain does not come from the piety that is beginning to exist in us, but from the impiety that is still there. If our senses did not oppose penance, and our corruption did not oppose the purity of God, there would be nothing painful in it for us. We suffer only in proportion as the vice that is natural to us resists supernatural grace; our heart feels torn between contrary efforts; but it would be most unjust to impute this violence to God, who draws us, instead of attributing it to the world, which holds us back. It is like a child snatched by its mother from the arms of robbers: in the pain it suffers, it must love the loving and lawful violence of the one who secures its freedom, and detest only the headlong and tyrannical violence of those who hold it unjustly. The cruelest war God can wage on men in this life is to leave them without the war he came to bring. "I came to bring war," he says; and, to explain this war: "I came to bring the sword and fire." Before him the world lived in this false peace.[22]

499 *Outward works.*—There is nothing so dangerous as what pleases both God and men; for the states that please God and men have one thing that pleases God and another that pleases men; like the greatness of Saint Teresa: what pleases God is her profound humility in her revelations; what pleases men is her

21 Ps. 143:2 ("Do not enter into judgment with your servant"); Rom. 2:4; Jonah 3:9.
22 Matt. 10:34; Luke 12:49.

illuminations. And so people wear themselves out imitating her words, thinking they are imitating her state, and try far less to love what God loves and to put themselves in the state God loves.[23]

It is better not to fast and be humbled by it than to fast and be pleased with oneself. Pharisee, publican.[24]

What good would it do me to remember it, if it can equally harm me and help me, and if everything depends on the blessing of God, which he gives only to things done for him, according to his rules and in his ways—the manner being thus as important as the thing, and perhaps more, since God can draw good out of evil, and without God we draw evil out of good?

500 The meaning of the words good and evil.

501 First degree: to be blamed for doing evil, and praised for doing good. Second degree: to be neither praised nor blamed.

502 Abraham took nothing for himself, but only for his servants; so the just man takes nothing for himself from the world, nor from the world's applause, but only for his passions, which he uses as their master, saying to one, Go, and, Come. *Your desire shall be under you*. Passions so mastered are virtues: avarice, jealousy, anger; God himself attributes them to himself; and they are virtues just as much as clemency, pity, constancy, which are also passions.[25] We must use them as slaves, and, leaving them their food, prevent the soul from taking any of it; for when the passions are the masters they are vices, and then they give the soul some of their food, and the soul feeds on it and is poisoned by it.

503 The philosophers consecrated the vices by placing them in God himself; Christians have consecrated the virtues.

504 The just man acts by faith in the smallest things: when he rebukes his servants, he desires their conversion by the Spirit of God, and prays God to correct them, and expects as much from

23 Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582), Spanish Carmelite reformer and mystic, whose writings describe her visions.

24 The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9–14).

25 Gen. 14:24; Matt. 8:9; Gen. 4:7 (Vulgate).

God as from his own rebukes, and prays God to bless his corrections. And so with his other actions.

505 Everything can be deadly to us, even the things made to serve us; as, in nature, walls can kill us, and stairs can kill us, if we do not walk carefully.

The slightest movement matters to all of nature; the whole sea changes because of one stone. So, in grace, the slightest action matters to everything by its consequences. Therefore everything is important.

In every action we must consider, besides the action itself, our present, past and future state, and that of others whom it concerns, and see the connections between all these things. And then we shall be well restrained.

506 May God not impute our sins to us—that is, all the consequences and sequels of our sins, which are dreadful, even of the smallest faults, if one chooses to trace them without mercy!

507 The movements of grace, hardness of heart, outward circumstances.

508 To make a man a saint, it must indeed be grace; and whoever doubts this does not know what a saint is, or what a man is.

509 *Philosophers*.—What a fine thing, to cry out to a man who does not know himself that he should go to God by his own efforts! And what a fine thing to say it to a man who knows himself!

510 Man is not worthy of God, but he is not incapable of being made worthy.

It is unworthy of God to join himself to wretched man; but it is not unworthy of God to draw him out of his wretchedness.

511 If someone wants to say that man is too small to deserve communion with God, he must be very great to judge of it.

512 It is wholly the body of Jesus Christ, in his jargon, but he cannot say that it is the whole body of Jesus Christ. The union of two things without change does not allow us to say that one becomes the other: thus the soul is united to the body, and fire to wood, without change; but there must be a change that makes

the form of the one become the form of the other: so it is with the union of the Word with man.[26]

Because my body without my soul would not make the body of a man, therefore my soul united to any matter whatever will make my body. He does not distinguish the necessary condition from the sufficient condition: the union is necessary, but not sufficient: the left arm is not the right. Impenetrability is a property of bodies. Identity *in number*, at the same moment, requires identity of matter. Thus if God united my soul to a body in China, the same body, *the same in number*, would be in China; the same river that flows there is *the same in number* as the one that runs at the same moment in China.

PRAYER AND GRACE

Pascal reflects on why God established prayer and how grace and merit relate.

513 Why God established prayer.

1. To communicate to his creatures the dignity of causality.

2. To teach us from whom we hold our virtue.

3. To make us merit the other virtues by labor.

(But to keep the pre-eminence for himself, he gives prayer to whom he pleases.)

Objection: But people will believe they hold prayer from themselves.

That is absurd; for since, even having faith, one cannot have the virtues, how could one have faith? Is there not a greater distance from unbelief to faith than from faith to virtue?

Merit: this word is ambiguous.

He merited to have a Redeemer.

He merited to touch such sacred limbs.

Worthy to touch such sacred limbs.

I am not worthy.

He who eats unworthily.

26 Pascal is discussing the consecrated host; "he" is probably Descartes, who explained the Eucharist by the soul's union with any matter.

He is worthy to receive.

Count me worthy.[27]

God owes nothing except according to his promises. He has promised to grant righteousness to prayers; he has never promised prayers except to the children of the promise.

Saint Augustine said expressly that strength would be taken away from the just man. But it was by chance that he said it; for it could have happened that the occasion to say it never arose. But his principles show that, once the occasion arose, it was impossible for him not to say it, or to say anything contrary. It is therefore more to be compelled to say it, should the occasion arise, than to have said it because the occasion did arise: the one being a matter of necessity, the other of chance. But the two together are all one can ask.

514 "Work out your salvation with fear."[28]

Proofs of prayer: *To him who asks it shall be given*. Therefore it is in our power to ask. On the contrary of the...: it is not in our power, since the obtaining, which would pray for it, is not; for since salvation is not in our power, and the obtaining is, prayer is not.[29]

The just man, then, should no longer hope in God, for he must not hope, but strive to obtain what he asks for.

Let us conclude, then, that since man has been iniquity ever since the first sin, and God does not want it to be through this that he does not draw away from him, it is only by a first effect that he does not draw away.

Therefore those who draw away do not have this first effect, without which one does not draw away from God, and those who do not draw away have this first effect. Therefore those who for a time were possessed by grace through this first effect cease to pray, for lack of this first effect.

Then God abandons the first in this sense....

27 Sources: the Easter *Exsultet*; the hymn *Vexilla Regis*; Matt. 8:8; 1 Cor. 11:27; Rev. 5:12; the Marian antiphon *Dignare me laudare te*.

28 Phil. 2:12.

29 Matt. 7:7; the fragment is a confused draft on grace and prayer.

515 The elect will not know their virtues, nor the reprobate the greatness of their crimes: Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, etc.?[30]

516 *Rom.* 3:27: Boasting excluded: by what law? of works? no, but by faith.—So faith is not in our power as the works of the law are, and it is given to us in another way.

517 Take comfort: it is not from yourself that you must expect it; on the contrary, it is by expecting nothing from yourself that you must expect it.

518 Every condition, even the martyrs, has cause to fear, according to Scripture.

The greatest pain of purgatory is the uncertainty of the judgment. *The hidden God*.

519 John 8: *Many believed in him. Then Jesus said: If you continue...,* truly *you will be my disciples, and* the truth will make you free.—*They answered: We are the seed of Abraham, and have never been slaves to anyone*.

There is a great difference between disciples and *true* disciples. You can recognize them by telling them that the truth will make them free; for if they reply that they are free and that it is in their power to come out of slavery to the devil, they are indeed disciples, but not true disciples.

520 The law did not destroy nature, but instructed it; grace did not destroy the law, but causes it to be practiced.

The faith received at baptism is the source of the whole life of Christians and of converts.

521 Grace will always be in the world—and nature too—so that grace is in a sense natural. And so there will always be Pelagians, and always Catholics, and always conflict; because the first birth makes the one, and the grace of the second birth makes the other.[31]

522 The law obliged us to what it did not give. Grace gives what it obliges us to.

30 Matt. 25:37–44.

31 Pelagians: followers of the monk Pelagius (c. AD 400), who held that man can do good without the help of grace.

523 All faith consists in Jesus Christ and in Adam; and all morality in concupiscence and in grace.

524 There is no doctrine better suited to man than this one, which teaches him his double capacity for receiving and for losing grace, because of the double danger to which he is always exposed: despair or pride.

525 The philosophers did not prescribe feelings proportioned to the two states.

They inspired movements of pure greatness, and that is not man's state.

They inspired movements of pure baseness, and that is not man's state.

There must be movements of baseness—not of nature, but of penitence; not in order to remain there, but to go on to greatness. There must be movements of greatness—not of merit, but of grace, and after passing through baseness.

526 Wretchedness persuades to despair; pride persuades to presumption. The Incarnation shows man the greatness of his wretchedness by the greatness of the remedy it required.

527 Knowledge of God without knowledge of our wretchedness produces pride. Knowledge of our wretchedness without knowledge of God produces despair. Knowledge of Jesus Christ is the middle way, because in it we find both God and our wretchedness.

528 Jesus Christ is a God whom we approach without pride, and before whom we humble ourselves without despair.

529 ... Not a humbling that makes us incapable of good, nor a holiness free from evil.

530 Someone told me one day that he felt great joy and confidence on coming out of confession. Another told me that he remained in fear. I thought, on hearing this, that out of these two one could make one good man, and that each fell short in not having the feeling of the other. The same often happens in other things.

531 He who knows his master's will shall be beaten with more blows, because of the power he has through knowledge. *He who*

is just, let him be justified still, because of the power he has through righteousness. From him who has received most, the greatest account will be demanded, because of the power he has through help.[32]

532 Scripture has provided passages to console every condition, and to intimidate every condition.

Nature seems to have done the same through its two infinities, natural and moral: for we shall always have people above us and below us, more able and less able, more exalted and more wretched, to humble our pride and to raise up our abjection.

533 *A broken heart*, Saint Paul: that is the Christian character. *Alba has named you, I know you no more*, Corneille: that is the inhuman character. The human character is the opposite.[33]

534 There are only two kinds of men: the just, who believe themselves sinners; and the sinners, who believe themselves just.

535 We owe much to those who point out our faults, for they mortify us; they teach us that we have been despised; they do not prevent our being despised in the future, for we have plenty of other faults to deserve it. They prepare the way for correction and for being rid of a fault.

536 Man is so made that if you keep telling him he is a fool, he believes it; and by telling it to oneself, one makes oneself believe it; for man holds an inner conversation with himself alone, which it is important to regulate well: *Evil conversations corrupt good morals*. We must keep silent as much as we can, and converse only about God, whom we know to be the truth; and so we persuade ourselves of it.[34]

537 Christianity is strange. It commands man to recognize that he is vile, even abominable, and commands him to want to be like God. Without such a counterweight, this elevation would

32 Luke 12:47–48; Rev. 22:11.
33 The first phrase is from Ps. 51:17, not Paul. The second is Horace to his brother-in-law Curiace in Corneille's *Horace* (1640), when Alba names Curiace to fight him.
34 1 Cor. 15:33.

make him horribly vain, or this abasement would make him terribly abject.

538 With how little pride does a Christian believe himself united to God! With how little abjection does he rank himself with the worms of the earth!

What a fine way to receive life and death, good things and bad!

539 What difference is there between a soldier and a Carthusian, as regards obedience? For they are equally obedient and dependent, and engaged in equally arduous exercises. But the soldier always hopes to become master, and never does, for even captains and princes are always slaves and dependent; yet he always hopes for it, and always works to reach it; whereas the Carthusian vows never to be anything but dependent. So they do not differ in perpetual servitude, which both always have, but in hope, which the one always has and the other never.[35]

540 The hope Christians have of possessing an infinite good is mixed with real enjoyment as well as with fear; for it is not like people who would hope for a kingdom of which, being subjects, they would have no share; but they hope for holiness, for freedom from injustice, and they have something of it.

541 No one is as happy as a true Christian, nor as reasonable, nor as virtuous, nor as lovable.

542 Only the Christian religion makes man both lovable and happy. In decency, one cannot be lovable and happy together.

GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

We know God, ourselves, life and death only through Jesus Christ the mediator.

543 *Preface*.—The metaphysical proofs of God are so remote from men's reasoning, and so involved, that they make little impression; and even if they helped some people, they would help only

35 Carthusians: monks of the strict contemplative order founded by Saint Bruno in AD 1084.

during the moment those people see the demonstration; an hour later they fear they have been mistaken.

What they found out by curiosity, they lost by pride.[36]

That is what knowledge of God produces when it is drawn without Jesus Christ: communing without a mediator with the God one has known without a mediator; whereas those who have known God through a mediator know their wretchedness.

[544] The God of Christians is a God who makes the soul feel that he is its only good; that all its rest is in him, that it will have no joy but in loving him; and who at the same time makes it abhor the obstacles that hold it back and prevent it from loving God with all its strength. Self-love and concupiscence, which hinder it, are unbearable to it. This God makes it feel that it has this deep store of self-love that is its ruin, and that he alone can cure it.

[545] Jesus Christ did nothing but teach men that they loved themselves, that they were slaves, blind, sick, unhappy and sinners; that he had to deliver, enlighten, bless and heal them; that this would be done by hating oneself, and by following him through wretchedness and the death of the cross.

[546] Without Jesus Christ, man must be in vice and wretchedness; with Jesus Christ, man is free from vice and wretchedness. In him is all our virtue and all our happiness. Outside him there is only vice, wretchedness, errors, darkness, death, despair.

[547] *God through Jesus Christ.* We know God only through Jesus Christ. Without this Mediator, all communication with God is taken away; through Jesus Christ we know God. All those who have claimed to know God and to prove him without Jesus Christ had only powerless proofs. But to prove Jesus Christ we have the prophecies, which are solid and tangible proofs. And these prophecies, being fulfilled and proved true by the event, show the certainty of these truths, and therefore prove the divinity of Jesus Christ. In him and through him, then, we know God. Apart from that, without Scripture, without original sin, without a necessary Mediator promised and come, one cannot

36 After Augustine, Sermon 141.

absolutely prove God, nor teach either sound doctrine or sound morality. But through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ, we prove God, and we teach morality and doctrine. Jesus Christ is therefore the true God of men.

But at the same time we know our wretchedness, for this God is nothing other than the Restorer of our wretchedness. So we can know God well only by knowing our iniquities; and so those who have known God without knowing their wretchedness have not glorified him, but glorified themselves. *Because it did not know him through wisdom, it pleased God to save through the foolishness of preaching*.[37]

548 Not only do we know God only through Jesus Christ, but we know ourselves only through Jesus Christ; we know life and death only through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ, we do not know what our life is, nor our death, nor God, nor ourselves.

So without Scripture, whose only object is Jesus Christ, we know nothing, and see only obscurity and confusion in the nature of God and in our own nature.

549 It is not only impossible but useless to know God without Jesus Christ. They have not drawn away from him, but closer; they have not humbled themselves, but...

The better a man is, the worse he is, if he ascribes to himself the very fact that he is good.[38]

550 I love poverty, because he loved it. I love wealth, because it gives the means of helping the wretched. I keep faith with everyone; I do [*not*] return evil to those who do me evil; but I wish them a condition like mine, in which one receives neither evil nor good from men. I try to be just, truthful, sincere and faithful to all men; and I have a tenderness of heart for those to whom God has united me more closely; and whether I am alone or in the sight of men, in all my actions I keep in view God, who must judge them, and to whom I have consecrated them all.

Those are my feelings, and every day of my life I bless my Redeemer, who put them in me, and who, out of a man full of

37 1 Cor. 1:21.
38 Attributed to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.

weaknesses, miseries, concupiscence, pride and ambition, has made a man free of all these evils by the power of his grace, to which all the glory is due, since of myself I have only wretchedness and error.

551 *More deserving of blows than of kisses, I do not fear, because I love.*

552 *The Tomb of Jesus Christ*.—Jesus Christ was dead, but seen, on the cross. He is dead and hidden in the tomb.

Jesus Christ was buried only by saints.

Jesus Christ worked no miracles in the tomb.

Only saints enter it.

It is there, not on the cross, that Jesus Christ takes on new life.

It is the last mystery of the Passion and of the Redemption.

[Jesus Christ teaches living, dead, buried, risen.]

Jesus Christ had nowhere to rest on earth but in the tomb.

His enemies did not stop tormenting him until the tomb.

THE MYSTERY OF JESUS

A meditation on Christ's agony in Gethsemane, in which Christ speaks to the soul.

553 *The Mystery of Jesus*.—In his Passion Jesus suffers the torments that men inflict on him; but in the agony he suffers the torments he inflicts on himself: *he troubled himself*; it is a torture from a hand not human but almighty, for one must be almighty to bear it.[39]

Jesus seeks some consolation at least from his three dearest friends, and they sleep; he asks them to bear up with him a little, and they leave him with complete indifference, having so little compassion that it could not keep them from sleeping even for a moment. And so Jesus was left alone to the wrath of God.

Jesus is alone on earth, with no one not only to feel and share his pain, but even to know of it: heaven and he are alone in that knowledge.

39 A meditation on Christ's agony in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36–46). The Latin echoes John 11:33.

Jesus is in a garden, not of delights like the first Adam, where he lost himself and the whole human race, but in one of torments, where he saved himself and the whole human race.

He suffers this pain and this abandonment in the horror of the night.

I believe Jesus never complained except this one time; but then he complains as if he could no longer contain his overwhelming grief: My soul is sorrowful to the point of death.

Jesus seeks company and relief from men. This is unique in all his life, it seems to me. But he receives none, for his disciples are asleep.

Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world; we must not sleep during that time.

Jesus, in the midst of this universal abandonment, and that of his friends chosen to watch with him, finding them asleep, is displeased because of the danger to which they expose not him but themselves; and he warns them about their own salvation and their own good with heartfelt tenderness for them in their ingratitude, and warns them that the spirit is willing and the flesh weak.

Jesus, finding them asleep again, since neither regard for him nor for themselves had kept them from it, has the kindness not to wake them, and leaves them to their rest.

Jesus prays in uncertainty about the Father's will, and fears death; but, having come to know it, he goes forward to offer himself to it: *Let us go*. *He went forth* (John).[40]

Jesus entreated men, and was not answered by them.

Jesus, while his disciples slept, worked their salvation. He has done so for each of the just while they slept, both in nothingness before their birth and in sin since their birth.

He prays only once that the cup may pass, and even then with submission, and twice that it may come if it must.

Jesus in anguish.[41]

40 Matt. 26:46; John 18:4.

41 The French is *ennui*, here in its older, stronger sense of anguish (cf. Mark 14:33).

Jesus, seeing all his friends asleep and all his enemies watchful, commits himself entirely to his Father.

Jesus does not see in Judas his enmity, but the order of God, which he loves; and he acknowledges it, since he calls him friend.

Jesus tears himself away from his disciples to enter into the agony; we must tear ourselves away from those nearest and dearest to us to imitate him.

Jesus being in agony and in the greatest pain, let us pray longer.

We implore the mercy of God, not so that he may leave us in peace in our vices, but so that he may deliver us from them.

If God gave us masters from his own hand, oh, how gladly we ought to obey them! Necessity and events are such masters, infallibly.

—Take comfort: you would not be seeking me if you had not already found me.[42]

I was thinking of you in my agony; I shed such and such drops of blood for you.

To wonder whether you would do this or that well, when it is not before you, is to tempt me rather than to test yourself: I will do it in you if it comes.

Let yourself be guided by my rules; see how well I have guided the Virgin and the saints, who let me act in them.

The Father loves all that I do.

Do you want it always to cost me the blood of my humanity, without your shedding any tears?

Your conversion is my affair; do not be afraid, and pray with confidence, as if for me.

I am present to you through my word in Scripture, through my spirit in the Church and through inspirations, through my power in the priests, through my prayer in the faithful.

Physicians will not heal you, for you will die in the end. But it is I who heal and make the body immortal.

42 From here on, Christ speaks to the soul.

Endure chains and bodily servitude; for now I deliver you only from spiritual servitude.

I am more your friend than this one or that; for I have done more for you than they have, and they would not suffer what I have suffered from you, and would not die for you in the time of your infidelities and cruelties, as I have done, and as I am ready to do, and do, in my elect and in the Blessed Sacrament.

If you knew your sins, you would lose heart.

—Then I shall lose it, Lord, for I believe in their malice on your word.

—No, for I, through whom you learn it, can heal you of it, and my telling you so is a sign that I want to heal you. As you expiate them, you will come to know them, and it will be said to you: See the sins that are forgiven you. Do penance, then, for your hidden sins, and for the hidden malice of those you know.

—Lord, I give you everything.

—I love you more ardently than you have loved your defilements, *as one unclean loves the mire*.[43]

Let the glory be mine and not yours, worm and earth.

Ask your director when my own words become an occasion of evil to you, and of vanity or curiosity.

—I see my abyss of pride, of curiosity, of concupiscence. There is no relation between me and God, nor Jesus Christ the just. But he was made sin through me; all your scourges fell on him. He is more abominable than I am, and, far from abhorring me, he holds himself honored that I go to him and help him.

But he healed himself, and all the more will he heal me.

I must add my wounds to his, and join myself to him, and he will save me in saving himself. But I must not add any more in the future.

You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. Everyone plays God in judging: "This is good or bad"; and in being too grieved or too delighted by events.[44]

43 Pascal's own Latin, perhaps recalling 2 Pet. 2:22 (the sow returning to wallow in the mire).

44 Gen. 3:5, the serpent's promise to Eve.

Do little things as though they were great, because of the majesty of Jesus Christ, who does them in us and who lives our life; and great things as though they were little and easy, because of his almighty power.

554 It seems to me that after his resurrection Jesus Christ lets only his wounds be touched: *Touch me not*. We must unite ourselves only to his sufferings.[45]

He gave himself in communion as mortal at the Last Supper, as risen to the disciples at Emmaus, as ascended into heaven to the whole Church.

555 Do not compare yourself to others, but to me. If you do not find me in those to whom you compare yourself, you are comparing yourself to something abominable. If you find me there, compare yourself to that. But what will you be comparing? Will it be you, or me in you? If it is you, it is something abominable. If it is me, you are comparing me with me. Now I am God in all things.

I speak to you and counsel you often, because your guide cannot speak to you; for I do not want you to be without a guide.

And perhaps I do so at his prayers, and so he guides you without your seeing it. You would not be seeking me if you did not possess me.

So do not be troubled.

45 John 20:17, the risen Jesus to Mary Magdalene.

Section VIII: The foundations of the Christian religion

Les fondements de la religion chrétienne
The hidden God and the wisdom and folly of religion.

556 ... They blaspheme what they do not know. The Christian religion consists of two points; it is equally important for men to know them, and equally dangerous to be ignorant of them; and it is equally of God's mercy to have given signs of both.

And yet they conclude that one of these points is not so from the very thing that ought to make them conclude the other. The sages who said there is only one God were persecuted, the Jews hated, the Christians even more so. They saw by natural light that, if there is a true religion on earth, the ordering of all things must tend toward it as to its center.

The whole ordering of things must have as its object the establishment and the greatness of religion; men must have in themselves feelings that match what it teaches us; and finally it must be so much the object and the center toward which all things tend that whoever knows its principles can account both for the whole nature of man in particular and for the whole ordering of the world in general.

And on this basis they take occasion to blaspheme the Christian religion, because they know it badly. They imagine that it consists simply in the worship of a God considered as great and powerful and eternal; which is properly deism, almost as far removed from the Christian religion as atheism, which is its complete opposite. And from this they conclude that this religion is not true, because they do not see that all things work

together to establish this point: that God does not show himself to men with all the evidence he could.

But let them conclude what they will against deism, they will conclude nothing against the Christian religion, which properly consists in the mystery of the Redeemer, who, uniting in himself the two natures, human and divine, has rescued men from the corruption of sin in order to reconcile them to God in his divine person.

It teaches men, then, these two truths together: both that there is a God of whom men are capable, and that there is a corruption in nature which makes them unworthy of him. It is equally important for men to know both these points; and it is equally dangerous for man to know God without knowing his wretchedness, and to know his wretchedness without knowing the Redeemer who can heal him of it. Having only one of these kinds of knowledge produces either the pride of the philosophers, who have known God and not their wretchedness, or the despair of the atheists, who know their wretchedness without a Redeemer.

And so, just as it is equally necessary for man to know these two points, it is also equally of God's mercy to have made them known to us. The Christian religion does this; that is what it consists in.

Let the order of the world be examined on this point, and let us see whether all things do not tend to establish the two chief points of this religion. Those who go astray go astray only for lack of seeing one of these two things. It is quite possible, then, to know God without one's wretchedness, and one's wretchedness without God; but one cannot know Jesus Christ without knowing both God and one's wretchedness together. Jesus Christ is the object of all things, and the center toward which all things tend. Whoever knows him knows the reason for all things.

And that is why I shall not undertake here to prove by natural reasons either the existence of God, or the Trinity, or the immortality of the soul, or any of the things of that nature: not only because I should not feel strong enough to find in nature the

means to convince hardened atheists, but also because this knowledge, without Jesus Christ, is useless and barren. Even if a man were persuaded that the proportions of numbers are immaterial, eternal truths, dependent on a first truth in which they subsist and which is called God, I should not think him much advanced toward his salvation.

The God of the Christians is not simply a God who is the author of geometrical truths and of the order of the elements; that is the share of the pagans and the Epicureans. He is not merely a God who exercises his providence over the lives and goods of men, to grant a happy succession of years to those who worship him; that is the portion of the Jews. But the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of the Christians, is a God of love and consolation; he is a God who fills the soul and the heart of those he possesses; he is a God who makes them feel inwardly their wretchedness and his infinite mercy, who unites himself with the depths of their soul, who fills it with humility, joy, confidence and love, who makes them incapable of any other end than himself.[1]

All those who seek God outside Jesus Christ, and who stop at nature, either find no light that satisfies them, or come to devise for themselves a way of knowing God and serving him without a mediator; and thereby they fall either into atheism or into deism, two things that the Christian religion abhors almost equally.

Without Jesus Christ the world would not go on existing; for it would have to be either destroyed or like a hell.

If the world existed to instruct man about God, his divinity would shine out from every side in an indisputable way; but since it exists only through Jesus Christ and for Jesus Christ, and to instruct men both about their corruption and about their redemption, everything in it blazes with proofs of these two truths.

1 The opening words echo Pascal's Memorial of 1654.

What appears there indicates neither a total exclusion nor a manifest presence of divinity, but the presence of a God who hides himself. Everything bears this mark.

Will the only being who knows nature know it only in order to be wretched? Will the only one who knows it be the only one who is unhappy?

He must not see nothing at all; nor must he see enough to believe that he possesses it; but he must see enough to know that he has lost it. For to know that one has lost, one must see and not see; and that is precisely the state in which nature is.

Whatever side he takes, I shall not leave him at rest there.

557 ... It is true, then, that everything instructs man about his condition, but this must be rightly understood: for it is not true that everything reveals God, and it is not true that everything hides God. But it is true at once that he hides himself from those who tempt him and reveals himself to those who seek him, because men are at once unworthy of God and capable of God: unworthy through their corruption, capable through their first nature.

558 What then shall we conclude from all our darkness, if not our unworthiness?

559 If nothing of God had ever appeared, this eternal deprivation would be ambiguous, and could as well be put down to the absence of any divinity as to men's unworthiness to know it; but the fact that he appears sometimes, and not always, removes the ambiguity. If he appears once, he always is; and so the only possible conclusion is that there is a God, and that men are unworthy of him.

559 bis The eternal Being always is, if he is once.

560 We do not conceive the glorious state of Adam, nor the nature of his sin, nor its transmission to us. These are things that took place in the state of a nature quite different from ours, and that go beyond the state of our present capacity.

Knowing all this is of no use to us for getting out of it; and all that matters for us to know is that we are wretched, corrupt,

separated from God, but redeemed by Jesus Christ; and of this we have wonderful proofs on earth.

So the two proofs, of corruption and of redemption, are drawn from the ungodly, who live in indifference to religion, and from the Jews, who are its irreconcilable enemies.

560 bis So the whole universe teaches man either that he is corrupt or that he is redeemed; everything teaches him his greatness or his wretchedness. God's abandonment appears in the pagans; God's protection appears in the Jews.

561 There are two ways of persuading men of the truths of our religion: one by the force of reason, the other by the authority of the one who speaks.

We do not use the latter, but the former. We do not say: "This must be believed, for Scripture, which says it, is divine"—but we say that it must be believed for such and such a reason, which are weak arguments, reason being pliable to anything.

562 There is nothing on earth that does not show either the wretchedness of man or the mercy of God; either the powerlessness of man without God, or the power of man with God.

563 It will be one of the humiliations of the damned to see that they are condemned by their own reason, by which they claimed to condemn the Christian religion.

564 The prophecies, even the miracles and the proofs of our religion, are not of such a nature that they can be said to be absolutely convincing; but they are also such that it cannot be said to be unreasonable to believe them. So there is evidence and obscurity, to enlighten some and darken others; but the evidence is such that it surpasses, or at least equals, the evidence for the contrary; so that it cannot be reason that decides us not to follow it; and so it can only be concupiscence and malice of heart. And in this way there is enough evidence to condemn and not enough to convince; so that it may appear that in those who follow it, it is grace, and not reason, that makes them follow; and that in those who shun it, it is concupiscence, and not reason, that makes them shun it.

Disciples indeed, an Israelite indeed, free indeed, food indeed.[2]

565 Recognize, then, the truth of religion in the very obscurity of religion, in the little light we have of it, in our indifference to knowing it.

566 We understand nothing of the works of God unless we take as a principle that he has willed to blind some and to enlighten others.

567 The two contrary reasons. We must begin with that: without it we understand nothing, and everything is heretical; and even at the end of each truth we must add that we remember the opposite truth.

568 *Objection*. Scripture visibly full of things not dictated by the Holy Spirit.—*Answer*. Then they do no harm to faith.—*Objection*. But the Church has decided that everything is from the Holy Spirit.—*Answer*. I answer two things: first, that the Church has never decided that; second, that even if it had decided it, it could be defended.

[*There*] are many warped minds.

Dionysius has charity; he was in office.[3]

The prophecies cited in the Gospel: do you think they are reported to make you believe? No, it is to keep you from believing.

569 *Canonical*.—The heretics at the beginning of the Church serve to prove the canonical books.

570 In the chapter *on Foundations* must go what is in the one *on Figuratives* concerning the reason for figures: why Jesus Christ was prophesied at his first coming; why prophesied obscurely as to the manner.

2 John 8:31; 1:47; 8:36; 6:55.

3 Probably Dionysius the Areopagite, a member of the Athenian council converted by Paul (Acts 17:34).

WHY FIGURES

The prophecies were hidden under carnal meanings so that the Jews would preserve them faithfully.

571 *Reason why Figures.*—[They had to sustain a carnal people and make it the custodian of the spiritual Testament]: in order to give credibility to the Messiah, there had to have been earlier prophecies, and they had to be carried by people above suspicion, of extraordinary diligence, faithfulness and zeal, and known to the whole earth.

To bring all this about, God chose this carnal people, to whom he entrusted the prophecies that foretell the Messiah as deliverer and dispenser of the carnal goods this people loved. And so it had an extraordinary ardor for its prophets, and carried before the eyes of the whole world these books that foretell their Messiah, assuring all nations that he was to come, in the manner foretold in the books they kept open to all the world. And so this people, disappointed by the ignominious and poor coming of the Messiah, became his cruelest enemies. So here we have the people in the world least suspected of favoring us, and the most exact and zealous that can be imagined for its law and its prophets, which it carries uncorrupted; so that those who rejected and crucified Jesus Christ, who was a stumbling block to them, are the very ones who carry the books that bear witness to him and that say he will be rejected and a stumbling block; so that they marked him out as the one by refusing him, and he was equally proved both by the just Jews who received him and by the unjust who rejected him, both having been foretold.

That is why the prophecies have a hidden meaning, the spiritual one, to which this people was hostile, beneath the carnal one, which it loved. If the spiritual meaning had been disclosed, they were not capable of loving it, and could not have carried it; they would have had no zeal for the preservation of their books and their ceremonies. And if they [*had*] loved these spiritual

promises, and preserved them uncorrupted until the Messiah, their testimony would have had no force, since they would have been friends to them.

