

Pensées

Blaise Pascal

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every **four**-point ellipsis indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Any **three**-point ellipsis . . . is in the original; there are many of these at the starts of sentences and in ones that tail off, uncompleted. Longer omissions are reported between brackets in normal-sized type.—The title means ‘Thoughts’; but English writers always use the French title. The division into Sections, and their titles, come from the 1897 edition by Léon Brunschvicg, which has been the basis for most editions in the past century. The 1976 edition by Philippe Sellier reflects, as Brunschvicg’s doesn’t, facts about the condition and order in which Pascal left the papers making up the *Pensées*; but Brunschvicg’s, followed here, is more likely to meet the philosophical needs of users of this website. There is a note on Sellier before item 196.—Roger Ariew has done, and Hackett has published, a good English translation based on Sellier, notes in which have been gratefully consulted in making the present version.—Each item (numbered in bold type) was in some way marked off as a unit in Pascal’s papers, but their numbers and order are Brunschvicg’s.—Passages left in French or Latin, and given slightly smaller type, are rather random notes and quotes that are obscure and/or have little chance of being philosophically instructive.—Many of the items have headings such as ‘Cause and effect’ (seven times), ‘Diversion’ (six times), and so on. This version omits those (the majority) that don’t give help in understanding the items in question.—Pascal presents many of his items as biblical quotations for which he gives references. Translations of these are based on what he wrote, not on what the King James version of the Bible has; there is often a considerable difference, notably in the quotations from the book of Isaiah in Section 11.

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Glossary

animal spirits: This stuff was supposed to be super-fluid matter to which Descartes and others attributed work that is in fact done by nerves. In 368 Pascal is exclaiming at the idea that •pleasure might be thought to be nothing but •a process in the body.

apathy: Translates *paresse*; often translated as ‘laziness’ or ‘sloth’, But Ariew argues persuasively that ‘apathy’ is truer to Pascal’s thought.

art: Anything involving rules, techniques, skills of the sort that one might acquire through training.

boredom: This regularly translates *ennui*, a word that can also mean ‘weariness’, ‘fed-up-ness’, and so on.

casuist: A theologian who resolves cases of conscience, duty etc. (OED)

cupidity: Translates *cupidité*; ‘greed’ would do as well, but that has been reserved for *concupiscence*.

curiosity: In English and in French [*curiosité*] this tended to mean a general *desire to know*; the word didn’t have the mildly trivialising sense that it does today.

diversion: Pascal holds that we avoid thinking about our miserable selves by going in for **diversions**, entertainments, which do the work of **diverting** our minds from our condition. This semi-pun is also present in the French *divertissement* and *divertir*.

Escobar: Antonio Escobar y Mendoza was a Spanish Jesuit priest whose voluminous writings on morality were regarded by many, emphatically including Pascal, as far too lax.

Eucharist: ‘The Christian sacrament in which bread and wine are consecrated and consumed as Christ’s body and

blood, to be a memorial of his sacrifice on the cross.’ (OED) When on page 44 Pascal says that the Eucharist ‘isn’t seen’, he means that Christ’s body isn’t seen to be present when the ceremony is performed.

evil: This means merely ‘something bad’. In French the adjectives for ‘good’ and ‘bad’ can also be used as nouns; in English we can do this with ‘good’ (‘friendship is a good’), but not with bad (‘pain is a bad’), and it is customary in English to use ‘evil’ for this purpose (e.g. ‘pain is an evil’, and ‘the problem of evil’ meaning ‘the problem posed by the existence of bad states of affairs’). Don’t load the word with all the force it has in English when used as an adjective. For the cognate adjective, this version always uses ‘bad’.

fancy: This translates most occurrences of *fantaisie*, which usually means something *close to* ‘imagination’ (the faculty) or ‘imaginative episode’ (event). How close is not clear. On page 46 we find *fantaisie* in one item and *imagination* in the very next.

greed: This translates *concupiscence*—a word that can refer to sexual lust, but is mainly used by Pascal in its other dictionary sense of ‘avid desire for material possessions and sensual pleasures’. Starting at item 458, ‘lust’ is used instead, under pressure from quoted biblical passages that use that word.

hateful: In this version the word is used in its present English sense of ‘odious’, ‘worthy of being hated’, rather than its older English and present American sense of ‘full of hate’.

honest: In this work an ‘honest man’ (*honnête homme* is a solid reliable all-around good chap.

infidel: In this work, anyone who isn't a Christian is an 'infidel'.

items of knowledge: This clumsy phrase translates *connaissances*. English won't let us speak of 'knowledges', as French does.

Jansenism: A movement within the Roman catholic church, espoused by Pascal (despite item 865); it emphasized original sin, interpreted in a particularly dark manner; strenuously opposed by the Jesuits.

Jesus-Christ: Pascal always has the hyphen; this should be read as 'Jesus, the Christ', using 'Christ' not as a proper name of Jesus of Nazareth but as a general term that supposedly applies only to him. Note in item 573, and in several other places, 'the Christ' (*le Christ*).

lust: see entry for **greed**.

machine: Pascal uses *la machine* half a dozen times, usually (it seems) as a coded reference to the famous argument known as 'the wager'. For a possible explanation of *how* it could have that meaning, see the illuminating note by Ariew on pages 40–41. The notion of rock-bottom mechanical thinking that figures in Ariew's note is also at work in item 308.

mercy: Occurring first on page 38 and frequently thereafter. The French word is *miséricorde*, a relative of *misère* = 'misery'. It could be translated as 'compassion', but in the context of God it's a matter of what he does, not how he feels.

mœurs: The *mœurs* of a people include their morality, their basic customs, their attitudes and expectations about how people will behave, their ideas about what is decent. . . and so on. This word—rhyming approximately with 'worse'—is left untranslated because there's no English word equivalent

to it. Good English dictionaries include it, for the sort of reason they have for including *schadenfreude*.

Moslem: This replaces most occurrences of *Turc*. In early modern times, French and other languages often let the Turks stand in for Moslems generally.

pagan: Translates *païen*. The range of senses in French is about the same as in English: covering all the (ir)religious territory outside Christianity, Judaism and Islam, with special reference to the polytheistic religion of ancient Greece. On pages 97 and 127 *païen* is translated by 'Gentile'.

populace: Pascal often uses *peuple* = 'people' as a singular term. We can do that in English ('The French—what a strange people!'), but sometimes this sounds strained and peculiar, and this version takes refuge in 'populace'. On page 55, for example, Pascal writes about the *vanité* of *le peuple*, obviously thinking of this as a single collective entity.

Port-Royal: A convent in Paris that was unofficially the headquarters of **Jansenism**.

Pyrrhonian: The adjective from 'Pyrrho', the founder of ancient Greek scepticism, who held that nothing can be known.

renown: Translates *éclat*, for which there is no one adequate English word. It refers to the quality of being vividly grand, glittering, magnificent.

sin: Regularly used to translate *péché*. It is not clear how if at all Pascal differentiates this from *iniquité*, but 'iniquity' is used for the latter, to play safe.

school: By 'at the school' Pascal meant, roughly, 'at the Aristotelian philosophy department where you studied'.

self: When this word is italicised, it translates Pascal's *moi*. This word has no exact equivalent in English. It can mean

'I' as in *C'est moi qui l'a fait* = 'It is I who did it', and it can mean 'me' as in *cette partie de moi qui pense* = 'the part of me that thinks'. And then there's a use of it in which it is not a pronoun but a noun, as in *la nature de ce moi humain* = 'the nature of this human *self*'. Thus a specialised use of *self* is used to translate a specialised use of *moi*.

she: Item 123 speaks of a man's no longer loving the *personne* he used to love; that's a feminine noun, requiring the feminine pronoun *elle*. It is translated here by 'she', but the French does not imply that the person is female; the item could concern the man's feelings towards another man with whom he once had a deep friendship.

soul: The left-hand side of the mind/matter or spiritual/material distinction. It has no special religious significance.

sound: As an adjective this translates *droit(s)* = 'right', 'correct', etc.

symbol(ic): Translate *figure* and *figuratif*.

temporal: Translates *temporel*, and means 'pertaining to the world we live in'. This was often called 'temporal'—meaning 'in time'—to contrast it with our life after death, which was thought to be 'eternal' in some sense that involves not being in time at all.

vain, vanity: These translate *vain* and *vanité*. In some cases the words are used in an older sense in which the idea is that of emptiness or lack of solidity. In some cases where 'vain' and 'vanity' are used, the older sense may be at work.

'we': This often translates *nous*; but very often it translates *on*, a standard French pronoun for use in generalising about people.

world: Translates *le monde*, which Pascal uses, especially in 37, to refer to *people in general*, perhaps tacitly restricted to people who are literate or who have some opinions on some general matters.

wrong: Translates *faux*, which in some places is translated as 'false'. When 'wrong' is used, think of it as roughly equivalent to 'defective'.

Section 1: Thoughts on mind and style

1. How the mathematical mind differs from the intuitive mind. In mathematical thinking the principles are removed from ordinary use, so that it's hard to get your mind onto them if you're not used to that kind of thinking; but if you manage to pay even the slightest attention to them, you'll see them fully. You would have to have a really *wrong* [see Glossary] mind if you reasoned badly on the basis of principles that are so obvious that it's hardly possible to let them escape your notice.

But the principles involved in intuitive thinking are in common use and exposed to everyone's gaze. All you need is to turn your head that way—it doesn't require any effort. It's merely a matter of having good eyesight; but it has to be *good* because the principles are so free-floating and so numerous that it's almost inevitable that some of them will escape your notice. But the omission of one principle leads to error; so—the other requirement for an intuitive mind—you need very clear sight so as to see them all, and you also need an accurate mind so as not to reason wrongly on the basis of known principles.

So mathematicians would all have intuitive minds if they had clear sight, because they don't reason wrongly on the basis of principles that they know; and intuitive minds would be mathematical if they could turn their eyes onto the unfamiliar principles of mathematics.

That's what stops some intuitive minds from being mathematical—it's because they really *can't* bring themselves to bear on the principles of mathematics; whereas the reason why some mathematicians aren't intuitive is that they don't see what is in front of them, and that—being accustomed to the clear, graspable principles of mathematics

and to holding off from reasoning until they have thoroughly seen and *handled* their principles—they're lost when they come into intuitive territory where the principles can't be handled in this way. The principles are scarcely seen; they are felt rather than seen; and if someone doesn't feel them for himself it is a hopelessly difficult task to tell him anything that will get him to feel them. These principles are so delicate and so numerous that you need a very delicate and clear sensing ability to feel them and then to judge soundly and fairly on the basis of this feeling. The trouble is that one can't demonstrate them rigorously as things can be demonstrated in mathematics, because we don't have that kind of grip on the principles, and it would be utterly useless to try to get it. What's needed is to take things in all at once in a single view, not by a process of reasoning, at least to a certain extent. That's why few mathematicians are intuitive and few intuitive minds are mathematicians. Mathematicians make fools of themselves by trying to treat intuitive matters mathematically, wanting to start with definitions and then move on to principles—which is *not* the way to go about this kind of reasoning. It's not that *the mind* isn't involved when it is done properly; it is at work, but tacitly, naturally and without art [see Glossary]; because no-one can put in words what's going on here, and only a few people even get a sense of it. [The point is that an 'art' of doing something must involve rules or techniques that could be 'put in words'.]

Intuitive minds, on the other hand, are used to judging things on the basis of a single view. When you present one of *them* with propositions that they don't understand, and that they can't reach except through a corridor of definitions and sterile axioms that they aren't accustomed to seeing close

up, they push them away in disgust.

But wrong minds are never intuitive or mathematical.

Mathematicians who are *only* mathematicians have minds that are sound [see Glossary], provided that everything is explained to them through definitions and axioms; otherwise their minds are wrong and intolerable; they're sound only when the principles are quite clear.

And intuitive thinkers who are that and nothing else can't muster the patience to dig down to the first principles of things—theoretically first and imaginatively first—that they have never seen in the world and are not in use [*hors d'usage*].

2. Two sorts of sound understanding. They are sound when things are ordered in a certain way, and are all at sea when things are ordered differently; and they differ from one another in *what* kind of order each requires.