That is why it was good that the spiritual meaning should be veiled. But, on the other hand, if this meaning had been so hidden that it did not appear at all, it could not have served as proof of the Messiah. What then was done? It was veiled under the temporal in the great mass of passages, and disclosed so clearly in a few; besides which, the time and the state of the world were foretold so clearly that it is clearer than the sun; and this spiritual meaning is so clearly explained in some places that it took a blindness like the one the flesh casts over the mind when the mind is subject to it, not to recognize it.

This, then, has been God's way of proceeding. This meaning is veiled by another in countless places, and disclosed in a few, rarely, but in such a way nonetheless that the places where it is hidden are ambiguous and can fit both, whereas the places where it is disclosed are unambiguous and can fit only the spiritual meaning.

So this could not lead into error, and only a people as carnal as that could have mistaken it.

For when goods are promised in abundance, what kept them from understanding the true goods, if not their cupidity, which fixed the meaning on the goods of the earth? But those whose only good was in God referred them to God alone. For there are two principles that divide the wills of men: cupidity and charity. Not that cupidity cannot exist along with faith in God, nor charity along with the goods of the earth; but cupidity uses God and enjoys the world, and charity the reverse.[4]

Now it is the final end that gives things their name. Whatever prevents us from reaching it is called an enemy. So creatures, though good, are enemies of the just when they turn them away from God; and God himself is the enemy of those whose covetousness he disturbs.

4 Augustine's distinction between using (uti) and enjoying (frui), in *On Christian Doctrine*, book I.

So, since the word "enemy" depends on the final end, the just understood by it their passions, and the carnal understood the Babylonians; and so these terms were obscure only to the unjust. And this is what Isaiah says: *Seal the law among my chosen*; and that Jesus Christ will be a stone of stumbling. But "Blessed are they who shall not be offended in him!" Hosea, *last chapter*, puts it perfectly: "Where is the wise man? and he will understand what I say. The just will understand it: for the ways of God are right; but the wicked will stumble in them."[5]

572 Hypothesis of the apostles as impostors.

The time clearly, the manner obscurely.

Five proofs of Figuratives.

2,000

1,600—Prophets. / 400—Scattered.[6]

573 *Blindness—of Scripture*.—Scripture, said the Jews, says that no one will know where the Christ comes from. *John* 7:27—And 12:34. Scripture says that the Christ abides forever, and this man says that he will die.

So, says Saint John, they did not believe, though he had done so many miracles, that the word of Isaiah might be fulfilled: *He has blinded them*, etc.[7]

574 *Greatness*.—Religion is so great a thing that it is right that those who would not take the trouble to seek it, if it is obscure, should be deprived of it. What, then, is there to complain of, if it is such that it can be found by seeking?

575 Everything turns to good for the elect, even the obscurities of Scripture; for they honor them because of the divine clarities. And everything turns to evil for the others, even the clarities; for they blaspheme them because of the obscurities they do not understand.

576 *General conduct of the world toward the Church: God willing to blind and to enlighten*.—Since the outcome has proved the divin-

5 Isa. 8:16 and 8:14; Matt. 11:6; Hos. 14:9.

6 The figures are apparently spans of years in Jewish history: some 1,600 years with prophets, then 400 years of dispersion.

7 John 12:37–40, quoting Isa. 6:10.

ity of these prophecies, the rest must therefore be believed; and by this we see the order of the world as follows: the miracles of the creation and the flood being forgotten, God sends the law and the miracles of Moses, and the prophets who prophesy particular things; and, to prepare a lasting miracle, he prepares prophecies and their fulfillment; but since the prophecies could be suspect, he wills to make them above suspicion, etc.

577 God has made the blindness of this people serve the good of the elect.

578 There is enough clarity to enlighten the elect and enough obscurity to humble them. There is enough obscurity to blind the reprobate and enough clarity to condemn them and leave them without excuse. (Saint Augustine; *Montaigne, Sebond.*)[8]

The genealogy of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament is mixed in among so many useless others that it cannot be distinguished. If Moses had recorded only the ancestors of Jesus Christ, it would have been too visible. If he had not marked out that of Jesus Christ, it would not have been visible enough. But, after all, whoever looks closely sees that of Jesus Christ clearly distinguished through Tamar, Ruth, etc.[9]

Those who ordained these sacrifices knew they were useless; those who declared them useless did not cease to practice them.

If God had permitted only one religion, it would have been too easily recognized; but look closely, and one clearly discerns the truth in this confusion.

Principle: Moses was an able man. So if he was guided by his own mind, he said nothing plainly that went directly against the mind.

So all the very obvious weaknesses are strengths. Example: the two genealogies of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke. What could be clearer than that this was not done by collusion?

579 God (and the apostles), foreseeing that the seeds of pride would give rise to heresies, and not wishing to give them occa-

8 Montaigne's "Apology for Raymond Sebond" (*Essays* II.12).

9 Tamar and Ruth, ancestresses of David, are named in Christ's genealogy (Matt. 1:3–5).

sion to arise through exact terms, placed in Scripture and in the prayers of the Church contrary words and sentences, to bear their fruit in due time.

Just as in morals he gives charity, which bears fruit against concupiscence.

580 Nature has perfections, to show that it is the image of God, and defects, to show that it is only his image.

581 God wishes to dispose the will more than the mind. Perfect clarity would help the mind and harm the will. Bring pride low.

582 We make an idol of truth itself; for truth apart from charity is not God; it is his image, and an idol, which we must neither love nor worship; and still less must we love or worship its contrary, which is falsehood.

I may well love total obscurity; but if God places me in a half-obscure state, the little obscurity there is displeases me, and, because I do not see in it the merit of complete obscurity, it does not please me. This is a fault, and a sign that I am making an idol of obscurity, separated from God's order. Now we must worship only his order.

583 The weaklings are people who know the truth, but uphold it only so far as their interest coincides with it; beyond that, they abandon it.

584 The world exists for the exercise of mercy and judgment—not as though men were in it as they came from the hands of God, but as enemies of God, to whom he gives by grace enough light to return, if they will seek him and follow him, but enough to punish them, if they refuse to seek him or follow him.

A HIDDEN GOD

God hides himself in part, so that men feel both their corruption and their hope.

585 *That God has willed to hide himself.*—If there were only one religion, God would be plainly manifest. If there were martyrs only in our religion, the same.

God being thus hidden, any religion that does not say that God is hidden is not true; and any religion that does not give the reason for it is not instructive. Ours does all this: *Truly you are a hidden God*.

586 If there were no obscurity, man would not feel his corruption; if there were no light, man would not hope for a remedy. So it is not only just but useful for us that God should be partly hidden and partly revealed, since it is equally dangerous for man to know God without knowing his wretchedness, and to know his wretchedness without knowing God.

587 This religion, so great in miracles, saints, devout, blameless, learned and great witnesses; martyrs; kings (David) established; Isaiah, a prince of the blood—so great in knowledge, after displaying all its miracles and all its wisdom, repudiates all this, and says that it has neither wisdom nor signs, but the cross and folly.

For those who by these signs and this wisdom have earned your belief, and who have proved their character to you, declare to you that nothing of all this can change us and make us capable of knowing and loving God except the power of the folly of the cross, without wisdom or signs; and not the signs without that power. So our religion is foolish if we look at the effective cause, and wise if we look at the wisdom that prepares for it.

588 Our religion is wise and foolish. Wise, because it is the most learned and the most founded on miracles, prophecies, etc. Foolish, because it is not all this that makes people belong to it; this does indeed condemn those who do not belong to it, but it does not make those who belong to it believe. What makes them believe is the cross, *lest the cross be emptied of its power*. And so Saint Paul, who came with wisdom and signs, says that he came neither with wisdom nor with signs: for he came to convert. But those who come only to convince can say that they come with wisdom and signs.[10]

588 bis *Contradictions*. Infinite wisdom and folly of religion.

10 1 Cor. 1:17; see also 1 Cor. 2:1–4.

Section IX: Perpetuity

La perpétuité
Other religions, Muhammad, China, and the continuity of the Jewish and Christian religion.

589 *On the fact that the Christian religion is not the only one.*—Far from being a reason for believing that it is not the true one, this is, on the contrary, what shows that it is.

590 In religion one must be sincere: true pagans, true Jews, true Christians.

591 Jesus Christ
Pagans
Muhammad
Ignorance / of God.

592 *Falsity of the other religions.*—They have no witnesses; these have. God challenges the other religions to produce such signs: Isa. 43:9; 44:8.

593 *History of China.*—I believe only those histories whose witnesses would let their throats be cut.[1]

[Which of the two is more credible, Moses or China?]

It is not a question of seeing this in the rough; I tell you there is enough to blind and enough to enlighten.

With this one word I destroy all your reasoning. "But China obscures things," you say; and I reply: China obscures things, but there is clarity to be found; look for it.

So everything you say serves one of the purposes, and nothing against the other. So it helps, and does no harm.

1 Jesuit accounts of Chinese annals (notably Martini, 1658) dated Chinese history earlier than the biblical Flood.

So we must look at this in detail; we must put our papers on the table.

[594] *Against the history of China.*—The historians of Mexico, with their five suns, the last of which was only eight hundred years ago.[2]

The difference between a book accepted by a people and one that forms a people.

MUHAMMAD

Muhammad was neither foretold nor confirmed by miracles; Christ took the opposite way, of perishing humanly.

[595] Muhammad, without authority. His reasons would therefore have to be very powerful, having only their own strength.

What, then, does he say? That we must believe him.

[596] The Psalms sung throughout the earth.

Who bears witness to Muhammad? He himself. Jesus Christ wills that his own testimony count for nothing.

The nature of witnesses requires that they be always and everywhere; and he, wretched man, is alone.

[597] *Against Muhammad.*—The Qur'an is no more Muhammad's than the Gospel is Saint Matthew's, for it is cited by many authors from century to century; even its enemies, Celsus and Porphyry, never disowned it.[3]

The Qur'an says that Saint Matthew was a good man. So Muhammad was a false prophet, either in calling wicked men good, or in not agreeing with what they said about Jesus Christ.

[598] It is not by what is obscure in Muhammad, which can be passed off as a mysterious meaning, that I want him to be judged, but by what is clear: by his paradise and the rest. That is where he is ridiculous; and that is why it is not right to take his

2 The Aztec scheme of five world-ages or "suns", which Pascal knew from Montaigne's "Of coaches" (*Essays* III.6).

3 Celsus (2nd century AD) and Porphyry (3rd century AD), pagan philosophers who wrote against Christianity.

obscurities for mysteries, given that his clear passages are ridiculous.

It is not the same with Scripture. I grant that there are obscurities in it as strange as those of Muhammad; but there are admirable clarities, and prophecies that are manifest and fulfilled. So the contest is not equal. We must not confuse and put on a level things that resemble each other only in their obscurity and not in their clarity, which deserves that we revere the obscurities.

599 *Difference between Jesus Christ and Muhammad.*—Muhammad, not foretold; Jesus Christ, foretold.

Muhammad, by killing; Jesus Christ, by having his own put to death.

Muhammad, by forbidding reading; the apostles, by commanding reading.

In short, the two are so opposed that, if Muhammad took the way of succeeding humanly, Jesus Christ took the way of perishing humanly; and that instead of concluding that, since Muhammad succeeded, Jesus Christ could well have succeeded, we must say that, since Muhammad succeeded, Jesus Christ had to perish.

600 Anyone can do what Muhammad did; for he performed no miracles, he was not foretold. No one can do what Jesus Christ did.

601 *Foundation of our faith.*—The pagan religion has no foundation [today. It is said that it once had one, through the oracles that spoke. But what are the books that assure us of this? Are they so worthy of belief through the virtue of their authors? Have they been preserved with such care that we can be sure they are not corrupted?]

The Muslim religion has as its foundation the Qur'an and Muhammad; but was this prophet, who was to be the world's final expectation, foretold? And what mark does he have that any man who chooses to call himself a prophet does not also have? What miracles does he himself say he performed? What mysteries did he teach, even according to his own tradition? What morality, and what happiness?

The Jewish religion must be viewed differently in the tradition of the holy books and in the tradition of the people. Its morality and its happiness are ridiculous in the tradition of the people, but admirable in that of their saints (and every religion is the same: for the Christian religion is very different in the holy books and in the casuists). Its foundation is admirable: it is the oldest book in the world and the most authentic; and whereas Muhammad, to make his book survive, forbade people to read it, Moses, to make his survive, commanded everyone to read it.[4]

Our religion is so divine that another divine religion is merely its foundation.

602 *Order*.—See what is clear and indisputable in the whole state of the Jews.

604 The only science that is against common sense and human nature is the only one that has always survived among men.

605 The only religion against nature, against common sense, against our pleasures, is the only one that has always existed.

606 No religion but ours has taught that man is born in sin; no sect of philosophers has said so: so none has told the truth.

No sect or religion has always existed on earth except the Christian religion.

607 Whoever judges the religion of the Jews by its coarser members will misunderstand it. It is visible in the holy books and in the tradition of the prophets, who made it clear enough that they did not understand the law literally. So our religion is divine in the Gospel, the apostles and tradition; but it is ridiculous in those who handle it badly.

CARNAL AND SPIRITUAL

Each religion has carnal and spiritual members; true Jews and true Christians await a Messiah who makes them love God.

The Messiah, according to the carnal Jews, is to be a great temporal prince. Jesus Christ, according to carnal Christians, came

to dispense us from loving God, and to give us sacraments that do everything without us. Neither the one nor the other is the Christian religion, or the Jewish.

True Jews and true Christians have always awaited a Messiah who would make them love God, and by that love triumph over their enemies.

608 The carnal Jews stand midway between Christians and pagans. Pagans do not know God, and love only the earth. Jews know the true God, and love only the earth. Christians know the true God, and do not love the earth. Jews and pagans love the same goods. Jews and Christians know the same God.

The Jews were of two kinds: some had only pagan affections, the others had Christian affections.

609 Two kinds of men in each religion: among the pagans, worshipers of beasts, and the others, worshipers of one God in natural religion. Among the Jews, the carnal, and the spiritual, who were the Christians of the old law. Among the Christians, the coarse, who are the Jews of the new law.

The carnal Jews awaited a carnal Messiah, and coarse Christians believe that the Messiah has dispensed them from loving God: true Jews and true Christians worship a Messiah who makes them love God.

ONE RELIGION OF TRUE JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

Scripture shows that the Jewish religion consisted not in ceremonies but in the love of God.

610 *To show that true Jews and true Christians have one and the same religion.*—The religion of the Jews seemed to consist essentially in the fatherhood of Abraham, in circumcision, in sacrifices, in ceremonies, in the Ark, in the Temple, in Jerusalem, and finally in the law and the covenant of Moses.

I say that it consisted in none of these things, but only in the love of God, and that God rejected all the other things.

4 Casuists: moral theologians who settled particular cases of conscience; Pascal attacked the Jesuit casuists in the *Provincial Letters*.

That God did not show favor to the posterity of Abraham.

That the Jews will be punished by God like foreigners if they offend him. *Deut.* 8:19: "If you forget God and follow foreign gods, I foretell that you will perish in the same way as the nations that God destroyed before you."

That foreigners will be received by God like the Jews if they love him. Isa. 56:3: "Let not the foreigner say, The Lord will not receive me.—The foreigners who hold fast to God shall serve him and love him: I will bring them to my holy mountain, and receive sacrifices from them, for my house is the house of prayer."

That true Jews regarded their merit as coming from God alone, and not from Abraham. Isa. 63:16: "You are truly our father, and Abraham has not known us, and Israel has had no knowledge of us; but it is you who are our father and our redeemer."

Moses himself told them that God would show no favor to persons. *Deut.* 10:17: "God," he says, "shows no favor to persons, nor to sacrifices."

The Sabbath was only a sign, *Exod.* 31:13; and in memory of the departure from Egypt, *Deut.* 5:15. So it is no longer necessary, since Egypt must be forgotten.

Circumcision was only a sign, *Gen.* 17:11. And that is why, while they were in the desert, they were not circumcised, because they could not be mixed up with other peoples; and why, since Jesus Christ came, it is no longer necessary.

That circumcision of the heart is commanded. *Deut.* 10:16; Jer. 4:4: "Be circumcised in heart; cut away the superfluities of your heart, and harden yourselves no more; for your God is a great God, mighty and terrible, who shows no favor to persons."

That God said he would do it one day. *Deut.* 30:6: "God will circumcise your heart, and the hearts of your children, so that you may love him with all your heart."

That the uncircumcised in heart will be judged. Jer. 9:26: For God will judge the uncircumcised nations and all the people of Israel, because it is "uncircumcised in heart."

That the outward is worth nothing without the inward. Joel 2:13: *Rend your hearts*, etc. Isa. 58:3, 4, etc.

The love of God is enjoined throughout Deuteronomy. *Deut.* 30:19: "I call heaven and earth to witness that I have set before you death and life, so that you may choose life, and love God, and obey him; for it is God who is your life."

That the Jews, for lack of this love, would be rejected for their crimes, and the pagans chosen in their place. Hos. 1:10; *Deut.* 32:20: "I will hide myself from them, in view of their final crimes; for they are a wicked and faithless nation. They have provoked me to anger with things that are not gods, and I will provoke them to jealousy with a people that is not my people, and with a nation without knowledge and without understanding." Isa. 65:1.

That temporal goods are false, and that the true good is to be united with God. *Ps.* 143:15.[5]

That their feasts displease God. Amos 5:21.

That the sacrifices of the Jews displease God. Isa. 66:1–3; 1:11; Jer. 6:20. David, *Have mercy*.—Even on the part of the good, *I waited*. *Ps.* 49:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.[6]

That he established them only because of their hardness. Micah, admirably, chapter 6. *1 Sam.* 15:22; Hos. 6:6.

That the sacrifices of the pagans will be accepted by God, and that God will withdraw his goodwill from the sacrifices of the Jews. Mal. 1:11.

That God will make a new covenant through the Messiah, and that the old one will be rejected. Jer. 31:31.

Commandments that were not good. Ezek.

That the former things will be forgotten. Isa. 43:18, 19; 65:17, 18.

That the ark will no longer be remembered. Jer. 3:15, 16.

That the temple would be rejected. Jer. 7:12, 13, 14.

5 Pascal numbers the Psalms as in the Latin Vulgate, usually one lower than in most modern Bibles (here Ps. 144:15).

6 Pascal names two psalms by their Latin opening words: *Miserere* ("Have mercy"), Ps. 51, and *Exspectavi* ("I waited"), Ps. 40; both say God does not desire sacrifices.

That the sacrifices would be rejected, and other, pure sacrifices established. Mal. 1:11.[7]

That the order of Aaron's priesthood would be rejected, and that of Melchizedek brought in by the Messiah. *The Lord said*.[8]

That this priesthood would be eternal. *Ibid.*

That Jerusalem would be rejected, and Rome admitted. *The Lord said.*

That the name of the Jews would be rejected and a new name given. Isa. 65:15.

That this last name would be better than that of Jews, and eternal. Isa. 56:5.

That the Jews were to be without prophets (Amos), without king, without princes, without sacrifice, without idol.

That the Jews would nevertheless always survive as a people. Jer. 31:36.

611 *Commonwealth*.—The Christian commonwealth, and even the Jewish one, has had God alone for its master, as Philo the Jew remarks, *On Monarchy*.[9]

When they fought, it was only for God; [they] placed their hope chiefly in God alone; they regarded their cities only as belonging to God, and kept them for God. 1 *Chron.* 19:13.

612 *Gen.* 17: *I will establish my covenant between me and you as an everlasting covenant... that I may be your God...*

You therefore shall keep my covenant.[10]

PERPETUITY

Belief in a fallen humanity and a coming Messiah has always existed and has survived every attack.

613 *Perpetuity*.—This religion, which consists in believing that man has fallen from a state of glory and communion with God into a state of sorrow, penitence and estrangement from God,

7 Ezek. 20:25.

8 Ps. 110 (Vulgate 109), which opens "The Lord said to my lord" and calls him "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

9 Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BC–c. AD 50), Jewish philosopher who wrote in Greek.

10 Gen. 17:9.

but that after this life we shall be restored by a Messiah who was to come, has always existed on earth. All things have passed away, and this has endured, for whose sake all things exist.

Men in the first age of the world were swept into every kind of disorder, and yet there were saints, such as Enoch, Lamech and others, who waited patiently for the Christ promised from the beginning of the world. Noah saw the wickedness of men at its height; and he was found worthy to save the world in his own person, through hope in the Messiah, of whom he was the figure. Abraham was surrounded by idolaters when God made known to him the mystery of the Messiah, whom he greeted from afar. In the time of Isaac and Jacob, abomination had spread over the whole earth; but these saints lived in faith. And Jacob, dying and blessing his children, cries out, in a rapture that makes him break off his speech: "I wait, O my God, for the Savior you have promised: *I will wait for your salvation, O Lord*." The Egyptians were infected both with idolatry and with magic; even the people of God were led astray by their example; but Moses and others nonetheless believed in him whom they did not see, and worshiped him, looking to the eternal gifts he was preparing for them.[11]

The Greeks, and after them the Latins, made false gods reign; the poets made a hundred different theologies; the philosophers split into a thousand different sects; and yet there were always, in the heart of Judea, chosen men who foretold the coming of this Messiah, who was known to them alone.

He came at last in the consummation of time; and since then we have seen so many schisms and heresies arise, so many states overthrown, so many changes in everything; and this Church, which worships him who has always been worshiped, has endured without interruption. And what is wonderful, incomparable and altogether divine is that this religion, which has always lasted, has always been under attack. A thousand times it has been on the eve of total destruction; and every time it has been in that state, God has raised it up again by

11 Gen. 49:18.

extraordinary strokes of his power. That is what is astonishing—and that it has held firm without bending or yielding to the will of tyrants. For it is not strange that a state should survive when its laws are sometimes made to give way to necessity, but that... (See the circle in Montaigne.)[12]

614 States would perish if the laws were not often made to bend to necessity; but religion has never tolerated this, nor made use of it. So there must be these accommodations, or else miracles. It is not strange that something survives by bending, and that is not, properly speaking, holding firm; and even so, states do finally perish entirely: not one has lasted a thousand years. But that this religion should always have held firm, and unbending—that is divine.

615 Say what you will. It must be admitted that the Christian religion has something astonishing about it. "That is because you were born in it," people will say. Far from it: I brace myself against it for that very reason, for fear that this bias might bribe me; but, though I was born in it, I still find it so.

616 *Perpetuity*.—The Messiah has always been believed in. The tradition from Adam was still fresh in Noah and in Moses. The prophets foretold him afterward, while also foretelling other things, whose fulfillment, coming to pass from time to time before men's eyes, showed the truth of their mission, and consequently that of their promises concerning the Messiah. Jesus Christ worked miracles, and so did the apostles, who converted all the pagans; and in this way, all the prophecies being fulfilled, the Messiah is proved forever.

617 *Perpetuity*.—Let us consider that, since the beginning of the world, the expectation or the worship of the Messiah has continued without interruption; that there were men who said that God had revealed to them that a Redeemer would be born who would save his people; that Abraham then came and said he had had a revelation that the Redeemer would be born of him, through a son he would have; that Jacob declared that, of his twelve children, he would be born of Judah; that Moses and the

12 Apparently a mark Pascal had drawn in his copy of Montaigne to flag a passage.

prophets then came and declared the time and manner of his coming; that they said the law they had was only provisional, until that of the Messiah; that until then it would be perpetual, but that the other would last eternally; that thus their law, or that of the Messiah of which it was the promise, would always be on earth; that in fact it has always lasted; that finally Jesus Christ came, in all the circumstances foretold. This is wonderful.

618 This is fact. While all the philosophers split into different sects, there are found in one corner of the world people who are the most ancient in the world, declaring that the whole world is in error, that God has revealed the truth to them, that it will always be on earth. And in fact all the other sects come to an end; this one still endures, and has for 4,000 years.

They declare that they have it from their ancestors that man has fallen from communion with God into complete estrangement from God, but that God has promised to redeem them; that this doctrine would always be on earth; that their law has a double meaning; that for 1,600 years they had men they believed to be prophets, who foretold the time and the manner; that 400 years later they were scattered everywhere, because Jesus Christ was to be proclaimed everywhere; that Jesus Christ came in the manner and at the time foretold; that since then the Jews have been scattered everywhere, under a curse and yet surviving.

THE JEWISH PEOPLE

A people descended from one man, the oldest on earth, keeps the oldest and most perfect law.

619 I see the Christian religion founded on an earlier religion, and here is what I find to be fact.

I say nothing here of the miracles of Moses, of Jesus Christ and of the apostles, because they do not seem convincing at first, and because I want only to bring to light here those foundations of this Christian religion which are beyond doubt, and

which cannot be called into question by anyone whatever. It is certain that we see in several places in the world a particular people, separate from all the other peoples of the world, called the Jewish people.

So I see a profusion of religions in many places in the world and in every age; but they have neither a morality that can please me nor proofs that can hold me. And so I would have rejected equally the religion of Muhammad, and that of China, and that of the ancient Romans, and that of the Egyptians, for this one reason: since the one has no more [*of the*] marks of truth than the other, nor anything that necessarily decides the matter, reason cannot incline toward one rather than the other.

But as I consider in this way this fickle and bizarre variety of manners and beliefs in different ages, I find in one corner of the world a particular people, separate from all the other peoples of the earth, the most ancient of all, whose histories precede by several centuries the most ancient we have.

So I find this people, great and numerous, descended from a single man, who worship a single God and are governed by a law they say they received from his hand. They maintain that they are the only ones in the world to whom God has revealed his mysteries; that all men are corrupt and out of God's favor; that they are all abandoned to their senses and to their own minds, and that from this come the strange aberrations and continual changes that occur among them, both of religions and of customs, whereas they themselves remain unshakable in their conduct. But, they say, God will not leave the other peoples in this darkness forever; a deliverer will come for all; they are in the world to announce him to men; they were formed expressly to be the forerunners and heralds of this great coming, and to call all peoples to unite with them in awaiting this deliverer.

Coming upon this people astonishes me, and seems to me worthy of attention. I consider this law which they boast of having received from God, and I find it wonderful. It is the first law of all, and so much so that, even before the word law was in use among the Greeks, they had received it and observed it without

interruption for nearly a thousand years. So I find it strange that the first law in the world should also prove to be the most perfect, so that the greatest lawgivers borrowed theirs from it, as appears from the law of the Twelve Tables of Athens, which was afterward taken over by the Romans, and as it [*would be*] easy to show, if Josephus and others had not dealt with this subject sufficiently.[13]

620 *Advantages of the Jewish people.*—In this inquiry, the Jewish people at once draws my attention by a number of wonderful and singular things that appear in it.

I see first that it is a people made up entirely of brothers. Whereas all others are formed by the joining of countless families, this one, though so astonishingly numerous, has sprung entirely from one man; and, being thus all one flesh and members of one another, [*they*] make up a powerful state out of a single family. This is unique.

This family, or this people, is the most ancient within the knowledge of men; which seems to me to earn it a particular veneration, and especially in the inquiry we are making, since, if God has at all times communicated himself to men, it is to these people that we must turn to learn the tradition.

This people is not only remarkable for its antiquity; it is also singular in its duration, which has continued unbroken from its origin until now. For whereas the peoples of Greece and Italy, of Lacedaemon, of Athens, of Rome, and the others who came so much later, perished long ago, these still survive. Despite the efforts of so many powerful kings who have tried a hundred times to destroy them, as their historians testify, and as one can easily judge from the natural order of things over so long a span of years, they have nevertheless always been preserved (and this preservation was foretold). And extending from the earliest times to the latest, their history contains within its span that of all our histories [which it precedes by a very long time].

13 The Twelve Tables (c. 450 BC) were Rome's earliest law code, said to have been modeled on the laws of Athens. Josephus (AD 37–c. 100) was a Jewish historian writing in Greek.

The law by which this people is governed is at once the most ancient law in the world, the most perfect, and the only one that has always been kept without interruption in a state. This is what Josephus shows admirably against Apion, and Philo the Jew in various places, where they show that it is so ancient that the very name of law was not known to the most ancient peoples until more than a thousand years later; so that Homer, who wrote of the history of so many states, never used it.[14] And it is easy to judge its perfection simply by reading it, where one sees that everything has been provided for with such wisdom, such equity, such judgment, that the most ancient Greek and Roman lawgivers, having had some glimpse of it, borrowed their principal laws from it; as appears from the law they call the Twelve Tables, and from the other proofs Josephus gives of it.

But this law is at the same time the most severe and rigorous of all as regards the worship of their religion, binding this people, to keep them to their duty, to a thousand particular and burdensome observances, on pain of death. So it is a very astonishing thing that it should have been kept so constantly for so many centuries by a people as rebellious and impatient as this one, while all other states have changed their laws from time to time, though these were far easier.

The book containing this law, the first of all, is itself the oldest book in the world, those of Homer, Hesiod and the others coming only six or seven hundred years later.

621 The creation and the flood being past, and God no longer intending to destroy the world, nor to create it anew, nor to give such great signs of himself, he began to establish on earth a people, formed expressly, which was to last until the people the Messiah would form by his spirit.

622 As the creation of the world began to recede into the past, God provided a single contemporary historian, and appointed an entire people to guard this book, so that this history might be the most authentic in the world, and all men might learn from it

14 Josephus's treatise *Against Apion* defends the antiquity of the Jews against Greek critics; it observes that Homer never uses the Greek word for law (*nomos*).

a thing so necessary to know, and one that could be known only from it.

623 [Japheth begins the genealogy].

Joseph crosses his arms and prefers the younger.[15]

624 Why does Moses make men's lives so long, and their generations so few?

For it is not the length of years but the number of generations that makes things obscure; for truth is altered only by the change of men. And yet he places the two most memorable things ever imagined, namely the creation and the flood, so close together that one can touch them.

625 Shem, who saw Lamech, who saw Adam, also saw Jacob, who saw those who saw Moses; therefore the flood and the creation are true. This is conclusive among certain people who understand it rightly.

626 *Another circle.*—The length of the patriarchs' lives, instead of causing the stories of past events to be lost, served rather to preserve them. For the reason we are sometimes not well enough informed about the history of our ancestors is that we have hardly ever lived with them, and that they have often died before we reached the age of reason. Now, when men lived so long, children lived a long time with their fathers; the fathers talked with them for a long time. And what would they have talked with them about, if not the history of their ancestors? For all history came down to that, and they had no studies, no sciences, no arts, which take up a large part of the conversation of life. And so we see that in those times peoples took particular care to preserve their genealogies.

627 I believe that Joshua was the first of the people of God to bear this name, as Jesus Christ was the last of the people of God.[16]

15 In Gen. 48:14 it is Jacob who crosses his hands to bless Ephraim, the younger of Joseph's sons, above Manasseh.

16 In Hebrew, Joshua and Jesus are the same name (Yehoshua, "the Lord saves").

ANCIENT BOOKS AND THEIR WITNESSES

Contemporary histories deserve belief; fables like Homer's, and the legend of Ezra, do not.

628 *Antiquity of the Jews.*—What a difference there is between one book and another! I am not surprised that the Greeks produced the *Iliad*, nor the Egyptians and the Chinese their histories.

We need only see how this came about. These fabulous historians are not contemporaries of the things they write about. Homer writes a romance, which he offers as such and which is received as such; [for nobody doubted that Troy and Agamemnon had no more existed than the golden apple]. Nor did he intend to make a history of it, but only a diversion. He is the only one writing in his time; the beauty of the work makes the thing last; everyone learns it and talks about it; one has to know it; everyone knows it by heart. Four hundred years later, the witnesses of the events are no longer alive; nobody knows any longer from his own knowledge whether it is fable or history: people have only learned it from their ancestors, and it can pass for true.

All history that is not contemporary is suspect. Thus the books of the sibyls and of Trismegistus, and so many others that have enjoyed credit in the world, are false, and are found to be false in the course of time. It is not so with contemporary authors.[17]

There is a great difference between a book that a private individual writes and throws out among the people, and a book that a people itself writes. There can be no doubt that such a book is as old as the people.

629 Josephus hides the shame of his nation.

Moses does not hide his own shame.

Who will grant me that all may prophesy?

17 The Sibylline Oracles and the writings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus passed for very ancient but were shown in 1614 (by Isaac Casaubon, for the latter) to date from the early Christian era.

He was weary of the people.[18]

630 *The sincerity of the Jews*.—Since they have had no more prophets, Maccabees; since Jesus Christ, Masorah.[19]

"This book shall be a witness for you."

The defective and final letters.[20]

Sincere against their own honor, and dying for it: this has no precedent in the world, nor any root in nature.

631 *Sincerity of the Jews*.—They carry with love and fidelity this book in which Moses declares that they have been ungrateful toward God all their lives, that he knows they will be even more so after his death; but that he calls heaven and earth to witness against them, and that he has [taught] it to them sufficiently.

He declares that in the end God, growing angry with them, will scatter them among all the peoples of the earth; that, as they angered him by worshiping gods that were not their God, so he will provoke them by calling a people that is not his people. And he wants all his words to be kept forever, and his book to be [*placed*] in the ark of the covenant, to serve forever as a witness against them.

Isaiah says the same thing, chapter 30.