(i) One kind draw conclusions well from a few premises, which is one way for an understanding to be sound.

(ii) The other kind draw conclusions well when there are many premises.

For example, **(i)** the former easily learn hydrostatics, where the premises are few but the conclusions are so fine-drawn that only an extremely sound mind can get to them.

Yet these people might not be great mathematicians; because mathematics contains very many principles, and there may be a kind of mind that •can easily get to the bottom of a few principles but •can't get any distance down in studies that involve many principles.

So there are two sorts of mind: **(i)** The mind with *justesse*—able to penetrate acutely and deeply into the conclusions of principles; and **(ii)** the mathematical mind: able to grasp a great number of premises without confusing them. One is forceful and sound; the other has breadth of

comprehension. Either quality can exist without the other: a mind can be strong and narrow, or can be comprehensive and weak.

3. Those who are accustomed to judge by *feeling* have no grasp of the process of reasoning. They want to grasp things straight off, at one view, and aren't used to looking for principles. And on the other hand, those who are accustomed to reasoning by principles have no grasp of matters of feeling, look for principles there, and can't see anything at a glance.

4. Mathematics, intuition. True eloquence makes fun of eloquence; true morality makes fun of morality—i.e. the morality of the judgement makes fun of the morality of the mind, which has no rules.

That's because judgement is the work of •the• feeling •side of human nature•, whereas science is the work of mind. Judgement performs intuition; mind performs mathematics.

To make fun of philosophy is to be a true philosopher.

5. Those who use a rule in judging a work relate to others in the way that someone who has a watch relates to others. Someone says 'It happened two hours ago', and someone else says 'No, it was only three-quarters of an hour ago'. I look at my watch, and tell one of them 'You must have been bored' and tell the other 'Time is speeding along for you', because it was actually an hour and a half ago. When people tell me that time drags for me and that I am judging time's passage by the feel of it, I am merely amused; they don't know that I'm judging it by my watch.

6. Just as we can go bad in our minds, we can go bad in our feelings.

Mind and feelings grow up through conversations; mind and the feelings go bad through conversations. It depends on whether the conversations are good or bad. So it's of the utmost importance to know how to *choose*, so as to

shape them up and not spoil them; and no-one can make this choice unless *he* has already been shaped up and not spoiled. If he has been spoiled, a circle is formed, and it's a lucky man who can escape from it.

7. The more *mind* you have, the more men you'll find that have something special about them. Ordinary folk find all men to be pretty much the same.

8. Many people listen to a sermon in the same way that they listen to evening prayers.

9. To correct someone *usefully*, and to show him that he is wrong about something, we need to know what angle he is viewing it from, because in most cases what he sees from that angle will be true; we should •grant him that truth, but •show him the angle from which his position is false. He'll be satisfied with that, because he'll see that he wasn't mistaken but merely failed to see all sides. No-one is upset at not seeing everything; but people don't like to be mistaken. That may be because a man naturally •can't see everything, and naturally •can't be wrong about the side that he does look at, because the perceptions of our senses are always true.

10. People are usually more convinced by reasons they have found for themselves than by reasons that others have thought up.

11. All great diversions [see Glossary] are dangerous to the Christian life; but *theatre* stands out as the most dangerous of all those that the world [see Glossary] has invented. It represents the passions so naturally and delicately that it makes them spring up in our hearts; especially the passion of love, and principally when that is represented as very chaste and virtuous. The more innocent it appears to innocent souls, the more likely they are to be touched by it. Its violence appeals to their self-esteem, making them want to have, themselves, the love that they see so well represented; while

they also develop a moral position based on the supposed propriety of the feelings they see on stage—feelings that these pure souls have no fear of because they imagine that their purity can't be harmed by a love that seems to them so *wise*!

[Then a further paragraph saying the same thing in much the same words.]

12–13. [Two brief remarks presupposing knowledge of currently popular plays and novels.]

14. When a natural discourse depicts a passion or an effect, we find *within ourselves* the truth of what we're hearing; it was there before, but we didn't know it. This makes us love him who makes us feel this, because he has shown us not •his riches but •ours. We find him lovable because of this benefit, and also because this sort of meeting of minds necessarily inclines the heart to love.

15. Eloquence, which persuades by sweetness, not by domination; as a usurper, not as a king. [Pascal's is presumably thinking of the *would-be* usurper (his word is *tyran*) before he has taken power.]

16. Eloquence is an art of saying things in such a way that the hearers (i) have no trouble understanding what is said, and are pleased by it; and (ii) feel themselves drawn in, so that their willingness to think about what's being said is increased by their sense of their own interests.

So it consists in a speaker's attempt to get the listeners' heads and hearts to correspond to the thoughts and expressions he is employing. This requires him to have studied the human heart thoroughly enough to know all its •workings and to find the right shape to give his discourse so that it meshes with •them. He must put himself in the place of his intended hearers, and try his discourse out on his own heart so as to see whether there's a good fit and whether he

can be sure that the listeners will be forced (so to speak) to surrender. He should do his best to restrict himself to what is simple and natural, not expanding small things or shrinking big ones. It is not enough for a thing to be beautiful; it must be suitable to the subject, with nothing excessive and nothing missing.

17. *Les rivières sont des chemins qui marchent, et qui portent où l'on veut aller.*

18. When we don't know the truth about something, it's just as well if there's a common error about it to calm men's minds; for example, wrongly crediting the moon with causing the change of seasons, the course of diseases, etc. For it's better to be in error about something than—man's chief malady!—to be restlessly and pointlessly curious about things that one can't know.

The manner in which Epictetus, Montaigne, and Salomon de Tultie [a joking one-off pseudonym for Pascal himself] wrote is the most usual, the most suggestive, the easiest to remember, and the most often quoted, because it's entirely composed of thoughts that have arisen out of the common talk of life. For example, when we're talking about errors that everyone makes, we never fail to quote Salomon de Tultie as saying that, when we don't know the truth about something, it's just as well if there's a common error about it, and so on.

19. The last thing one discovers in writing a book is what one should put in first.

20. Why will I divide my virtues into four rather than six? Why will I set up virtue as four? as two? as one? ·And if I choose *one*·, why will it be *Abstine et sustine* [Stoic maxim meaning, roughly, 'Put up with it and stay strong'], rather than 'Follow nature' or Plato's 'Conduct your private affairs without injustice', or anything else?

But you will say ·in defence of your preferred moral

slogan· 'Look! A single phrase says it all!' Yes, but it's useless unless you explain it; and when you start to do that, the moment you *open up* this maxim that contains all the others, out they come in the original confusion that you were trying to avoid. Thus, when they are all included in one, they are hidden and useless, as though packed away in a box, and they never come out except in their natural confusion. Nature has established them all without putting any of them inside others.

21. Nature has established each of its truths separately; we artificially put some of them inside others, but that's not natural; each has its own place.

22. Let no-one say that I haven't said anything new; the arrangement of the material is new. In a game of handball both players use the same ball, but one of them places it better.

I would rather be told that I've been using old words. *Of course* the same thoughts arranged differently form a different discourse; and similarly the same words arranged differently form different thoughts.

23. Words differently arranged have a different meaning, and meanings differently arranged have different effects.

24. We shouldn't turn our mind from one thing to another, except to relax it; and we shouldn't do that except when it's appropriate to do so. Someone who relaxes [*délasse*] at the wrong time goes slack [*lasse*], and someone who goes slack at the wrong time relaxes—because he drops everything. ·Drops *everything*·? That's a measure of how far our wicked greed [see Glossary] can take us in opposing any demands that are made of us without any offer of payment in pleasure—the coin for which we'll do whatever is wanted.

25. Eloquence should offer something pleasant and something real; but what's pleasant in it must itself be drawn

from what is true.

26. Eloquence is a painting of thought; anyone who paints the thought and then adds something has made a •picture instead of a •portrait.

27. Those who •make antitheses by forcing words are like those who •make the front of a house symmetrical by inserting false windows. They don't steer by 'Speak accurately [*juste*]' but by 'Make apt [*justes*] figures of speech'.

28. Symmetry in what we see at a glance; based on. . . .the human figure, which is why symmetry is wanted only in breadth, not in height or depth.

29. When we see a natural style we are astonished and thrilled, because having expected to see an •author we have come across a •man. Whereas those who have good taste and open a book expecting to find a man are quite surprised to find •merely• an author. 'He spoke more like a poet than like a human being' [quoted in Latin from Petronius]. Nature is honoured by those who learn from it that it can speak about anything, even theology.

30. We consult only our ears because we have no heart. All that matters is integrity. . . .

31. *Tous les fausses beautés que nous blâmons en Cicéron ont des admirateurs, et en grande nombre.*

32. There's a certain model of grace and beauty which consists in a certain relation between our nature—weak or strong as it may be—and the thing that pleases us.

Anything that conforms to this model pleases us—house, song, discourse, verse, prose, woman, birds, rivers, trees, rooms, dress, etc. Whatever doesn't conform to this model displeases people who have good taste.

Just as there's a perfect relation between a song and a house that conform to this good model, because they are both like this unique model, though each in its own way, so

also there is a perfect relation between things made after a bad model. It's not that the bad model is unique; there are countless bad models. But each bad sonnet, for example, based on some false model or other, perfectly resembles a woman dressed after that same model.

The best way to understand how ridiculous a false sonnet is is to consider •its nature and •the model it conforms to, and then to imagine •a woman or a house made on that model!

33. Just as we speak of 'poetic beauty', so we ought also to speak of 'mathematical beauty' and 'medical beauty'. But we don't, and here is why. We know very well what mathematics aims at, namely proofs, and what medicine aims at, namely healing; but we *don't* know what the attractiveness is that poetry aims at. We don't know what this natural model is that should be imitated; so we invent fantastic terms—'the golden age', 'the wonder of our times', 'destiny', etc.—and call this jargon 'poetic beauty'.

Anyone who imagines a woman on this model—which consists in saying little things in big words—will picture to himself a pretty girl adorned with mirrors and chains. He'll scoff at this, because we know more about what makes a woman attractive than about what makes a poem so. But people who didn't know such things would admire her in this get-up, and in many villages she would be taken for the 'queen'; which is why we call •bad• sonnets based on this model 'village queens'.

34. No-one counts in the world as skilled in verse unless he has hung out a 'Poet' sign; similarly with mathematicians and so on. But universal people [*gens universels*] don't want a sign, and hardly distinguish the poet's trade from the embroiderer's.

Universal people aren't called 'poets', 'mathematicians' or

the like; they are all of these and judges of them all. You can't pick them out of a crowd. They'll join in whatever conversation was going on when they entered the room. We don't see in them any one quality in particular, except when there is a need to make use of one. But when that happens, we remember it; because with such people we typically *don't* say 'he is a fine speaker' in a context where oratory isn't under discussion, and we *do* say it when oratory is the topic.

Someone enters the room and we say 'he's a very able poet'—false praise! A question arises about the quality of some verses, and he isn't consulted—bad sign!

35. It would be good if we couldn't say of someone 'he is a mathematician', 'he is a preacher', or 'he is eloquent', but could say 'he is an honest [see Glossary] man'. That universal quality is the only one that pleases me. If when seeing a person you remember his book, that's a bad sign. I would prefer you not to be aware of any quality of any person until you encounter it and have a use for it *Ne quid nimis* [Latin: 'nothing in excess'], because we don't want any one quality to dominate our thinking about the man. . . . Let's not think of his quality as a speaker unless some issue about fine speaking comes up; *then* let's think about it.

36. Man is full of needs: he likes only those who can satisfy them all. Someone is pointed out to me as 'a good mathematician', but what is mathematics to me?—he would think I am a proposition. Someone else is 'a good soldier'—he would think I am a besieged town. What is needed then is an honest man who can address all my needs.

37. Since we can't *be universal* and know everything knowable about everything, we should know a little about everything—that being the best kind of universality we can have. It's much better to know *something* about everything than to know *everything* about some one thing. If we can

have both, that's even better; but if we have to choose, we should choose the former. And the world [see Glossary] senses this and does so; for the world is often a good judge.

38. *Poète et non honnête homme.*

39. *Si la foudre tombait sure les lieux bas, etc.*

Les poètes et ceux qui ne savent raisonner que sur les choses de cette nature manqueraient de preuves.