632 *On Ezra*.—Fable: the books were burned with the temple. Shown false by Maccabees: *Jeremiah gave them the law*.[21]

Fable: that he recited everything by heart. Josephus and Ezra state *that he read the book*. Baronius, *Annals*, 180: *Not one of the ancient Hebrews is found who has reported that the books perished and were restored by Ezra, except in 4 Esdras*.[22]

Fable: that he changed the letters. Philo, in the *Life of Moses*: *The language and script in which the law was written in ancient*

18 Num. 11:29; Moses' weariness with the people is in Num. 11:11–15.

19 The Masorah is the body of notes by which Jewish scholars preserved the exact text of the Hebrew Bible, down to its letters.

20 Deut. 31:26. The "defective and final letters" are peculiarities of spelling faithfully preserved by the Hebrew copyists.

21 A legend (from the apocryphal 4 Esdras) held that the Scriptures perished with the Temple and that Ezra restored them; 2 Macc. 2:2 says Jeremiah gave the law to the exiles.

22 Cesare Baronius (1538–1607), cardinal and author of the *Ecclesiastical Annals*.

times remained so until the Seventy. Josephus says that the law was in Hebrew when it was translated by the Seventy.[23]

Under Antiochus and Vespasian, when there was an attempt to abolish the books and there was no prophet, it could not be done; and under the Babylonians, when no persecution took place and there were so many prophets, would they have let it be burned? Josephus mocks the Jews who would not endure....[24]

Tertullian: *He could just as well have re-formed it in the spirit after it had been destroyed by the violence of the flood, as, after Jerusalem was destroyed in the Babylonian conquest, every document of Jewish literature is agreed to have been restored through Ezra.* He says that Noah could just as well have restored in spirit the book of Enoch, lost in the flood, as Ezra could restore the Scriptures lost during the captivity.[25]

God, when the Scriptures had been destroyed during the captivity of the people under Nebuchadnezzar, inspired Ezra the priest, of the tribe of Levi, to set in order all the words of the prophets who had gone before, and to restore to the people the legislation given through Moses. He adduces this to prove that it is not incredible that the Seventy should have interpreted the Holy Scriptures with the uniformity that is admired in them. Eusebius, *History*, book 5, chapter 8; and he took this from Saint Irenaeus.

Saint Hilary, in the preface to the Psalms, says that Ezra put the Psalms in order. The origin of this tradition is chapter 14 of the fourth book of *Esdras*.

God was glorified, and the Scriptures were believed to be truly divine, since all of them recited the same things, in the same words and with the same names, from beginning to end, so that even the heathen then present might recognize that the Scriptures had been translated by the inspiration of God. Nor was it surprising that God should have done this in them: for when, in the captivity of the people brought about by Nebuchadnezzar, the Scriptures had been corrupted,

23 The Seventy: the translators said to have produced the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, at Alexandria in the 3rd century BC.
24 Antiochus IV Epiphanes persecuted the Jews in the 2nd century BC; Vespasian led the Roman war against Judea in AD 67–69.
25 Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women* 1.3.

and after 70 years the Jews had returned to their own land, then afterward, in the times of Artaxerxes king of the Persians, he inspired Ezra the priest, of the tribe of Levi, to recall all the words of the prophets who had gone before, and to restore to the people the law that was given through Moses.[26]

633 *Against the fable of Ezra*, 2 *Macc.* 2.—Josephus, *Antiquities* 2.1: Cyrus took occasion from Isaiah's prophecy to release the people; the Jews held peaceful possessions under Cyrus in Babylon, so they could well have had the law. 2 *Kings* 17:27.

Josephus, in the whole history of Ezra, does not say a word about this restoration.

634 If the fable of Ezra is credible, then we must believe that Scripture is Holy Scripture; for this fable rests only on the authority of those who tell the story of the Seventy, which shows that Scripture is holy.

So, if this tale is true, we get what we need from it; if not, we get it elsewhere. And so those who would destroy the truth of our religion, founded on Moses, establish it by the very authority with which they attack it. Thus, by this providence, it always endures.

635 *Chronology of Rabbinism*. (The page citations are from the book *Pugio*.)[27]

Page 27, R. Hakadosh (AD 200), author of the *Mishnah*, or oral law, or second law.[28]

Commentaries on the *Mishnah* (AD 340):

one, *Sifra*.
Baraitot.
Jerusalem Talmud.
Tosefta.

Bereshit Rabbah, by R. Oshaiah Rabbah, a commentary on the *Mishnah*.

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26 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.21.2.
27 Raymond Martini's *Pugio fidei* ("Dagger of Faith"), in its 1651 printed edition.
28 Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, called "the Holy" (Hakadosh), who compiled the Mishnah around AD 200.

Bereshit Rabbah, *Bar Nachmoni*, are subtle, pleasant discourses, historical and theological. The same author wrote books called *Rabbot*.

A hundred years after the *Jerusalem Talmud*, the *Babylonian Talmud* was compiled, by R. Ashi (440), with the universal consent of all the Jews, who are strictly bound to observe everything it contains. R. Ashi's addition is called the *Gemara*, that is, the commentary on the *Mishnah*.

And the Talmud comprises the *Mishnah* and the *Gemara* together.

636 *If* does not indicate indifference: Malachi, Isaiah. Isa., *If we are willing*, etc.

In whatever day.[29]

THE SCEPTER AND THE CAPTIVITY

The Babylonian exile came with a promise of return; the present dispersion has none.

637 *Prophecies*.—The scepter was not interrupted by the Babylonian captivity, because the return was promised and foretold.[30]

638 *Proofs of Jesus Christ*.—It is not being captive to be so with the assurance of being freed in seventy years; but now they are captive without any hope.

God promised them that, even though he would scatter them to the ends of the earth, nevertheless, if they were faithful to his law, he would gather them together again; they are very faithful to it, and remain oppressed.

639 When Nebuchadnezzar carried the people away, lest it be thought that the scepter had been taken from Judah, they were told beforehand that they would be there only a short time, and that they would be restored. They were always comforted by the prophets; their kings continued. But the second destruction is

29 Compare Isa. 1:19, "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land."

30 Gen. 49:10: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah ... until Shiloh come," read as a prophecy of the Messiah.

without promise of restoration, without prophets, without kings, without consolation, without hope, because the scepter is taken away forever.

640 It is an astonishing thing, and worthy of extraordinary attention, to see this Jewish people surviving for so many years, and to see it always wretched: for it is necessary for the proof of Jesus Christ both that it should survive, to prove him, and that it should be wretched, since they crucified him. And though being wretched and surviving are contrary, it survives nevertheless, in spite of its wretchedness.

641 It is plainly a people made expressly to serve as witness to the Messiah (Isa. 43:9; 44:8). It carries the books, and loves them, and does not understand them. And all this is foretold: that God's judgments are entrusted to them, but as a sealed book.

Section X: The figures

Les figuratifs
How the Old Testament speaks in figures of Christ.

642 *Proof of both Testaments at once*.—To prove both at one stroke, we need only see whether the prophecies of the one are fulfilled in the other. To examine the prophecies, we must understand them. For if we believe they have only one meaning, it is certain that the Messiah will not have come; but if they have two meanings, it is certain that he will have come in Jesus Christ.

The whole question, then, is whether they have two meanings.

That Scripture has two meanings, which Jesus Christ and the apostles gave it; here are the proofs:

1. Proof from Scripture itself;

2. Proof from the rabbis: Moses Maimonides says that it has two faces, and that the prophets prophesied only of Jesus Christ;[1]

3. Proof from the Kabbalah;

4. Proof from the mystical interpretation that the rabbis themselves give to Scripture;

5. Proof from the principles of the rabbis: that there are two meanings; that there are two comings of the Messiah, glorious or abject, according to their merit; that the prophets prophesied only of the Messiah—the law is not eternal, but must change with the Messiah—that then the Red Sea will no longer be remembered; that the Jews and the Gentiles will be mingled;

1 Moses Maimonides (1138–1204), the great Jewish philosopher and legal scholar.

[6. Proofs from the key that Jesus Christ and the apostles give us.]

643 Isa. 51: The Red Sea, an image of the Redemption. *That you may know that the Son of man has power to forgive sins, I say to you: Arise*. God, wishing to show that he could form a holy people with an invisible holiness and fill it with eternal glory, did visible things. As nature is an image of grace, he did in the goods of nature what he was to do in those of grace, so that men might judge that he could do the invisible, since he did indeed do the visible.[2]

So he saved this people from the flood; he had it born of Abraham; he redeemed it from among its enemies, and brought it into rest.

God's purpose was not to save from the flood, and to have a whole people born of Abraham, only to bring it into a rich land.

And even grace is only the figure of glory, for it is not the final end. It was figured by the law, and itself figures [*glory*]: but it is its figure, and its principle or cause.

The ordinary life of men is like that of the saints. They all seek their satisfaction, and differ only in the object in which they place it; they call their enemies those who hinder them from it, etc. God has thus shown the power he has to give invisible goods by the power he has shown he has over visible ones.

FIGURES OF SALVATION

God showed his power over invisible goods by the visible goods he gave the Jews.

644 *Figures*.—God, wishing to form for himself a holy people, whom he would separate from all other nations, deliver from its enemies, and set in a place of rest, promised to do so, and foretold by his prophets the time and manner of his coming. And meanwhile, to strengthen the hope of his elect, he showed them an image of it in every age, never leaving them without assurances of his power and of his will for their salvation. For at the

2 Mark 2:10–11.

creation of man, Adam was its witness, and the trustee of the promise of the Savior who was to be born of the woman, when men were still so near the creation that they could not have forgotten their creation and their fall. When those who had seen Adam were no longer in the world, God sent Noah, and saved him, and drowned the whole earth, by a miracle that showed clearly enough the power he had to save the world, and the will he had to do so, and to cause the one he had promised to be born of the seed of the woman. This miracle was enough to strengthen the hope of the...

The memory of the flood being still so fresh among men, while Noah was still living, God made his promises to Abraham; and while Shem was still living, God sent Moses, etc...

645 *Figures*.—God, wishing to deprive his own of perishable goods, made the Jewish people, to show that it was not from lack of power.

646 The synagogue did not perish, because it was the figure; but because it was only the figure, it fell into servitude. The figure lasted until the truth came, so that the Church might always be visible, either in the picture that promised it or in the reality.

647 That the law was figurative.

648 Two errors: 1. taking everything literally; 2. taking everything spiritually.

649 Speak against the extreme figurists.

650 There are clear and demonstrative figures; but there are others that seem a little far-fetched, and that prove only to those who are persuaded on other grounds. These are like those of the apocalyptics; but the difference is that they have none that are beyond doubt. So nothing is as unjust as when they claim that theirs are as well founded as some of ours; for they have none that are demonstrative, as some of ours are. The contest, then, is not equal.[3] We must not put these things on a level and confuse them, because they seem alike at one end while being so differ-

3 The "apocalyptics" were interpreters who read the Book of Revelation as a detailed forecast of historical events.

ent at the other. It is the clear passages which, when they are divine, earn our reverence for the obscure ones.

[It is like people who share a certain obscure language: those who did not understand it would find only a foolish meaning in it.]

651 *Extravagances of the Apocalyptics, and Pre-Adamites, Millenarians*, etc.—Whoever wants to found extravagant opinions on Scripture will found them, for example, on this: It is said that this generation shall not pass away until all this is done. On that I will say that after this generation another generation will come, and so on in succession.[4]

In 2 *Chronicles* Solomon and the king are spoken of as if they were two different persons. I will say that they were two.

652 *Particular figures*.—Double law, double tables of the law, double temple, double captivity.

653 *Figures*.—The prophets prophesied through figures of belts, of beards and of burnt hair, etc.[5]

654 Difference between dinner and supper.

In God, word does not differ from intention, for he is true; nor word from effect, for he is powerful; nor means from effect, for he is wise. Bernard, *last sermon on Missus*.[6]

Augustine, *City of God* 5.10. This rule is general: God can do everything, except those things which, if he could do them, he would not be almighty, such as dying, being deceived, and lying, etc.

Several Evangelists to confirm the truth: their differences useful.

The Eucharist after the Last Supper: truth after figure.

The ruin of Jerusalem: figure of the ruin of the world, forty years after the death of Jesus.

4 The Pre-Adamites held (after Isaac La Peyrère, 1655) that men existed before Adam; the Millenarians awaited Christ's thousand-year reign on earth. The saying is Matt. 24:34.

5 See Jer. 13 (the linen belt) and Ezek. 5 (the prophet's shaved hair and beard, part of it burned).

6 Saint Bernard of Clairvaux's homilies on the Gospel *Missus est* ("The angel was sent", Luke 1:26).

I do not know, as man, or as envoy. Matt. 24:36.

Jesus condemned by Jews and Gentiles.

The Jews and Gentiles figured by the two sons. Augustine, *City of God* 20.29.

655 The six ages, the six fathers of the six ages, the six wonders at the beginning of the six ages, the six dawns at the beginning of the six ages.[7]

656 Adam, *the figure of him who was to come*. Six days to form [*the*] one, six ages to form the other; the six days that Moses depicts for the forming of Adam are only the picture of the six ages for forming Jesus Christ and the Church. If Adam had not sinned, and Jesus Christ had not come, there would have been only one covenant, only one age of men, and creation would have been depicted as done at a single time.[8]

657 *Figures*.—The Jewish and Egyptian peoples plainly foretold by the two individuals whom Moses came upon: the Egyptian beating the Jew, Moses avenging him and killing the Egyptian, and the Jew being ungrateful for it.

658 (20v). The Gospel's figures for the state of the sick soul are sick bodies; but because one body cannot be sick enough to express it fully, several were needed. So there are the deaf man, the mute, the blind man, the paralytic, the dead Lazarus, the possessed man; all of this together is in the sick soul.

WHY THE OLD TESTAMENT IS FIGURATIVE

The prophets' own words show that the law and sacrifices point to something beyond themselves.

659 *Figures*.—To show that the Old Testament is only figurative, and that by temporal goods the prophets meant other goods, there is:

First, that this would be unworthy of God;

Second, that their words express very clearly the promise of temporal goods, and yet they say that their words are obscure,

7 Augustine divided world history into six ages, matching the six days of creation.
8 Rom. 5:14.

and that their meaning will not be understood. From which it appears that this secret meaning was not the one they expressed openly, and that consequently they meant to speak of other sacrifices, of another deliverer, etc. They say that it will be understood only at the end of time. Jer. 33, *last verse*.

The third proof is that their words are contradictory and cancel each other out, so that if we think that by the words "law" and "sacrifice" they meant nothing other than the law of Moses, there is a manifest and gross contradiction. Therefore they meant something else, contradicting themselves sometimes within the same chapter.

Now, to understand an author's meaning...

660 Concupiscence has become natural to us, and has made our second nature; so there are two natures in us: one good, the other bad. Where is God? Where you are not; and the kingdom of God is within you.—Rabbis.

661 Penance, alone of all the mysteries, was declared openly to the Jews, and by Saint John, the forerunner; and then the other mysteries. This was to show that in each man, as in the whole world, this order must be observed.

662 The carnal Jews understood neither the greatness nor the lowliness of the Messiah foretold in their prophecies. They failed to recognize him in his foretold greatness, as when he says that the Messiah will be David's lord, though his son, and that he is before Abraham, and that he has seen him. They did not believe him so great as to be eternal; and they likewise failed to recognize him in his lowliness and in his death. "The Messiah," they said, "abides forever, and this man says that he will die."—So they believed him neither mortal nor eternal: they sought in him only a carnal greatness.

663 *Figurative*.—Nothing is so like charity as cupidity, and nothing is so contrary to it. Thus the Jews, full of the goods that flattered their cupidity, were very like the Christians, and very contrary to them. In this way they had the two qualities they needed to have: to be very like the Messiah, so as to be his figure, and very contrary, so as not to be suspect witnesses.

664 *Figurative*.—God made use of the concupiscence of the Jews to make them serve Jesus Christ [who brought the remedy for concupiscence].

665 Charity is not a figurative precept. To say that Jesus Christ, who came to take away the figures and put the truth in their place, came only to put in place the figure of charity, taking away the reality that existed before: that is horrible.

"If the light is darkness, what will the darkness be?"[9]

666 Fascination. *Their sleep*. *The fashion of this world*.

The Eucharist. *You shall eat* your *bread*. Our *bread*.

The enemies of God shall lick the earth: sinners lick the earth, that is, they love earthly pleasures.[10]

The Old Testament contained the figures of the joy to come, and the New contains the means of reaching it.

The figures were of joy; the means, of penance. And yet the Paschal lamb was eaten with wild lettuces, *with bitter herbs*.[11]

I am alone until I pass over: Jesus Christ, before his death, was almost alone as a martyr.[12]

667 *Figurative*.—The terms "sword," "shield." *O most mighty*.[13]

668 We move away only by moving away from charity.

Our prayers and our virtues are abominable before God if they are not the prayers and virtues of Jesus Christ. And our sins will never be the object of the [*mercy*] but of the justice of God, if they are not [*those*] of Jesus Christ. He has adopted our sins, and has [*admitted us to his*] covenant; for virtues are [*his own, and*] sins foreign to him; and virtues [*are*] foreign to us, and our sins are our own.

Let us change the rule we have followed until [*now*] for judging what is good. We had our own will as the rule; let us now take the will of [*God*]: everything he wills is good and just for us, everything he does [*not will, bad*].

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9 Matt. 6:23.
10 Cf. Wisd. 4:12 ("the bewitching of vanity"); Ps. 76:5; 1 Cor. 7:31; Deut. 8:9; Matt. 6:11; Ps. 72:9.
11 Exod. 12:8.
12 Ps. 141:10.
13 Ps. 45:3: "Gird your sword upon your thigh, O most mighty."

Everything God does not will is forbidden. Sins are forbidden by the general declaration God has made that he did not will them. Other things, which he has left without a general prohibition and which for that reason are called permitted, are nevertheless not always permitted. For when God removes one of them from us, and it appears from the event (which is a manifestation of God's will) that God does not will us to have a thing, that thing is then forbidden to us as sin is, since God's will is that we should have the one no more than the other. There is only this difference between these two things: it is certain that God will never will sin, whereas it is not certain that he will never will the other. But so long as God does not will it, we must regard it as sin; so long as the absence of God's will, which alone is all goodness and all justice, makes it unjust and bad.

669 Changing the figure, because of our weakness.

CHARITY, THE SOLE OBJECT OF SCRIPTURE

Whatever in Scripture does not lead to charity is a figure; the Jews loved the figures instead.

670 *Figures.*—The Jews had grown old in these earthly thoughts: that God loved their father Abraham, his flesh and what came from it; that for this reason he had multiplied them and set them apart from all other peoples, without allowing them to mingle with them; that when they were languishing in Egypt he brought them out with all his great signs in their favor; that he fed them with manna in the desert; that he led them into a very rich land; that he gave them kings and a well-built temple in which to offer beasts, and that by the shedding of their blood they would be purified; and that at last he was to send them the Messiah to make them masters of the whole world. And he foretold the time of his coming.

The world having grown old in its carnal errors, Jesus Christ came at the time foretold, but not in the splendor expected; and so they did not think it was he. After his death, Saint Paul came to teach men that all these things had happened in figure; that

the kingdom of God consisted not in the flesh but in the spirit; that men's enemies were not the Babylonians but the passions; that God took no pleasure in temples made with hands, but in a pure and humbled heart; that circumcision of the body was useless, and circumcision of the heart was needed; that Moses had not given them the bread from heaven, etc.

But since God did not wish to reveal these things to this people, who were unworthy of them, and yet wished to foretell them so that they might be believed, he foretold their time clearly, and sometimes expressed them clearly, but abundantly in figures. He did so in order that those who loved the figuring things might stop at them, and those who loved the things figured might see them there.

Whatever does not lead to charity is figure.

The sole object of Scripture is charity.

Whatever does not lead to the sole end is a figure of it; for since there is only one end, whatever does not lead to it in literal terms is figurative.

God thus varies this sole precept of charity to satisfy our curiosity, which seeks variety, by a variety that always leads us to the one thing we need. For one thing alone is needful, and we love variety; and God satisfies both through these varieties, which lead to the one thing needful.

The Jews so loved the figuring things, and awaited them so fully, that they failed to recognize the reality when it came at the time and in the manner foretold.

The Rabbis take the breasts of the bride as figures, along with everything that does not express the sole end they have, temporal goods.[14]

And Christians take even the Eucharist as a figure of the glory toward which they tend.

671 The Jews, who were called to subdue nations and kings, were slaves of sin; and the Christians, whose calling was to serve and to be subjects, are the free children.

672 *For formalists*.—When Saint Peter and the apostles deliberate about abolishing circumcision, where it was a question of acting against the law of God, they do not consult the prophets, but simply the reception of the Holy Spirit in the person of the uncircumcised.[15]

They judge it more certain that God approves those whom he fills with his Spirit than that the law must be observed. They knew that the end of the law was nothing but the Holy Spirit; and thus, since one had the Spirit without circumcision, circumcision was not necessary.

673 *Make it according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain*.[16]

The religion of the Jews was therefore formed on the likeness of the truth of the Messiah; and the truth of the Messiah was recognized through the religion of the Jews, which was its figure.

Among the Jews, the truth was only figured; in heaven, it is uncovered.

In the Church it is covered, and recognized by its relation to the figure.

The figure was made after the truth, and the truth was recognized from the figure.

Saint Paul himself says that people will forbid marriage, and he himself speaks of it to the Corinthians in a way that is a trap. For if a prophet had said the one, and Saint Paul had then said the other, he would have been accused.[17]

674 *Figurative*.—"Make all things according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." On which Saint Paul says that the Jews portrayed heavenly things.

675 And yet this Testament, made to blind some and enlighten others, marked, in the very people it blinded, the truth that was to be known by the others. For the visible goods they received

14 The bride of the Song of Songs (e.g. 4:5).
15 Acts 15; cf. Acts 10–11.
16 Exod. 25:40; Heb. 8:5.
17 1 Tim. 4:3; 1 Cor. 7.

from God were so great and so divine that it was plain he was able to give them the invisible ones, and a Messiah.

For nature is an image of grace, and visible miracles are images of the invisible. *That you may know... I say to you: Rise.*[18]

Isaiah 51 says that the redemption will be like the crossing of the Red Sea.

God therefore showed, in the going out from Egypt and from the sea, in the defeat of the kings, in the manna, in the whole lineage of Abraham, that he was able to save, to make bread come down from heaven, etc.; so that the enemy people are the figure and representation of the very Messiah whom they do not know, etc.

So he taught us at last that all these things were only figures, and what is meant by truly free, true Israelite, true circumcision, true bread from heaven, etc.

In those promises each person finds what he has at the bottom of his heart: temporal goods or spiritual goods, God or creatures. But there is this difference. Those who look there for creatures find them, but with many contradictions, with the prohibition against loving them, with the command to worship God alone and to love him alone (which is one and the same thing), and, finally, with the fact that no Messiah has come for them. Whereas those who look there for God find him, and without any contradiction, with the command to love him alone, and with the fact that a Messiah has come at the time foretold to give them the goods they ask for.

Thus the Jews had miracles, and prophecies they saw fulfilled; and the doctrine of their law was to worship and love one God alone; it was also perpetual. Thus it had all the marks of the true religion: and so it was. But we must distinguish the doctrine of the Jews from the doctrine of the law of the Jews. Now the doctrine of the Jews was not true, though it had miracles, prophecies and perpetuity, because it lacked this other point: to worship and love God alone.

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18 Mark 2:10–11.

676 The veil that lies over these books for the Jews lies there also for bad Christians, and for all who do not hate themselves.

But how well disposed we are to understand them and to know Jesus Christ when we truly hate ourselves!

THE CIPHER

The Old Testament is a cipher with a double meaning, whose key Christ and the apostles gave.

677 A figure carries absence and presence, pleasure and displeasure.

A cipher has a double meaning: one that is clear, and in which it is said that the meaning is hidden.

678 A portrait carries absence and presence, pleasure and displeasure. Reality excludes absence and displeasure.

Figures.—To know whether the law and the sacrifices are reality or figure, we must see whether the prophets, in speaking of these things, fixed their view and their thought on them, so that they saw in them only that old covenant, or whether they saw in them something else of which it was the picture; for in a portrait we see the thing figured. For that we need only examine what they say of them.

When they say that it will be eternal, do they mean the covenant of which they say that it will be changed? And the same for the sacrifices, etc.

A cipher has two meanings. Suppose one intercepts an important letter in which one finds a clear meaning, and in which it is nevertheless said that the meaning is veiled and obscured, that it is hidden so that one will see the letter without seeing it and understand it without understanding it. What must one think, except that it is a cipher with a double meaning? All the more so as one finds manifest contradictions in the literal sense. The prophets said clearly that Israel would always be loved by God, and that the law would be eternal; and they said that their meaning would not be understood, and that it was veiled.

How highly, then, we should esteem those who reveal the cipher to us and teach us to know the hidden meaning, especially when the principles they draw from it are entirely natural and clear! This is what Jesus Christ did, and the apostles: they broke the seal, he tore the veil and revealed the spirit. For that purpose they taught us that man's enemies are his passions; that the Redeemer would be spiritual, and his reign spiritual; that there would be two comings, one of wretchedness, to humble proud man, the other of glory, to raise humbled man; that Jesus Christ would be God and man.

679 *Figures*.—Jesus Christ opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.[19]

These are two great disclosures. 1. All things happened to them in figures: *truly Israelites, truly free*, true bread from heaven. 2. A God humbled even to the Cross: Christ had to suffer to enter into his glory; "that he would conquer death by his death." Two comings.

680 *Figures*.—Once this secret has been opened, it is impossible not to see it. Let the Old Testament be read in this light, and let us see whether the sacrifices were true, whether kinship with Abraham was the true cause of God's friendship, whether the promised land was the true place of rest.—No; so they were figures. Let us look in the same way at all the ceremonies ordained and all the commandments that are not for charity: we will see that they are its figures.

All these sacrifices and ceremonies were therefore either figures or foolishness. Now there are clear things too lofty to be thought foolishness.

To find out whether the prophets fixed their view on the Old Testament, or saw other things in it.

681 *Figurative*.—Key to the cipher: *True worshipers. Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world*.[20]

682 Isa. 1:21. Change from good to evil, and God's vengeance.

Isa. 10:1: *Woe to those who make unjust laws.* Isa. 26:20: *Go, my people, enter into your chambers, shut your doors upon you, hide*

19 Luke 24:45.

yourself for a little moment, until the wrath passes by.—Isa. 28:1: *Woe to the crown of pride.*

Miracles.—Isa. [33]:9: *The earth has mourned and languished; Lebanon is confounded and has withered, etc.*

Now I will rise up, says the Lord; now I will be exalted, now I will lift myself up.—Isa. 40:17: *All nations are as if they were not.*—Isa. 41:26: *Who has declared it from the beginning, that we may know, and from the start, that we may say: You are just?*—Isa. 43:13: *I will act, and who will turn it back?*—Jer. 11:21: *You shall not prophesy in the name of the Lord, and you shall not die at our hands. Therefore thus says the Lord.*[21]

Isa. 44:20: *Nor will he say: Perhaps there is a lie in my right hand.*

Isa. 44:21, etc.: *Remember these things, O Jacob and Israel, for you are my servant. I have formed you; you are my servant, Israel; do not forget me.*

I have blotted out your iniquities like a cloud, and your sins like a mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.[22]

44:23–24: *Praise, O heavens, for the Lord has shown mercy..., for the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and Israel shall glory. Thus says the Lord, your redeemer, who formed you from the womb: I am the Lord, who makes all things, who alone stretches out the heavens, who establishes the earth, and there is none with me.*

Isa. 54:8: *In a moment of indignation I hid my face from you for a little while, and with everlasting mercy I have had mercy on you, said the Lord your redeemer.*

Isa. 63:12: *Who led Moses by the right hand with the arm of his majesty, who divided the waters before them to make himself an everlasting name.*

14. *So you led your people, to make yourself a glorious name.*

Isa. 63:16: *For you are our father, and Abraham has not known us, and Israel has not recognized us.*

Isa. 63:17: *Why have you hardened our heart, so that we did not fear you?*

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20 John 4:23; John 1:29.
21 The first quotation is Isa. 33:10.
22 Isa. 44:22.

Isa. 66:17: *Those who sanctified themselves and thought themselves clean… shall be consumed together, says the Lord.*

Jer. 2:35: *And you have said: I am without sin and innocent, and therefore let your anger be turned away from me. Behold, I will contend with you in judgment, because you have said: I have not sinned.*

Jer. 4:22: *They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have not known.*

Jer. 4:23–24: *I looked at the earth, and behold, it was empty and nothing; and at the heavens, and there was no light in them. I saw the mountains, and behold, they were moving, and all the hills were shaken. I looked, and there was no man, and every bird of the air had fled. I looked, and behold, Carmel was a desert, and all its cities were destroyed before the face of the Lord and before the face of the wrath of his fury. For thus says the Lord: The whole land shall be desolate, yet I will not make a full end.*

Jer. 5:4: *But I said: Perhaps these are poor and foolish, not knowing the way of the Lord, the judgment of their God. I will go to the great men and speak to them, for they have known the way of the Lord; and behold, these together have broken the yoke even more, have burst the bonds. Therefore a lion from the forest has struck them, a leopard watching over their cities.*

Jer. 5:29: *Shall I not punish these things, says the Lord? Or shall my soul not be avenged on such a nation?*

Jer. 5:30: *Astonishing and wonderful things have come to pass in the land.*

Jer. 5:31: *The prophets prophesied falsehood, and the priests clapped their hands, and my people loved such things: what then will be done at its end?*

Jer. 6:16: *Thus says the Lord: Stand upon the ways, and see, and ask about the ancient paths, which is the good way, and walk in it; and you will find refreshment for your souls. And they said: We will not walk in it.*

And I set watchmen over you: Hear the sound of the trumpet. And they said: We will not hear.[23]

23 Jer. 6:17.

Therefore hear, you nations, what great things I will do to them. Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evils, etc.[24]

Trust in outward sacraments: Jer. 7:14: *I will do to this house, in which my name has been invoked and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. As for you, then, do not pray for this people.*—The essential thing is not the outward sacrifice. Jer. 7:22: *For I did not speak with your fathers, and I did not command them, on the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and victims. But this word I commanded them, saying: Hear my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk in every way that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you. And they did not listen.*

Multitude of doctrines. Jer. 11:13: *For according to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars of shame. As for you, then, do not pray for this people.*

Jer. 15:2: *And if they say to you: Where shall we go? you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord: Those for death, to death; those for the sword, to the sword; those for famine, to famine; those for captivity, to captivity.*—Jer. 17:9: *The heart of all is perverse and unsearchable: who shall know it?* That is, who will know all its wickedness, for it is already known that it is evil. *I the Lord search the heart and test the inmost parts. And they said: Come, and let us devise plans against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor the word from the prophet.*—Jer. 17:17: *Be not a terror to me; you are my hope in the day of affliction.*[25]

Jer. 23:15: *For from the prophets of Jerusalem pollution has gone out over all the land.*

Jer. 23:17: *They say to those who blaspheme me: The Lord has spoken: You shall have peace; and to everyone who walks in the perversity of his heart they have said: No evil shall come upon you.*

683 *Figures*.—The letter kills; all things happened in figures. That is the cipher Saint Paul gives us. Christ had to suffer. A

24 Jer. 6:18–19.

25 "I the Lord…" is Jer. 17:10; "And they said…" is Jer. 18:18.

humbled God. Circumcision of the heart, true fasting, true sacrifice, true temple. The prophets indicated that all this had to be spiritual.

Not the food that perishes, but that which does not perish.

"You would be truly free." So the other freedom is only a figure of freedom.

"I am the true bread from heaven."

RECONCILING CONTRADICTIONS

Only a figurative meaning, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, reconciles the contrary passages of the prophets.

684 *Contradiction*.—One cannot make a good likeness except by reconciling all our contradictions. It is not enough to follow a series of qualities that agree without reconciling the contrary ones. To understand an author's meaning, one must reconcile all the contrary passages.

So, to understand Scripture, one must have a meaning in which all the contrary passages agree. It is not enough to have one that fits several passages that agree; one must have one that reconciles even the contrary passages.

Every author has a meaning in which all the contrary passages agree, or he has no meaning at all. We cannot say that of Scripture and the prophets; they certainly had too much good sense. We must therefore look for one that reconciles all the contradictions.

The true meaning, then, is not that of the Jews; but in Jesus Christ all the contradictions are reconciled.

The Jews could not reconcile the end of kingship and rule, foretold by Hosea, with the prophecy of Jacob.[26]

If we take the law, the sacrifices and the kingdom as realities, we cannot reconcile all the passages. It follows necessarily, then, that they are only figures. We could not even reconcile the passages of the same author, or of the same book, or sometimes of the same chapter, which shows only too clearly what the

26 Hos. 3:4; Gen. 49:10.

author's meaning was: as when Ezekiel, chapter 20, says that one will live in the commandments of God and that one will not live in them.

685 *Figures*.—If the law and the sacrifices are the truth, it must please God and not displease him. If they are figures, they must both please and displease.