40. We use a range of examples *x* to prove something *y*; if we wanted to prove *x* we would take *y* to be examples of it. That's because we always think that the difficulty is in what we want to prove, and find the examples clearer and a help to demonstration.

Thus, when we want to demonstrate a general theorem we must give the rule as applied to a particular case; but if we want to demonstrate a particular case, we must begin with the general rule. For we always *find* obscure the thing we're trying to prove and *find* clear whatever it is that we use in the proof. . . .

41. Martial's epigrams. Man loves malice—not against one-eyed men or the unfortunate, but against the fortunate and proud. It's a mistake to think otherwise. For greed [see Glossary] is the source of all our actions, and humanity, etc.

We must please those who have humane and tender feelings.

The epigram about two one-eyed people is worthless, for it doesn't console *them* and only enhances the author's glory. Anything that is only for the sake of the author is worthless. . . .

42. *"Prince" à un roi plaît, parce qu'il diminue sa qualité.*

43. Those authors who refer to their works as 'My book', 'My commentary', 'My history' and so on: they are like bourgeois who have a house of their own and always have 'at my house' on their tongue. They would do better to say 'Our book',

‘Our commentary’, ‘Our history’ etc., because in most cases the work has been done more by other people than by the author.

44. Do you want people to think well of you? Then keep quiet about it.

45. Languages are ciphers in which letters aren’t changed into letters but words into words, so that an unknown language is decipherable.

46. *Diseur de bons mots, mauvais caractère.*

47. Some people don’t write well but do speak well. What happens is that the place and the audience *warm* them, and draw from their minds more than they can find there when they are cold.

48. If a piece of writing repeats some words, and there’s a question of trying to repair this, here’s the test: are the repetitions so appropriate that ‘repairing’ them would spoil the piece? If so, leave them alone. ·If you don’t·, that is the work of envy, which is blind and doesn’t see that repetition is not a fault—in this case, I mean, for there’s no general rule about this.

49. Masking nature and disguising it: replace ‘king’, ‘pope’, ‘bishop’ by ‘august monarch’ and so on; replace ‘Paris’ by ‘the capital of the kingdom’. In some places Paris ought to be called ‘Paris’; in others it ought to be called ‘the capital of the kingdom’.

50. The same *meaning* changes with the words that express it. Meanings get their dignity from words rather than giving

it to them. I should look for examples. . .

51. *Pyrrhonien pour opiniâtre.*

52. No-one calls someone a courtier if he is one himself; only a pedant would call someone ‘a pedant’; only a provincial would call someone ‘provincial’—and I’ll bet it was the printer who put that word in the title of *Letters to a Provincial*. [The oddity of the move from *only a non-F would call someone an F* to *only a G would call someone a G* is in the original. The last item jokingly alludes to Pascal’s own *Lettres provinciales*.]

53. *Carosse ‘versé’ ou ‘renversé’, selon l’intention.
‘Répandre’ ou ‘verser’, selon l’intention.*

Plaidoyer de M. le Maître sur le cordelier par force.

54. *Facon de parler: ‘Je m’étais voulu appliquer à cela.’*

55. The opening power of a key, the pulling power of a hook.

56. Guess what part I am playing in what displeases you. The Cardinal did not want to be guessed.

‘My mind is disquieted.’ ‘I am disquieted’ is better.

57. I always feel uncomfortable with such civilities as these: ‘I have given you a lot of trouble’, ‘I’m afraid I am boring you’, ‘I fear that this is taking too long’. We either engage our audience or irritate them.

58. You are awkward: ‘Please excuse me’ ·you say·. If you hadn’t said that I wouldn’t have known there was anything wrong. . . .

59. ‘Extinguish the flame of sedition’—too flamboyant.
‘L’inquiétude de son génie’: trop de deux mots hardis.

Section 2: The misery of man without God

60. First part: Misery of man without God.

Second part: Happiness of man with God. [starting at page 65]

Alternatively:

First part: That nature is corrupt. Proved by nature itself.

Second part: That there is a redeemer. Proved by Scripture.

61. I could have presented this discourse in this order:

- show the vanity [see Glossary] of all sorts of conditions,
- show the vanity of ordinary lives, and then
- show the vanity of philosophical lives, pyrrhonian [see Glossary] lives, stoic lives;

but the order wouldn't have been kept. I know a bit about order, and about how few people understand it. No human science can keep it. Saint Thomas didn't keep it. Mathematics keeps it, but mathematics, for all its depth, is useless.

62. **Preface to the first part.** Speak of those who have discussed self-knowledge; of ·Pierre· Charron's divisions, depressing and boring; of Montaigne's confusion; that he felt the lack of a sound method, and tried to deal with this by jumping from subject to subject; that he tried to come across as a good fellow.

His *stupid* project of depicting himself! Everyone makes mistakes; but this wasn't a mere slip that went against his maxims; it was backed by his maxims and was a principal part of his design. To say silly things by chance and out of weakness is a humdrum mishap; but to say them intentionally is intolerable, and to say things like these. . . [The tailing-off is in the original.]

63. Montaigne's faults are great. •Lewd words; this is worthless, despite ·the defence of such language by editor·

Mademoiselle de Gournay. •Credulous: people without eyes! Ignorant: squaring the circle!. . . •His opinions on suicide, on death. •He projects a don't-care attitude about salvation—no fear and no repentance. His book wasn't written to encourage piety, so he wasn't obliged to mention it; but we are always obliged not to turn men away from it. We might excuse his rather free and licentious opinions about some kinds of events in our lives; but there's no excuse for his thoroughly pagan views about death. Someone who doesn't at least *want* a Christian death should renounce piety altogether; and all through his book Montaigne thinks of death only in a cowardly and weak way.

64. Everything that I see in Montaigne I find not in him but in myself.

65. What's good about Montaigne must have been difficult for him to acquire. What's bad about him—apart from his *mœurs* [see Glossary], I mean—could have been corrected in a moment, if he had been warned that he was telling too many stories and talking about himself too much.

66. You must know yourself. If this doesn't enable you to discover truth, it at least brings order into your life—and nothing does it better.

67. **The vanity of the sciences.** Physical science won't console me for ignorance of morality in times of affliction. But the science of *mœurs* will always console me for ignorance of the physical sciences.

68. Men are never *taught* to be honest men [see Glossary], and they're taught everything else; but they are more vain about knowing how to be honest men than about knowing anything else. The only thing they are vain about knowing is the one

thing they haven't been taught.

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

70. Nature doesn't. . . [The rest of this item was deleted by Pascal. But here it is:] Nature has centred us so well that if we go off-balance on one side we make a corrective motion on the other. . . . Which makes me think that we have in our heads springs that are arranged in such a way that whatever touches one also touches the contrary one.

71. Too much and too little wine. Give him none, he can't find truth; give him too much, same result.

72. Man's disproportion. [Several sentences crossed out by Pascal. Then:] Let man then contemplate the whole of nature in its great and full majesty, looking away from the lowly objects in his environment. Let him gaze at that brilliant light, set like an eternal lamp to light up the universe; let the earth appear to him as a *point* in comparison with the vast orbit traced out by the sun; and let him be astonished that this vast orbit is itself only a very fine point in comparison with the orbit covered by the stars as they revolve around the firmament.

But if that is as far as we can see, let our *imagination* go further; it will get tired of conceiving before nature gets tired of providing! The whole visible world is only a speck in nature's broad bosom. No idea comes close to encompassing it. It won't do us any good to enlarge our conceptions beyond any imaginable space—all we'll come up with are *atoms* in comparison with the reality of things. It's an infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere, and its circumference nowhere. [Pascal means that soberly. Any point in an infinite space is central in it, in the sense of having as much space on any side of it as on any other; and nothing is its circumference, because it has no edges.] Our imagination loses itself in that thought, and that fact is the

greatest available mark of God's omnipotence.

Having come back to himself, let man consider what *he* is in comparison with everything that exists; let him regard himself as lost in this out-of-the-way province of nature; and from the little cell in which he finds himself lodged—I mean the universe—let him estimate the true value of the earth, kingdoms, cities, and himself. What is a man in the infinite?

But to confront him with another equally astonishing wonder, let him look into the most delicate things he knows. Let a mite with its minute body and incomparably tinier parts present him with

- limbs with their joints,
- veins in the limbs,
- blood in the veins,
- humours in the blood,
- drops in the humours,
- vapours in the drops.

Let him go on dividing these last things until his all this conceiving has worn him out. And the last thing he can arrive at—let's talk about *that!* Perhaps he'll think that this is as small as nature gets.

I want to get him to see a new abyss down in *that*. I want to depict for him, within the confines of this small-scale model of an atom, not only the visible universe but all that we can conceive of nature's immensity. Let him see in there an infinity of universes, each with its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same proportions as in the visible world; in each earth animals and smaller animals. . . right down to at the end *mites*; and in each mite he'll find the same thing as before [listed in the indented passage in the preceding paragraph], and on it will go, smaller and smaller, with nothing to bring the process to a halt. Let man lose himself in these marvels, as amazing in their littleness as the others are in their vastness. For who won't be astounded at the fact that our body, which

not long ago was imperceptible in a universe that was itself imperceptible in the bosom of *everything*, is now a colossus, a world, or rather an *everything* in comparison with the *nothing* that we can't reach?

Anyone who sees himself in this light will be afraid of himself and, taking in that he is sustained (in the chunk of matter given to him by nature) between those two abysses of the infinite and the nothing, will tremble at the sight of these marvels; and I think that as his curiosity is changed into wonder, he'll find •silent contemplation more appropriate than •arrogant exploration.

After all, what is man in nature? A *nothing* in comparison with the infinite, an *everything* in comparison with the nothing—an intermediate item between nothing and everything. Since he is infinitely far from grasping the extremes, the end of things and their beginning are hidden from him in an impenetrable secret; he is equally incapable of seeing the nothing that he came from and the infinite that swallows him up.

What will he do then, but see how things look in the middle, in an eternal despair of knowing their beginning or their end? All things have come from nothingness and are carried towards the infinite. Who will follow these astonishing processes? Their Author understands them. No-one else can.

Through failure to think about these infinities, men have rashly plunged into the examination of nature, as though it were somehow commensurable with them. What a strange figure they cut, aiming to understand the beginnings of things and move on from there to knowing the whole •of reality•, doing this with an arrogance that is as infinite as the thing they are studying! There's no doubt about it: no-one could plan such a project unless he was infinitely arrogant—or infinitely powerful, like nature.

If we're well educated we understand that because nature has engraved its image and its Author's on everything, nearly everything in nature shares in its double infinity. Thus we see that all the sciences are infinite in the extent of their researches; for anyone can see that mathematics, for instance, has to deal with an infinity of infinities of propositions. The sciences are also infinite in the number and subtlety of their underlying principles; some are put forward as rock-bottom, but it's *obvious* that they aren't self-supporting, but are based on others which are based on yet others, and so on, with no bottom level. But we treat as rock-bottom ones that are as far down as *reason* can go, just as with material objects we call something an indivisible point if our *senses* can't detect any parts in it, although by its nature it is infinitely divisible.

Of these two infinities of science, the more perceptible is its infinite scope, which is why so few people have claimed to know all things. 'I will speak about everything', said Democritus.

The infinitely small is much less visible. Philosophers have much been readier to claim to have reached it, and that's where they have all stumbled. This has given rise to such every-day titles as *The Principles of Things*, *The Principles of Philosophy* and the like, which are actually as pretentious—though not in appearance—as the one that comes right out with it, •Mirandola's• *Concerning Everything that can be Known!* [They are pretentious, Pascal thinks, because etymologically 'principles' are the things that come first, i.e. are rock-bottom.]

We naturally think we're better able to reach the centre of things than to embrace their circumference. The world stretched out in space visibly surpasses us; but we know that we surpass small things, which encourages us to think that we can •intellectually• possess them. Yet it takes as much

capacity to reach the *nothing* as to reach the *all*—an infinite capacity in each case. And it seems to me that anyone who could succeed on the ‘small’ side of things could also succeed on the ‘large’. Each depends on the other, each leads to the other. These extremes meet and combine in God and in God alone.