Now throughout Scripture they please and displease. It is said that the law will be changed; that the sacrifice will be changed; that they will be without law, without prince and without sacrifice; that a new covenant will be made; that the law will be renewed; that the precepts they received are not good; that their sacrifices are abominable; that God did not ask for them.

It is said, on the contrary, that the law will last forever; that this covenant will be eternal; that the sacrifice will be eternal; that the scepter will never depart from them, since it is not to depart from them until the eternal King comes.

Do all these passages indicate that it is reality? No. Do they indicate, then, that it is figure? No: but that it is reality or figure. But the first ones, excluding reality, indicate that it is only figure.

All these passages together cannot be said of the reality; all can be said of the figure: therefore they are not said of the reality, but of the figure.

The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. Perpetual sacrificer.[27]

686 *Contradictions*.—The scepter until the Messiah—without king or prince.

Eternal law—changed.

Eternal covenant—new covenant.

Good laws—bad precepts. Ezek.

687 *Figures*.—When the word of God, which is true, is false literally, it is true spiritually. *Sit at my right hand*: that is false literally; therefore it is true spiritually.[28]

27 Rev. 13:8. "Perpetual" renders *juge*, as in the Vulgate's *juge sacrificium*, the continual sacrifice.
28 Ps. 110:1.

In these expressions God is spoken of in the manner of men. And this means nothing else but that God will have the same intention that men have in seating someone at their right hand. So it is a sign of God's intention, not of his manner of carrying it out.

So when it says: God has received the fragrance of your perfumes, and will give you a rich land in reward. That is: the same intention a man would have who, pleased with your perfumes, would give you a rich land in reward, God will have toward you, because you have had toward him the same intention a man has toward the one to whom he gives perfumes. So too *he was angry*, "a jealous God," etc. For since the things of God are inexpressible, they cannot be said otherwise; and the Church still uses such language today: *For he has strengthened the bars*, etc.[29]

It is not permitted to attribute to Scripture meanings it has not revealed to us that it has. Thus, to say that the closed *mem* of Isaiah signifies 600 is not revealed. It might have said that the final *tsade*s and the *missing he*s signified mysteries. It is therefore not permitted to say so, and still less to say that this is the way to the philosopher's stone. But we do say that the literal meaning is not the true one, because the prophets themselves said so.[30]

688 I do not say that the *mem* is mysterious.

689 Moses (*Deut.* 30) promises that God will circumcise their heart to make them capable of loving him.

690 A single word of David or of Moses, such as that God will circumcise hearts, lets us judge their mind. Let all their other words be ambiguous, leaving it doubtful whether they are philosophers' or Christians': in the end one word of this kind determines all the others, just as one word of Epictetus determines all the rest the other way. Until then the ambiguity lasts, and not after.

691 Take two people who tell foolish stories, one with a double meaning understood within a secret circle, the other with only

29 Ps. 147:13, "he has strengthened the bars of your gates," as used in the liturgy.
30 In Isa. 9:7 a final (closed) *mem* appears mid-word; kabbalists gave it the value 600. *Tsade* and *he* are Hebrew letters.

one meaning. If someone not in on the secret hears both of them talk in this way, he will judge them alike. But if afterward, in the rest of the conversation, one says angelic things and the other always flat and commonplace ones, he will judge that the one was speaking in mysteries and not the other: the one having shown well enough that he is incapable of such foolishness and capable of being mysterious; the other, that he is incapable of mystery and capable of foolishness.

The Old Testament is a cipher.

692 There are some who see clearly that man has no other enemy than concupiscence, which turns him away from God, and not God; nor any other good than God, and not a rich land. As for those who believe that man's good is in the flesh, and evil in whatever turns him away from the pleasures of the senses, let [*them*] have their [*fill*] of them, and [*die*] in them. But those who seek God with all their heart, who have no grief but to be deprived of the sight of him, no desire but to possess him, and no enemies but those who turn them away from him; who are distressed to find themselves surrounded and dominated by such enemies: let them take comfort. I bring them good news. There is a deliverer for them; I will show him to them; I will show them that there is a God for them; I will not show him to the others. I will show that a Messiah was promised who would deliver from enemies; and that one has come to deliver from iniquities, but not from enemies.

When David foretells that the Messiah will deliver his people from their enemies, one can believe carnally that it will be from the Egyptians; and then I could not show that the prophecy has been fulfilled. But one can equally well believe that it will be from iniquities; for in truth the Egyptians are not enemies, but iniquities are. This word "enemies" is therefore ambiguous. But if he says elsewhere, as he does, that he will deliver his people from their sins, as do Isaiah and the others, the ambiguity is removed, and the double meaning of "enemies" is reduced to the single meaning of "iniquities." For if he had sins in mind, he

could well denote them by "enemies"; but if he was thinking of enemies, he could not designate them by "iniquities."

Now Moses and David and Isaiah used the same terms. Who then will say that they did not have the same meaning, and that David's meaning, which is manifestly "iniquities" when he spoke of enemies, was not the same as [*that of*] Moses when he spoke of enemies?

Daniel (9) prays for the deliverance of the people from captivity to their enemies; but he was thinking of sins. To show it, he says that Gabriel came to tell him that his prayer was heard, and that there were only seventy weeks more to wait, after which the people would be delivered from iniquity, sin would come to an end, and the deliverer, the Holy of Holies, would bring in *eternal* justice: not legal justice, but eternal.

Section XI: The prophecies

Les prophéties
Jacob, Isaiah, Daniel and the Messiah.

693 *H.* 5.—Seeing the blindness and wretchedness of man, looking at the whole silent universe, and man without light, left to himself and as though lost in this corner of the universe, without knowing who put him there, what he has come to do, what will become of him when he dies, incapable of all knowledge, I am seized with terror. I am like a man who has been carried asleep to a desert and terrifying island, and who wakes without knowing [where he is], and with no means of escape. And at this I marvel that people do not fall into despair at so wretched a state. I see other people near me, of a similar nature. I ask them whether they are better informed than I am; they tell me they are not. And at this, these wretched lost creatures, having looked around them and seen some pleasing objects, have given themselves to them and become attached to them. For my part, I have not been able to form any attachment to them. Considering how much more likely it is that there is something other than what I see, I have searched to see whether this God might not have left some mark of himself.

I see several contrary religions, and therefore all false except one. Each wants to be believed on its own authority and threatens unbelievers; so I do not believe them on that account. Anyone can say that; anyone can call himself a prophet. But I see the Christian religion, in which I find prophecies, and that is something not everyone can do.

694 And what crowns all this is the prediction, so that no one could say it was chance that did it.

Whoever, with only a week left to live, does not find that the course to take is to believe that all this is not a stroke of chance...

Now, if the passions did not hold us, a week and a hundred years would be one and the same.

695 *Prophecies*.—The great Pan is dead.[1]

696 *They received the word with all eagerness, searching the Scriptures to see whether these things were so*.[2]

697 *The law once published.—See what has been fulfilled.—Gather what is yet to be fulfilled.*

698 We understand the prophecies only when we see the events come to pass. Thus the proofs of retreat, of discretion, of silence, etc., are proved only to those who know and believe them.

Joseph, so inward in a law wholly outward.

Outward penances dispose us to inward penance, as humiliations dispose us to humility. Thus the...

699 The synagogue preceded the Church; the Jews, the Christians. The prophets foretold the Christians; Saint John, Jesus Christ.

700 Beautiful to see, with the eyes of faith, the history of Herod, of Caesar.

701 The zeal of the Jews for their law and their temple: Josephus, and Philo the Jew, *To Gaius*. What other people has such zeal? They had to have it.[3]

Jesus Christ foretold as to the time and the state of the world: the ruler taken from the thigh, and the fourth monarchy. How fortunate we are to have this light in this darkness.[4]

1 A story in Plutarch's *On the Obsolescence of Oracles*, set in the reign of Tiberius; Christians read it as marking the end of paganism at Christ's coming.

2 Acts 17:11.

3 Philo's *Embassy to Gaius* describes the Jews' resistance to the emperor Caligula's plan to set up his statue in the Temple.

4 Gen. 49:10 in the Vulgate: no "ruler from his thigh" shall be taken from Judah until the one who is to be sent comes. The fourth monarchy: Dan. 2 and 7.

How beautiful it is to see, with the eyes of faith, Darius and Cyrus, Alexander, the Romans, Pompey and Herod acting, without knowing it, for the glory of the Gospel!

[702] Zeal of the Jewish people for their law, and especially since there have been no more prophets.

[703] As long as there were prophets to uphold the law, the people were negligent; but once there were no more prophets, zeal took their place.

[704] The devil disturbed the zeal of the Jews before Jesus Christ, because it would have been salutary to them, but not after.

The Jewish people, mocked by the Gentiles; the Christian people, persecuted.

[705] *Proof*.—Prophecies with their fulfillment: what preceded and what followed Jesus Christ.

PROPHECY, THE GREATEST PROOF

Prophecies spread over sixteen centuries, and carried everywhere by the Jews, are the chief proof of Christ.

[706] The greatest of the proofs of Jesus Christ are the prophecies. It is also what God provided for most, for the event that fulfilled them is a miracle that has endured from the birth of the Church until the end. So God raised up prophecies for sixteen hundred years; and for four hundred years afterward he scattered all these prophecies, with all the Jews who carried them, into every part of the world. Such was the preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ. Since his Gospel was to be believed by the whole world, there had to be not only prophecies to make it believed, but prophecies spread throughout the whole world, to make the whole world embrace it.

[707] But it was not enough that the prophecies existed; they had to be distributed through every place and preserved through every age. And so that this concord should not be taken for an effect of chance, it had to be foretold.

It is much more glorious for the Messiah that they should be the spectators, and even the instruments, of his glory; besides which, God has reserved them.

[708] *Prophecies*.—The time foretold by the state of the Jewish people, by the state of the pagan people, by the state of the temple, by the number of years.

[709] One must be bold to foretell the same thing in so many ways. The four monarchies, idolatrous or pagan, the end of the reign of Judah, and the seventy weeks all had to happen at the same time, and all of it before the second temple was destroyed.

[710] *Prophecies*.—Even if a single man had written a book of predictions about Jesus Christ, as to the time and the manner, and Jesus Christ had come in accordance with these prophecies, that would carry infinite force.

But there is much more here. It is a succession of men, over four thousand years, who, constantly and without variation, come one after another to foretell this same coming. It is an entire people that announces it, and that has existed for four thousand years, to bear witness as a body to the assurances they have of it; and they cannot be turned aside from it by any threats or persecutions brought against them. This is of quite another order of importance.

[711] *Predictions of particular things*.—They were strangers in Egypt, with no possession of their own, either in that country or elsewhere. [There was not the slightest sign either of the kingship that came so long afterward, or of that supreme council of seventy judges which they called the *Sanhedrin*, which, having been instituted by Moses, lasted until the time of Jesus Christ: all these things were as remote from their present state as they could possibly be] when Jacob, dying and blessing his twelve children, declares to them that they will possess a great land. He foretells in particular to the family of Judah that the kings who would one day govern them would be of his line, and that all his brothers would be his subjects [and even that the Messiah, who was to be the expectation of the nations, would be born of him, and that the kingship would not be taken from Judah, nor the

ruler and lawgiver from his descendants, until this awaited Messiah came in his family].

This same Jacob, disposing of this future land as though he were its master, gave Joseph a larger portion of it than the others: *I give you, he said, one portion more than your brothers*. And blessing the two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, whom Joseph had presented to him, the elder, Manasseh, at his right, and the younger, Ephraim, at his left, he crosses his arms, and, laying his right hand on Ephraim's head and his left on Manasseh, he blesses them in [*this*] way; and when Joseph points out to him that he is preferring the younger, he answers with admirable firmness: "I know it, my son, I know it; but Ephraim will increase quite differently from Manasseh." And this proved so true in the event that, since Ephraim alone was almost as numerous as two whole tribes that made up an entire kingdom, they were usually called by the single name of Ephraim.

This same Joseph, when dying, charges his children to carry his bones with them when they go into that land, which they reached only two hundred years later.

Moses, who wrote all these things so long before they happened, himself divided that land among the families before entering it, as though he were its master [and finally declares that God is to raise up from their nation and their race a prophet, of whom he was the figure; and he foretells to them exactly everything that was to happen to them in the land they were to enter after his death: the victories God will give them, their ingratitude toward God, the punishments they will receive for it, and the rest of their fortunes]. He gives them the arbiters who will divide it; he prescribes for them the whole form of political government they will observe there, the cities of refuge they will build there, and...

712 The prophecies mingled with particular events and with those concerning the Messiah, so that the prophecies of the Messiah should not be without proofs, and the particular prophecies should not be without fruit.

THE PROPHETS ON THE JEWS AND THE GENTILES

Isaiah and Jeremiah foretell the blinding of Israel, the rejection of the temple and the call of the Gentiles.

[713] *Captivity of the Jews without return*. Jer. 11:11: "I will bring upon Judah evils from which they will not be able to be delivered."

Figures.—Isa. 5: "The Lord had a vineyard from which he expected grapes, and it produced only sour grapes. I will therefore lay it waste and destroy it; the land will produce only thorns from it, and I will forbid the sky to [*rain*] on it. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are its delightful shoot. I waited for them to do deeds of justice, and they produce only iniquities."

Isa. 8: "Sanctify the Lord with fear and trembling; fear him alone, and he will be your sanctification; but he will be a stone of offense and a stone of stumbling to both houses of Israel. He will be a snare and a ruin to the people of Jerusalem; and a great number of them will strike against this stone, fall on it, be broken on it, be caught in this snare, and perish in it. Veil my words, and cover my law for my disciples.

"I will therefore wait patiently for the Lord, who veils and hides himself from the house of Jacob."

Isa. 29: "Be confounded and amazed, people of Israel; stagger, stumble and be drunk, but not with the drunkenness of wine; stumble, but not from drunkenness; for God has prepared for you the spirit of slumber: he will veil your eyes, he will darken your princes and your prophets who have the visions."

(Daniel 12: "The wicked will not understand it, but those who are well instructed will understand it." Hosea, last chapter, last verse, after many temporal blessings, says: "Where is the wise man? and he will understand these things;" etc.) And the visions of all the prophets will be to you like a sealed book, which, if it is given to a learned man who can read it, he will answer: I cannot read it, for it is sealed; and when it is given to those who cannot read, they will say: I do not know letters.

And the Lord said to me: Because this people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me (there is the reason and the cause; for if they worshiped God from the heart, they would understand the prophecies), and because they have served me only by human ways: for this reason I will add to all the rest by bringing upon this people an astonishing wonder, a great and terrible marvel; namely, the wisdom of its wise men will perish, and their understanding will be [darkened].

Prophecies. Proofs of divinity.—Isa. 41: "If you are gods, come near, announce to us things to come, and we will incline our hearts to your words. Teach us the things that were at the beginning, and prophesy to us those that are to happen.

"By this we shall know that you are gods. Do good or evil, if you can. Let us see, then, and reason together. But you are nothing, you are only abominations; etc. Who among you instructs us<ref[*Announces.*]></ref> (through contemporary authors) about the things done from the beginning and the origin? so that we may say to him: You are the righteous one.—There is none who teaches us, nor who foretells the future."

Isa. 42: "I who am the Lord do not give my glory to others. It is I who caused the things that have happened to be foretold, and who still foretell those that are to come. Sing a new song to God throughout all the earth.

"Bring here this people that has eyes and does not see, that has ears and is deaf. Let all the nations gather together. Which of them—and of their gods—will instruct you in things past and future? Let them bring forward their witnesses to justify themselves; or let them hear me, and confess that the truth is here.

"You are my witnesses, says the Lord, you and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know me, and believe that it is I who am.

"I have foretold, I have saved, I alone have done these wonders before your eyes; you are my witnesses of my divinity, says the Lord.

"It is I who for love of you broke the might of the Babylonians; it is I who have sanctified you and who created you.

"It is I who made you pass through the midst of the waters and the sea and the torrents, and who drowned and destroyed forever the mighty enemies who resisted you.

"But lose the memory of these ancient benefits, and no longer cast your eyes toward the things of the past.

"See, I am preparing new things that will soon appear; you shall know them: I will make the deserts habitable and delightful.

"I have formed this people for myself, I have established it to declare my praises, etc.

"But it is for my own sake that I will blot out your sins and forget your crimes: for (to call your ingratitude back to your memory, to see whether you have anything to justify yourselves with) your first father sinned, and your teachers have all been transgressors."

Isa. 44: "I am the first and the last, says the Lord; whoever would make himself my equal, let him recount the order of things since I formed the first peoples, and let him announce the things that are to happen. Fear nothing; have I not made you hear all these things? You are my witnesses."

Prediction of Cyrus.—Isa. 45:4: "For the sake of Jacob, whom I have chosen, I have called you by your name."

Isa. 45:21: "Come, and let us debate together. Who has made these things heard from the beginning? Who foretold these things from that time? Is it not I, who am the Lord?

Isa. 46: "Remember the first ages, and know that there is nothing like me, who announce from the beginning the things that are to happen at the end, and already at the origin of the world. My decrees will stand, and all my will shall be accomplished.

Isa. 42:9: "The first things have come to pass as they had been foretold; and see, now I foretell new ones, and announce them to you before they have happened.

Isa. 48:3: "I caused the first things to be foretold, and afterward I accomplished them; and they came to pass in the way I had said, because I know that you are hard, that your spirit is rebellious and your brow impudent; that is why I chose to

announce them before the event, so that you could not say it was the work of your gods and the effect of their command.

"You see come to pass what was foretold; will you not tell of it? Now I announce to you new things, which I keep in my power, and which you have not yet known; it is only now that I am preparing them, and not long ago: I have kept them hidden from you lest you boast of having foreseen them by yourselves.

"For you have no knowledge of them, and no one has spoken to you of them, and your ears have heard nothing of them; for I know you, and I know that you are full of transgression, and I gave you the name of transgressors from the earliest times of your origin.

Isa. 65: *Reprobation of the Jews and conversion of the Gentiles.* —"Those who did not consult me have sought me. Those who did not seek me have found me. I said: Here I am, here I am—to the people that did not call upon my name.

"I have stretched out my hands all day long to an unbelieving people that follows its own desires and walks in an evil way, to this people that provokes me ceaselessly by the crimes it commits in my presence, that has been carried away into sacrificing to idols, etc.

"These shall be scattered like smoke in the day of my fury, etc.

"I will gather together the iniquities of you and of your fathers, and repay you all according to your works.

"Thus says the Lord: For the sake of my servants, I will not destroy all Israel, but I will keep back some, as one keeps back a grape left on a bunch, of which one says: Do not pull it off, for it is a blessing.

"So I will take some of Jacob and of Judah to possess my mountains, which my chosen ones and my servants had as their inheritance, and my fertile and wonderfully abundant fields; but I will exterminate all the others, because you have forgotten your God to serve foreign gods. I called you and you did not answer; I spoke and you did not hear, and you chose [*the*] things I had forbidden.

"That is why the Lord says these things: See, my servants shall be filled, and you shall languish with hunger; my servants shall be in joy, and you in shame; my servants shall sing songs out of the abundant joy of their heart, and you shall utter cries and howls out of the affliction of your spirit.

"And you shall leave your name as an abomination to my chosen ones. The Lord will exterminate you, and will call his servants by another name, in which whoever is blessed on earth shall be blessed in God, etc., because the former sorrows are forgotten.

"For see, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the things of the past shall no longer be remembered, nor come to mind.

"But you shall rejoice forever in the new things I create, for I create a Jerusalem that is nothing but joy, and its people gladness.

"And I will delight in Jerusalem and in my people, and no more cries and weeping shall be heard there.

"I will answer him before he asks; I will hear them when they are only beginning to speak. The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, the lion and the ox shall eat the same straw; the serpent shall eat only dust, and there shall be no more murder or violence on all my holy mountain.

Isa. 56: "The Lord says these things: Be just and upright, for my salvation is near, and my justice is about to be revealed.

"Blessed is he who does these things and observes my sabbath, and keeps his hands from doing any evil.

"And let not the strangers who cling to me say: God will separate me from his people; for the Lord says these things: Whoever keeps my sabbath, and chooses to do my will, and keeps my covenant, I will give them a place in my house, and I will give them a name better than the one I have given to my children: it shall be an everlasting name that will never perish.

"It is for our crimes that justice has gone far from us. We waited for light and we find only darkness; we hoped for brightness and we walk in obscurity; we have groped along the wall

like the blind, and we have stumbled at noon as in the middle of the night, and like the dead in dark places.

"We shall all roar like bears, we shall moan like doves. We waited for justice, and it does not come: we hoped for salvation, and it goes far from us.

Isa. 66:18: "But I will examine their works and their thoughts when I come to gather them with all the nations and peoples, and they shall see my glory.

"And I will set a sign upon them, and of those who are saved I will send some to the nations, to Africa, to Lydia, to Italy, to Greece, and to the peoples who have not heard of me and have not seen my glory. And they shall bring your brothers."

Jer. 7. *Reprobation of the temple*: "Go to Shiloh, where I had set my name at the beginning, and see what I did to it because of the sins of my people. And now, says the Lord, because you have committed the same crimes, I will do to this temple where my name is invoked, in which you trust, and which I myself gave to your priests, the same thing I did to Shiloh. (*For I have rejected it, and made myself a temple elsewhere.*)[5]

"And I will cast you far from me, in the same way that I cast off your brothers, the children of Ephraim. (*Rejected without return.*) Do not pray, then, for this people.

Jer. 7:22: "What good does it do you to add sacrifice to sacrifice? When I brought your fathers out of Egypt, I did not speak to them of sacrifices and burnt offerings; I gave them no command about them, and the precept I gave them was this: Be obedient and faithful to my commandments, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. (*It was only after they had sacrificed to the golden calf that I gave myself sacrifices, to turn a bad custom to good.*)

Jer. 7:4: "Do not trust in the lying words of those who tell you: The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these."

713 bis *Zephaniah* 3:9: "I will give my words to the Gentiles, so that all may serve me with one shoulder."—*Ezekiel* 37:25: "David

5 Shiloh, where the Ark and the sanctuary of Israel stood before the temple was built in Jerusalem.

my servant shall be their prince forever,"—*Exodus* 4:22: "Israel is my firstborn son."

714 The Jews, witnesses of God. Isa. 43:9; 44:8.

Prophecies fulfilled.—1 Kings 13:2.—2 Kings 23:16.—Josh. 6:26.—1 Kings 16:34.—Deut. 23.[6]

Mal. 1:11. The sacrifice of the Jews rejected, and the sacrifice of the pagans (even outside Jerusalem), and in all places.

Moses foretells the calling of the Gentiles before he dies, 32:21, and the reprobation of the Jews.

Moses foretells what is to happen to each tribe.

Prophecy.—"Your name shall be a curse to my chosen ones, and I will give them another name."

"Harden their heart"—and how? By flattering their concupiscence and making them hope to satisfy it.

715 *Prophecies*.—Amos and Zechariah: They have sold the just one, and for that they shall never be called back.—Jesus Christ betrayed.

Egypt will be remembered no more; see Isa. 43:16, 17, 18, 19. Jer. 23:6, 7.

Prophecies.—The Jews will be scattered everywhere. Isa. 27:6.—A new law. Jer. 31:32.

Malachi, *Grotius*. The second temple glorious.—Jesus Christ will come there. Hag. 2:7, 8, 9, 10.[7]

Calling of the Gentiles. Joel 2:28. Hos. 2:34. Deut. 32:21. Mal. 1:11.

716 Hos. 3.—Isa. 42, 48: "I foretold it long ago, so that it might be known that it is I." 54, 60, last: Jaddus to Alexander.[8]

717 [*Prophecies*.—Oath that David will always have successors. Jer.]

6 Pascal cites the Vulgate's four books of Kings, whose third and fourth books are the modern 1 and 2 Kings.

7 Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), Dutch jurist and theologian, author of *On the Truth of the Christian Religion* (1627).

8 Jaddus (Jaddua), the high priest who, according to Josephus, showed Alexander the Great the prophecy of Daniel concerning him.

718 The eternal reign of David's line, 2 *Chron*., through all the prophecies, and with an oath. And it is not fulfilled temporally: Jer. 23:20.

719 Someone might perhaps think that, when the prophets foretold that the scepter would not depart from Judah until the eternal king, they were speaking to flatter the people, and that their prophecy proved false with Herod. But to show that this is not their meaning, and that on the contrary they knew well that this temporal kingdom was to cease, they say that they will be without king and without prince, and for a long time. Hosea.[9]

720 *We have no king but Caesar*. Therefore Jesus Christ was the Messiah, since they no longer had any king but a foreigner, and wanted no other.[10]

721 "We have no king but Caesar."

THE VISIONS OF DANIEL

Daniel's statue, his seventy weeks and his vision of the kings foretell the empires down to the Messiah.

722 "Daniel 2. All your soothsayers and wise men cannot reveal to you the mystery you ask about. But there is a God in heaven who can, and who has revealed to you in your dream the things that are to happen in the last times. (*This dream must have lain very close to his heart.*)

"And it is not by my own knowledge that I have come to know this secret, but by the revelation of this same God, who has disclosed it to me to make it manifest in your presence.

"Your dream, then, was this. You saw a statue, great, tall and terrible, standing before you: its head was of gold; its chest and arms were of silver; its belly and thighs were of bronze; and its legs were of iron, but its feet were a mixture of iron and earth (*clay*). You went on gazing at it in this way, until the stone cut out

9 Herod the Great, an Idumaean made king of Judea by Rome in 37 BC. The passage is Hos. 3:4.
10 John 19:15.

without hands struck the statue on its feet of mingled iron and earth and crushed them.

"And then the iron, and the earth, and the bronze, and the silver, and the gold went to dust and were scattered in the air; but this stone, which struck the statue, grew into a great mountain, and it filled the whole earth. That was your dream, and now I will give you its interpretation.

"You who are the greatest of kings, and to whom God has given so wide a power that you are feared by all peoples, are represented by the golden head of the statue you saw. But another empire will succeed yours, which will not be so powerful; and after it will come another, of bronze, which will extend over the whole world.

"But the fourth will be strong as iron; and just as iron breaks and pierces all things, so this empire will break and crush everything.

"And as for what you saw, that the feet and the toes were made partly of earth and partly of iron, this signifies that this empire will be divided, and that it will have partly the firmness of iron and partly the fragility of earth.

"But as iron cannot bond firmly with earth, so those represented by the iron and by the earth will not be able to make a lasting alliance, although they unite by marriages.

"Now it is in the time of these monarchs that God will raise up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor ever be handed over to another people. It will scatter and put an end to all the other empires; but it will itself endure forever, according to what was revealed to you of this stone, which, not cut by hand, fell from the mountain and broke the iron, the earth, the silver and the gold. That is what God has disclosed to you of the things that are to happen in the course of time. This dream is true, and its interpretation faithful.

"Then Nebuchadnezzar fell with his face to the ground, etc.

Daniel 8. "Daniel having seen the fight between the ram and the he-goat that overcame it and ruled over the earth; whose chief horn having fallen, four others had come out of it toward

the four winds of heaven; from one of which had come a little horn that grew great toward the South, toward the East and toward the land of Israel, and rose up against the host of heaven, cast down some of its stars and trampled them underfoot, and at last struck down the Prince, and made the perpetual sacrifice cease, and laid the sanctuary waste.

"This is what Daniel saw. He asked for its explanation, and a voice cried out in this way: Gabriel, make him understand the vision he has had—and Gabriel said to him: The ram you saw is the king of the Medes and Persians; and the he-goat is the king of the Greeks, and the great horn it had between its eyes is the first king of that monarchy.

"And as for this horn being broken and four others coming in its place: it means that four kings of this nation will succeed him, but not with the same power.

"Now, as these kingdoms decline, when iniquities have increased, there will arise an insolent and strong king, but of borrowed power, for whom everything will go as he pleases; and he will lay waste the holy people, and, succeeding in his undertakings with a double and deceitful mind, he will kill many of them, and will at last rise up against the prince of princes; but he will perish miserably, and yet not by a violent hand."

Daniel 9:20. "As I was praying to God with all my heart, and, confessing my sin and that of all my people, lay prostrate before my God, see, Gabriel, whom I had seen in a vision at the beginning, came to me and touched me, at the time of the evening sacrifice, and, giving me understanding, said to me: Daniel, I have come to you to open to you the knowledge of things. From the beginning of your prayers I came to disclose to you what you desire, because you are the man of desires. Hear then the word, and enter into the understanding of the vision. Seventy weeks are prescribed and determined upon your people and upon your holy city, to expiate crimes, to put an end to sins and abolish iniquity, and to bring in everlasting justice, to fulfill the visions and the prophecies, and to anoint the holy of holies." (*After which this people will no longer be your people, nor this city the holy*

city. The time of wrath will be past, the years of grace will come forever.)

"Know then and understand. From the time the word goes forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, until the prince Messiah, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. (*The Hebrews are accustomed to divide numbers and to put the smaller first; these 7 and 62 therefore make 69: of these 70, then, there will remain the 70th, that is, the last seven years, of which he will speak next.*)

"After the square and the walls have been built in a time of trouble and affliction, and after these sixty-two weeks (*which will have followed the first 7. The Christ will therefore be killed after the 69 weeks, that is, in the last week*), the Christ will be killed, and a people will come with its prince, who will destroy the city and the sanctuary, and flood everything; and the end of this war will complete the desolation."

"Now one week (*which is the 70th that remains*) will establish the covenant with many, and indeed the half of the week (*that is, the last three and a half years*) will abolish the sacrifice and the offering, and will make astonishing the extent of the abomination, which will spread and last over the very people who are astonished at it, until the consummation."

Daniel 11. "The angel said to Daniel: There will be (*after Cyrus, in whose reign this is still taking place*) three more kings of Persia (*Cambyses, Smerdis, Darius*), and the fourth (*Xerxes*), who will come after, will be more powerful in riches and in forces, and will raise all his peoples against the Greeks.

"But there will arise a mighty king (*Alexander*), whose empire will be of the widest extent, and who will succeed in all his undertakings as he desires. But when his monarchy is established, it will perish and be divided into four parts toward the four winds of heaven (*as he had said before*, 7:6; 8:8), but not to persons of his line; and his successors will not equal his power, for his kingdom will even be scattered among others besides these (*these four chief successors*).

"And the one of his successors who reigns toward the South (*Egypt: Ptolemy, son of Lagus*) will become powerful; but another

will surpass him, and his state will be a great state (*Seleucus, king of Syria. Appian says he was the most powerful of Alexander's successors*).[11]

"And in the course of years they will make an alliance; and the daughter of the king of the South (*Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, son of the other Ptolemy*) will come to the king of the North (*to Antiochus Deus, king of Syria and Asia, nephew of Seleucus Lagidas*), to establish peace between these princes.

"But neither she nor her descendants will hold authority long; for she and those who had sent her, and her children, and her friends, will be given over to death (*Berenice and her son were killed by Seleucus Callinicus*).

"But a shoot will spring from her roots (*Ptolemy Euergetes will be born of the same father as Berenice*), who will come with a mighty army into the lands of the king of the North, where he will bring everything into subjection, and will carry off into Egypt their gods, their princes, their gold, their silver and all their most precious spoils (*if he had not been recalled to Egypt for domestic reasons, he would have entirely despoiled Seleucus, says Justin*); and for some years the king of the North will be able to do nothing against him.[12]

"And so he will return to his kingdom; but the sons of the other (*Seleucus Ceraunus, Antiochus Magnus*), provoked, will gather great forces. And their army will come and lay everything waste; at which the king of the South (*Ptolemy Philopator*), provoked in turn, will also raise a great army, and will give battle (*against Antiochus Magnus, at Raphia*), and will win; and his troops will grow insolent, and his heart will swell with pride (*this Ptolemy profaned the temple: Josephus*): he will defeat many thousands of men, but his victory will not be lasting. For the king of the North (*Antiochus Magnus*) will come with even

11 Appian of Alexandria, Greek historian of Rome (2nd century AD), whose *Syrian Wars* Pascal draws on here.

12 Justin, Roman historian (2nd–3rd century AD), author of an abridgment of Pompeius Trogus's universal history.

greater forces than the first time, and then too a great number of enemies will rise against the king of the South (*the young Ptolemy Epiphanes reigning*), and even apostate, violent men of your people will rise up so that the visions may be fulfilled, and they will perish (*those who had abandoned their religion to please Euergetes when he sent his troops to Scopas, for Antiochus will take Scopas again and defeat them*). And the king of the North will destroy the ramparts and the best-fortified cities, and all the force of the South will not be able to resist him, and everything will give way to his will; he will halt in the land of Israel, and it will yield to him. And so he will think of making himself master of the whole empire of Egypt (*despising the youth of Epiphanes, says Justin*). And for this he will make an alliance with him and give him his daughter (*Cleopatra, so that she might betray her husband; on which Appian says that, doubting whether he could make himself master of Egypt by force, because of the protection of the Romans, he chose to attempt it by cunning*). He will try to corrupt her, but she will not follow his intention; so he will turn to other designs and think of making himself master of some islands (*that is, coastal places*), and he will take several of them (*as Appian says*).