Let’s take our bearings then: we are something, and we aren’t everything. The *being* that we do have cuts us off from knowledge of first beginnings, which arise out of the *nothing*; and the smallness of our *being* conceals from us the sight of the *infinite*.

Our intellect is at the same level in the world of intelligible things [= ‘concepts’] as our body occupies in the extended world.

Limited as we are in every way, our status as intermediate between two extremes shows up in all our faculties. Our senses don’t perceive any extreme:

- Too much sound deafens us;
- too much light dazzles us;
- we can’t see well things that are too far or too near;
- we lose track of speech that goes on too long or not long enough;
- too much truth stuns us (I know people who can’t understand that zero minus four equals zero);
- first principles are too self-evident for us;
- too much pleasure disagrees with us;
- too many concords are displeasing in music;
- too many benefits annoy us (we don’t want too big a burden of moral debt: ‘Benefits are acceptable when the receiver thinks he may return them; but beyond that hatred is given instead of thanks’ [quoted in Latin from Tacitus]);
- we don’t feel extreme heat or extreme cold;
- excessive qualities are bad for us, and not perceptible

by the senses; we are acted on by them but don’t feel them;

- extreme youth and extreme age hinder the mind;
- similarly with too much and too little education.

In short, extremes are for us as though they didn’t exist, and we are for them as though we didn’t exist. They elude us, or we elude them.

There you have it—our true state; it’s what makes us incapable of certain knowledge and of absolute ignorance. We’re floating on a vast ocean, adrift and uncertain, pushed from side to side. Whenever we are about to get steady by mooring ourselves to something, it shakes us off and gets away; and if we follow it, it eludes our grasp, slips away from us and vanishes for ever. Nothing holds still for us. This is our natural condition and yet the one that goes the most directly against our inclination; we’re burning with desire to find solid ground and a rock-bottom secure foundation on which to build a tower reaching to the infinite. But all our foundation cracks, and abysses open up in the earth beneath it.

So let us not look for certainty and stability. Our reason is always deceived by the transitory nature of appearances; nothing can *fix* the finite between the two infinities, which enclose it and fly away from it.

Once that is well understood, I think we’ll be at peace, each in the state that nature has assigned him. This hand that we have been dealt is always distant from either extreme, so what does it matter whether a man gets a little more knowledge of things? If he gets it, he has a slightly higher vantage-point; but isn’t he always infinitely far from the end? And if our life lasts ten years longer, isn’t it still just as far from being eternal?

From the standpoint of these infinities, all finities are equal, and I don’t see why we should fix our imagination more on

one than on another. Merely comparing ourselves with finite things is depressing.

If man studied himself first, he would see how incapable he is of going further. How *could* a part know the whole? But mightn't he aim to know at least the parts to which he bears some proportion? But the world's parts are all so inter-related and inter-linked that I believe it's impossible to know one without the next. . . and without the whole.

Take man, for example. He is related to everything that he knows. He needs

- a place to live in,
- time to live through,
- motion in order to live,
- elements to make him up,
- warmth and food to nourish him,
- air to breathe.

he sees light; he feels bodies; eventually he is connected with everything. To know man, then, you need know how it comes about that he needs air to live; to know the air, you have to know how it gets this role in the life of man; and so on.

Flame needs air; so to know one you have to know the other.

Since things are all causes and effects, supported and supporting, mediate and immediate, and held together by a natural imperceptible chain that connects the most distant and different things, I hold that one couldn't know the parts without knowing the whole, any more than one could know the whole without knowing each of the parts. . . .

And what completes our inability to know things is the fact that •they are simple and •we are not: we are composed of two natures—opposite to one another and radically different in kind—namely soul [see Glossary] and body. For it is impossible for the reasoning part of us to be other than spiritual; and if anyone claimed that we are •not composite,

but • simply corporeal, this would put us even further from having knowledge of things, because *matter that knows itself* is as inconceivable as anything could be. We cannot possibly know how matter could know itself.

Thus, if we're simply material, we can't know anything; and if we're composed of mind and matter, we can't have complete knowledge of anything simple, whether spiritual or corporeal.

That's why almost all philosophers have confused ideas of things, and speak of corporeal things in spiritual terms and of spiritual things in corporeal terms. They come right out with it and say that bodies

- aim to go downwards,
- seek their centre,
- flee from destruction,
- fear the void, and
- have inclinations, sympathies, antipathies,

all of which can be true only of minds. And in speaking of minds, they regard them as having locations and as moving from one place to another, all of which can be true only of bodies.

Instead of receiving the ideas of these things in their purity, we colour them with our own qualities, and stamp our composite nature onto all the simple things that we contemplate.

Given that we treat everything as a composite of mind and body, you'd think that this is a mixture that we understand very well. In fact, it's the thing we understand least! Man is to himself the most *extraordinary* object in nature; for he can't conceive what a body is, still less what a mind is, and least of all how a body can be united to a mind. This is the peak of his difficulties, yet it's his own being. 'How the spirit is united to the body can't be understood by man, and yet it *is* man' [Augustine, *The City of God* xxi.10; Pascal quotes it in Latin].

Finally, to complete the proof of our weakness, I will conclude with these two considerations. . .

73. But perhaps this subject goes beyond reason's scope. Then let us examine what reason comes up with on topics that are within its powers. If there's anything that its own interest must have made reason apply itself to most seriously, it is the inquiry into its own supreme good. Let us see, then, what these strong and clear-sighted souls have said about what the supreme good is, and whether they agree.

Among the things that have been said to be the supreme good are

- virtue,
- pleasure,
- knowledge of nature ('he's a happy man who can know the things' causes' [quoted in Latin from Virgil]),
- truth,
- total ignorance,
- idleness,
- not believing in appearances,
- not being surprised by anything ('Almost the only thing that can make us and keep us happy is not confronting anything with admiring wonder' [quoted in Latin from Horace]).

And the true pyrrhonians equate the supreme good with

- indifference, doubt, constant suspension of judgment,
- while others, wiser, say that
- we can't find any supreme good, even by wishing.

•After all our intellectual industry, look at the reward we get!

After so much intense study, hasn't this fine philosophy achieved *any* solid results? Perhaps at least the soul will know itself. Well, let us hear the world authorities on this subject. [Each of the next three sentences ends with a page-number referring to Montaigne.] What have they thought about the soul's substance? Have they had better luck in locating the soul?

What have they found out about the soul's origin, duration, and departure?

Is the soul, then, too noble a subject for its own feeble lights? Then let us go down to the level of mere *matter*, and see if the soul knows what the body is made of—the body that it animates and the other bodies that it contemplates and pushes around at will. Those great dogmatists who know everything, what have they known about matter? [Pascal here quotes the first two words of a fragment of Cicero which, in full, says 'Which of these sentences is true, God will see.]

This would of course be enough if reason were reasonable. It is reasonable enough to admit that it hasn't yet found anything durable; but it doesn't yet despair of finding some. [Pascal deleted the rest of this item—a few lines with not much content.]

74. A letter *On the Foolishness of Human Knowledge and Philosophy*.

Cette lettre avant 'le divertissement'.

Felix qui potuit. . . Nihil admirari. [These are fragments of the Virgil and Horace quotations in **73**].

Two hundred and eighty kinds of supreme good in Montaigne.

75. What is more absurd than to say •that lifeless bodies have passions, fears, dreads? •that unfeeling bodies—lifeless and incapable of life—have passions, which presuppose at least a feeling soul to feel them? Even worse, to say •that what they dread is any vacuum? What is there in a *vacuum* that could frighten them? What is there that is more shallow and ridiculous than this?

And there's more. •Isn't it absurd to say • that lifeless bodies have in themselves a source of movement enabling them to avoid any vacuum? Do they have arms, legs, muscles, nerves?

76. Write against those who went too deeply into the sciences.

Descartes.

77. I can't forgive Descartes. He would have been quite willing to do without God all through his philosophy; but he couldn't do without the flick of a finger by which God set the world in motion. After that he has no further need of God.

78. Descartes useless and uncertain.

79. [Deleted by Pascal.]

80. Why is it that a crippled person doesn't offend us, while a crippled mind does? Because a crippled person recognises that we walk straight, whereas a crippled mind says that it is we who are limping. If that weren't so, we would feel pity for it and not anger.

Epictetus asks still more strongly: 'Why are we not angry if we're told that we have a headache, but are upset if we're told that we reason badly or choose badly?'

It's because we are •quite certain that we don't have a headache and that we aren't lame; but we are •less sure that we're choosing rightly. We aren't sure of anything except what we see with our whole sight; so it gives us a jolt when someone else with his whole sight sees the opposite, and even more when a thousand others sneer at our choice. •We shouldn't smoothly deal with this by just going along with the multitude, because we ought to prefer our own insights to those of others, however many of them there are; that is difficult and requires courage. There's no such inner conflict in our thoughts about a lame person.

81. It's natural for the mind to believe, and for the will to love; so that when they don't have true objects they have to attach themselves to false ones.

82. Imagination is the dominant part in man, the mistress of error and falsity, which is all the more effective as a liar because it sometimes tells the truth; if we could *depend* on it to be wrong, that would give us an infallible rule of truth. As

things stand, it is usually false but gives no sign of whether in a particular case it is true or false.

I'm not talking about the deception of fools; I'm talking about the wisest men—*they* are the ones whom imagination persuades the most strongly. It's no use reason protesting against this; reason can't *price* things [i.e. know what they are worth on the true/false scale].

This arrogant power, the enemy of reason which it likes to control and dominate, has displayed its all-purpose power by establishing in man a second nature. The people it takes possession of are happy and sad, healthy and sick, rich and poor; it forces its captives to believe, doubt, and reject reason; it cancels the senses and then switches them on again; it possesses fools and sages; and it fills those it occupies—it's *exasperating* to see this!—with a satisfaction that is deeper and fuller than reason gives them. People with lively imaginations are much more pleased with themselves than prudent people could reasonably be. They condescendingly look down on others; they argue boldly and confidently against opponents who are timid and unsure of themselves; and their jubilant manner often makes hearers think that they have won the argument—a sign of how greatly •those who fancy they are wise are favoured by •those who fancy they are judges! Imagination can't make fools wise, but it can make them happy, covering them with glory, whereas reason can only make its friends miserable, covering them with shame.

What passes out reputations? What brings respect and veneration to people, to works, to laws, to the great—what can do all this if not this faculty of imagination? How insufficient all the earth's riches are if they don't please imagination!

That magistrate over there—one whose venerable age commands the respect of a whole people—wouldn't you say

that he is governed by pure high *reason*, and judges cases according to their true nature, not being deflected by trivial details that have no role except to affect the imagination of the weak? See him go to church, full of devout zeal, with the solidity of his reason supported by the ardour of his Christian love. There he sits, ready to listen with perfect respect. Now the preacher appears; nature has given him a hoarse voice and a peculiar face, his barber has given him a bad shave and by chance he is notably dirty. However great the truths he announces, I'll bet that our magistrate laughs at him.

Suppose that the world's greatest philosopher is on a comfortably wide plank projecting over a precipice: his reason will convince him that he is safe, but his imagination will take charge. The mere *thought* of being in that situation would make many people go pale and start sweating—not to mention other effects that I won't go into here.

Everyone knows that someone's reason can be unhinged by the sight of a cat or a rat, or the sound of crushing coal, etc. A discourse or a powerful poem can have a quite different effect on hearers, even wise ones, according to the tone of voice.

Love or hate alters the look of justice. A lawyer has been retained with a large fee—how greatly that increases his sense of the *justice* of his cause! How greatly his boldly confident manner that makes the judges (deceived as they are by appearances) think better of him! How ludicrous reason is, blown in every direction by a puff of wind!

·To report all the effects of imagination· I would have to describe almost all the actions of men, who hardly produce a shrug or a nod except when pushed by imagination. For reason has had to yield, and the wisest reason takes as its own principles ones that men's imagination has rashly scattered all over the place. . . .

Man has good reason to bring these two powers into harmony; in this peace-time it's imagination that has the upper hand; whereas in war it is totally dominant. Reason never completely conquers imagination, whereas the reverse is commonplocce.