"But a great leader will oppose his conquests and will put a stop to the shame that would come upon him from them (*Scipio Africanus, who halted the advance of Antiochus Magnus, because he was offending the Romans in the person of their allies*). He will therefore return to his kingdom, and perish there, and be no more (*he was killed by his own people*).

"And the one who succeeds him (*Seleucus Philopator or Soter, son of Antiochus Magnus*) will be a tyrant, who will afflict the glory of the kingdom (*that is, the people*) with taxes; but in a short time he will die, yet not by sedition or by war. And in his place there will succeed a contemptible man, unworthy of the honors of kingship, who will slip into it cleverly and by flattery. All the armies will bend before him; he will defeat them, and even the prince with whom he had made an alliance; for having renewed the alliance with him, he will deceive him, and, coming with few troops into his calm and unsuspecting provinces, he will

take the best places, and do more than his fathers had ever done, and, ravaging on every side, he will form great designs during his time."

723 *Prophecies*.—Daniel's seventy weeks are ambiguous as to their starting point, because of the terms of the prophecy; and as to their end point, because of the disagreements among chronologists. But this whole difference amounts to no more than two hundred years.

724 *Predictions*.—That in the fourth monarchy, before the destruction of the second temple, before the dominion of the Jews was taken away, in Daniel's seventieth week, while the second temple still stood, the pagans would be instructed and brought to the knowledge of the God worshiped by the Jews; that those who love him would be delivered from their enemies, filled with fear and love of him.

And it has come to pass that in the fourth monarchy, before the destruction of the second temple, etc., the pagans in crowds worship God and lead an angelic life; young women consecrate their virginity and their lives to God; men renounce all pleasures. What Plato could not persuade a few chosen and highly educated men of, a secret power persuades a hundred million ignorant men of, by the power of a few words.

The rich give up their wealth, children leave the comfortable houses of their fathers to go into the austerity of a desert, etc. (See Philo the Jew.) What is all this? It is what was foretold so long before. For two thousand years no pagan had worshiped the God of the Jews; and at the time foretold, the multitude of pagans worship this one God. The temples are destroyed, kings themselves submit to the cross. What is all this? It is the spirit of God poured out upon the earth.[13]

No pagan from Moses to Jesus Christ, according to the rabbis themselves. The multitude of pagans, after Jesus Christ, believe the books of Moses, and observe their essence and spirit, and reject only what is useless.

13 Philo described the Therapeutae, an ascetic Jewish community in Egypt.

[725] *Prophecies*.—The conversion of the Egyptians (Isaiah 19:19): an altar in Egypt to the true God.

[726] *Prophecies*.—215, In Egypt.

Pug., p. 659, *Talmud*: "It is a tradition among us that, when the Messiah comes, the house of God, intended for the dispensing of his word, will be full of filth and impurity, and that the wisdom of the scribes will be corrupt and rotten; those who fear to sin will be rejected by the people, and treated as fools and madmen."

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

Isaiah, Amos, Haggai, Moses and Jacob foretell a servant who will be the light of the Gentiles.

Isa. 49: "Listen, distant peoples, and you, inhabitants of the islands of the sea: the Lord called me by my name from my mother's womb, he protects me in the shadow of his hand, he has made my words like a sharp sword, and has said to me: You are my servant; it is through you that I will make my glory appear. And I said: Lord, have I labored in vain? is it for nothing that I have spent all my strength? You be the judge of it. Lord, my work is before you. Then the Lord, who himself formed me from my mother's womb to be wholly his, so as to bring back Jacob and Israel, said to me: You shall be glorious in my sight, and I myself will be your strength; it is a small thing that you should convert the tribes of Jacob; I have raised you up to be the light of the Gentiles, and to be my salvation to the ends of the earth. These are the things the Lord has said to him who humbled his soul, who was held in contempt and abomination by the Gentiles, and who submitted to the powerful of the earth. Princes and kings shall worship you, because the Lord who chose you is faithful.

"The Lord said to me again: I have heard you in the days of salvation and mercy, and I have established you to be the covenant of the people, and to put you in possession of the most forsaken nations; so that you may say to those who are in chains:

Go out in freedom; and to those who are in darkness: Come into the light, and possess abundant and fertile lands. They shall no longer be afflicted by hunger, or thirst, or the heat of the sun, because he who has had compassion on them will be their guide: he will lead them to the living springs of water, and level the mountains before them. See, the peoples will come from every side, from East, from West, from North and from South. Let heaven give glory to God for it; let the earth rejoice in it, because it has pleased the Lord to console his people, and he will at last have pity on the poor who hope in him.

"And yet Zion dared to say: The Lord has forsaken me, and no longer remembers me. Can a mother forget her child, and can she lose her tenderness for the one she carried in her womb? But even if she were capable of it, I will never forget you, Zion; I carry you always in my hands, and your walls are always before my eyes. Those who are to restore you are hastening to you, and your destroyers will be driven far away. Lift up your eyes on every side, and behold all this multitude gathered to come to you. I swear that all these peoples will be given to you as the ornament with which you will be clothed forever; your deserts and your solitary places, and all your lands that are now desolate, will be too narrow for the great number of your inhabitants; and the children born to you in the years of your barrenness will say to you: The place is too small; push back the borders, and make room for us to live. Then you will say within yourself: Who has given me this abundance of children, I who bore no more, who was barren, carried off and captive? And who has fed them for me, I who was forsaken, without help? Where then have all these come from? And the Lord will say to you: Behold, I have shown my power over the Gentiles, and I have raised my standard over the peoples; and they will bring you children in their arms and at their breasts; kings and queens will be your nurses; they will worship you with their faces to the ground, and kiss the dust of your feet; and you will know that I am the Lord, and that those who hope in me will never be put to shame; for who can take the prey from one who is strong and mighty?

But even if it could be taken from him, nothing will be able to prevent me from saving your children and destroying your enemies; and all the world will acknowledge that I am the Lord your savior and the mighty redeemer of Jacob.

"The Lord says these things: What is this bill of divorce by which I have put away the synagogue? And why have I delivered her into the hands of your enemies? Is it not for her impieties and her crimes that I have put her away?

"For I came, and no one received me; I called, and no one listened. Is my arm shortened, so that I do not have the power to save?

"That is why I will display the signs of my wrath; I will cover the heavens with darkness and hide them under veils.

"The Lord has given me a well-taught tongue, so that I may know how to comfort with my word the one who is in sorrow. He has made me attentive to his words, and I have listened to him as to a master.

The Lord has revealed his will to me, and I have not rebelled against it.

"I gave my body to blows and my cheeks to insults; I gave up my face to shame and to spitting; but the Lord upheld me, and that is why I have not been put to shame.

"He who justifies me is with me: who will dare accuse me? Who will rise up to contend against me and accuse me of sin, when God himself is my protector?

"All men will pass away and be consumed by time; so let those who fear God listen to the words of his servant; let him who languishes in darkness put his trust in the Lord. But as for you, you only kindle the wrath of God against yourselves; you walk on the burning coals and among the flames that you yourselves have lit. It is my hand that has brought these evils upon you; you will perish in pain.

"Listen to me, you who follow justice and who seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the cistern from which you were drawn. Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you. See that he was alone and childless when

I called him and gave him such abundant descendants; see how many blessings I have poured out on Zion, and with how many graces and consolations I have filled her.

"Consider all these things, my people, and give heed to my words, for a law will go forth from me, and a judgment that will be the light of the Gentiles."

Amos 8: The prophet, having listed the sins of Israel, says that God has sworn to take vengeance for them.

"Thus he says: On that day, says the Lord, I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will cover the earth with darkness in the day of light; I will turn your solemn feasts into weeping, and all your songs into lamentation.

"You will all be in sorrow and suffering, and I will bring this nation into a desolation like that of mourning for an only son; and these last times will be times of bitterness. For behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will send famine on this land, hunger—not hunger and thirst for bread and water, but hunger and thirst to hear words from the Lord. They will wander from one sea to the other, and will go from the north to the east; they will turn every way, seeking someone to proclaim to them the word of the Lord, and they will find none.

"And their virgins and their young men will perish of this thirst, they who have followed the idols of Samaria, who have sworn by the god worshiped in Dan, and who have followed the worship of Beersheba; they will fall and never rise again from their fall."

Amos 3:2: "Of all the nations of the earth, I have acknowledged you alone as my people."

Daniel 12:7. Daniel, having described the whole extent of the Messiah's reign, says: "All these things will be fulfilled when the dispersion of the people of Israel is complete."

Haggai 2:4: "You who, comparing this second house with the glory of the first, despise it, take courage, says the Lord—you, Zerubbabel, and you, Joshua the high priest, and you, all the people of the land—and do not cease working on it. For I am with you, says the Lord of hosts; the promise I made when I

brought you out of Egypt still stands; my spirit is in your midst.[14] Do not lose hope, for thus says the Lord of hosts: Yet a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land (*a figure of speech to mark a great and extraordinary change*); and I will shake all the nations. Then will come the one desired by all the Gentiles, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord.

"The silver and the gold are mine, says the Lord (*that is, it is not with these that I wish to be honored; as it is said elsewhere: All the beasts of the field are mine; what use is it to offer them to me in sacrifice?*); the glory of this new temple will be far greater than the glory of the first, says the Lord of hosts; and I will establish my house in this place, says the Lord."

"In Horeb, on the day you were assembled there, and you said: Let the Lord no longer speak to us himself, and let us no longer see this fire, lest we die. And the Lord said to me: Their prayer is right; I will raise up for them a prophet like you, from among their brothers, in whose mouth I will put my words; and he will tell them all the things I have commanded him; and it will come to pass that whoever does not obey the words he brings them in my name, I myself will judge him."[15]

Genesis 49: "You, Judah, will be praised by your brothers, and victorious over your enemies; your father's children will worship you. Judah, lion's cub, you have gone up to the prey, O my son! and you have lain down like a lion, and like a lioness that will awaken.

"The scepter will not be taken from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and the nations will gather to him, to obey him."

14 Pascal's French, following the Vulgate, calls the high priest "Jésus"; he is Joshua son of Jehozadak, who led the rebuilding of the Temple.
15 Deut. 18:16–19.

WHAT WAS FORETOLD OF THE MESSIAH

The prophecies list his birth, his rejection, his death and resurrection, and the calling of the Gentiles.

[727] *During the time of the Messiah.—Of a riddle*. Ezek. 17.

His forerunner. Mal. 3.

He will be born. A child. Isa. 9.

He will be born in the town of Bethlehem. Mic. 5. He will appear chiefly in Jerusalem and will be born of the family of Judah and David.

He is to blind the wise and the learned, Isa. 6, 8, 29, etc., and to preach the Gospel to the poor and the lowly, Isa. 29; to open the eyes of the blind, restore health to the sick, and lead into the light those who languish in darkness. Isa. 61.

He is to teach the perfect way, and to be the teacher of the Gentiles. Isa. 55; 42:1–7.

The prophecies are to be unintelligible to the wicked, Dan. 12; Hos., *last chapter*, 10; but intelligible to those who are well instructed.

The prophecies that represent him as poor represent him as master of the nations. Isa. 52:14, etc.; 52. Zech. 9:9.

The prophecies that foretell the time foretell him only as master of the Gentiles, and suffering, and not in the clouds, nor as judge. And those that represent him thus, judging and glorious, do not specify the time.

That he is to be the victim for the sins of the world. Isa. 39, 53, etc.

He is to be the precious foundation stone. Isa. 28:16.

He is to be the stone of stumbling and of offense. Isa. 8. Jerusalem is to strike against this stone.

The builders are to reject this stone. *Ps.* 117:22. God is to make this stone the head of the corner.

And this stone is to grow into a vast mountain, and to fill the whole earth. Dan. 2.

That thus he is to be rejected, unrecognized, betrayed, *Ps.* 108:8; sold, Zech. 11:12; spat upon, struck, mocked, afflicted in countless ways, given gall to drink, *Ps.* 68; pierced, Zech. 12; his feet and hands pierced, killed, and lots cast for his garments.

That he would rise again, *Ps.* 15, on the third day, Hos. 6:3.

That he would ascend to heaven to sit at the right hand. *Ps.* 109.

That kings would take up arms against him. *Ps.* 2.

That, being at the right hand of the Father, he would be victorious over his enemies.

That the kings of the earth and all peoples would worship him. Isa. 60.

That the Jews will survive as a nation. Jer.

That they would be wanderers, without kings, etc., Hos. 3; without prophets, Amos; awaiting salvation and not finding it. Isa.

Calling of the Gentiles by Jesus Christ. Isa. 52:15; 55:5; 60, etc.; *Ps.* 81.

Hos. 1:9: "You will no longer be my people, and I will no longer be your God, after you have multiplied through the dispersion. The places where they do not call my people, I will call my people."

[727 bis] Calling of the Gentiles by Jesus Christ (Isaiah 52:15).

[728] It was not permitted to sacrifice outside Jerusalem, which was the place the Lord had chosen, nor even to eat the tithes anywhere else. *Deut.* 12:5, etc. *Deut.* 14:23, etc.; 15:20; 16:2, 7, 11, 15.

Hosea foretold that they would be without king, without prince, without sacrifice and without idol; which is fulfilled today, since they cannot offer lawful sacrifice outside Jerusalem.

[729] *Predictions.*—It is foretold that in the time of the Messiah he would come to establish a new covenant, which would make them forget the exodus from Egypt, Jer. 23:5; Isa. 43:10; which would place his law not in outward things but in hearts; that he would place his fear, which had been only outward, in the midst of the heart. Who does not see the Christian law in all this?

730 ... That then idolatry would be overthrown; that this Messiah would cast down all the idols, and bring men into the worship of the true God.

That the temples of the idols would be cast down, and that among all nations and in all places of the world a pure offering would be made to him, not animals.

That he would be king of the Jews and of the Gentiles. And here is this king of the Jews and of the Gentiles, oppressed by both, who conspire to put him to death; ruler over both, and destroying both the worship of Moses in Jerusalem, which was its center, and which he makes his first Church, and the worship of idols in Rome, which was its center, and which he makes his principal Church.

731 *Prophecies*.—That Jesus Christ will be at the right hand, while God subjects his enemies to him.

Therefore he will not subject them himself.

732 —"... That then no one will teach his neighbor any more, saying: Here is the Lord, *for God will make himself felt by all*."—"*Your sons will prophesy*."—I will put my spirit and my fear *in your heart*."

All this is the same thing. To prophesy is to speak of God, not by outward proofs, but by inward *and immediate* feeling.

733 That he would teach men the perfect way.

And never has there come, before him or after him, any man who taught anything divine approaching this.

734 ... That Jesus Christ would be small at his beginning, and would grow afterward. Daniel's little stone.

Even if I had never heard of the Messiah in any way, still, after such wonderful predictions of the order of the world, which I see fulfilled, I see that this is divine. And if I knew that these same books foretell a Messiah, I would be sure that he had come; and seeing that they place his time before the destruction of the second temple, I would say that he had come.

735 *Prophecies*.—That the Jews would reject Jesus Christ, and that they would be rejected by God for this reason. That the chosen vine would yield only sour grapes. That the chosen

people would be unfaithful, ungrateful and unbelieving: *a people that does not believe and that contradicts*. That God will strike them with blindness, and that they would grope at noon like the blind. That a forerunner would come before him.[16]

736 *Prophecies.—They pierced*, Zech. 12:10.

That there was to come a deliverer who would crush the devil's head, who was to deliver his people from their sins, *from all their iniquities*. That there was to be a New Testament, which would be eternal. That there was to be another priesthood after the order of Melchizedek; that it would be eternal.[17] That the Christ was to be glorious, mighty, strong, and yet so wretched that he would not be recognized; that he would not be taken for what he is; that he would be rebuffed, that he would be killed; that his people, who had denied him, would no longer be his people; that the idolaters would receive him, and would turn to him; that he would leave Zion to reign at the center of idolatry; that nevertheless the Jews would always survive; that he was to be of Judah, and when there would no longer be a king.

16 Rom. 10:21, quoting Isa. 65:2.
17 Ps. 129:8 in the Vulgate (130:8 in modern Bibles).

Section XII: Proofs of Jesus Christ

Preuves de Jésus-Christ
The three orders, the style of the Gospels, and the apostles.

737 ... From this I reject all other religions.

In this I find an answer to all objections.

It is right that a God so pure should reveal himself only to those whose hearts are purified.

Hence I love this religion, and I find it already sufficiently authorized by so divine a morality; but I find more in it.

I find in fact that, for as long as human memory lasts (Here is a people that has survived, older than any other people), men have constantly been told that they are in a universal corruption, but that a Restorer will come: a whole people foretells him before his coming, a whole people worships him after his coming; that it is not one man who says it, but countless men, and a whole people prophesying, and made expressly for this, over four thousand years; at last, they without idols or kings. Their books dispersed over four hundred years.

The more I examine them, the more truths I find in them: both what came before and what followed; and this synagogue that is foretold, and these wretches who follow it, and who, being our enemies, are admirable witnesses to the truth of these prophecies, in which their very wretchedness and blindness are foretold.

I find this sequence, this religion, wholly divine in its authority, in its duration, in its perpetuity, in its morality, in its conduct, in its doctrine, in its effects; and the darkness of the Jews, dreadful and foretold: *You will grope at noon. The book will be*

given to one who knows letters, and he will say: I cannot read; the scepter being still in the hands of the first foreign usurper, the rumor of the coming of Jesus Christ.[1]

So I stretch out my arms to my Deliverer, who, having been foretold for four thousand years, came to suffer and die for me on earth at the times and in all the circumstances that had been foretold; and by his grace I await death in peace, in the hope of being eternally united with him; and meanwhile I live with joy, whether in the good things he is pleased to give me or in the ills he sends me for my good, and which he taught me to suffer by his example.

738 The prophecies having given various signs that were all to occur at the coming of the Messiah, all these signs had to occur at the same time. Thus the fourth monarchy had to have come when Daniel's seventy weeks were completed, and the scepter had then to have departed from Judah; and all this happened without any difficulty; and then the Messiah had to arrive, and Jesus Christ, who called himself the Messiah, arrived then; and all this is again without difficulty; and this clearly shows the truth of the prophecies.

739 The prophets foretold, and were not foretold. The saints after them foretold, not foretelling. Jesus Christ foretold and foretelling.

740 Jesus Christ, whom both Testaments look to: the Old as its expectation, the New as its model, both as their center.

741 The two oldest books in the world are Moses and Job, one Jewish, the other pagan, both of which look to Jesus Christ as their common center and their object: Moses, in recording God's promises to Abraham, Jacob, etc., and his prophecies; and Job: *Oh that someone would grant me that*, etc.? *For I know that my redeemer lives*, etc.[2]

742 The Gospel speaks of the Virgin's virginity only up to the birth of Jesus Christ. Everything in relation to Jesus Christ.

743 *Proofs of Jesus Christ.*

1 The Latin combines Deut. 28:29 and Isa. 29:11–12.
2 Job 19:23, 25.

Why was the book of Ruth preserved?

Why the story of Tamar?

744 "Pray, lest you enter into temptation." It is dangerous to be tempted; and those who are tempted are so because they do not pray.

And when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren. But before that, *Jesus turned and looked at Peter*.[3]

Saint Peter asks leave to strike Malchus, and strikes before hearing the answer; and Jesus Christ answers afterward.

The word *Galilee*, which the crowd of Jews uttered as if by chance when accusing Jesus Christ before Pilate, gave Pilate occasion to send Jesus Christ to Herod; and in this was fulfilled the mystery that he was to be judged by the Jews and the Gentiles. Chance, to all appearances, was the cause of the mystery's fulfillment.

THE JEWS AS WITNESSES

The Jews' refusal to believe makes them unimpeachable witnesses to the prophecies they carry.

745 Those who find it hard to believe look for a reason in the fact that the Jews do not believe.—If it was so clear, they say, why would they not believe?—and would almost wish that they did believe, so as not to be held back by the example of their refusal. But it is their very refusal that is the foundation of our belief. We would be much less inclined to it if they were on our side. We would then have a far broader pretext. It is admirable to have made the Jews great lovers of the things foretold, and great enemies of their fulfillment.

746 The Jews were accustomed to great and dazzling miracles; and so, having had the great strokes of the Red Sea and the land of Canaan as an epitome of the great deeds of their Messiah, they expected still more dazzling ones, of which those of Moses were only samples.

747 The carnal Jews and the pagans have their miseries, and so do Christians. There is no redeemer for the pagans, for they do not even hope for one. There is no redeemer for the Jews; they hope for him in vain. There is a redeemer only for Christians (See Perpetuity).

747 bis See the two kinds of men under the heading Perpetuity.

747 ter Two kinds of men in each religion (see Perpetuity): superstition, concupiscence.

748 At the time of the Messiah, the people divides. The spiritual embraced the Messiah; the coarse remained, and serve him as witnesses.

749 If this was so clearly foretold to the Jews, how is it that they did not believe it? Or how is it that they were not wiped out for resisting something so clear?

I answer: first, it was foretold both that they would not believe something so clear and that they would not be wiped out. And nothing is more glorious for the Messiah; for it was not enough that there should be prophets; they had to be preserved free of suspicion. Now, etc.

750 If the Jews had all been converted by Jesus Christ, we would have only suspect witnesses. And if they had been wiped out, we would have none at all.

751 What do the prophets say of Jesus Christ? That he will plainly be God? No; but that he is a truly hidden God; that he will not be recognized; that people will not think it is he; that he will be a stumbling stone, against which many will strike, etc. Let no one reproach us any longer, then, with a lack of clarity, since we openly profess it.

But, they say, there are obscurities.—And without them, no one would have stumbled over Jesus Christ; and this is one of the express purposes of the prophets: *Blind*...[4]

752 Moses first teaches the Trinity, original sin, the Messiah.

David, a great witness: a king, good, forgiving, a fine soul, a fine mind, powerful; he prophesies, and his miracle comes to

3 Luke 22:32 and 22:61.

4 Isa. 6:10: "Blind the heart of this people."

pass; this is infinite. He had only to say that he was the Messiah, if he had been vain: for the prophecies are clearer about him than about Jesus Christ.

And Saint John likewise.

753 Herod believed to be the Messiah. He had taken the scepter from Judah, but he was not of Judah. This made a considerable sect.

And Bar Kokhba, and another received by the Jews. And the rumor that was everywhere at that time: Suetonius, Tacitus, Josephus.[5]

What must the Messiah have been like, since through him the scepter was to be in Judah forever, and at his coming the scepter was to be taken from Judah.

To make them, seeing, not see, and, hearing, not hear, nothing could have been better done.

Curse of the Greeks against those who count three periods of time.

754 *c. c. Being a man, you make yourself God.*

It is written, "You are gods"—and Scripture cannot be broken.

c. c. This sickness is not unto death—and it is unto death.

Lazarus sleeps—and then he said: Lazarus is dead.[6]

755 The apparent discrepancy of the Gospels.

756 What can one feel but veneration for a man who clearly foretells things that come to pass, and who declares his purpose both to blind and to enlighten, and who mingles obscurities among the clear things that come to pass?

757 The time of the first coming is foretold; the time of the second is not, because the first was to be hidden; the second was to be dazzling, and so manifest that even his enemies were to recognize it. But, since he was to come only obscurely, and only to be known by those who would search the Scriptures...

758 God, to make the Messiah recognizable to the good and unrecognizable to the wicked, had him foretold in this way. If

5 Simon Bar Kokhba (Pascal's "Barcosba") led the Jewish revolt against Rome of AD 132–135 and was hailed by many as the Messiah.

the manner of the Messiah had been foretold clearly, there would have been no obscurity, even for the wicked. If the time had been foretold obscurely, there would have been obscurity even for the good; for the [goodness of their hearts] would not have made them understand that, for example, the closed *mem* signifies six hundred years. But the time was foretold clearly, and the manner in figures.

By this means the wicked, taking the promised goods to be material, go astray despite the time being clearly foretold, and the good do not go astray. For the understanding of the promised goods depends on the heart, which calls good what it loves; but the understanding of the promised time does not depend on the heart. And so the clear prediction of the time, and the obscure prediction of the goods, deceives only the wicked.

759 [Either the Jews or the Christians must be wicked.]

760 The Jews reject him, but not all of them: the saints receive him, and not the carnal. And far from this being against his glory, it is the final stroke that completes it. As the reason they give for it, and the only one found in all their writings, in the Talmud and in the Rabbis, is only that Jesus Christ did not subdue the nations by force of arms, *your sword, O most mighty* (Is that all they have to say? Jesus Christ was killed, they say; he succumbed; he did not subdue the pagans by his strength; he did not give us their spoils; he gives no riches. Is that all they have to say?[7] That is why I love him. I would not want the one they imagine), it is clear that it is only his life that prevented them from receiving him; and by this refusal they are witnesses beyond reproach, and, what is more, by this they fulfill the prophecies.

[Through the fact that this people did not receive him, this marvel has come about: the prophecies are the only lasting miracles that can be performed, but they are liable to be disputed.]

6 John 10:33–35 and 11:4, 11, 14; "c. c." is an unexplained abbreviation in the manuscript, perhaps marking apparent contradictions.

7 Ps. 45:3 (Vulgate 44:4).

761 The Jews, in killing him so as not to receive him as Messiah, gave him the final mark of the Messiah.

And by continuing not to recognize him, they have made themselves irreproachable witnesses; and by killing him, and continuing to deny him, they have fulfilled the prophecies (Isa. 60; Ps. 70).

762 What could the Jews, his enemies, do? If they receive him, they prove him by their reception, for those entrusted with the expectation of the Messiah receive him; if they renounce him, they prove him by their renunciation.

763 The Jews, in testing whether he was God, showed that he was man.

764 The Church has had as much trouble showing that Jesus Christ was man, against those who denied it, as showing that he was God; and the appearances were just as strong.

765 *Source of contradictions*.—A God humbled, even to death on the cross; a Messiah triumphing over death by his death. Two natures in Jesus Christ, two comings, two states of man's nature.

766 *Figures*.—Savior, father, sacrificer, victim, food, king, sage, lawgiver, afflicted, poor, who was to bring forth a people whom he was to lead and feed, and bring into his land...

Jesus Christ. Offices.—He alone was to bring forth a great people, elect, holy and chosen; to lead it, feed it, bring it into the place of rest and holiness; make it holy to God; make it the temple of God, reconcile it to God, save it from the wrath of God, deliver it from the bondage of sin, which visibly reigns in man; give laws to this people, engrave these laws in their heart, offer himself to God for them, sacrifice himself for them, be a spotless victim, and himself the sacrificer: having to offer himself, his body and his blood, and yet to offer bread and wine to God...

Coming into the world.

"Stone upon stone."

What came before, what followed. All the Jews surviving and wandering.[8]

8 The Latin is Heb. 10:5; "stone upon stone" recalls Matt. 24:2, on the destruction of the Temple.

767 Of all that is on earth, he takes part only in its sorrows, not its pleasures. He loves those close to him; but his charity is not confined within these bounds, and spreads to his enemies, and then to God's.

768 Jesus Christ figured by Joseph: beloved of his father, sent by the father to see his brothers, etc., innocent, sold by his brothers for twenty pieces of silver, and thereby become their lord, their savior, and the savior of strangers, and the savior of the world; which would not have happened but for their plan to destroy him, the sale and the rejection they made of him.

In prison, Joseph, innocent, between two criminals; Jesus Christ on the cross between two thieves. He foretells salvation to one and death to the other, on the same appearances. Jesus Christ saves the elect and damns the reprobate, for the same crimes. Joseph only foretells; Jesus Christ does. Joseph asks the one who will be saved to remember him when he has come into his glory; and the one whom Jesus Christ saves asks him to remember him when he is in his kingdom.

769 The conversion of the pagans was reserved solely for the grace of the Messiah. The Jews spent so long fighting them without success; all that Solomon and the prophets said about it was useless. The wise, like Plato and Socrates, could not persuade them of it.

770 After many people had come before, at last Jesus Christ came to say: Here I am, and here is the time. What the prophets said was to come in the course of time, I tell you that my apostles are going to do. The Jews are going to be cast off, Jerusalem will soon be destroyed; and the pagans are going to come to the knowledge of God. My apostles are going to do it after you have killed the heir of the vineyard.

And then the apostles said to the Jews: You are going to be cursed (*Celsus mocked this*); and to the pagans: You are going to come to the knowledge of God. And it happens then.

771 Jesus Christ came to blind those who saw clearly, and to give sight to the blind; to heal the sick, and let the healthy die; to

call sinners to repentance and justify them, and leave the righteous in their sins; to fill the needy, and leave the rich empty.

772 *Holiness.—I will pour out my spirit*. All peoples were in unbelief and in concupiscence; the whole earth burned with charity; princes give up their greatness, young women suffer martyrdom. Where does this strength come from? It is that the Messiah has come; these are the effect and the marks of his coming.[9]

CHRIST FOR ALL

Christ came for all nations, unlike Moses; Pascal weighs in what sense he redeemed all.

773 Ruin of the Jews and the pagans by Jesus Christ: *all nations will come and worship him. It is a small thing that*, etc. *Ask of me. All kings will worship him. Unjust witnesses. He will give his cheek to the one who strikes him. They gave gall for my food.*[10]

774 Jesus Christ for all, Moses for one people.

The Jews blessed in Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you." But: "all nations blessed in his seed."

It is a small thing that, etc. Isaiah.

A light to enlighten the Gentiles.[11]

He has not dealt so with every nation, said David, speaking of the law. But, speaking of Jesus Christ, we must say: *He has dealt so with every nation. It is a small thing that*, etc., Isaiah. So it belongs to Jesus Christ to be universal; the Church itself offers the sacrifice only for the faithful: Jesus Christ offered that of the cross for all.[12]

775 It is heresy always to take *omnes* as "all," and heresy sometimes not to take it as "all." *Drink of it, all of you*: the Huguenots, heretics in taking it as all. *In whom all have sinned*: the Huguenots, heretics in excepting the children of the faithful. So

9 Joel 2:28.
10 In order: Ps. 85:9, Isa. 49:6, Ps. 2:8, Ps. 71:11, Ps. 26:12, Lam. 3:30, Ps. 68:22 (Vulgate numbering).
11 Luke 2:32.
12 Ps. 147:20.

we must follow the Fathers and tradition to know when, since there is heresy to fear on either side.[13]

776 "*Fear not, little flock.*"—*With fear and trembling.*—*What then? Fear not,* [*provided*] *you fear*: Do not fear, provided [*that*] you fear; but if you do not fear, then fear.[14]

He who receives me receives not me, but him who sent me.

No one knows, not even the Son.

A bright cloud overshadowed them.[15]

Saint John was to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and Jesus Christ was to bring division—without contradiction.

777 The effects, *in general and in particular*. The Semi-Pelagians err in saying of *in general* what is true only *in particular*; and the Calvinists, in saying *in particular* what is true *in general* (so it seems to me).[16]

778 *All the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem, and they were baptized*. Because of all the conditions of men who came there.[17]

Stones *can* be children of Abraham.

779 If we knew ourselves, God would heal and forgive: *Lest they be converted and I heal them,* Isaiah, *and their sins be forgiven them,* Mark 3.

780 Jesus Christ never condemned without hearing. To Judas: *Friend, why have you come?* To the man who did not have the wedding garment, the same.[18]

781 The figures of the totality of the redemption, such as the sun shining on all, indicate only a totality; but the [*figures*] of exclusions, such as the Jews chosen to the exclusion of the Gentiles, indicate exclusion.

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13 Matt. 26:27 and Rom. 5:12; the Huguenots were the French Calvinists, who gave the cup to all communicants.

14 Luke 12:32 and Phil. 2:12.

15 Mark 9:37; 13:32; Matt. 17:5.

16 The Semi-Pelagians held that the first movement toward faith comes from human free will rather than from grace.

17 Mark 1:5.

18 Matt. 26:50 and 22:12.

"Jesus Christ redeemer of all."—Yes, for he made the offer, like a man who has ransomed all who are willing to come to him; those who die on the way, that is their misfortune, but as for him, he was offering them redemption.—That holds in this example, where the one who ransoms and the one who prevents dying are two, but not in Jesus Christ, who does both.—No, for Jesus Christ, as redeemer, is not perhaps master of all; and so, insofar as it lies in him, he is redeemer of all.

When it is said that Jesus Christ did not die for all, you exploit a vice in men, who at once apply this exception to themselves, which is to encourage despair; instead of turning them away from it to encourage hope. For in this way one grows accustomed to inward virtues through these outward habits.

782 The victory over death. "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world if he loses his soul? Whoever would keep his soul will lose it."

"I did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it."

"The lambs did not take away the sins of the world, but I am the lamb that takes away sins."

"Moses did not give you the bread from heaven. Moses did not bring you out of captivity, and did not make you truly free."

783 ... Then Jesus Christ comes to tell men that they have no other enemies but themselves; that it is their passions that separate them from God; that he comes to destroy these, and to give them his grace, so as to make of them all one holy Church; that he comes to bring back into this Church the pagans and the Jews; that he comes to destroy the idols of the one and the superstition of the other. All men oppose this, not only through the natural opposition of concupiscence; but, above all, the kings of the earth unite to abolish this nascent religion, as had been foretold (*Proph.: Why do the nations rage... The kings of the earth... against his Christ*).[19]

All that is greatest on earth unites: the learned, the wise, the kings. Some write, others condemn, others kill. And despite all this opposition, these simple people without strength resist all

19 Ps. 2:1–2.

these powers, and even bring into submission these kings, these learned men, these wise men, and remove idolatry from the whole earth. And all this is done by the force that had foretold it.

784 Jesus Christ did not want the testimony of demons, nor of those who had no calling; but that of God and of John the Baptist.

CHRIST IN OBSCURITY

Foretold by a whole people, Christ lived unnoticed by historians and died betrayed and abandoned.

785 I see Jesus Christ in all persons and in ourselves: Jesus Christ as father in his father, Jesus Christ as brother in his brothers, Jesus Christ as poor in the poor, Jesus Christ as rich in the rich, Jesus Christ as teacher and priest in priests, Jesus Christ as sovereign in princes, etc. For by his glory he is all that is great, being God, and by his mortal life he is all that is paltry and abject. That is why he took on this wretched condition: so that he could be in all persons, and a model for every condition.

786 Jesus Christ in an obscurity (in what the world calls obscurity) so deep that the historians, who write only of the important affairs of states, barely noticed him.

787 *On the fact that neither Josephus nor Tacitus nor the other historians spoke of Jesus Christ.*—Far from telling against, this tells for. For it is certain that Jesus Christ existed, that his religion made a great stir, and that these men knew of it; and so it is plain that they kept silent about it only on purpose; or else that they did speak of it, and it has been suppressed or altered.[20]

788 "I have reserved seven thousand for myself." I love the worshipers unknown to the world, and even to the prophets.[21]

789 As Jesus Christ remained unknown among men, so his truth remains among common opinions, with no outward difference; so too the Eucharist among common bread.

20 Tacitus: Roman historian of the late 1st and early 2nd centuries AD.
21 1 Kings 19:18, quoted in Rom. 11:4.

790 Jesus Christ did not want to be killed without the forms of justice, for it is far more ignominious to die by justice than in an unjust uprising.

791 Pilate's false justice serves only to make Jesus Christ suffer; for he has him flogged for the sake of his false justice, and then kills him. It would have been better to kill him at once. So it is with the falsely righteous: they do good works, and bad ones, to please the world and to show that they do not belong wholly to Jesus Christ, for they are ashamed of him. And in the end, in great temptations and occasions, they kill him.

792 What man ever had more splendor? The whole Jewish people foretells him before his coming. The Gentile people worships him after his coming. The two peoples, Gentile and Jewish, look to him as their center.

And yet what man ever enjoyed that splendor less? Of thirty-three years, he lives thirty without appearing. In three years he is taken for an impostor; the priests and the leaders reject him; his friends and those closest to him despise him. In the end he dies betrayed by one of his own, denied by another, and abandoned by all.

What part, then, does he have in that splendor? Never has a man had so much splendor; never has a man had more ignominy. All that splendor has served only us, to make him recognizable to us; and he kept none of it for himself.

THE THREE ORDERS

Bodies, minds and charity are orders infinitely distant from one another; Christ came in the order of holiness.

793 The infinite distance between bodies and minds is a figure of the infinitely more infinite distance between minds and charity, for charity is supernatural.

All the splendor of greatness has no luster for people engaged in the pursuits of the mind.

The greatness of people of mind is invisible to kings, to the rich, to generals, to all these great ones of the flesh.

The greatness of wisdom, which is nothing if it is not from God, is invisible to the carnal and to people of mind. These are three orders differing in kind.

Great geniuses have their empire, their splendor, their greatness, their victory, their luster, and have no need of carnal greatness, to which they bear no relation. They are seen not by eyes but by minds; that is enough.

The saints have their empire, their splendor, their victory, their luster, and have no need of carnal greatness or greatness of mind, to which they bear no relation, for these neither add nor take away anything. They are seen by God and the angels, and not by bodies or by curious minds: God is enough for them.

Archimedes, without splendor, would be held in the same veneration. He did not fight battles for the eyes to see, but he furnished all minds with his discoveries. Oh, how he shone for minds![22]

Jesus Christ, without wealth and without any outward production of knowledge, is in his own order, that of holiness. He produced no invention, he did not reign; but he was humble, patient, holy, holy, holy to God, terrible to demons, without any sin. Oh, in what great pomp and in what prodigious magnificence he came, to the eyes of the heart, the eyes that see wisdom!

It would have been pointless for Archimedes to play the prince in his books of geometry, though he was one.

It would have been pointless for our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to shine in his reign of holiness, to come as a king; but he did indeed come with the splendor of his own order!

It is quite absurd to be scandalized at the baseness of Jesus Christ, as if this baseness were of the same order as the greatness he came to reveal. Consider that greatness in his life, in his passion, in his obscurity, in his death, in the choosing of his own, in their desertion, in his secret resurrection, and in the

22 Archimedes: Greek mathematician of Syracuse (3rd century BC), said to be a kinsman of its king.

rest: you will see it to be so great that you will have no reason to be scandalized at a baseness that is not there.

But there are some who can admire only carnal greatness, as if there were no greatness of the mind; and others who admire only greatness of the mind, as if there were not greatness infinitely higher in wisdom.

All bodies, the firmament, the stars, the earth and its kingdoms, are not worth the least of minds; for a mind knows all that, and itself; and bodies know nothing.

All bodies together, and all minds together, and all their productions, are not worth the least movement of charity. That is of an infinitely higher order.

From all bodies together, you could not manage to produce one little thought: that is impossible, and of another order. From all bodies and minds, you could not draw one movement of true charity: that is impossible, and of another order, supernatural.

794 Why did Jesus Christ not come in a visible manner, instead of drawing his proof from earlier prophecies?

Why did he have himself foretold in figures?

795 If Jesus Christ had come only to sanctify, all Scripture and all things would tend toward that, and it would be very easy to convince unbelievers. If Jesus Christ had come only to blind, his whole conduct would be confused, and we would have no means of convincing unbelievers. But since he came *for sanctification and for a stumbling block*, as Isaiah says, we cannot convince unbelievers and they cannot convince us; but by that very fact we convince them, since we say that in his whole conduct there is nothing conclusive either way.[23]

796 Jesus Christ does not say that he is not from Nazareth, so as to leave the wicked in their blindness, nor that he is not the son of Joseph.

23 Isa. 8:14.

THE GOSPELS AND THE APOSTLES

The plain style of the Gospels and the constancy of the apostles rule out imposture.

797 *Proofs of Jesus Christ*.—Jesus Christ said great things so simply that it seems he had not thought about them, and yet so clearly that one sees well what he thought of them. This clarity joined with this artlessness is admirable.

798 The style of the Gospel is admirable in so many ways, and among others in never containing any invective against the executioners and enemies of Jesus Christ; for there is none from the historians against Judas, Pilate, or any of the Jews.

If this restraint in the Gospel historians had been affected, like so many other features of so fine a character, and they had affected it only to have it noticed, then, if they had not dared to point it out themselves, they would not have failed to find friends to point it out to their credit. But since they acted this way without affectation, and from a wholly disinterested impulse, they pointed it out to no one; and I believe that many of these things have gone unnoticed until now, and that is what shows the coolness with which the thing was done.

799 An artisan who talks about wealth, an attorney who talks about war, kingship, etc.; but the rich man speaks well of wealth, the king speaks coolly of a great gift he has just made, and God speaks well of God.

800 Who taught the evangelists the qualities of a perfectly heroic soul, that they could paint it so perfectly in Jesus Christ? Why do they make him weak in his agony? Do they not know how to paint a steadfast death? Yes, for the same Saint Luke paints the death of Saint Stephen as stronger than that of Jesus Christ.[24]

So they make him capable of fear before the necessity of dying has come, and then wholly strong.

24 Acts 7:55–60.

But when they make him so troubled, it is when he troubles himself; and when men trouble him, he is wholly strong.[25]

801 *Proof of Jesus Christ*.—The hypothesis that the apostles were impostors is quite absurd. Follow it all the way through; imagine these twelve men gathered after the death of Jesus Christ, plotting to say that he has risen. By this they take on all the powers. The heart of man is strangely inclined to fickleness, to change, to promises, to wealth. If even one of them had recanted under all these lures, and what is more, under prison, torture, and death, they were lost. Follow that through.

802 The apostles were either deceived or deceivers; either is hard to believe, for it is not possible to mistake someone for a man risen from the dead.

While Jesus Christ was with them, he could sustain them; but after that, if he did not appear to them, who made them act?

25 The Vulgate of John 11:33 says that Jesus "troubled himself."

Section XIII: Miracles

Les miracles
The rule of miracles and the miracle of the Holy Thorn.

803 *Beginning*.—Miracles distinguish doctrine, and doctrine distinguishes miracles.

There are false ones and true ones. There must be a mark to know them by; otherwise they would be useless. Now, they are not useless; on the contrary, they are a foundation. Now, the rule he gives us must be such that it does not destroy the proof that true miracles give of the truth, which is the chief end of miracles.

Moses gave two: that the prediction does not come to pass, *Deut.* 18, and that they do not lead to idolatry, *Deut.* 13; and Jesus Christ one.

If doctrine regulates miracles, miracles are useless for doctrine.

If miracles regulate...

Objection to the rule.—Discerning the times. One rule in Moses' time, another rule now.

804 *Miracle*.—It is an effect that exceeds the natural power of the means employed; and a non-miracle is an effect that does not exceed the natural power of the means employed. Thus those who heal by invoking the devil do not perform a miracle; for that does not exceed the natural power of the devil. But...

805 The two foundations, one inward, the other outward; grace, miracles; both supernatural.

806 Miracles and truth are necessary, because the whole man must be convinced, in body and in soul.

807 Always, either men have spoken of the true God, or the true God has spoken to men.

808 Jesus Christ proved that he was the Messiah, never by proving his doctrine from Scripture and the prophecies, and always by his miracles.

He proves by a miracle that he forgives sins.[1]

"Do not rejoice in your miracles," says Jesus Christ, "but that your names are written in heaven."[2]

If they do not believe Moses, they will not believe one risen from the dead.[3]

Nicodemus recognizes from his miracles that his doctrine is from God: *We know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do what you do unless God is with him*. He does not judge the miracles by the doctrine, but the doctrine by the miracles.[4]

The Jews had a doctrine from God, as we have one from Jesus Christ, and it was confirmed by miracles; and they were forbidden to believe any worker of miracles, and moreover commanded to have recourse to the high priests and to abide by them.

And so all the reasons we have for refusing to believe workers of miracles, they had with regard to their prophets.

And yet they were very guilty for rejecting the prophets, in view of their miracles, and Jesus Christ; and would not have been guilty had they not seen the miracles: *If I had not done..., they would not have sin*. Therefore all belief rests on miracles.[5]

Prophecy is not called a miracle: thus Saint John speaks of the first miracle at Cana, and then of what Jesus Christ says to the Samaritan woman, revealing her whole hidden life, and then he heals the son of an official, and Saint John calls this "the second sign."[6]

809 The combinations of miracles.

1 Mark 2:10–11.
2 Luke 10:20.
3 Luke 16:31.
4 John 3:2.
5 John 15:24.
6 John 2:11; 4:16–18; 4:46–54.

810 The second miracle may presuppose the first; the first cannot presuppose the second.

811 Without the miracles, there would have been no sin in not believing in Jesus Christ.

812 I would not be a Christian without the miracles, says Saint Augustine.

813 *Miracles*.—How I hate those who make a show of doubting miracles! Montaigne speaks of them as he should in the two places. In the one, you see how cautious he is; and yet in the other he believes, and mocks the unbelievers.[7]

Be that as it may, the Church is without proof if they are right.

814 Montaigne against miracles.

Montaigne for miracles.

815 It is not possible to believe reasonably against miracles.

816 Unbelievers, the most credulous of all: they believe the miracles of Vespasian so as not to believe those of Moses.[8]

WHY FALSE MIRACLES ARE BELIEVED

There are so many false miracles, remedies and religions only because some are true.

817 Title: *Why so many liars who say they have seen miracles are believed, and none of those who say they have secrets for making man immortal or restoring his youth.*—Having considered why so much faith is placed in so many impostors who say they have remedies, to the point that people often put their lives in their hands, it seemed to me that the true cause is that there are real ones; for it would not be possible for there to be so many false ones, and for them to be given so much credence, if there were no genuine ones. If there had never been a remedy for any ill, and all ills had been incurable, it is impossible that men would have imagined they could provide remedies; and still more impossible that so many others would have believed those who boasted of

7 Montaigne, *Essays* 1.27 and 3.11.

8 Tacitus (*Histories* 4.81) reports cures worked by the emperor Vespasian at Alexandria.

having them: just as, if a man boasted that he could prevent death, no one would believe him, because there is no example of it. But since there were many remedies that proved genuine, as the greatest men themselves knew, men's belief was bent that way; and since the thing was known to be possible, people concluded from this that it was so. For the people usually reason thus: A thing is possible, therefore it is;—because, since the thing cannot be denied in general, as there are particular effects that are genuine, the people, who cannot tell which of these particular effects are the genuine ones, believe them all. In the same way, what makes people believe in so many false effects of the moon is that there are true ones, like the tides of the sea.

The same is true of prophecies, miracles, divination by dreams, sorcery, etc. For if there had never been anything genuine in any of this, none of it would ever have been believed; and so, instead of concluding that there are no true miracles because there are so many false ones, we must say on the contrary that there certainly are true miracles, since there are so many false ones, and that there are false ones only for this reason: that there are true ones. We must reason in the same way about religion; for it would not be possible for men to have imagined so many false religions if there were not a true one. The objection to this is that peoples without cities have a religion: but the answer is that they have heard of the true one, as appears from the flood, circumcision, Saint Andrew's cross, etc.[9]

818 Having considered why there are so many false miracles, false revelations, sorceries, etc., it seemed to me that the true cause is that [*there*] are true ones; for it would not be possible for there to be so many false miracles if there were no true ones, nor so many false revelations if there were no true ones, nor so many false religions if there were not a true one. For if there had never been any of this, it is well-nigh impossible that men would have imagined it, and still more impossible that so many others would have believed it. But since there have been very great

9 Travelers' reports claimed that X-shaped crosses, like Saint Andrew's, were venerated by some peoples of the Americas.

things that were genuine, and so were believed by great men, this impression has made almost everyone capable of believing the false ones too. And so, instead of concluding that there are no true miracles, since there are so many false ones, we must say on the contrary that there are true miracles, since there are so many false ones, and that there are false ones only for this reason: that there are true ones; and likewise that there are false religions only because there is a true one. —The objection to this: that peoples without cities have a religion; but that is because they have heard of the true one, as appears from Saint Andrew's cross, the flood, circumcision, etc. This comes from the fact that the mind of man, finding itself bent in that direction by the truth, thereby becomes susceptible to all the falsehoods of this...

819 Jeremiah 23:32, the *miracles* of the false prophets. In the Hebrew and in Vatable, it is their *lightness*.[10]

Miracle does not always mean miracle. 1 *Sam.* 14:15, *miracle* means *fear*, and it is so in the Hebrew. Likewise, clearly, in Job 33:7. And again Isa. 21:4; Jer. 44:12. *Portentum* (portent) means *simulacrum* (idol), Jer. 50:38, and it is so in the Hebrew and in Vatable. *Isa.* 8:18. Jesus Christ says that he and his own will be for *miracles*.[11]

820 If the devil favored the doctrine that destroys him, he would be divided, as Jesus Christ said. If God favored the doctrine that destroys the Church, he would be divided: *Every kingdom divided*... For Jesus Christ was acting against the devil and destroying his dominion over hearts, of which exorcism is the figure, in order to establish the kingdom of God. And so he adds: *If by the finger of God... the kingdom of God upon you*.[12]

821 There is a great difference between tempting and leading into error. God tempts, but he does not lead into error. To tempt is to provide occasions which impose no necessity, but in which,

10 François Vatable (d. 1547): French Hebrew scholar whose annotated Latin Bible Pascal used.
11 Pascal cites the Vulgate's "1 Kings," which is 1 Samuel in modern Bibles; likewise its "3 Kings" is our 1 Kings.
12 Luke 11:17–20.

if one does not love God, one will do a certain thing. To lead into error is to put a man under the necessity of concluding and following a falsehood.

822 Abraham, Gideon: [*signs*] above revelation. The Jews blinded themselves by judging miracles by Scripture. God has never forsaken his true worshipers.

I would rather follow Jesus Christ than anyone else, because he has miracles, prophecies, doctrine, perpetuity, etc.

Donatists: no miracle, which obliges them to say it is the devil. The more one particularizes God, Jesus Christ, the Church...[13]

823 If there were no false miracles, there would be certainty. If there were no rule for telling them apart, miracles would be useless, and there would be no reason to believe.

Now, humanly speaking, there is no human certainty, but there is reason.

824 Either God has confounded false miracles, or he has foretold them; and by either means he has raised himself above what is supernatural with respect to us, and raised us there too.

825 Miracles serve not to convert, but to condemn (1st part, 113, a. 10, *ad* 2).[14]

825 bis *Miracles*.—Saint Thomas, vol. III, bk. 8, ch. 20.

826 *Reasons why people do not believe.*

John 12:37. *But though he had done so many signs, they did not believe in him, that the word of Isaiah might be fulfilled: He has blinded,* etc.

Isaiah said these things when he saw his glory and spoke of him.[15]

"*The Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we have Jesus crucified.*" *But full of signs, but full of wisdom; you, however, have a Christ not crucified, and a religion without miracles and without wisdom.*[16]

What makes people not believe true miracles is the lack of charity. John: *But you do not believe, because you are not of my*

13 Donatists: schismatic North African church of the 4th and 5th centuries AD, opposed by Augustine.

14 A reference to Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*.

sheep. What makes them believe false ones is the lack of charity, 2 Thess. 2.[17]

The foundation of religion: it is miracles. What then? Does God speak against miracles, against the foundations of the faith we have in him?

If there is a God, faith in God had to exist on earth. Now, the miracles of Jesus Christ are not foretold by Antichrist, but the miracles of Antichrist are foretold by Jesus Christ; and so, if Jesus Christ were not the Messiah, he would truly have led men into error; but Antichrist cannot truly lead them into error. When Jesus Christ foretold the miracles of Antichrist, did he think he was destroying faith in his own miracles?

Moses foretold Jesus Christ and commanded that he be followed; Jesus Christ foretold Antichrist and forbade following him.

It was impossible, in Moses' time, for people to reserve their belief for Antichrist, who was unknown to them; but it is quite easy, in the time of Antichrist, to believe in Jesus Christ, who is already known.

There is no reason for believing in Antichrist that is not a reason for believing in Jesus Christ; but there are reasons in Jesus Christ that are not in the other.

827 *Judges* 13:23: "If the Lord had wanted to kill us, he would not have shown us all these things."

Hezekiah, Sennacherib.

Jeremiah. Hananiah, false prophet, dies in the seventh month.[18]

2 *Macc.* 3: The temple, about to be plundered, miraculously rescued.—2 *Macc.* 15.

1 *Kings* 17: The widow to Elijah, who had raised her child: "By this I know that your words are true."

1 *Kings* 18: Elijah with the prophets of Baal.

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15 John 12:41.
16 1 Cor. 1:22–23; the second sentence is Pascal's own Latin.
17 John 10:26.
18 2 Kings 19; Jer. 28:17.

Never, in a contest over the true God or the truth of religion, has a miracle occurred on the side of error and not on the side of truth.

828 *Contest*.—Abel, Cain; Moses, magicians; Elijah, false prophets; Jeremiah, Hananiah; Micaiah, false prophets; Jesus Christ, Pharisees; Saint Paul, Bar-Jesus; Apostles, exorcists; Christians and unbelievers; Catholics, heretics; Elijah Enoch. Antichrist.[19]

The true always prevails in miracles. The two crosses.

MIRACLES AND DOCTRINE

Miracles, not prophecies, proved Christ in his lifetime; unbelief in the face of miracles is inexcusable.

829 Jesus Christ says that the Scriptures bear witness to him, but he does not show in what way.

Even the prophecies could not prove Jesus Christ during his life; and so no one would have been guilty for not believing in him before his death, if miracles had not sufficed without doctrine. Now, those who did not believe in him while he was still alive were sinners, as he himself says, and without excuse. So they must have had a demonstration that they resisted. Now, they did not have ours, but only the miracles; therefore miracles suffice when the doctrine is not contrary, and one must believe them.

John 7:40. A dispute among the Jews, as among Christians today. Some believed in Jesus Christ, others did not believe him, because of the prophecies that said he was to be born in Bethlehem. They should have looked more carefully into whether he was not from there; for since his miracles were convincing, they should have made quite sure of these supposed contradictions between his doctrine and Scripture; and this obscurity did not excuse them, but blinded them. So those who refuse to believe today's miracles because of a supposed and chimerical contradiction are not excused.

19 Micaiah: 1 Kings 22; Bar-Jesus: Acts 13:6–11. Elijah and Enoch were expected to return to oppose Antichrist.

The people who believed in him on the strength of his miracles; the Pharisees said to them: This people that does not know the law is accursed; but has any ruler or Pharisee believed in him? For we know that no prophet comes out of Galilee. Nicodemus replied: Does our law judge a man before hearing him?[20]

830 The prophecies were ambiguous: they are no longer.

831 The five propositions were ambiguous; they are no longer.

832 Miracles are no longer necessary, because we already have them.—But when tradition is no longer listened to, when the Pope alone is put forward, when he has been misled, and so, with the true source of truth, which is tradition, shut out, and the Pope, who is its guardian, prejudiced, truth is no longer free to appear: then, since men no longer speak of truth, truth itself must speak to men. That is what happened in the time of Arius. (Miracles under Diocletian and under Arius.)[21]

833 *Miracle*.—The people draw this conclusion by themselves; but if you must be given the reason...

It is an unwelcome thing to be the exception to the rule. One must even be strict, and opposed to the exception. But nevertheless, since it is certain that there are exceptions to the rule, one must judge them strictly, but justly.

834 John 6:26: *Not because you saw signs, but because you had your fill*.

Those who follow Jesus Christ because of his miracles honor his power in all the miracles it produces; but those who, while professing to follow him for his miracles, in fact follow him only because he comforts them and fills them with the goods of the world, dishonor his miracles when they run counter to their convenience,

John 9: *This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath. Others: How can a man who is a sinner do such signs*?

Which is clearer?

20 John 7:47–52.

21 Arius (d. AD 336): priest whose denial of Christ's full divinity was condemned at Nicaea; Diocletian: Roman emperor who persecuted the Christians.

This house is not from God; for they do not believe there that the five propositions are in Jansenius. The others: This house is from God; for he works extraordinary miracles there.[22]

Which is clearer?

What do you say of him? I say he is a prophet. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.[23]

835 In the Old Testament: when someone turns you away from God. In the New: when someone turns you away from Jesus Christ. These are the occasions marked out for excluding faith in miracles. No other exclusions must be added.

Does it follow from this that they had the right to exclude all the prophets who came to them? No. They would have sinned in not excluding those who denied God, and would have sinned in excluding those who did not deny God.

As soon, then, as one sees a miracle, one must either submit or have extraordinary marks to the contrary. One must see whether he denies a God, or Jesus Christ, or the Church.

836 There is a great difference between not being for Jesus Christ and saying so, and not being for Jesus Christ and pretending to be. The first can work miracles, not the second; for it is clear of the first that they are against the truth, not of the second; and so miracles are clearer.

837 It is so plain a thing that we must love one God alone that no miracles are needed to prove it.

838 Jesus Christ worked miracles, and after him the apostles, and the first saints, in great numbers; because, since the prophecies were not yet fulfilled and were being fulfilled through them, nothing bore witness but miracles. It was foretold that the Messiah would convert the nations. How could that prophecy have been fulfilled without the conversion of the nations? And how could the nations have been converted to the Messiah without seeing this final effect of the prophecies that prove him? So before he had died, risen, and converted the nations, not

22 The convent of Port-Royal, where in 1656 Pascal's niece Marguerite Périer was reported healed by a relic of the Holy Thorn.
23 John 9:17, 33.

everything was fulfilled; and so miracles were needed during all that time. Now none are needed against the Jews, for the fulfilled prophecies are a standing miracle.

839 "If you do not believe in me, at least believe the miracles." He refers them to these as to the strongest proof.[24]

The Jews, as well as the Christians, had been told not always to believe the prophets; but nevertheless the Pharisees and the scribes make much of his miracles, and try to show that they are false, or worked by the devil, since they would be forced to be convinced if they acknowledged that they came from God.

We are not burdened today with making this discernment. Yet it is very easy to make: those who deny neither God nor Jesus Christ work no miracles that are not sure. *No one does a mighty work in my name and can soon speak evil of me.*[25]

THE HOLY THORN

The miracles at Port-Royal show God defending the nuns accused of heresy.

But we do not have to make this discernment. Here is a sacred relic; here is a thorn from the crown of the Savior of the world, over whom the prince of this world has no power, which works miracles by the very power of that blood shed for us. Here God himself chooses this house to make his power shine forth in it.

It is not men who work these miracles by an unknown and doubtful power, which would oblige us to a difficult discernment. It is God himself; it is the instrument of the Passion of his only Son, which, though it is in many places, chooses this one, and brings men from every side to receive there these miraculous reliefs in their afflictions.

840 The Church has three kinds of enemies: the Jews, who have never been of her body; the heretics, who have withdrawn from it; and bad Christians, who tear her apart from within.

These three different kinds of adversaries usually attack her in different ways; but here they attack her in one and the same

24 John 10:38.

way. Since they are all without miracles, and the Church has always had miracles against them, they have all had the same interest in evading them, and have all used this excuse: that one must not judge doctrine by miracles, but miracles by doctrine. There were two parties among those who listened to Jesus Christ: some who followed his doctrine because of his miracles; the others who said... There were two parties in Calvin's time... Now there are the Jesuits, etc.

841 Miracles decide doubtful matters: between the Jewish and pagan peoples, Jewish and Christian; Catholic, heretic; the slandered and the slanderers; between the two crosses.

But for heretics, miracles would be useless; for the Church, authorized by the miracles that have already won belief, tells us that they do not have the true faith. There is no doubt that they are not in it, since the first miracles of the Church rule out belief in theirs. There is thus miracle against miracle, and the first and greater ones are on the side of the Church.

These nuns, astonished at what is said—that they are on the road to perdition; that their confessors are leading them to Geneva; that they instill in them the idea that Jesus Christ is not in the Eucharist, nor at the right hand of the Father—know that all this is false; so they offer themselves to God in this state: *See if there is any way of wickedness in me*. What happens then? This place, which they say is the temple of the devil, God makes his temple. They say the children must be taken away from it: God heals them there. They say it is the arsenal of hell: God makes it the sanctuary of his graces.[26] Finally they are threatened with all the fury, all the vengeance of heaven; and God heaps his favors on them. One would have to have lost one's senses to conclude from this that they are therefore on the road to perdition.

(We undoubtedly have the same marks as Saint Athanasius.)[27]

842 "*If you are the Christ, tell us*."[28]

25 Mark 9:39.
26 The nuns of Port-Royal, accused of Calvinism ("Geneva"); the Latin is Ps. 139:24.
27 Athanasius (d. AD 373): bishop of Alexandria, repeatedly condemned and exiled for opposing the Arians.
28 Luke 22:67; John 10:24.

"*The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me. But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice*."[29]

John 6:30. "*What sign then do you do, that we may see and believe you?*"—*They do not say: What doctrine do you preach?*

"*No one can do the signs that you do unless God is with him*."

2 Macc. 14:15. "*God who protects his portion with evident signs.*"

"*We want to see a sign* from heaven, testing *him*. Luke 11:16.[30]

"*An evil generation seeks a sign; and none shall be given. And sighing deeply he said: Why does this generation seek a sign?*" (Mark 8:12.) It asked for a sign with evil intent.

"*And he could not do*." And yet he promises them the sign of Jonah, of his resurrection, the great and incomparable one.[31]

"*Unless you see signs, you do not believe*." He does not blame them for not believing unless there are miracles, but for not believing unless they themselves are the spectators.[32]

—Antichrist "*in lying signs*, says Saint Paul, 2 Thess. 2, *according to the working of Satan, in seduction for those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved; therefore God will send them the working of error, that they may believe a lie*." As in the passage of Moses: *for God tests you, whether you love him*.[33]

Behold, I have told you beforehand: see to it, then.[34]

843 This is not the country of truth; it wanders unknown among men. God has covered it with a veil that leaves it unrecognized by those who do not hear its voice. The place is open to blasphemy, even about truths that are at least quite evident. If the truths of the Gospel are proclaimed, contrary ones are proclaimed, and the questions are so obscured that the people cannot tell them apart. And they ask: What do you have that should make you believed rather than the others? What sign do you

29 John 10:25–27.
30 The first quotation is John 3:2.
31 Mark 6:5; Matt. 12:39–40.
32 John 4:48.
33 Deut. 13:3.
34 Matt. 24:25; Mark 13:23.

give? You have only words, and so do we. If you had miracles, well and good.—It is a truth that doctrine must be supported by miracles, and this truth is abused in order to blaspheme doctrine. And if miracles occur, they say that miracles are not enough without doctrine; and that is another truth, used to blaspheme miracles.

Jesus Christ healed the man born blind, and worked many miracles on the sabbath day. In this way he blinded the Pharisees, who said that miracles must be judged by doctrine.

"We have Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." That is what is marvelous: that you do not know where he comes from, and yet he works such miracles.[35]

Jesus Christ spoke neither against God nor against Moses.

Antichrist and the false prophets, foretold by both Testaments, will speak openly against God and against Jesus Christ. Whoever is not hidden... Whoever was a covert enemy, God would not allow to work miracles openly.

Never, in a public dispute where both parties claim to be for God, for Jesus Christ, for the Church, are the miracles on the side of the false Christians, and the other side without miracles.

"He has the devil. *John* 10:21.—And the others said: Can the devil open the eyes of the blind?"

The proofs that Jesus Christ and the apostles draw from Scripture are not demonstrative; for they say only that Moses said that a prophet would come; but they do not thereby prove that it is this one, and that was the whole question. These passages therefore serve only to show that one is not contrary to Scripture, and that no conflict with it appears, but not that there is agreement. Now, that is enough: exclusion of conflict, together with miracle.

There is a reciprocal duty between God and men, to do and to give. *Come: what did I owe?* "Accuse me," says God in Isaiah.[36]

God must fulfill his promises, etc.

35 John 9:29–30.

36 The Latin combines Isa. 1:18 ("Come and accuse me," in the Vulgate) and Isa. 5:4 ("What more ought I to have done for my vineyard?").

Men owe it to God to receive the religion he sends them. God owes it to men not to lead them into error. Now, they would be led into error if the workers [*of*] miracles proclaimed a doctrine that did not appear visibly false to the light of common sense, and if a greater worker of miracles had not already warned them not to believe them.

Thus, if there were division in the Church, and the Arians, for example, who claimed to be founded on Scripture just as the Catholics did, had worked miracles, and the Catholics had not, people would have been led into error.

For just as a man who announces the secrets of God to us is not worthy of belief on his private authority, and that is why the ungodly doubt him, so a man who, as a sign of his communion with God, raises the dead, foretells the future, moves the seas, heals the sick—there is no ungodly person who does not yield to that; and the unbelief of Pharaoh and of the Pharisees is the effect of a supernatural hardening.

When, therefore, we see miracles and unsuspect doctrine together on one side, there is no difficulty. But when we see miracles and suspect doctrine on the same side, then we must see which is clearer. Jesus Christ was suspect.

Bar-Jesus blinded: the power of God overcomes that of his enemies.[37]

The Jewish exorcists beaten by the devils, who said: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?"[38]

Miracles are for the sake of doctrine, and not doctrine for the sake of miracles.

If miracles are true, will it be possible to make people believe any doctrine whatever? No, for that will not happen. *If an angel...*[39]

37 Acts 13:6–11: the sorcerer Bar-Jesus is struck blind when he opposes Paul.
38 Acts 19:13–16.
39 Gal. 1:8: "But though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you... let him be accursed."

Rule: We must judge doctrine by miracles; we must judge miracles by doctrine. All this is true, but it is not contradictory, for we must distinguish the times.

How pleased you are to know the general rules, thinking you can use them to sow confusion and make everything useless! You will be prevented, Father: truth is one and firm.

It is impossible, by God's duty, that a man who hides his bad doctrine, lets only a good one appear, and claims to be in conformity with God and the Church, should work miracles in order to slip in, imperceptibly, a false and subtle doctrine: that cannot be.

And still less that God, who knows hearts, should work miracles in favor of such a man.

THE THREE MARKS OF RELIGION

Perpetuity, good life and miracles mark the true religion; the Jesuits undermine all three.