Our magistrates have known this mystery well. They absolutely *needed* their red robes, the ermine they wrap themselves in like cats, the courts in which they judge, the fleurs-de-lis, and all those stately trappings. If physicians didn't have their gowns and high heels, if the professors hadn't had their mortar-boards and their absurdly capacious robes, they would never have duped the world, which can't resist a show as authoritative as that! If magistrates had true justice and physicians had the true art of healing, they wouldn't need mortar-boards; the unadorned majesty of these sciences would be venerable enough. But because they have only imaginary sciences, they have to use those silly tools that strike the imagination that they have to deal with, and in that way they do indeed get respect. It's only the military that aren't disguised in this way, because indeed their role really is essential; they establish themselves by force—the others do it by show.

So our kings haven't looked for disguises. They don't make themselves appear extraordinary by dressing up in extraordinary clothes; but they are accompanied by guards and soldiers. Those armed troops who have hands and power only for their king, those trumpets and drums that go before them, and those legions that surround them, make the strongest men tremble. Kings don't dress up—they have power. It would take a very refined reason to see the Grand Turk—surrounded in his superb seraglio by forty thousand janissaries [= 'élite military guards']—as an ordinary man.

To have a favourable opinion of an advocate's ability, we have only to see him in his robe and with his cap on his

head.

The imagination has control of everything; it makes beauty, justice, and happiness—which are the whole world. I would very much like to see an Italian book of which I know only the title—*Opinion, Queen of the World*—which itself is worth many books. Without knowing the book, I endorse what it says, apart from anything bad it may contain.

Those are pretty much the effects of that deceptive faculty, which seems to have been given to us precisely so as to lead us into a necessary error [*une erreur nécessaire*, meaning ‘an error that it’s necessary for us to make’?]. We have plenty of other sources of error.

It’s not only •old impressions that can mislead us; the charms of the •new can do it too. That’s the source of all the disputes in which men taunt each other either with following the false impressions of childhood or running rashly after novelties. Who keeps to the proper middle path? Let him step forward and prove it! There is no source of belief, however natural to us even from infancy, that can’t be misrepresented as a false impression of education or of the senses.

Some say:

‘Because you have believed since childhood that when you saw nothing in a box it was *empty*, you have believed that a vacuum is possible. This is an illusion of your senses, strengthened by custom, which science must correct.’

Their opponents say:

‘Because you were told at the school [see Glossary] that there is no vacuum, you have perverted your common sense, which clearly grasped vacuum before this false teaching came along. You must correct this error by returning to your first state.’

Which has deceived you, your senses or your education?

We have another source of error—diseases. They spoil

our judgement and our senses; and if really bad illnesses produce noticeable changes, I’m sure that lesser ailments have correspondingly smaller effects on our judgment and senses.

Our own interest is another marvellous instrument for painlessly blinding ourselves. The fairest man in the world isn’t allowed to be a judge in his own case; I know people like that who have escaped this kind of self-interest by acting *against* their own interests—like the *unfairest* man in the world. The sure way of losing a just cause was to get it recommended to these men by their near relatives!

Justice and truth are such delicately sharp points that •our tools are too blunt to touch them precisely. If •they reach the point, they flatten it and spread themselves around in its vicinity, more on the false than on the true.

Man is so well constructed that he has no sound source of truth and many of falsehood. See now how much. . . But the most comical cause of his errors is the war between the senses and reason.

83. Man is full of errors that are •natural and •incurable without divine help. Nothing shows him the truth. Everything deceives him. (•Memo to self: Begin the chapter on the deceptive powers with this.) The two sources of truth, reason and the senses, besides being separately untruthful also deceive one another. The senses mislead reason with false appearances; and they play tricks on •other departments of the soul, which return the favour: the soul’s passions trouble the senses, and make false impressions on them. They rival each other in lying and self-deception.

Mais outre ces erreurs qui viennent par accident et par la manque d’intelligence, avec ses facultés hétérogènes. . .

84. Imagination enlarges little objects, giving them such a fantastic size that they fill our souls; and with rash insolence

it shrinks great things down to a size that it can cope with—e.g. when talking about God.

85. These ‘little’ things have the most hold on us, hiding their tiny content, which is often almost nothing. It’s a *nothing* that our imagination magnifies into a mountain. Another stroke of the imagination easily shows us that that is so.

86. My fancy [see Glossary] makes me hate someone who croaks, and someone who splutters when he is eating. Fancy has great weight. Will it do us any good to yield to this weight because it is natural? No. It will do us good to resist it. . .

87. *Quasi quicquam infelicius sit homine cui figmenta dominantur.* (Pliny)

88. Children who are frightened by the face they have blackened—they’re just children. But how does a weak child become really strong when he grows older? All that happens is that we change our fancies.

Anything that becomes perfect through progress also dies through progress. Nothing that has been weak can ever become absolutely strong. We say in vain ‘he has grown’, ‘he has changed’; he is also the same.

89. Custom is our nature. Someone who is accustomed to the faith •believes it, •can no longer fear hell, and •doesn’t believe anything else. Someone who is accustomed to believing that the king is terrible. . . etc. Who doubts then that our soul, being accustomed to see number, space and motion, believes that and nothing else?

90. ‘If an event is of a common kind, we take it in our stride even if we don’t know what caused it; an event of a kind we haven’t experienced before counts as a marvel.’ [Cicero, quoted in Latin]

Nae isto magno conatu magnas nugas dixerit. (Terence)

91. When we see the same effect always happening in the same way, we infer that natural necessity is at work, ‘The

sun will rise tomorrow’ and so on. But nature often deceives us, and doesn’t obey its own rules.

92. What are our natural sources of action but ones that custom has created? In children they’re the ones received from the customary behaviour of their fathers—like hunting in animals.

We know from experience that different customs produce different natural drives; and if some natural drives can’t be wiped out by custom, there are custom-based ones that are opposed to nature and can’t be eradicated by nature or by a second custom. This depends on ‘the person’s’ disposition.

93. Fathers fear that their children’s natural love for them may fade away. What kind of nature is it that can fade away? Custom is a second nature which destroys the first. But what is nature? Why isn’t custom natural? I’m much afraid that just as custom is a second nature, nature is merely a first custom.

94. Man’s nature is wholly natural—‘Every animal ‘after its own kind.’ [Genesis 7:14].

Anything can be made natural; anything natural can be lost.

95. Memory, joy, are feelings; even mathematical propositions become feelings, for reason produces natural feelings and erases them.

96. When we are accustomed to giving bad reasons to explain natural effects, we’re no longer willing to accept good ones when they are discovered. An example of this: adducing the circulation of the blood to explain why a vein swells below a ligature.

97. The most important affair in life is the choice of a vocation; chance decides it. Custom makes men masons, soldiers, roofers. ‘He’s a good roofer’, someone says; and someone says of soldiers ‘They are perfect fools’. Others say

on the contrary: ‘There’s nothing great but war; other men are scoundrels.’ We choose a vocation because as children we heard it being praised and all the others scorned, for we naturally love *virtue* and hate *folly*. These words themselves will settle issues; we go wrong only in how we apply them.

So great is the force of custom that out of those whom nature has made to be simply *men* are created *all sorts of men*. Some districts are full of masons, others of soldiers, etc. Nature certainly doesn’t group them like that. It’s done by custom, then, for it pushes nature around. But sometimes nature gets the upper hand and preserves man’s instinct, in spite of all custom, good or bad.

98. Prejudice leading to error. It’s deplorable to see everyone deliberating only about means and not about the end. Each man thinks about how he will perform in his vocation; but as for the choice of vocation—chance settles that, as it settles what country we belong to.

It’s pitiful to see so many Moslems [see Glossary], heretics, and infidels [see Glossary] follow in their fathers’ footsteps simply because each has been indoctrinated to believe that his way is the best. And that’s how each man comes to have his vocation as locksmith, soldier, etc. It’s also why savages don’t care about providence.

99. There’s a universal and essential difference between the actions of the will and all other actions.

The will is one of the main organs of belief. It doesn’t create belief—I can’t start believing that P by simply choosing to do so—but it does determine the angle from which we look at something, and that determines what we think is true or false about it. •The will turns the mind away from considering the qualities of anything that •it doesn’t like to see; so the mind looks from the angle that the will likes, and what it sees determines what it judges.

100. The nature of self-love and of this human *self* [see Glossary] is to love only oneself and consider only oneself. But what is a man to do? He can’t prevent this object that he loves from being full of faults and misery.

- He wants to be great, and sees himself small.
- He wants to be happy, and sees himself miserable.
- He wants to be perfect, and sees himself full of imperfections.
- He wants men to love and esteem him, and sees that his faults deserve only their dislike and contempt.

This *fix* that he’s in produces in him the most improper and wicked passion that can be imagined: he develops a mortal hatred against the truth that reproaches him and convinces him of his faults. He would like to annihilate it, but because he can’t destroy it he does his best to destroy his and other people’s knowledge of it. That is, he puts all his efforts into hiding his faults both from others and from himself. He can’t bear to have anyone point them out to him, or to see them.

It’s certainly bad to be full of faults; but it’s much worse to be full of faults and refuse to recognise them, because that adds the further fault of a voluntary illusion. We don’t want others to deceive us, and we don’t think it fair that they want us to admire them more than they deserve; so it’s not fair that we should deceive them, and want them to admire us more than we deserve.

So: when they discover only imperfections and vices that we really do have, they clearly aren’t wronging us, because *they* didn’t cause our faults. Indeed they are doing us a favour, by helping us to free ourselves from something bad, namely ignorance of our imperfections. We shouldn’t be angry at their knowing our faults and despising us: it is *right* that they should •know us for what we are and •despise us if we are despicable.

Those are the feelings that would arise in a heart full of

fairness and justice. Then what should we say about our own heart when we see that it's nothing like that? Isn't it true that we hate truth and those who tell it to us, and that we like them to be deceived in our favour, and want them to admire us for being something that we actually are not?

One example of this horrifies me. The Catholic religion doesn't require us to confess our sins indiscriminately to everybody; it lets us keep them hidden from everyone else except for *one* to whom we are to reveal the innermost recesses of our heart and show ourselves as we are. The Church •orders us to undeceive just this one man in all the world, and •requires him to maintain an inviolable secrecy, so that it's as though this knowledge that he has didn't exist. Can we imagine anything kinder and more gentle? Yet man is so corrupt that he finds even this law harsh. It's one of the main reasons leading a great part of Europe to rebel against the Church.

How unjust and unreasonable is the human heart, which objects to being obliged to do in relation to one man something that it would be just, in a way, for him to do in relation to all men! For is it just for us to deceive them?

This aversion to truth comes in different strengths, but everyone can be said to have it in some degree, because it is inseparable from self-love. It's because of this bad delicacy that people who have to correct others choose to do it in roundabout and toned-down ways, so as not to give offence. They have to lessen our faults, appear to excuse them, and stir into the mix praises and assurances of love and esteem. Despite all this, self-love finds such correction to be bitter medicine. It takes as little of it as it can, always with disgust, and often with a secret resentment against those who administer it.

That's how it happens that if it's in someone's interests to be loved by us, he avoids doing anything for us that he

knows we wouldn't enjoy; he treats us as we want to be treated: we hate the truth, he hides it from us; we want to be flattered, he flatters us; we like to be deceived, he deceives us.

People are most afraid of wounding those whose affection is most useful and whose dislike is most dangerous, so every *step up* that we take in the world removes us further from truth. A prince can be the laughing-stock of all Europe and the only one who doesn't know this. I'm not surprised: telling the truth is useful to those to whom it is told, but harmful to those who tell it, because it gets them disliked. Anyone who lives with a prince loves his own interests more than he does those of the prince he serves; so he keeps clear of doing anything that would benefit the prince while harming himself.

This wretched condition is no doubt greater and more common among the higher classes; but the poorest aren't exempt from it, because it's in any man's interests to get others to like him. Human life is thus only a perpetual illusion; all we do is to deceive each other and flatter each other. No-one speaks of us in our presence as he does behind our backs. Human society is grounded on mutual deceit; few friendships would endure if each person knew what his friend said about him in his absence, even if he said it sincerely and dispassionately.