844 The three marks of religion: perpetuity, good life, miracles. They destroy perpetuity by probability; good life, by their morality; miracles, by destroying either their truth or their consequence.[40]

If we believe them, the Church will have no use for perpetuity, holiness or miracles. The heretics deny them, or deny their consequence; so do they. But one would have to lack all sincerity to deny them, or else to have lost one's senses to deny the consequence.

No one has ever let himself be martyred for miracles he claims to have seen; for [*as for*] those the Turks believe by tradition, human folly may perhaps go as far as martyrdom, but not for those one has seen.

844 bis Perpetuity.—Molina: novelty.[41]

40 "They" are the Jesuits. Probability (probabilism) is the casuists' doctrine that one may follow any opinion made "probable" by the backing of a learned authority.

41 Luis de Molina (1535–1600), Spanish Jesuit whose theory of grace the Jansenists attacked as a novelty.

845 Heretics have always fought these three marks, which they do not have.

846 "*First objection*: An angel from heaven. We must not judge truth by miracles, but miracles by truth. Therefore miracles are useless."

Now they are useful, and we must not go against the truth; therefore what Father Lingendes said, that God will not allow a miracle to be able to lead into error...[42]

When there is dispute within the same Church, the miracle will decide.

Second objection: But the Antichrist will perform signs.

Pharaoh's magicians did not seduce anyone into error. So no one will be able to say to Jesus Christ about the Antichrist: You have seduced me into error.—For the Antichrist will perform them against Jesus Christ, and so they cannot lead into error. Either God will not permit false miracles, or he will bring about greater ones.

[Since the beginning of the world Jesus Christ has endured: that is stronger than all the miracles of the Antichrist].

If, within the same Church, a miracle occurred on the side of those in error, people would be led into error. Schism is visible; the miracle is visible. But schism is more a mark of error than the miracle is a mark of truth: therefore the miracle cannot lead into error.

But, apart from schism, error is not as visible as the miracle is visible; therefore the miracle would lead into error.

Where is your God? Miracles show him, and are a flash of lightning.[43]

847 One of the antiphons of Christmas Vespers: *Unto the upright in heart there has arisen a light in the darkness.*[44]

848 If God's mercy is so great that he instructs us to our salvation even when he hides himself, what light must we not expect from him when he reveals himself?

42 Claude de Lingendes (1591–1660), Jesuit preacher.
43 Ps. 42:3 (Vulgate 41:4).
44 Ps. 112:4 (Vulgate 111:4).

849 Will *it is and it is not* be accepted in faith itself as well as in miracles? And if it is inseparable from it in the others...

When Saint Xavier works miracles.—[Saint Hilary.—Wretches, who force us to speak of miracles.] *Woe to you who make.*[45]

Unjust judges, do not make laws on the spur of the moment; judge by those that are established, and established by yourselves: *Woe to you who make unjust laws.*[46]

Continual miracles, false.

To weaken your adversaries, you disarm the whole Church.

If they say that our salvation depends on God, they are heretics. If they say they are submissive to the Pope, it is hypocrisy. If they are ready to subscribe to all his constitutions, that is not enough. If they say that one must not kill for an apple, they are attacking the morality of Catholics. If miracles occur among them, it is not a mark of holiness; on the contrary, it is a suspicion of heresy.[47]

The way the Church has endured is that the truth has been uncontested; or, if it has been contested, there was the Pope; or, failing that, there was the Church.

850 The five propositions condemned: no miracle, for truth was not attacked. But the Sorbonne..., but the bull...[48]

It is impossible that those who love God with all their heart should fail to recognize the Church, so evident is it.—It is impossible that those who do not love God should be convinced of the Church.

Miracles have such force that God had to warn us not to heed them against him, however clear it is that there is a God; otherwise they could have troubled us.

And so, far from these passages (Deut. 13) telling against the authority of miracles, nothing marks their force more. And like-

45 Francis Xavier (1506–52), Jesuit missionary to Asia; Hilary of Poitiers (4th century AD) complained that heretics forced him to speak of what should be left unsaid.

46 Isa. 10:1.

47 "They" are the Port-Royal Jansenists as seen by the Jesuits; the apple alludes to casuists who allowed killing to protect property of small value (seventh *Provincial Letter*).

wise for the Antichrist: "So as to deceive the very elect, if it were possible."[49]

851 The story of the man born blind.[50]

What does Saint Paul say? Does he keep citing the correspondence with the prophecies? No, but his miracle. What does Jesus Christ say? Does he cite the correspondence with the prophecies? No: his death had not yet fulfilled them; but he says: *If I had not done*. Believe the works.[51]

Two supernatural foundations of our wholly supernatural religion: one visible, the other invisible. Miracles with grace, miracles without grace.

The synagogue, which was treated with love as the figure of the Church, and with hatred because it was only the figure, was raised up again when it was about to fall, while it was on good terms with God; and so a figure.

Miracles prove the power God has over hearts by the power he exercises over bodies.

The Church has never approved a miracle among heretics.

Miracles, the support of religion: they have singled out the Jews, they have singled out the Christians, the saints, the innocent, the true believers.

A miracle among schismatics is not so much to be feared; for schism, which is more visible than the miracle, visibly marks their error. But when there is no schism, and error is in dispute, the miracle decides.

If I had not done the works which no other man did. Those wretches, who have forced us to speak of miracles.[52]

Abraham, Gideon: confirming faith by miracles.

Judith: at last God speaks in the direst oppressions.

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48 Innocent X's bull of 1653 condemned the five propositions; the Sorbonne censured Antoine Arnauld in 1656.

49 Matt. 24:24.

50 John 9.

51 John 15:24 ("If I had not done among them the works which none other man did") and John 10:38.

52 John 15:24.

If the cooling of charity leaves the Church almost without true worshipers, miracles will stir some up. It is one of the last effects of grace.

If a miracle happened among the Jesuits!

When a miracle disappoints the expectation of those in whose presence it happens, and there is a disproportion between the state of their faith and the instrument of the miracle, then it should lead them to change. But with you it is otherwise. There would be as much reason to say that if the Eucharist raised a dead man, one would have to become a Calvinist rather than remain a Catholic. But when it crowns the expectation, and those who hoped that God would bless the remedies find themselves healed without remedies...

The ungodly.—Never has a sign come from the devil without a stronger sign from God, or at least without its having been foretold that it would happen.

852 Unjust persecutors of those whom God visibly protects: if they reproach you for your excesses, they speak like the heretics; if they say that the grace of Jesus Christ sets us apart, "they are heretics"; if miracles occur, "it is the mark of their heresy."

Ezekiel. They say: There is the people of God speaking thus.—Hezekiah.

It is said: "Believe the Church," but it is not said: "Believe miracles," because the latter is natural, and not the former. The one needed a precept, not the other.

The synagogue was the figure, and so did not perish; and was only the figure, and so has perished. It was a figure that contained the truth, and so it endured until it no longer had the truth.

Reverend Father, all this happened in figure. Other religions perish; that one does not perish.

Miracles are more important than you think: they served for the founding of the Church, and will serve for its continuation, until the Antichrist, until the end.

The two Witnesses.[53]

In the Old Testament and in the New, miracles are performed through their link with figures. Salvation, or a useless thing, except to show that we must submit to the Scriptures: figures of the sacraments.

853 [We must judge divine ordinances soberly, Father.

Saint Paul on the island of Malta.][54]

855 Suppose people believe in miracles: you corrupt religion either in favor of your friends or against your enemies. You dispose of it as you please.

856 *On the miracle*.—As God has made no family happier, may he also see to it that he finds none more grateful.

53 Rev. 11:3–6: the two witnesses who prophesy and work wonders before the end.
54 Acts 28:1–6: the islanders took Paul for a murderer when a viper bit him, then for a god when he was unharmed.

Section XIV: Polemical fragments

Fragments polémiques
Divisions in the Church, the Pope, the Jesuits and probabilism.

[857] *Clarity, obscurity*.—There would be too much obscurity if truth had no visible marks; an admirable one is that it has always been preserved in a visible Church and assembly. There would be too much clarity if there were only one view in this Church; the one that has always been there is the truth; for the true has always been there, and nothing false has always been there.

[858] The history of the Church should properly be called the history of truth.

[859] There is pleasure in being on a ship battered by the storm when one is sure it will not perish: the persecutions that beset the Church are of this kind.

[860] After so many marks of piety, they also have persecution, which is the best of the marks of piety.

[861] A fine state for the Church, when it is upheld by God alone.

CONTRARY TRUTHS

Heresies arise from excluding one of two truths that seem opposed, such as Christ's two natures.

[862] The Church has always been attacked by contrary errors; but perhaps never at the same time, as now. And if it suffers more from this, because of the multiplicity of errors, it gains this advantage: that they destroy one another.

It complains of both, but much more of the Calvinists, because of the schism.

It is certain that many on both opposing sides are deceived; they must be undeceived.

Faith embraces many truths that seem to contradict one another: *A time to laugh, to weep*, etc. *Answer, answer not*, etc.[1]

The source of this is the union of the two natures in Jesus Christ; and also the two worlds (the creation of a new heaven and a new earth; new life, new death; all things doubled, and the same names remaining); and finally the two men who are in the righteous (for they are the two worlds, and a member and image of Jesus Christ. And so all the names suit them: righteous, sinners; dead, living; living, dead; elect, reprobate, etc.).

There are therefore a great number of truths, both of faith and of morals, which seem incompatible, and which all subsist in an admirable order. The source of all heresies is the exclusion of some of these truths; and the source of all the objections the heretics raise against us is ignorance of some of our truths. And it usually happens that, unable to conceive the connection between two opposed truths, and believing that to admit one entails excluding the other, they cling to one and exclude the other, and think that we do the opposite. Now the exclusion is the cause of their heresy; and their ignorance that we hold the other causes their objections.

First example: Jesus Christ is God and man. The Arians, unable to reconcile these things, which they believe incompatible, say that he is man: in this they are Catholics. But they deny that he is God: in this they are heretics. They claim that we deny his humanity: in this they are ignorant.

Second example: on the subject of the Blessed Sacrament. We believe that, the substance of the bread being changed, by transubstantiation, into that of the body of our Lord, Jesus Christ is really present in it; that is one of the truths. Another is that this Sacrament is also a figure of the cross and of glory, and a commemoration of both; that is the Catholic faith, which includes these two truths that seem opposed.

1 Eccles. 3:4; Prov. 26:4–5 ("Answer not a fool according to his folly… Answer a fool according to his folly").

Today's heresy, not conceiving that this Sacrament contains at once both the presence of Jesus Christ and its figure, and that it is both sacrifice and commemoration of sacrifice, [*believes*] for this reason that one cannot admit one of these truths without excluding the other.[2]

They cling to this point alone, that this Sacrament is figurative; and in this they are not heretics. They think that we exclude this truth; and that is why they raise so many objections against us from the passages of the Fathers that say so. Finally they deny the presence; and in this they are heretics.

Third example: indulgences.

That is why the shortest way to prevent heresies is to teach all the truths; and the surest way to refute them is to declare them all; for what will the heretics say then?

To know whether a view is that of a Father...

863 All err the more dangerously because each follows a truth; their fault is not in following a falsehood, but in not following another truth.

864 Truth is so obscured in these times, and falsehood so established, that unless one loves the truth, one cannot know it.

865 If there is ever a time when one should profess both opposites, it is when one is reproached for omitting one. So the Jesuits and the Jansenists are wrong to conceal them; but the Jansenists more so, for the Jesuits have made better profession of both.

866 Two kinds of people make things equal: feast days with working days, Christians with priests, all sins with one another, etc. And from this some conclude that what is wrong for priests is therefore wrong for Christians too; and the others, that what is not wrong for Christians is permitted to priests.

867 If the ancient Church was in error, the Church has fallen. Even if it were in error today, it is not the same; for it always has the higher maxim of tradition, from the hand of the ancient Church; and so this submission and conformity to the ancient Church prevails and corrects everything. But the ancient

2 "Today's heresy" is Calvinism.

Church did not presuppose the future Church and did not look to it, as we presuppose and look to the ancient one.

868 What misleads us when we compare what happened long ago in the Church with what we see there now is that we usually regard Saint Athanasius, Saint Teresa and the others as crowned with glory and... as gods. Now that time has made things clear, that is how it appears. But at the time when he was being persecuted, this great saint was a man called Athanasius; and Saint Teresa, a woman. "Elijah was a man like us, and subject to the same passions as we are," says Saint Peter, to disabuse Christians of that false idea which makes us reject the example of the saints as out of proportion with our condition. They were saints, we say; it is not the same with us. What, then, was happening at that time?[3] Saint Athanasius was a man called Athanasius, accused of several crimes, condemned at such and such a council for such and such a crime; all the bishops agreed, and finally the Pope. What is said to those who resist? That they disturb the peace, that they cause schism, etc.

Zeal, light. Four kinds of people: zeal without knowledge; knowledge without zeal; neither knowledge nor zeal; and both zeal and knowledge. The first three condemn him, and the last acquit him, and are excommunicated from the Church, and nevertheless save the Church.

869 If Saint Augustine came today and had as little authority as his defenders, he would accomplish nothing. God guides his Church well in having sent him beforehand with authority.

870 God did not want to absolve without the Church; as it has a part in the offense, he wants it to have a part in the pardon; he associates it with this power, as kings associate the parlements with theirs. But if it absolves or binds without God, it is no longer the Church; as with the parlement: for even though the king has pardoned a man, the pardon must still be registered; but if the parlement registers without the king, or refuses to

3 The quotation is in fact from James 5:17.

register at the king's order, it is no longer the king's parlement, but a rebellious body.[4]

CHURCH AND POPE

The pope is head of the Church as unity, but only a part of it as multitude.

871 *Church, pope. Unity, multitude.*—Considering the Church as a unity, the Pope, who is its head, is as the whole; considering it as a multitude, the Pope is only a part of it. The Fathers considered it sometimes in one way, sometimes in the other; and so spoke variously of the Pope (Saint Cyprian: *Priest of God*). But in establishing one of these two truths, they did not exclude the other. Multitude that is not reduced to unity is confusion; unity that does not depend on multitude is tyranny. France is almost the only place left where one may say that the council is above the Pope.[5]

872 The Pope is first. Who else is known to all? Who else is acknowledged by all, having the power to reach into the whole body because he holds the main branch, which reaches everywhere? How easy it was to let this degenerate into tyranny! That is why Jesus Christ laid down this precept for them: *But you, not so*.[6]

873 The Pope hates and fears scholars who are not bound to him by vow.

874 We must not judge what the Pope is by a few words of the Fathers—as the Greeks said at a council—important rules—but by the actions of the Church and of the Fathers, and by the canons.

4 The parlements were the sovereign law courts of France, which had to register royal acts and pardons for them to take effect.
5 Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (3rd century AD). The superiority of a general council over the Pope was a tenet of the French (Gallican) Church.
6 Luke 22:26.

Unity and multitude. *Two or three. Into one*: it is an error to exclude either of the two, as do the papists, who exclude multitude, or the Huguenots, who exclude unity.[7]

875 Would the Pope be dishonored by holding his light from God and from tradition? And is it not dishonoring him to separate him from this holy union?

876 God does not work miracles in the ordinary conduct of his Church. It would be a strange one if infallibility were in one man; but its being in the multitude seems so natural that God's guidance is hidden under nature, as in all his other works.

877 Kings dispose of their empire; but Popes cannot dispose of theirs.

878 *Extreme right, extreme wrong*.[8]

The majority is the best way, because it is visible and has the force to make itself obeyed; yet it is the opinion of the least able. If it had been possible, force would have been placed in the hands of justice; but since force does not let itself be handled as we wish, because it is a palpable quality, whereas justice is a spiritual quality that we dispose of as we wish, justice has been placed in the hands of force; and so we call just what we are forced to observe. Hence the right of the sword, for the sword gives a true right; otherwise we would see violence on one side and justice on the other (end of the twelfth *Provincial Letter*). Hence the injustice of the Fronde, which raises its so-called justice against force. It is not the same in the Church, for there is a true justice there, and no violence.

879 *Injustice*.—Jurisdiction is not given for the sake of [*the*] one who exercises it, but of the one subject to it.—It is dangerous to say so to the people.—But the people have too much faith in you; it will not harm them, and may serve you; so it must be made public: *Feed my sheep*, not *yours*; you owe me pasture.[9]

7 Matt. 18:20 ("where two or three are gathered together") and John 11:52 ("gather together in one").
8 A Roman proverb quoted by Cicero, *On Duties* 1.33.
9 John 21:17.

880 People love security; they like the Pope to be infallible in faith, and grave doctors to be so in morals, so as to have their assurance.

881 The Church teaches and God inspires, both infallibly. The work of the Church serves only to prepare for grace or for condemnation; what it does is enough to condemn, not to inspire.

882 Every time the Jesuits take the Pope by surprise, all Christendom will be made to perjure itself.

The Pope is very easily taken by surprise, because of his affairs and the trust he places in the Jesuits; and the Jesuits are very capable of taking him by surprise, because of calumny.

883 Those wretches, who have forced me to speak of the foundations of religion.

884 Sinners purified without penitence, the righteous justified without charity, all Christians without the grace of Jesus Christ, God without power over the will of men, a predestination without mystery, a redemption without certainty.

884 bis Sinners without penitence, the righteous without charity, a God without power over the will of men, a predestination without mystery.

885 Whoever wants to be a priest is made one, as under Jeroboam. It is a horrible thing that the discipline of today's Church is held up to us as so good that wanting to change it is made a crime. Formerly it was infallibly good, and yet we find that it could be changed without sin; and now, such as it is, we may not even wish it changed! It was quite permissible to change the custom of making priests only with such circumspection that hardly any were found worthy; and it will not be permissible to complain of the custom that makes so many unworthy ones![10]

886 *Heretics*.—Ezekiel. All the pagans spoke ill of Israel, and so did the prophet; and far from the Israelites having the right to say to him: You speak like the pagans, he builds his strongest argument on the fact that the pagans speak as he does.

887 The Jansenists resemble the heretics in the reform of morals; but you resemble them in evil.

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10 1 Kings 13:33: Jeroboam consecrated as priest "whosoever would."

888 You do not know the prophecies if you do not know that all this must happen: princes, prophets, pope and even the priests; and yet the Church must endure. By the grace of God we have not come to that. Woe to those priests! But we hope that God will show us the mercy of not being among them.

Saint Peter, chap. 2: false prophets of the past, image of those to come.

889 ... So that if it is true, on the one hand, that some lax members of religious orders and some corrupt casuists, who are not members of the hierarchy, have had a hand in these corruptions, it is certain, on the other, that the true pastors of the Church, who are the true guardians of the divine word, have preserved it unchanged against the efforts of those who undertook to destroy it. And so the faithful have no pretext for following these laxities, which are offered to them only by the alien hands of these casuists, instead of the sound doctrine presented to them by the fatherly hands of their own pastors.

And the ungodly and the heretics have no ground for presenting these abuses as signs that God's providence has failed his Church; for since the Church properly consists in the body of the hierarchy, far from our being able to conclude from the present state of things that God has abandoned it to corruption, it has never been more apparent than today that God visibly defends it from corruption.

For if some of those men who, by an extraordinary calling, have professed to leave the world and take the religious habit in order to live in a more perfect state than ordinary Christians, have fallen into aberrations that horrify ordinary Christians, and have become among us what the false prophets were among the Jews, it is a particular and personal misfortune, which is indeed to be deplored, but from which nothing can be concluded against the care God takes of his Church; since all these things are so clearly foretold, and it was announced so long ago that these temptations would arise from people of this sort, that when one is well instructed one sees in this the marks of God's guidance rather than of his forgetting us.

890 Tertullian: *the Church will never be reformed.*[11]

891 We must make known to the heretics who take advantage of the doctrine of the Jesuits that [*it is not*] that of the Church [*the doctrine of the Church*]; and that our divisions do not separate us from the altar.

892 "If in differing we condemned, you would be right. Uniformity without diversity is useless to others; diversity without uniformity is ruinous for us. The one harmful outside, the other harmful within."

893 By showing the truth, one makes it believed; but by showing the injustice of ministers, one does not correct it. One makes the conscience secure by exposing falsehood; one does not make the purse secure by exposing injustice.

894 Those who love the Church lament to see morals corrupted; but at least the laws remain. But these men corrupt the laws: the model is spoiled.

895 Men never do evil so fully and so cheerfully as when they do it from conscience.

896 It is in vain that the Church has established these words anathema, heresy, etc.; they are used against it.

897 The servant does not know what the master is doing, for the master tells him only the action and not the end; and that is why he submits to it servilely, and often sins against the end. But Jesus Christ has told us the end. And you destroy that end.[12]

898 They cannot have perpetuity, so they seek universality; and for that they make the whole Church corrupt, so that they may be sound.

899 Against those who misuse passages of Scripture and take advantage of finding one that seems to favor their error.—The chapter at Vespers on Passion Sunday; the prayer for the king.[13]

Explanation of these words: Whoever is not for me is against me—and of these others: Whoever is not against you is for you. A

11 Tertullian (c. AD 160–225), Latin Church Father; the phrase echoes his *On the Veiling of Virgins* 1, where the rule of faith is called "irreformable."
12 John 15:15.
13 The "chapter" is the short scriptural reading in the Divine Office.

person who says: I am neither for nor against—; we should answer him...[14]

900 Whoever would give the meaning of Scripture and does not take it from Scripture is an enemy of Scripture. (Aug. *d. d. ch.*).[15]

901 "*He gives grace to the humble*"—*does it follow that he did not give humility?*[16]

"*His own received him not*"—*but as many as did not receive him, were they not his own?*[17]

902 "It must surely be," says the Feuillant, "that this is not so certain; for dispute is a mark of uncertainty (Saint Athanasius, Saint Chrysostom; morals, the infidels)."[18]

The Jesuits have not made truth uncertain, but they have made their ungodliness certain.

Contradiction has always been left, to blind the wicked; for everything that offends against truth or charity is bad: that is the true principle.

902 bis On hearing the rumor about the Feuillants, I went to see one of my old friends; as we talked of devotion, he thought I had some feeling for it and might well become a Feuillant, and that I could do some good by writing, especially at this time, against the innovators.

We recently acted against your general chapter, which is that the bull would be signed.

That he would like God to inspire me.

"Father, should one sign?"

903 All the religions and sects of the world have had natural reason as their guide. Christians alone have been bound to take their rules from outside themselves, and to inquire into those that Jesus Christ left to the ancients to be handed down to the faithful. This constraint wearies these good Fathers; they want to have, like the other peoples, the freedom to follow their own

14 Matt. 12:30; Mark 9:40.
15 Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* (*De doctrina christiana*).
16 James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5.
17 John 1:11.
18 The Feuillants were a reformed Cistercian congregation; see the anecdote in fragment 902 bis.

imaginings. It is in vain that we cry to them, as the prophets once said to the Jews: Go into the midst of the Church; inquire into the ways the ancients left it, and follow those paths.[19] — They have answered like the Jews: We will not walk in them, but we will follow the thoughts of our heart; and they have said: We will be like the other peoples.[20]

904 They make the exception the rule.

The ancients gave absolution before penance—do it in a spirit of exception. But you make of the exception a rule without exception, so that you no longer want the rule to stand even as an exception.

905 *On confessions and absolutions without signs of regret.*—God looks only at the inward; the Church judges only by the outward. God absolves as soon as he sees penitence in the heart; the Church, when it sees it in works. God will make a Church pure within, which by its inward and wholly spiritual holiness confounds the inward ungodliness of the proud sages and the Pharisees; and the Church will make an assembly of men whose outward conduct is so pure that it confounds the conduct of the pagans. If there are hypocrites among them, but so well disguised that it does not recognize their venom, it tolerates them; for although they are not accepted by God, whom they cannot deceive, they are accepted by men, whom they do deceive. And so it is not dishonored by their conduct, which appears holy. But you want the Church to judge neither the inward, because that belongs to God alone, nor the outward, because God cares only for the inward; and so, taking from it all choice of men, you keep in the Church the most dissolute, and those who dishonor it so greatly that the synagogues of the Jews and the sects of the philosophers would have banished them as unworthy and abhorred them as ungodly.

906 The conditions easiest to live in according to the world are the hardest to live in according to God; and conversely. Nothing is so hard according to the world as the religious life; nothing is

19 Jer. 6:16.
20 Jer. 6:16 and 18:12; 1 Sam. 8:20.

easier than to live it according to God. Nothing is easier than to hold high office and great wealth according to the world; nothing is harder than to live in them according to God, without taking any interest or pleasure in them.

PROBABILITY

The casuists' doctrine of probable opinions puts corrupt reason and will in charge of conscience.

907 The casuists submit the decision to corrupt reason, and the choice of decisions to the corrupt will, so that everything corrupt in human nature may have a share in man's conduct.

908 But is it *probable* that *probability* gives assurance?

Difference between peace of conscience and security of conscience. Nothing gives assurance but truth; nothing gives peace but the sincere search for truth.

909 The whole entire society of their casuists cannot make a conscience secure in error, and that is why it is important to choose good guides.

Thus they will be doubly guilty: both for having followed ways they should not have followed, and for having listened to doctors they should not have listened to.

910 Can it be anything but the wish to please the world that makes you find things probable? Will you have us believe that it is the truth, and that, if dueling were not in fashion, you would find it probable that one may fight, looking at the matter in itself?

911 Must we kill to prevent there being wicked men?—That is to make two instead of one: *Overcome evil with good.* (Saint Aug.)[21]

912 *Universal*.—Morals—and language—are particular sciences, but universal.

913 *Probability*.—Anyone can add; no one can take away.

914 They let concupiscence act and hold back scruple, whereas they ought to do the opposite.

915 *Montalte*.—Lax opinions please men so much that it is strange theirs should displease; it is because they have gone beyond all bounds. And besides, there are many people who see the truth and cannot attain it; but there are few who do not know that the purity of religion is contrary to our corruptions. Ridiculous to say that an eternal reward is offered to Escobartine morals.[22]

916 *Probability*.—They have some true principles; but they abuse them. Now the abuse of truths should be punished as much as the introduction of falsehood.

As if there were two hells, one for sins against charity, the other for sins against justice!

917 *Probability*.—The ardor of the saints in seeking the truth was useless, if the probable is safe. The fear of the saints, who had always followed the safest course (Saint Teresa having always followed her confessor).

918 Take away *probability*, and one can no longer please the world; bring in *probability*, and one can no longer displease it.

919 These are the effects of the sins of peoples and of the Jesuits: the great have wished to be flattered; the Jesuits have wished to be loved by the great. They have all deserved to be abandoned to the spirit of lying, the ones to deceive, the others to be deceived. They have been greedy, ambitious, sensual: *They will heap up teachers for themselves*. Worthy disciples of such masters, *they are worthy*. They sought flatterers and found them.[23]

920 If they do not renounce probability, their good maxims are no more holy than their bad ones, for they are founded on human authority; and so, if they are more just, they will be more reasonable, but not more holy; they take after the wild stock on which they are grafted.

If what I say does not serve to enlighten you, it will serve the people.

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21 The words are Rom. 12:21, cited by Augustine.
22 Montalte: Pascal's pseudonym in the *Provincial Letters*. Antonio Escobar y Mendoza (1589–1669) was the Jesuit casuist they mocked most.
23 2 Tim. 4:3; Rev. 16:6.

If these keep silent, the stones will speak.[24]

SILENCE IS THE GREATEST PERSECUTION

Pascal defends his Provincial Letters against censure, appealing from Rome to Christ's tribunal.

Silence is the greatest persecution. The saints have never kept silent. It is true that one needs a calling. But it is not from the decrees of the King's Council that one must learn whether one is called; it is from the necessity of speaking. Now, after Rome has spoken, and people think it has condemned the truth, and they have written so, and the books that said the contrary are censured, one must cry out all the louder the more unjustly one is censured, and the more violently they try to stifle speech. This must go on until a pope comes who hears both sides and consults antiquity in order to do justice. So good popes will still find the Church in an uproar.

The Inquisition and the Society: the two scourges of truth.

Why do you not accuse them of Arianism? For they have said that Jesus Christ is God. Perhaps they mean it not by nature, but in the sense in which it is said: *You are gods*.[25]

If my letters are condemned in Rome, what I condemn in them is condemned in heaven: *To your tribunal, Lord Jesus, I appeal*.[26]

You yourselves are corruptible.

Seeing myself condemned, I feared I might have written badly. But the example of so many pious writings makes me believe the contrary. It is no longer permitted to write well, so corrupt or ignorant is the Inquisition!

"It is better to obey God than men."[27]

I fear nothing, I hope for nothing. The bishops are not like that. Port-Royal is afraid, and it is bad policy to split them up,

24 Luke 19:40.
25 Ps. 82:6, quoted by Jesus in John 10:34.
26 The *Provincial Letters* were condemned in Rome in 1657.
27 Acts 5:29.

for they will no longer be afraid and will make themselves more feared. I do not fear even your particular censures, unless they are grounded on those of tradition. Do you censure everything? What! even my respect? No. Then say what, or you will achieve nothing, unless you point out the evil and why it is evil.—And that is what they will have great difficulty doing.

Probability.—They have given an amusing account of safety. For after establishing that all their ways are safe, they no longer called safe what leads to heaven without danger of failing to get there by that way, but what leads there without danger of leaving that way.

921 [What have you gained by accusing me of mocking holy things? You will gain no more by accusing me of imposture.]

[I have not said everything; you will see.]

I am not a heretic; I have not upheld the five propositions. You say so and do not prove it. I say that you have said that, and I prove it.

You threaten me.

Will you say that I am an impostor?

I tell you that you are impostors. I prove it to you; and I prove that you do not hide it, and that you insolently authorize it: Brisacier, Meynier, d'Alby. *To crush*.[28]

When you thought M. Puys an enemy of the Society, he was an unworthy pastor of his Church, ignorant, heretical, of bad faith and bad morals. Since then he is a worthy pastor, of good faith and good morals.[29]

Since you have touched on that alone, it is approving all the rest.

To slander: *this is great blindness of heart*. Not to see the evil of it: *this is greater blindness of heart*. To defend it instead of confess-

28 Brisacier, Meynier and d'Alby were Jesuit polemicists who attacked Port-Royal. "To crush" (*elidere*) is the casuists' term for destroying an accuser's credit, if need be by calumny.

29 Jean Puys, parish priest of Saint-Nizier in Lyon, first defamed and then praised by the Jesuit d'Alby (fifteenth *Provincial Letter*).

ing it as a sin: *then the depth of iniquity shuts the man in*, etc. 230 *passim*, *To crush*, Caramuel.[30]

Great lords take sides in civil wars, and so do you in the civil war of men.

[I want to say it to you yourself, so that it has more force.]

[Those who examine the books, I am sure of their approval. But those who read only the titles, and they are the greater number, might believe your word, not supposing that men of religious orders could be impostors.]

[Not that I fail to see how embarrassed you are: for if you were willing to retract, that would be the end of it, but, etc.]

The saints split hairs to find themselves guilty, and accuse their best actions; and these men split hairs to excuse the worst.

Do not claim that this is merely a matter for disputation. Your works will be printed in full, and in French, and everyone will be made judge of them.

I ask that people do me the justice of no longer taking them at their word.

A building equally beautiful from outside, but on a bad foundation: the wise pagans built it. And the devil deceives men by this apparent resemblance, grounded on the most different foundation.

Never has a man had so good a cause as I; and never have others laid themselves so open as you.

People of the world do not believe they are on the right paths.

The more weakness they point out in my person, the more they support my cause.

You say that I am a heretic. Is that permitted? And if you do not fear that men will fail to do justice, do you not fear that God will do it?

You will feel the force of truth and you will yield to it.

The world would have to be obliged to believe you, on pain of mortal sin.

30 Juan Caramuel (1606–82), Spanish casuist quoted in the fifteenth *Provincial Letter* as holding that calumny in defense of one's honor may be no mortal sin.

To crush. It is a sin to believe slanders rashly. (*A calumniator shall not be rashly believed.*) (Saint Aug.)

And by falling he made me fall on every side, by the maxim of slander.

There is something supernatural in such blindness. *A fitting necessity*.[31]

I am alone against thirty thousand? Not at all. You may keep the court, you may keep imposture; I keep the truth. It is all my strength; if I lose it, I am lost. I shall not lack accusations and persecutions. But I have the truth, and we shall see who wins.

I do not deserve to defend religion, but you do not deserve to defend error and injustice. May God in his mercy, disregarding the evil that is in me and regarding the good that is in you, grant us all the grace that truth may not succumb in my hands, and that falsehood may not...

You lie most shamelessly.

230.—To defend it is an extreme sin. *To crush*.

340. 23.—The good fortune of the wicked.

A man is known by his doctrine.

66. *The labor of lying*.

80. *Wicked gods.*

False piety, double sin.[32]

922 *Probable*.—Let us see whether we seek God sincerely, by comparison with the things we care about. It is *probable* that this meat will not poison me; it is *probable* that I shall not lose my lawsuit by not pressing my case...