That's what man is, then: disguise, lying, and hypocrisy, in himself and in relation to others. He doesn't 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 maintain that if all men knew what others said about them, there wouldn't be four friends in the world. You can see this from the quarrels caused by occasional indiscretions.

102. Some vices get hold of us only by means of others, and go when the others do, like branches falling when the trunk is cut down.

103. The example of Alexander's chastity hasn't made as many people sexually restrained as the example of his drunkenness has made intemperate. It isn't shameful to be *less* virtuous than he was, and it seems excusable to be *no more* vicious. When we see that we're sharing in the vices of great men, we don't think of ourselves as fully sharing in the vices of ordinary people; we're overlooking the fact that when it comes to vices, the great men *are* ordinary people. We're linked to them in the same way that they are linked to the people; because however exalted they are, they're still united at some point with the lowest of men. They aren't suspended in the air, quite removed from our society. No, no; if they are greater than us it's because their heads are higher, but their feet are down where ours are. They're all on the same level, and rest on the same earth as the smallest folk, as infants, as the beasts.

104. When we're led by passion to do something, we forget our duty; for example, we like a book and read it when we should be doing something else. Now, to remind ourselves of our duty, we should set ourselves a task that we dislike; then we can plead that we have something else to do, thus being led to remember our duty.

105. How hard it is to submit something to the judgement of someone else without prejudicing his judgement by *how* we submit it! If we say 'I think it's beautiful', 'I find it obscure' or the like, we either entice the other person's imagination into that view or annoy it into going the opposite way. It's better to say nothing; and then the other person can judge according to what he is—i.e. what he is at that moment—and according to other factors that won't be of our making. At least we

won't have added anything, unless our silence affects the other person's judgment according to •how he interprets it, or •what he guesses from our gestures or facial expression or tone of voice. . . . That's how hard it is *not* to lift a judgement down from its natural stand, or rather how few judgments have firm and stable stands!

106. By knowing each man's ruling passion, we are sure of pleasing him; and yet each has fancies [see Glossary] that are opposed to his true good—fancies that lurk in the very idea that he has of the good. This weird fact leaves us completely at a loss.

107. My mood has little connection with the weather ·out there in the world·. I have my fogs and my sunshine within me; and which of them I have at a given time has little to do with whether my affairs are going well or badly. Sometimes I struggle against how things are going, and the glory of getting on top makes me cheerful; whereas sometimes things are going well and I am depressed and disgusted.

108. Don't be absolutely sure that someone isn't lying just because he has no motive to lie. Some people lie simply for the sake of lying.

109. When we are well we wonder how we would cope with being ill, but when we *are* ill we take medicine cheerfully, braced by the illness. We no longer have the passions and desires for diversions and outings that health gave to us and that would be bad for us when we are ill. Nature at that time gives us passions and desires suitable to our present state. The only fears that disturb us are not about nature but about ourselves, because they involve being in one state and having passions that are appropriate to some other state.

With nature always making us unhappy, whatever state we are in, our desires depict to us a happy state, combining the state we are in with the pleasures of a different state.

And if we achieved those pleasures, that still wouldn't make us happy, because then we would have other desires that are natural ·but not appropriate· to this new state.

·Memo to self·: Produce particular instances of this general proposition.

110. Inconstancy is caused by •your feeling that the pleasures you have are false, combined with •your not knowing that the pleasures you don't have are empty.

111. Inconstancy. When we are playing on men, we think we are playing on ordinary organs. Men *are* indeed organs, but weird changeable organs whose pipes aren't assembled in the order of the musical scale. Those who only know how to play on ordinary organs won't produce harmonies on men. You have to know where the keys are.

112. Inconstancy. Things have various qualities, and the soul has various inclinations; for nothing is offered to the soul as simple, and the soul never presents itself simply to any subject. That's how it comes about that we weep and laugh at the same thing.

113. Inconstancy and weirdness. •Working for one's living, and •ruling over the most powerful State in the world, are very opposite things. They are united in the person of the great Sultan of the Turks.

114. There's so much variety! All tones of voice, all ways of walking, coughing, blowing the nose, sneezing. . . We select grapes from other fruit, and then divide them so that a bunch of grapes may be

- of the muscat type,
- grown in the Condrieu region,
- in the vineyard of M. Desargues, and
- from such-and-such stock.

Is that as far down as it goes? Has a vine ever produced two bunches exactly the same? Has a bunch ever had two grapes

alike? And so on.

I have never judged a single thing in exactly the same way ·on two occasions·. I can't judge my own work while I'm doing it. I have to do what painters do—stand back. But not too far. Then how far? Guess!

115. Theology is a science, but how many sciences is it all at once? This man is *one* servant; but if he is dissected ·how many of him will there be·? Will he be the head, the heart, the stomach, the veins, each vein, each portion of a vein, the blood, each fluid in the blood?

Seen from a distance, a town is a town, a countryside is a countryside; but as we come nearer there are houses, trees, roof-tiles, leaves, grass, ants, limbs of ants, and so on to infinity. All this is covered by the word 'countryside'.

116. Thoughts. All is one, all is diverse. How many natures there are in human nature! How many vocations! And what a chancy business ·the choosing of a vocation is·! Ordinarily a man simply chooses one that he has heard praised. . . .

117. 'Ah! What a nice bit of work! That's the work of a skillful shoemaker!' 'How brave that soldier is!' This is the source of our inclinations and of our choice of life-style. 'What a lot that man drinks!' 'How abstemious that man is!' This makes people sober or drunk, soldiers, cowards, etc.

118. Principal talent, which regulates all the others.

119. Nature imitates itself: A seed thrown onto good ground produces; a principle thrown into a good mind produces.

Numbers imitate space, which is so different in nature from them.

All is made and directed by the same master: root, branches, fruits; premises, conclusions.

120. [deleted by Pascal]

121. Nature always starts up the same ·temporal· things again—the years, the days, the hours. Similarly spaces and

numbers follow one another in an unbroken sequence. This gives rise to a kind of ·numerical· infinity and ·temporal· eternity. Not that anything in all this is itself infinite and eternal; it's just that these finite things are infinitely multiplied. So the only infinite thing (it seems to me) is the number by which they are multiplied.

122. Time heals griefs and quarrels, because we change and are no longer the same persons. Neither the offender nor the offended are themselves any more. It's like the situation where we have angered a nation; we encounter it again two generations later; they're still Frenchmen, but not the same ones.

123. He no longer loves the person he loved ten years ago. I believe it. She [see Glossary] is no longer the same, nor is he. He was young, and she was too; she is quite different. Perhaps he would still love her if she were now what she was then.

124. We view things not only from different sides but with different eyes; we're not trying to find them to be alike.

125. Man is naturally credulous, incredulous; timid, bold.

126. Description of man: dependency, desire for independence, need.

127. Man's condition: inconstancy, boredom, unrest.

128. The boredom we feel when we leave the pursuits to which we are attached. A man lives at home with pleasure; then he sees a woman who charms him, or has a good time gambling for five or six days, and *voilà!* how miserable he is if he returns to his former occupation. Nothing is more common than that.

129. Our nature consists in motion; complete immobility is death.

130. Restlessness. If a soldier or labourer or the like

complains about the hardship of his work, assign him the job of doing nothing.

131. Boredom. Nothing is as unbearable for a man as to be completely at rest, with no passions, no business, no diversion, no work. That's when he feels his nothingness, his forlornness, his isolation, his dependence, his weakness, his emptiness. Boredom, gloom, sadness, fretfulness, resentment, despair will swell up from the depth of his soul.

132. It seems to me that Caesar was too old to set about conquering the world to give himself something to do. Such pastimes were good for Augustus or Alexander. They were still young, and thus hard to restrain. But Caesar should have been more mature.

133. The resemblance between two look-alikes makes us laugh when we see them together, though neither of them is funny in itself.

134. Painting that is admired for its resemblance to the originals, which we don't admire—how pointless!

135. The only thing that pleases us is struggle, but not victory. We like to see animals fighting, not the victor ripping into the vanquished. All we wanted was to see the fight end in victory; once that happens, we are glutted. It's like that in games, and in the search for truth. In disputes we like to see the clash of opinions, but to contemplate the truth when it is found?—not a bit! To get any pleasure from truth we have to see it emerging out of the dispute. Similarly with passions: there's pleasure in seeing two contrary passions collide, but when one of them comes out on top it becomes a merely animal episode [*ce n'est plus que brutalité*]. We don't try to get •things; we try to get •the search for things. Likewise in plays: happy scenes that don't arouse fear are worthless; so are extreme and hopeless misery, animal lust, and extreme cruelty.

136. It doesn't take much to console us, because it doesn't take much to distress us.

137. I needn't examine every particular occupation. It will suffice to bring them all in under the heading 'diversion' [see Glossary].

138. [Deleted by Pascal]

139. I sometimes think about distractions that men go in for, the pains and perils they expose themselves to at court or in war, giving rise to so many quarrels, passions, and risky (and often bad) undertakings. I have often concluded that all men's unhappiness comes from a single fact, namely that men can't stay quietly in one room. A man who has enough to live on, if he could enjoy staying at home, wouldn't leave home to go to sea or to besiege a town. The only reason men are willing to pay so much for a commission in the army is that they can't bear to stay in their home towns; and they go looking for conversation and gambling diversions only because they can't find pleasure at home.

But on thinking about this more closely, after finding this cause of all our ills, I have tried to discover the reason for it and concluded that there's a very real reason, namely the natural miserableness of our condition, which is •feeble and •mortal and •so miserable that nothing can comfort us when we think about it close-up.

Think about possible occupations, bringing into the picture every good thing you could possibly have, and you'll see that *being a king* is the finest position in the world. But now imagine a king who has every satisfaction that can reach him, but has no diversions, and allow him to reflect on *what he is*, this feeble happiness won't sustain him. He'll inevitably become prey to forebodings of dangers—of revolutions that *may* happen and of disease and death that inevitably *will*. So there he is, •without any so-called diversions and •more

unhappy than the lowliest of his subjects who plays and diverts himself.

That is why men go after gambling, the company of women, war, and high positions in government. Not that there's in fact any happiness in those; it's not that men think it would be true bliss to win money at cards, or to get the hare that they hunt—they wouldn't take it as a gift! . . . All they want is the bustle that turns their thoughts away from our unhappy human condition.

That is why

- men love noise and stir so much;
- prison is such a horrible torture;
- the pleasure of solitude is incomprehensible.

The greatest source of happiness for a king is that men continually try to divert him and to procure all kinds of pleasures for him. The king is surrounded by people whose only thought is to divert him and stop him from thinking about himself. Though he is a king, thinking about himself makes him miserable.

That's the whole of what men have been able to discover to make themselves happy. Those who come at this in philosophical mode—and who think that men are unreasonable for spending a day chasing a hare that they wouldn't be willing to buy—don't know much about human nature. What protects us from the sight of •death and calamities is not the hare, but the hunt, which turns away our attention from •such things.

[Pyrrhus of Epirus, third century BCE, was engaged in a series of military victories and was asked a series of 'What next?' questions by a friend. The series of answers, in terms of further victories, was end-stopped by Pyrrhus's saying that after his last victory he would rest. His friend asked 'Why not rest *now*?' Now back to Pascal.] The advice given to Pyrrhus, to have right then the *rest* that he was planning to seek with so much work, was highly problematic.

To tell a man to *rest* is to tell him live happily. It's to advise him to be in a state that is perfectly happy and that he can think about at leisure without finding anything in it to distress him. It's to advise him. . . So it is *not* to understand nature!

Men who naturally understand their own condition avoid rest more than anything else. There's nothing they won't do to create disturbances. It's not that they have an instinct that shows them that true happiness is. . .

So we are wrong in blaming them. Their error does not lie in seeking excitement, if they seek it only as a diversion; the evil is that they seek it as if succeeding in their quest would make them genuinely happy. In this respect it is right to call their quest a vain one. In all this, then, both the censurers and the censured fail to understand man's true nature.

When men are criticised for pursuing so ardently something that can't satisfy them, the reply they *ought* to make—the one they *would* make if they thought hard about it—is that all they want is a violent and impetuous occupation to turn their thoughts away from themselves, and *that's* why they select something attractive to charm them into an ardent pursuit. If they gave that answer, it would silence their critics. But they don't make this reply because they don't know themselves. They don't know that what they are looking for is not the quarry but the chase.