Even if it were true that grave authors and reasons were enough, I say that they are neither grave nor reasonable. What! a husband may profit from his wife, according to Molina! Is the reason he gives for it reasonable? And is the contrary one of Lessius reasonable too?[33]

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31 *A fitting necessity*: Wisd. 19:4.

32 The first Latin phrase is the Capuchin Valerian Magni's retort to his Jesuit accusers (fifteenth *Provincial Letter*); *A man is known by his doctrine* is Prov. 12:8.

33 Leonard Lessius (1554–1623), Flemish Jesuit theologian.

Will you dare, you, to trifle like this with the king's edicts? As by saying that it is not fighting a duel to go into a field and wait for a man.

That the Church has indeed forbidden dueling, but not going for a walk.

And usury too, but not...

And simony, but not...

And revenge, but not...

And sodomy, but not...

And the *as soon as possible*, but not...[34]

923 It is not absolution alone that remits sins in the sacrament of penance, but contrition, which is not genuine unless it seeks the sacrament.

Thus it is not the nuptial blessing that prevents sin in procreation, but the desire to beget children for God, which is genuine only in marriage.

And just as a contrite person without the sacrament is better disposed for absolution than an impenitent one with the sacrament, so Lot's daughters, for example, who had only the desire for children, were purer without marriage than married people without the desire for children.[35]

924 People without word, without faith, without honor, without truth, double-hearted, double-tongued; and like, as you were once reproached, that amphibious animal of the fable which kept itself in an ambiguous state between the fish and the birds.

Port-Royal is surely as good as Voltigerod.

However just your procedure may be from that angle, it is just as unjust if one looks at Christian piety.

It matters to kings and princes to be held in esteem for piety; and for that, they must confess to you.

925 Examine the motive of the censure by the phenomena: make a hypothesis that fits them all.

34 The Council of Trent required a priest in mortal sin who had celebrated Mass to confess *as soon as possible*; the casuists stretched the phrase.
35 Gen. 19:30–38.

The habit makes the doctrine.

[You hear the confessions of so many people who confess only once a year.]

[I thought there was one opinion against another.]

[When one is so wicked that one no longer feels any remorse, one cannot displease. So you persecute M. Arnauld without remorse.]

I distrust this doctrine, for it is too agreeable to me, given the malice that is said to be in me.

I distrust their union, given their particular contradictions. I shall wait until they agree before taking sides. For one friend I would have too many enemies. I am not learned enough to answer them.

[Why did you not choose some gross heresy!]

[The wager.]

[I did believe that one was damned for not having had good thoughts; but to be damned for believing that no one has any, that is new to me.]

[What use is that? To console the righteous and ward off despair?—No, for no one can be in a position to believe himself righteous.

[M. Chamillard would be a heretic—which is a manifest falsehood—for he has written for M. Arnauld.[36]

—Those who think they do right in sinning.]

In the year 1647, grace for all; in 1650, it was scarcer, etc.

Luther: everything except the truth.

If there had been no such occasions in the Church; but I take my parish priest's word for it.

Only one tells the truth.

However little it inconveniences them, they make others (graces), for they dispose of them as their own handiwork. [For each occasion, a grace; for each person: grace for the great, grace for rogues.]

36 Gaston Chamillard, a doctor of the Sorbonne involved in the censure of Arnauld (1656).

In short, M. Chamillard has brought it so near that, if there are steps for descending into nothingness, this sufficient grace is now on the nearest one.

[Amusing, to be a heretic for that!]

There is no one who would not be surprised at it; for it has never been seen in Scripture or in the Fathers, etc.

How long is it, Father, since this has been an article of faith? It is at most only since the words "proximate power." And I believe that it gave birth to this heresy at its own birth, and that it was born for that single purpose.[37]

[The censure only forbids speaking thus of Saint Peter, and nothing more.]

[I am much obliged to them. They are clever people; they feared that the letters written to people in the provinces...

It is not worth the trouble for one word.

I think they are sorcerers. People say everything except the truth. Member—Heretic. *Unam sanctam*.[38]

The Enluminures did me harm.

A proposition is good in one author and bad in another.

Yes; but then there are other bad propositions.[39]

Some people defer to the censure; others to reasons; and all to reasons. I am surprised, then, that you did not take the general way instead of the particular one, or at least that you did not join the one to the other.

How relieved I am! No Frenchman a good Catholic.

The... Clement VIII—Paul V—Censure.

God visibly protects us.

"Man is truly senseless. He cannot make a mite."

Instead of desiring grace to go there. Plurality of graces.

Jansenist translations.[40]

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37 "Proximate power" (*pouvoir prochain*), the scholastic term mocked in the first *Provincial Letter*.

38 The bull *Unam sanctam* ("One holy [Church]," 1302) of Boniface VIII, asserting papal supremacy.

39 *Les Enluminures du fameux almanach des Jésuites* (1654), satirical verses against the Jesuits by Isaac Le Maistre de Sacy.

40 Montaigne, *Essays* II, 12, which continues: "and he makes gods by the dozen."

Saint Augustine has the most of it because of the divisions among his friends. Besides a thing that may be regarded as an unbroken tradition of twelve thousand popes, councils, etc.

M. Arnauld must, then, hold very bad views, to infect those he embraces.

The censure will do them this good only when they come to be censured themselves: they will fight it by saying that they are imitating the Jansenists.

926 Both sides must be heard; I have taken care of that.

When one has heard only one side, one is always on that side; but the opposing side makes one change, whereas here the Jesuit confirms.

Not what they do, but what they say.

It is only against me that people cry out. I am quite willing: I know to whom I must answer for it.

Jesus Christ was a stone of stumbling.

Condemnable, condemned.

NOTES AGAINST THE JESUITS

Jottings on Jesuit maxims, the censure of Arnauld and the five propositions.

Politics.—We have found two obstacles to our plan of easing men's lot. One is the inner laws, those of the Gospel; the other, the outer laws, those of the State and of Religion. The first we are masters of; as for the others, here is what we have done: *to be widened, to be narrowed, from the greater to the lesser*. *Junior*.[41]

Probable. If reasons as bad as these are probable, everything will be:

1st reason. *Master of conjugal acts*. Molin.

2nd reason. *It cannot be compensated*. Less.

Set against them not holy maxims, but abominable ones.

They reason like those who prove that it is night at noon: Bauny, burner of barns.

41 *Junior*: Latin, "younger"; the allusion is obscure.

... Council of Trent, for priests in mortal sin: *as soon as possible*...

927 The mad idea you have of the importance of your Company has made you set up these horrible ways. It is quite plain that this is what has made you follow the way of calumny. For you condemn in me as horrible the very impostures that you excuse in yourselves, because you regard me as a private individual, and yourselves as *Imago*.[42]

It is quite clear that your praises are follies, from such follies as the privilege of *not damned*.[43]

Is it encouraging your children, to condemn them when they serve the Church?

It is a device of the devil to divert elsewhere the weapons with which these people fought heresies.

You are poor politicians.

928 *Diana*.—[This is very useful to us.] Fundamental corruption.[44]

11. *It is permissible not to give to the most worthy the benefices that do not carry the cure of souls*. The Council of Trent seems to say the contrary; but here is how he proves it: *For if that were so, all prelates would be in a state of damnation, for they all act in this way.*

The king and the pope are not obliged to choose the most worthy. If that were so, the pope and kings would have a terrible burden.

And elsewhere: 21. *If this opinion were not true, penitents and confessors would have a great deal of trouble, and that is why I consider that it should be followed in practice*."

And in another place, 22, where he sets out the conditions required to make a sin mortal, he puts in so many circumstances that one hardly ever sins mortally. And after establishing this, he exclaims: *Oh, how sweet and light is the yoke of the Lord*!

42 The *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Jesu* ("Image of the First Century of the Society of Jesus," 1640), the Jesuits' self-glorifying centenary volume.

43 The *Imago* reported a revelation that no Jesuit dying in the Society would be damned during its first three centuries.

44 Antonino Diana (1585–1663), Sicilian Theatine casuist, quoted in the fifth *Provincial Letter*.

And elsewhere: 11. *One is not obliged to give alms from one's superfluity in the ordinary needs of the poor; if the contrary were true, one would have to condemn most of the rich and their confessors.*

These reasons were making me impatient when I said to the father: But what prevents one from saying that they are?—He foresaw that too in this place, he answered, where, after saying: *If that were true, the richest would be damned,* he adds: 22. *To that Arragonius replies that they are indeed; and Baunez adds further that their confessors are too. But I reply, with Valentia, another Jesuit, and other authors, that there are several reasons for excusing these rich people and their confessors.*

I was delighted with this reasoning, when he finished with this one: *If this opinion were true for restitution, oh, how many restitutions there would be to make!*

—Oh, Father, I said to him, what a good reason!—Oh! said the father, what an accommodating man he is!—Oh, Father, I answered, but for your casuists, how many people would be damned! Oh, how wide you make the way that leads to heaven! Oh, how many people find it! There is a...[45]

929 [And they are preparing to drive out of the Church those who refuse this admission. In v...] Everyone declares that they are.

M. Arnauld (and his friends) protests that he condemns them in themselves and wherever they may be found; that if they are in Jansenius, he condemns them there; and that even if they are not there, if the heretical sense of these propositions which the pope condemned is found in Jansenius, he condemns Jansenius.

But you are not satisfied with these protestations: you want him to affirm that these propositions are word for word in Jansenius. He has answered that he cannot affirm it, not knowing whether it is so; that he has looked for them there, along with an infinity of others, without ever finding them. They have begged you and all your people to cite the pages where they are; no one has ever done so. And yet you want to cut him off from

45 Reversing Matt. 7:13–14: narrow is the way that leads to life, and few find it.

the Church for this refusal, though he condemns everything she condemns. And for this one reason: that he does not affirm that some words, or a sense, are in a book where he has never found them, and where no one will show them to him. In truth, Father, this pretext is so hollow that there was perhaps never in the Church a proceeding so strange, so unjust and so rash as...

The Church may well oblige.

One need not be a theologian to see that their heresy consists only in the opposition they offer you. I experience it in myself, and one sees the general proof of it in all those who have attacked you: the parish priests of Rouen, Jansenists... of Caen.

You think your designs so honorable that you make them the matter of a vow.

Two years ago their heresy was the bull; last year it was "inward"; six months ago it was *in so many words*; now it is the sense.[46]

Can I not see that you want only to make them heretics? Saint-Sacrement. Preface. Villeloin...

Jansenius—Aurelius—Arnauld—*Provincial Letters*.

I have quarreled with you while speaking for others.[47]

You are quite ridiculous to make a fuss over the propositions; that is nothing. It must be understood.

Without authors' names; but since your design was known, 70 opposed it.

Date the decree.

So that he whom you had been unable to make a heretic on his own words, etc.[48]

[That I have shown that all this comes from your authors, down to the most horrible.] For everything becomes known.

[Have you nothing to answer but that, and no other way of proving it?]

46 The dispute over whether the five propositions were in Jansenius *totidem verbis*, "in so many words."

47 Petrus Aurelius was the pen name of Saint-Cyran, spiritual director of Port-Royal.

48 Some seventy doctors of the Sorbonne opposed the censure of Arnauld in 1656.

Either he knows that it is so, or that it is not, or he doubts; either sinner or heretic.

Considering only the pagans.

This same light which reveals supernatural truths reveals them without error, whereas the light that...

[A body of reprobates. All the alms boxes of Saint-Merri could be broken open without your being any less innocent.][49]

[So that is not strange... False right... For my part I would rather be unjustly than.]

What reason do you have? You say that I am a Jansenist, that Port-Royal upholds the five propositions, and that therefore I uphold them: three lies.

And I beg you not to come and tell me that it is not you who set all this in motion. Spare me the answer. I would tell you things that would please neither you nor others.

The pope did not condemn two things; he condemned only the sense of the propositions. Will you say that he did not condemn it?—But the sense of Jansenius is included in it, says the pope.—I can see that the pope thinks so, because of your "*in so many words*"; but he has not said it on pain of excommunication. How could he not have believed it, and the bishops of France too? You said it *in so many words*, and they did not know that you are capable of saying it even when it is not so. Impostors: my fifteenth letter had not been seen.

How could the sense of Jansenius be in propositions that are not his?

Either it is in Jansenius, or it is not. If it is there, he stands condemned in that; if not, why do you want to have him condemned?

Let just one of your propositions from Father Escobar be condemned, and I shall go carrying Escobar in one hand and the censure in the other, and make a formal argument of it.

930 That they have been treated as humanely as was possible, in keeping to the middle way between love of truth and the duty

49 Saint-Merri, a parish church in Paris.

of charity. That piety does not consist in never rising up against one's brothers; it would be very easy, etc.

It is false piety to preserve peace at the expense of truth; it is also false zeal to preserve truth by wounding charity. And so they have not complained of it.

Their maxims have their time and place.

Their vanity seeks to exalt itself from their errors.

Like the pagans in their faults, and like the martyrs in their punishment.

And yet they disavow none of...

They had only to take the extract and disavow it.

They sanctify war.

Monsieur Bourseys. At least they cannot deny that he opposes the condemnation.[50]

931 *Casuists*.—A considerable alms, a reasonable penance: even though one cannot fix the exact measure, one can see well enough what is not. The casuists are amusing, to think they can interpret that as they do!

People who grow used to speaking badly and thinking badly.

Their great number, far from showing their perfection, shows the contrary.

The humility of one alone makes the pride of many.

932 He will be well condemned, who is condemned by Escobar!

933 Those who wrote this in Latin speak in French. The harm having been done of putting them into French, the good should have been done of condemning them.

There is one single heresy which is explained differently in the schools and in the world.

934 *Generals*.—It is not enough for them to bring such morals into our temples, *to bring morals into the temples*. Not only do they want to be tolerated in the Church; as if they had become the stronger, they want to drive out of it those who are not of them...

50 *They sanctify war*: Mic. 3:5. Amable de Bourzeis (1606–72), an abbé who had defended Jansenius.

Mohatra. To be astonished at it is to show one is no theologian.[51]

Who would have told your generals that a time was so near when they would give these morals to the universal Church, and call the refusal of these disorders war: *So many and such great evils, peace?*[52]

935 *The Jesuits.*—The Jesuits have tried to join God to the world, and have gained only the contempt of God and of the world. For on the side of conscience this is evident; and on the side of the world, they are not good schemers. They have power, as I have often said, but only with respect to other religious orders. They will have the influence to get a chapel built and to obtain a jubilee station, but not to get bishoprics or governorships of fortified towns. The position of monks is a foolish post in the world, and by their own admission they hold it (Fr. Brisacier. Benedictines). Meanwhile... you bow before those more powerful than you, and with all your little influence you oppress those who have less intrigue in the world than you.

936 It is good that they commit injustices, lest it appear that the Molinists have acted justly. And so they must not be spared: they are worthy of committing them.

937 The world must be very blind if it believes you.

938 I have reread them since, for I had not...

939 You never accuse me of falsehood about Escobar, because he is well known.

940 It is indifferent to the human heart whether it believes in three or four persons in the Trinity; but not, etc. And that is why they grow heated in upholding the one and not the other.

It is good to do the one; but one must not leave the other undone. The same God who told us, etc.

And so whoever believes only the one, and not the other, does not believe it because God said it, but because his covetousness does not desire it, and he is very glad to consent to it, and so to

51 The *mohatra* contract, a disguised usurious loan by sale and immediate buyback, discussed in the eighth *Provincial Letter*.

52 Wisd. 14:22: "they call so many and such great evils peace."

give himself without effort a testimony of conscience that... But it is a false testimony.

941 *End*.—Is one safe? Is this principle safe? Let us examine.

Testimony of oneself worthless. Saint Thomas.

942 Now, probability is necessary for the other maxims, as for that of Lamy and [*of the*] calumniator.[53]

By their fruits: judge their faith by their morals.[54]

Probability is little without the corrupt means, and the means are nothing without probability.

There is pleasure in being assured that one can do right and knows how to do right. Grace, *to know and to be able*, and probability give it: for one can render account to God with assurance, relying on their authors.

943 M. de Condren: There is, he says, no comparison between the union of the saints and that of the Holy Trinity. Jesus Christ says the contrary.[55]

944 There is a contradiction. For on the one hand they say that tradition must be followed, and would not dare disavow that; and on the other they will say whatever they please. People will always believe the first, since in any case it would be going against them not to believe it.

945 The day of judgment.

So that, Father, is what you call the sense of Jansenius; so that is what you give both the pope and the bishops to understand.

If the Jesuits were corrupt, and it were true that we were alone, all the more should we remain.

What war has established, let no feigned peace take away.

He is moved neither by blessing nor by cursing, like an angel of the Lord.

They are attacking the greatest of Christian truths, which is the love of truth.[56]

53 François Amicus (Lamy), Jesuit who held it probable that a religious might kill one who slandered his order (seventh *Provincial Letter*).

54 Matt. 7:16.

55 Charles de Condren (1588–1641), superior general of the French Oratory; see John 17:21–22.

56 The second Latin sentence adapts 2 Sam. 14:17.

If the signature means that, let us be allowed to explain it, so that there is no ambiguity; for it must be agreed that many believe that signing marks consent.[57]

If the reporting judge did not sign, the decree would be invalid; if the bull were not signed, it would be valid; it is not, therefore...

But you may have been mistaken?—I swear that I believe I may have been mistaken; but I do not swear that I believe I have been mistaken.

One is not guilty for not believing, and one would be guilty for swearing without believing.

... fine questions, he...

I am sorry to tell you everything; I am only giving an account.

That, with Escobar, puts them at the head of the table; but they do not take it so, and show displeasure at seeing themselves between God and the pope.

946 There is such disproportion between the merit he thinks he has and his stupidity that one could not believe he misjudges himself so badly.

946 bis *Annat*. He plays the disciple without ignorance and the master without presumption.[58]

947 You abuse the trust the people have in the Church, and make them believe falsehoods.

948 By corrupting the bishops and the Sorbonne, if they have not had the advantage of making their judgment just, they have had that of making their judges unjust. And so, when they are condemned by them in future, they will say *ad hominem* that these judges are unjust, and so will refute their judgment. But that is of no use. For just as they cannot conclude that the Jansenists are rightly condemned for the sole reason that they are condemned, so they will not be able to conclude then that they themselves are wrongly condemned because they are con-

57 The Formulary condemning the five propositions as Jansenius's, which clergy and nuns were required to sign.

58 François Annat (1590–1670), Jesuit, confessor to Louis XIV and adversary of Port-Royal and of Pascal.

demned by corruptible judges. For their condemnation will be just, not because it is given by judges who are always just, but by judges who are just in this; and that will be shown by the other proofs.

PEACE AND TRUTH

Peace in the Church serves truth; when truth is attacked, war is just and necessary.

949 Peace within states has no other object than to keep the people's goods secure. In the same way, peace within the Church has no other object than to keep secure the truth, which is its good, and the treasure where its heart is. It would be going against the purpose of peace to let foreigners into a state to plunder it without opposing them, for fear of disturbing its repose. For peace is just and useful only for the safety of that good; it becomes unjust and pernicious when it lets the good be lost, and the war that can defend it becomes both just and necessary. So too in the Church: when truth is offended by the enemies of the faith, when they seek to tear it from the hearts of the faithful in order to make error reign there, would remaining at peace then be serving the Church or betraying it? Would it be defending it or ruining it? And is it not plain that, just as it is a crime to disturb the peace where truth reigns, it is also a crime to remain at peace when truth is being destroyed? There is, then, a time when peace is just, and another when it is unjust. It is written that there is a time for peace and a time for war; and it is the interest of truth that tells them apart. But there is not a time for truth and a time for error; and it is written, on the contrary, that the truth of God endures forever. And that is why Jesus Christ, who says that he came to bring peace, also says that he came to bring war.[59] But he does not say that he came to bring both truth and falsehood. Truth is therefore the first rule and the final end of things.

950 After tormenting you thoroughly, they will send you home.

59 Eccles. 3:8; Ps. 117:2; John 14:27 and Matt. 10:34.

It is as feeble a consolation as that of appeals against abuse. For a great means of abuse—besides the fact that most people will not have the means to come from the depths of Périgord and Anjou to plead before the Parlement of Paris—is that they will at any moment have decrees of the Council forbidding these appeals against abuse.[60]

For even if they cannot obtain what they ask for, the request nonetheless reveals their power. And that power is all the greater in that it has led them to ask for something so unjust that it is plain they cannot obtain it.

This therefore only makes their intention better known, and the need not to authorize by registration the bull that they want to use as the basis for this new establishment.

This is not a simple bull, but a base.

On leaving the law courts.

121. The pope forbids the king to marry off his children without his permission (1294).

If we will 124 (1302).

951 In the bull *Cum ex apostolatus officio* by Paul IV, published in 1558:[61]

"We ordain, enact, decree and define that each and every one of those who are found to have strayed or fallen into heresy or schism, of whatever rank and condition they may be—laymen, clerics, bishops, archbishops, patriarchs, primates, cardinals, counts, marquesses, dukes, kings and emperors—besides the sentences and penalties aforesaid, are by that very fact, without any ministry of law or of fact, deprived wholly and entirely and in perpetuity of their orders, bishoprics, benefices, offices, kingdom, empire, and are incapable of ever recovering them.

"We abandon them to the discretion of the secular power, to be punished. We grant no other grace to those who, moved by true penitence, return from their error, except that, by the kindness and clemency of the Holy See, they may be deemed to

60 The *appel comme d'abus* allowed an appeal to the secular courts against an abuse of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

61 The title means "Since by the office of the apostolate."

deserve to be shut up in a monastery, to do perpetual penance there on bread and water; but let them remain forever deprived of all dignity, order, prelacy, county, duchy, kingdom. And let those who harbor and defend them be, by that very fact, judged excommunicate and infamous, and deprived of every kingdom, duchy, property and possession, which shall belong by right and ownership to those who first seize them.

"If... they will exterminate, they will be justified. 23 q. 5, of Urban II. *We do not regard as murderers those who, burning with zeal for the Catholic mother against the excommunicated, happen to have slain one of them.*"[62]

952 The two chief interests of the Church are the preservation of the piety of the faithful and the conversion of heretics. We are therefore overwhelmed with grief to see the factions being formed today to introduce the errors most capable of closing to heretics forever the entry into our communion, and of mortally corrupting such pious and Catholic people as remain to us. This undertaking, carried on so openly today against the truths of religion, and those most important for salvation, fills us not only with displeasure but also with dread and fear. For besides the feeling that every Christian must have about these disorders, we have in addition the obligation to remedy them, and to use the authority that God has given us to ensure that the peoples he has entrusted to us, etc.

953 Letter on the violent establishments of the Jesuits everywhere.

Supernatural blindness.

This morality, which is faced with a crucified God.

These are the men they have vowed to obey, *as Christ*.

The decline of the Jesuits.

Our religion, which is wholly divine.

A casuist, a mirror.

We are the...

If you think it good, it is a good sign.

62 Gratian's *Decretum*, cause 23, question 5, quoting Pope Urban II (1088–99).

It is a strange thing that there is no way of giving them the idea of religion.

A crucified God.

By divulging this affair, in order to speak of the formulary, they are punished.

But what a reversal! The children love corruption, in embracing it. Their enemies abhor them.

As for the multitude of casuists, far from being a ground of accusation against the Church, it is on the contrary a cause of the Church's lamentation.

And so that we may not be suspect—like the Jews, who carry the books and are not suspect to the Gentiles—they bring us their Constitutions.

THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Notes on the Jesuit Constitutions and on their generals' letters lamenting the Society's decline.

954 *Venice*. What advantage will you gain from it, if from the need that princes have of it, and the horror that peoples have of it...? If they had asked for you, and to obtain it had implored the assistance of Christian princes, you could make much of this request. But that for fifty years all the princes should have worked at it in vain, and that so pressing a need was required to obtain it...![63]

955 751. The tip of a hood arms twenty-five thousand monks.

956 "Do you have the idea of our Society that you should?"

The Church subsisted so long without these questions. Others raise them, but not in the same way.

What comparison do you think there is between twenty thousand scattered and two hundred million united, who would die for one another? An immortal body. We stand by one another to the death (*Lamy*). We hound our enemies (*M. Puys*).

Kings. Pope. III, Kings, 246.

63 The Jesuits, expelled from Venice in 1606, were readmitted in 1657 at the pope's request, when Venice needed papal help against the Turks.

Everything depends on probability.

The world naturally wants a religion, but a mild one. Grant me this principle, and I will prove this to you: that the Society and the Church share the same fortune. Without this principle one can do nothing. One does not live long in open impiety, nor naturally in great austerities. An accommodating religion is fit to last. People seek them out of libertinism.

So I feel like showing it to you by a strange supposition. I will say, then: even if God did not sustain us by a particular providence for the good of the Church, I want to show you that, even speaking in human terms, we are not... Private persons who do not wish to rule by force of arms: I do not know whether they could do better.

6. Upright and in good faith in devotion.—vi, 452 Nursing kings. 4 Hated because of their merit.—Apol. Univ.[64]

59. Decree of the Sorbonne. Kings 241, 228. Jesuits hanged. 112. Religion and learning. *Every man a Jesuit*. Colleges, parents, friends, children to choose.

Constitutions.

253. Poverty, ambition.

257. Chiefly princes, the great lords who can harm and help.

12. The useless rejected.—Good looks.—Wealth, nobility, etc. What! were you afraid that people would fail to admit them sooner? 27.

An immortal universal body. Affirmation for the community, great and without scruple: dangerous.

47. Give one's property to the Society, for the glory of God. *Decl*.

51, 52. Union of views. *Decl.*: Submit to the Society, and so keep uniformity. Now today this uniformity lies in diversity, for the Society wills it.

117. *Const.*: The Gospel and Saint Thomas. *Decl.*: Some accommodating theology.

65. Pious scholars rare, but today people change their minds.

74, 23. Begging.

64 "Nursing kings" echoes Isa. 49:23.

79. Give nothing to relatives, and rely on the counselors appointed by the superior.

1. Not to practice the examination. *Decl.*

2. Complete poverty: No *Masses*, neither for sermons nor by way of alms, compensation.

4. *Decl.* of the same authority as the *Const.* End; read the *Const.* every month.

143. The *Declarations* spoil everything.

154. Neither to incite people to give perpetual alms, nor to sue for them at law, nor alms boxes. (*Decl.*). Not as alms, [*but as compensation.*]

200, 4. But warned of everything.

190. *Const.* does not mean to deceive. *Decl.* deceives, being interpreted.

By religion we would all be rich, without our Constitutions; and so we are poor. And by true religion, and without them, we are strong.

Key of the Complaisant. Our generals feared decline:—because of outward occupations (208, 152, 15);—because of the Court (209, 200, 216, 218);—because the safest and most authoritative opinions, Saint Thomas's, etc., were not being followed (215, 218).—*Stipend against the Constit.* (218).—Women (224, 225, 228).—Princes and politics (227, 168, 177).

Probability—Novelty (279, 156).

Novelty—Truth.

To pass the time and divert themselves, more than to help souls (158).

Lax opinions (160).

Mortal sin turned into venial.

Contrition (162, 64).

Politics (162, 64).

"*Whether it be lawful*" (162, 182).

The comforts of life are increasing among the Jesuits (166). Apparent and false goods that deceive them (192, ad). Complaints of the generals: none from Saint Ignatius; none from

Laínez; a few from Borgia and Aquaviva; countless ones from Mutius, etc.[65]

Father Lemoine: 10,000 écus outside his province.[66]

182, 157. See how feeble human foresight is. All the things from which our first generals feared the ruin of our Society are the very means by which it has grown: through the great, through going against our institutions, through the multitude of religious, the diversity and novelty of opinions, etc.

Politics (181).

The first spirit of the Society extinguished (184 ad 189–170, 171 ad 174).

It is no longer what it was (Vitelescus, 180).

957 We ourselves have not been able to have general maxims. If you look at our Constitutions, you will hardly recognize us: they make us beggars and exclude us from courts; and yet, etc. But that is not breaking them, for the glory of God is everywhere.

There are various ways of getting there. Saint Ignatius took some, and now others are taken. It was better at the beginning to propose poverty and retirement; it has been better afterward to take the rest. For to begin at the top would have frightened people: that is against nature.

Not that the general rule is not that one must keep to the *Institutions*; for people would abuse it. One would find few like us, who know how to rise without vanity.

Two obstacles: the Gospel; the laws of the State.—*From the greater to the lesser. Junior.—Unam sanctam*.—The Jansenists pay the penalty for it.

God visibly protects us against rash judgments and scruples. —*By false accusation.—Subtly.*—"All the truth on one side: we extend it to both."

65 The successive generals of the Society of Jesus: Ignatius Loyola, Diego Laínez, Francis Borgia, Claudio Aquaviva and Mutius Vitelleschi.

66 Pierre Le Moyne (1602–71), Jesuit poet and author of *La Dévotion aisée* ("Easy Devotion"), mocked in the ninth *Provincial Letter*.

Father Saint-Jure—Escobar—"*So much, indeed.*" (Aquaviva. 14 Dec. 1621)—Clement and Paul V—Saint Teresa (474) (1660)—*Rose* romance, etc.

On speaking of personal vices.—Fine letter of Aquaviva (18 June 1611) against probable opinions.—Saint Augustine (282).—And for Saint Thomas, the places where he treated the subjects expressly.—Climacus... (277).—And Novelties.—And it is no excuse for the Superiors not to have known it, for they ought to have known it (279–194–192).—For morals (283, 288).—Aquaviva heard women's confessions (360).—The Society imputed to the Church, for good and ill (236, 156).

[958] *LETTER 16 OF AQUAVIVA: On the Training of Preachers.* P. 373. *Far mistaken are those who—will irrigate*. All the Fathers made to conform to his imagination, instead of forming his thought on that of the Fathers.

LETTER 1 OF MUTIUS VITELLESCHI. P. 389. *For although I well know—and absolute*.

P. 390. *He grieves and complains—to be modesty*. Modesty

P. 392. *Lest the law, halved—rebukes*. The Mass. I do not know what he means.

408. *So that wild beast—even bursts in*. Politics.

409. *Finally, I would very much wish it to be circulated*. By a singular misfortune, or rather good fortune, of the Society, what one does is attributed to all.

410. *Complaints—you will discover*, p. 412. Obey the bishops exactly; let it not appear that we claim to measure ourselves against them, following the example of Saint Xavier.

412. *Besides, if from lawsuits—of greed*. Wills, lawsuits.

413. *Of Father Borgia—that it would be.* They embellish, they even invent false stories.

415. *So domestic affairs—now you let go*, etc.

LETTER 2 OF MUTIUS VITELLESCHI. 432. *Fourthly, of some—urge as ardently as I can*. Probability: *It can piously be held, it is probable, it does not lack an author.*

433. *But since, regarding license of speech—or is rarely punished*. Failure to punish slanderers.

LETTER 3 OF MUTIUS VITELLESCHI. P. 437. *Nor indeed is there any doubt—has now suffered no harm.* That the Society may not be spoiled.

P. 440. *Let us pray God most ardently—did not think it burdensome to work, and you, son*, etc. Ezek. 37.

P. 441. *The second chapter—we value so highly*. Lack of obedience: in order to seek their reputation.

P. 442. *Truly, if this one thing fails—who contrives these things*, etc. Lack of obedience: seeking the support of the great.

P. 443. *For from this vice—you show yourself importunate*. They do things that are unseemly and outside the state of the Society, and say that great lords importune them to do so. But it is they who importune the lords, so that one must either make them enemies by refusing, or ruin the Society by granting.

443. *The third chapter will concern—the finest color has changed*. Chastity.

445. *On poverty—are not opposed to truth*. Poverty. Laxity of opinions contrary to truth.

445. *A certain nobleman in Rome—will place*.

P. 446. *God grant—as if they were omitted*. Vineyards, etc.

The Memorial

Mémorial
The record of Pascal's night of fire, 23 November 1654, found sewn into his coat.

Mémorial

The year of grace 1654,
Monday, 23 November, day of Saint Clement, pope and martyr, and others in the martyrology,
eve of Saint Chrysogonus, martyr, and others,
From about half past ten in the evening until about half past midnight,
Fire.
God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,
not of the philosophers and scholars.
Certainty. Certainty. Feeling. Joy. Peace.
God of Jesus Christ.
My God and your God.
"Your God shall be my God."
Forgetfulness of the world and of everything, except God.
He is to be found only by the ways taught in the Gospel.
Greatness of the human soul.
"Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you.[1]

1 The parchment Pascal kept sewn into his coat, recording his experience of the night of 23 November 1654. Quotations: John 20:17; Ruth 1:16; John 17:25.

”

Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.
I have separated myself from him:
They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water.
“My God, will you forsake me?”
Let me not be separated from him eternally.
“This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ.”
Jesus Christ.
Jesus Christ.
I have separated myself from him; I have fled him, renounced him, crucified him.
Let me never be separated from him.
He is kept only by the ways taught in the Gospel:
Total and sweet renunciation
Total submission to Jesus Christ and to my director.
Eternally in joy for one day of discipline on earth.
I will not forget your words. *Amen*.[2]

2 Jer. 2:13; Matt. 27:46; John 17:3; Ps. 119:16.