Dancing: You have to think about where to put your feet.—A gentleman sincerely believes that hunting is a great and royal sport; but his beater doesn't think so.

A man fancies that if he could get such-and-such a post, from then on he would be happy and relaxed; he has no sense of the insatiable nature of his cupidity [see Glossary]. He thinks he is truly seeking quiet, but actually all he is seeking is excitement.

Men have a secret instinct that drives them to seek

diversion and occupation out in the world; it comes from their bitter sense of their continual miseries. And they have another secret instinct—left over from the greatness of the nature we had at first, before the Fall—which teaches them that happiness is to be found only in •rest and not in •tumult. Out of these two contrary instincts a confused project is formed—hidden out of sight in the depths of their soul—which leads them to *aim at rest through excitement*, and always to think that the satisfaction they haven't yet achieved will come to them if they can overcome their current difficulties and then open the door to rest.

That's how a man spends his life. We seek rest in fighting against difficulties; and when we have conquered these, rest becomes intolerable because in it we think either about the misfortunes we have or about those that threaten us. And even if we saw ourselves as sufficiently sheltered on all sides, boredom would nevertheless exercise its privilege of arising from the depths of the heart where its natural roots are, filling the mind with its poison.

Thus, man is in such a wretched condition that he would be bored, even if he had no cause for boredom; and he is so empty-headed that, although he has a thousand real reasons for boredom, he is diverted by the least thing, such as a cue striking a billiard-ball.

'But what's his objective in all this?' you will ask. The pleasure of boasting to his friends on the next day that he defeated someone at billiards. Others wear themselves out in their studies, so as to show the learned world that they have solved a previously unsolved problem in algebra. Yet others expose themselves to extreme perils—just as foolishly, in my opinion—so as to be able afterwards to boast of having captured a town.

Lastly, others knock themselves out studying all these things, not so as to become wiser but only so as to show that

they know them; and these are the stupidest of the bunch, because they have knowledge along with their stupidity, whereas it's credible that if the others had that knowledge they would stop being stupid.

Here's a man who enjoys his life of daily card-playing for small stakes. Give him each morning the money he could win on that day, on condition he doesn't play: you'll make him miserable. You may say: 'He wants the amusement of playing, not the winnings.' Well, then, make him play for nothing; he won't be enthusiastic about that—he'll be bored. What he is after is not the amusement alone; a languid and passionless amusement will bore him. Getting worked up about it, and tricking himself into thinking that he'll be happy if he wins the amount that he wouldn't accept as payment for not playing—*that's* what he must do if he's to •give himself an object of passion and •get his pursuit of this imagined end to arouse his desire, his anger, his fear; the way children are frightened by a face that they have blackened.

How does it happen that this other man, who lost his only son a few months ago and just this morning was in such distress over lawsuits and quarrels, is no longer giving thought to any of that? Don't be surprised: he is absorbed in looking out for the boar that his dogs have been hunting so eagerly for the last six hours. That's all he needs. However full of sadness a man may be, if you can get him to enter into some diversion for a while, he'll be happy while that lasts. And however happy a man may be, if he isn't diverted and absorbed in some passion or pursuit that keeps boredom at bay, he will soon be discontented and wretched

Without diversion there's no joy; with diversion there's no sadness. And the happiness of highly-placed people consists in their •having a number of underlings to divert them and •being able to maintain this situation.

Bear this in mind. What is it to be superintendent, chancellor, prime minister, but to be in a condition where all day people flock in from all directions to see them, leaving them with no time to think about themselves? And when such a person is in disgrace and is sent back to his country house, he still has his wealth and servants to meet his needs; and yet he is wretched and desolate because no-one prevents him from thinking about himself.

140. [Deleted by Pascal. Its content was already given three paragraphs back ('How does it happen. . .').]

141. Men spend their time in following a ball or a hare; it is the pleasure even of kings.

142. Isn't the royal dignity great enough just in itself to make a king happy by the awareness of what he is? Must *he* be diverted from this thought, like ordinary folk? Making someone happy by diverting him from the thought of his domestic sorrows by filling his thoughts with a concern to learn to dance well—I can easily see this for an ordinary man. But will it be the same with a king? Will *he* be happier engaging in these idle amusements than in contemplating his greatness? And what more satisfactory thing could he have to think about? Wouldn't it lessen his pleasure if he turned from that to thoughts about how to make his steps fit the music, or how to improve his serve, rather than restfully contemplating the majestic glory that surrounds him? Let us test this: let us leave a king all alone to reflect on himself quite at leisure, with no gratification of the senses, with no cares, without society; and we'll see that a king without diversion is a man full of miseries. So this is carefully avoided, and there's never any shortage of people near the persons of kings who see to it that diversion follows business, and who manage all their leisure-time to supply them with delights and games, leaving no blank periods. That is, kings

are surrounded with persons who are wonderfully attentive in ensuring that the king is never alone and in a state to think of himself—knowing that he will be miserable, king though he is, if he thinks about it.

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

143. From childhood on, men are entrusted with the care of their honour, their property, their friends, and even with the property and honour of their friends. They're overwhelmed with business, with the study of languages, and with exercises ·in training for a profession·; and they're given to understand •that they can't be happy unless their health, their honour, their fortune and that of their friends are all in good condition, and •that the absence of anything from the list will make them unhappy. Thus they are given cares and business that push and pull them from break of day. You'll say: 'That's a strange way to make them happy! What could do a better job of making them miserable?' I'll tell you what: relieve them of all these cares! For then they would see themselves: they would reflect on what they are, where they came from, where they are going. . . . That's why after having given them so much business, we advise them to employ any spare time in diversion, in play, and to be always fully occupied.

How flimsy and full of rubbish is the heart of man!

144. I had spent a long time studying the abstract sciences, and was upset by how little opportunity they offered for the exchange of ideas. When I started studying man, I saw that those abstract sciences are not suited to man and that getting into them was taking me further from my own condition than others were who didn't know them. I didn't hold it against others that they knew little of the abstract sciences. But I thought at least that •I would find many

companions in the study of man, and that •it is the true study that is suited to man. I was wrong: even fewer study man than study mathematics. 'People get into other lines of study', ·you may say·, 'because they *don't know how to study man*.' Isn't it rather that this is *not* knowledge that man should have, and that for his happiness it's better for him not to know himself?

145. A single thought occupies us; we can't think of two things at once. This is an advantage for us according to the world [see Glossary], not according to God.

146. Man is obviously made for thinking; that is his whole dignity and his whole business [*métier* = 'trade', 'occupation', 'profession']; and his whole duty is to think as he ought. Now, orderly thought begins with •oneself, •one's Author, and •one's goal.

Well, what does the world think about? Never about this, but about dancing, lute-playing, singing, making verses, horseback skills, etc.; about fighting, becoming king, without thinking about what it is to be a king—or to be a man.

147. We don't settle for the life we have in ourselves and in our own being; we want to live an imagined life in the minds of others, and for this purpose we try to impress. We work unceasingly to prettify and preserve this •imagined existence and neglect the •real one. And if we are calm or generous or trustworthy, we're eager to make this known, so as to attach these virtues to that imagined existence. We care more about being thought to have them than about having them; we wouldn't mind being cowards if that brought us a reputation for courage. A great proof of the nothingness of our being, not being satisfied with the real without the imagined, and often to give up the real in order to have the imagined! Someone who wouldn't die to preserve his honour would be infamous. [Pascal presumably meant: 'Someone

who wouldn't die to preserve his standing in the minds of others would be regarded as infamous.']

148. We're so grandiose that we would like to be known by all the world, even by people who will come after we are dead; and we're so empty that the esteem of five or six neighbours fills our thoughts and satisfies us.

149. We don't care about being admired in the towns we pass through. But when we have to stay for a short time, we do care. How short? A very short time to match our empty and flimsy lives.

150. Vanity is so *anchored* in the human heart that a soldier, a camp servant, a cook, a porter boasts and wants to be admired. Even philosophers want to have admirers; and those who write against vanity want the glory of having written well; and those who read the philosophers want the glory of having read them. Perhaps I who write this want to have the former glory, perhaps those who will read it. . .

151. Admiration spoils everything from infancy onward. 'Ah! How well said!' 'Ah! Well done!' 'What a good boy he is!'

The children in the school associated with the convent of Port-Royal, who don't receive this spur of envy and of glory, end up not caring about anything.

152. Curiosity [see Glossary] is only vanity. Usually we want to know something so that we can talk about it. We wouldn't take a sea voyage just to see the sights if there were no hope of ever telling anyone about them.

153. The desire for the esteem of those we are with. Pride so naturally takes hold of us in the midst of our woes, errors, etc. We would cheerfully lose our life, provided people would talk about it.

Vanity: gaming, hunting, visiting, theatre, false posthumous fame.

154. [Deleted by Pascal]

155. A true friend is a great advantage; even the greatest lord needs one to speak well of him, back him up when he is away. But he should be careful in his choice of friends, because any efforts on behalf of fools—however well they speak of him—will be wasted labour. And they *won't* speak well of him if they find themselves in the minority on the subject of him; having no influence to win over the majority, they will speak ill of him.

156. 'A fierce people for whom there is no life without arms' [quoted in Latin from Livy]. They prefer death to peace; others prefer death to war. . . .

157. Contradiction: regarding our existence as negligible, dying for nothing, hating our existence.

158. The sweetness of glory is so great that we are drawn to everything to which it is attached, even death.

159. Noble deeds are most admirable when they are hidden. When I see some of these in history, they please me greatly. But after all they *weren't* entirely hidden, because they became known. People have done their best to hide them, but those efforts failed because the deeds did make a small appearance in public; and that appearance spoils everything, because what was best in those deeds was the wish to hide them.

160. [An obscure and unconvincing paragraph contrasting *sneezing* with *working for a living*.]

It isn't disgraceful for man to yield to pain, and it is disgraceful to yield to pleasure. You might think:

That's because pain comes to us from outside ourselves, whereas we seek pleasure;

but that is wrong, because it's possible to seek pain, and to yield to it deliberately, without this kind of baseness [i.e. the kind that attaches to yielding to pleasure]. Then what is going on when reason holds it to be glorious to give way under the

stress of pain and disgraceful to give way under the stress of pleasure? It's that pain doesn't tempt and attract us: we voluntarily choose it, and will to make it prevail over us, so that we are in charge of the situation; in this, the man yields to *himself*. But in pleasure he yields to *pleasure*. And glory comes only from mastery and domination; it's slavery that brings shame.

161. Something as obvious as the vanity [see Glossary] of the world is so little known that the statement 'It's foolish to seek greatness' is found to be strange and surprising—amazing!

162. If you want a complete grasp of man's vanity, consider the causes and effects of love. The cause is a *je ne sais quoi* (as Corneille said) and the effects are dreadful. This *je ne sais quoi*, such a little thing that we don't know what it looks like, agitates a whole country, princes, armies, the entire world.

Cleopatra's nose: if it had been shorter, the whole face of the world would have been different.

163. *Vanité.—La cause et les effets de l'amour: Cléopâtre.*

164. Anyone who doesn't see the world's vanity is himself very vain. Indeed, doesn't *everyone* see it except young folk who are absorbed in noise, diversion, and the thought of the future? But if you deprive them of their diversions you'll see them dried up with boredom. That's when they'll feel their nothingness, though without realising that that's what is going on; for it is indeed a miserable thing for a man to be intolerably depressed as soon as he is reduced to thinking about himself and having no diversion.

165. Thoughts. 'In all things I have sought rest' [Ecclesiastes 24:11; Pascal quotes it in Latin]. If our condition were truly happy, we wouldn't need to divert ourselves from thinking about it.

166. *La mort est plus aisée à supporter sans y penser, que la pensée de la mort sans péril.*

167. *Les misères de la vie humaine ont fondé tout cela: comme ils ont vu cela, ils ont pris le divertissement.*

168. Because men can't win against death, misery, ignorance, they have taken it into their heads, in order to be happy, not to think about them.

169. Despite these •miseries, man wants to be happy; that's all he wants to be, and he can't *not* want it. But how will he set about it? To make a good job of it he would have to make himself immortal; but, not being able to do that, he has taken it into his head to prevent himself from thinking about •them.

170. If man were happy, he would be the more happy the less he was diverted, like the saints and God. 'Yes; but isn't it a happy thing to be able to get joy from diversion?' No; because the diversion comes from elsewhere, from outside the man, so it is dependent and therefore liable to be disturbed by a thousand accidents, which bring inevitable griefs.

171. The only thing that consoles us in our miseries is diversion, yet that is itself the greatest of our miseries. It's diversion that principally blocks us from thinking about ourselves and gradually leads to our ruin. Without it we would be bored, and •this boredom would push us to look for a more solid means of escaping from •it. But diversion fills our heads and gradually leads us to our death.

172. We never *stay* in the present. We look ahead to the slowly approaching future, as though wanting to speed it up; or we recall the past, to slow down its retreat. We're •so imprudent that we wander around in times that are not ours, giving no thought to the only one that does belong to us; and •so empty-headed that we dream of times that don't now exist and allow the only time that *does* exist to slip away unexamined. It's because the present is usually painful to us. We keep it out of sight because it troubles us; and if it's

delightful to us we're sorry to see it go. We try to keep hold of it by means of the future, planning to arrange matters that aren't in our power, for a time that we may never reach!

Examine your thoughts and you'll find that they are all about the past and the future. We hardly ever think about the present; and when we do, it's only for guidance in arranging things for the future. The present is never our end [= 'goal']. The past and the present are our means; the future is our end. Thus, we never *live*; we only *hope to live*; and because we are always preparing to be happy, there's no chance of our ever actually being so.

173. They say that eclipses predict misfortune; and so they often do, because misfortunes are so common! If they were said to predict good fortune, they would often be wrong. They [i.e. predictors] associate good fortune only with rare conjunctions of the heavens, so they aren't often wrong. [Pascal's point seems to be: They don't often wrongly predict good fortune because they don't often predict good fortune.]

174. Solomon and Job knew best and spoke best about man's misery; one the happiest of men, the other the unhappiest; experience teaching one the vanity of pleasures, the other the reality of evils.

175. We know ourselves so little that many people think they're on the brink of death when they're in good health, and many think they are well when they are near death and unaware of an approaching fever or an abscess starting to develop.

176. Cromwell was about to ravage all Christendom; the ·English· royal family was ruined and his own was in a position of permanent power, if it weren't for a tiny grain of sand that got into his ureter. Rome itself was going to tremble under him; but because this small piece of gravel formed there, he is dead, his family cast down, all is peaceful, and the king restored.

177. If someone had the friendship of the King of England, the King of Poland, and the Queen of Sweden, would he have thought he had no safe place, anywhere in the world, to shelter in? [Charles I of England was beheaded in 1649; Casimir of Poland was briefly deposed in 1656; Christina of Sweden abdicated in 1654.]

178. *Macrobius: des innocents tués par Hérode.*

179. When Augustus learned that Herod's own son was amongst the infants under two years old whom he caused to be killed, he said that it was better to be Herod's pig than his son.

180. The great and the small have the same misfortunes, the same griefs, the same passions; but one is on the rim of the wheel, and the other near the axle and so less disturbed by the same movements.

181. We're so unfortunate that we can take pleasure in something only on condition that we'll be upset if it turns out badly, as a thousand things can do, and *do* do, every hour. Someone who found the secret of •rejoicing in something good and •not being upset when it turns out badly would have hit the mark. It is perpetual motion. [He means, presumably, that that achievement (in psychotherapy?) is as desirable and as impossible as perpetual motion is in physics.]

182. Someone who in the thick of any bad course of events

- remains hopeful that things will go better,
- is delighted when they do, and
- and isn't equally upset when they don't,

is suspected of being very pleased that things are going badly. He is delighted to find these pretexts for hope, to show himself as concerned and to conceal by his pretended joy the real joy he has at seeing the failure of the affair.

183. We carelessly run over the edge of the cliff, after putting something in front of us to prevent us from seeing it.

Section 3: The need to make the bet

184. A letter to get people to search after God.

And then look for him among the philosophers—pyrrhonians [see Glossary] and dogmatists—who give inquirers a bad time.

185. God's way, always gentle, is to put religion into the mind by reasons and into the heart by grace. But trying to get religion into the mind and heart by force and threats is planting there not religion but terror—*terror rather than religion* [Pascal says this in Latin; it seems not to be a quotation].

186. 'If they were led by terror rather than teaching, this would come across as wicked domination.' [quoted in Latin from Augustine of Hippo]

187. Men despise religion; they hate it and fear that it may be true. To remedy this, what is needed is

- to show that religion is not contrary to reason;
- to get respect for it by showing that it is venerable;
- to make it lovable, so that good men will hope it is true; and
- to prove that it is true.

Venerable, because it knows man so well; lovable because it promises the true good.

188. In every dialogue and discourse we must be able to say to anyone who is offended 'What are you complaining about?'

189. Begin by *pitying* unbelievers; they are wretched enough just by being unbelievers. It would be right to revile them only if that were beneficial; but it does them harm.

190. Pity atheists who are seeking, for aren't they unhappy enough already? Come down hard on those who *boast* of

their atheism. ['atheists who are seeking'? In Pascal's day an 'atheist' might be a believer in the 'wrong' religion.]

191. *Et celui-là se moquera à l'autre? Qui se doit moquer? Et cependant, celui-ci ne se moque pas de l'autre, mais en a pitié.*

192. *Reprocher à Miton de ne pas se remuer, quand Dieu se reprochera.*

193. What will become of men who despise small things and don't believe in greater ones? [Quoted in Latin from Augustine]

194. . . . Before they attack religion, let them at least learn what the religion they attack *is*. If this religion boasted of having a clear view of God, and of possessing it open and unveiled, it would be attacking it to say that we see nothing in the world that shows him as clearly as this. But because it says, on the contrary,

- that men are in darkness and estranged from God,
- that he has hidden himself from their knowledge,
- that he fits the name he gives himself in the Scriptures, 'the hidden God' [quoted in Latin from Isaiah 45:15],

and because it works hard to establish these two things:

- a** that God has set up in the Church visible signs to reveal himself to those who seek him sincerely, and
- b** that he has nevertheless disguised the signs so that only those who seek him with all their heart will find him,

what points can the opponents score when, along with their casual claims to be seeking •the truth, they cry out that nothing reveals •it to them? ·Clearly, *none*· because the darkness that surrounds them, for which they blame the Church, merely serves to confirm **b** one of its teachings without touching **a** the other, and establishes its doctrine rather than pulling it down.

If they wanted to attack it [i.e. religion], they needed to protest that they had made every effort to seek it everywhere, even in what the Church offers for their instruction, but without satisfaction. [. . . to seek *what?* Not God, because the 'it' is *la*, which is feminine. Presumably, then, to seek the truth.] If they took that line, they would indeed be attacking one of religion's claims. But I hope to show here that no reasonable person *could* take that line, and I even venture to say that no-one ever *has* done so. We know well enough how people of this sort 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 priest about the truths of the faith. On that basis they boast of having searched in books and among men! I would say to such people what I often *have* said, namely that this casualness is intolerable. We are not dealing here with the trivial interests of some outsider; the topic is ourselves, and our *all*.

The immortality of the soul matters so much to us, touches us so deeply, that we couldn't be indifferent about the truth of it unless we had lost all feeling. All our actions and thoughts must travel such different paths, depending on whether there are or aren't eternal joys to hope for, that it's impossible to take a single step, with feelings and judgment intact, without being guided by our view of this matter, which ought to be our ultimate topic.

Thus our first interest and our first duty is to enlighten ourselves about this subject, which all our conduct depends on. That's why I divide non-believers into two *very* different categories: •those who do everything they can to inform themselves and •those who live without caring or thinking about it.

I can have only compassion for ·the former group·, those who sincerely lament their doubt, regarding it as the greatest of misfortunes, who spare no effort to escape it, making this

inquiry their principal and most serious occupation.

As for those who

- pass their lives without thinking about this ultimate end of life,
- don't find within themselves the insights that would convince them ·that the soul is immortal·, and who *just for that reason*
- don't bother to look for those insights anywhere else, and
- don't look thoroughly into the question of whether this opinion is •one of those that people receive with credulous simplicity, or rather •one of those which, although obscure in themselves, have a solid unshakable foundation,

I have a very different view of them.

This carelessness about something that concerns themselves, their eternity, their *all*, moves me to anger more than to pity; it astonishes and shocks me; to me it is monstrous. I don't say this out of a pious zeal for spiritual devotion. On the contrary, I think this matter should be taken seriously because of a basic drive of human interest and because of self-love; all that is needed for this is to see what the least enlightened people see.

You don't need a very elevated soul to grasp that

- there's no real and lasting satisfaction to be had *here*;
- that our pleasures are nothing but vanity;
- that our ills are infinite; and
- that death, which threatens us every moment, will a few years hence *certainly* confront us with the horrible necessity of being either annihilated or eternally wretched.

There's nothing more real than this, nothing more terrible. However much we put on airs of courage, *that* is the end awaiting the finest life in the world. Let us reflect on this

and then say whether it isn't unquestionable

- that the only good in this life is the hope of another;
- that we are happy only in proportion as we draw near it; and
- that just as there will be no more woes for those who are completely sure of eternity, so there is no happiness for those who don't have a glimmering of it.

Surely then it is a great evil [see Glossary] to be in this doubt, but least it's an indispensable duty to *seek* when one is in such doubt; so the person who doubts and doesn't seek is utterly unfortunate and utterly wrong. If he is also easy and content, and says and indeed boasts that he is—if this state of disbelief itself is what he's pleased and proud about—words fail me to describe such a wildly foolish creature.

Where can anyone get these attitudes from? What joy can be found in having nothing to look forward to but hopeless misery? What can anyone find to be proud of in being in impenetrable darkness? And how can a reasonable man come up with the following **inference** ?

'I don't know who put me into the world, or what the world is, or what I am. I'm terribly ignorant about everything. I don't know what my body is, or my senses, or my soul, or even the part of me that is thinking these things that I am saying, the part that reflects on everything including itself, and doesn't know itself any more than it knows anything else.

'I see the frightful spaces of the universe that surround me, and I find myself tied to one corner of this vast expanse, without knowing why I am put *here rather than somewhere else*, or why the short time I am given to live through is at *this point rather than some other* in the eternity that stretches before and after me. I see nothing but infinities everywhere, which

surround me as an atom, as a momentary shadow. All I know is that I must die soon; and the thing I know least about is what this inescapable death is.

'Just as I don't know where I come from, so also I don't know where I am going. All I know is that in leaving this world I'll fall for ever into annihilation or into the hands of an angry God, without knowing which of these two states I will be eternally assigned to. Such is my state, full of weakness and uncertainty. And **what I infer from all this** is that I should spend my life without any thought of trying to find out what's going to happen to me. 'If I did', perhaps I might find some resolution to my doubts; but I don't want to take the trouble. . . .; and while scorning those who *do* work at this concern, I will go without foresight or fear to see what the outcome will be of the great event, letting myself be limply carried to my death without knowing what my eternal future state will be.'

A man who **argues** in this fashion—who would want him as a friend? Who would select him as a confidant? Who would look to him for help in difficult times? How indeed could he be *any* use in this life?

It is in fact one of religion's glories to have enemies who are so unreasonable; their opposition to it is so far from threatening religion that it actually serves to establish its truths. For the Christian faith is concerned almost entirely to establish two things: **(a)** the corruption of nature, and **(b)** redemption by Jesus-Christ. Now, I contend that if these men don't prove the truth of **(b)** the redemption by the holiness of their *mœurs* [see Glossary], they at least serve admirably through their unnatural attitudes to show **(a)** the corruption of nature.

Nothing is as important to man as his own state, nothing is as formidable as eternity; so it isn't *natural* for there to

be men who don't care about the loss of their existence or the risk of everlasting suffering. They aren't a bit like that about anything else. They're afraid of the slightest trifles; they foresee them; they feel them. And this man who spends so many days and nights in rage and despair because he has lost a position or imagines that someone has insulted his honour is the very one who *quietly and coolly* knows that death is going to deprive him of everything. It is a monstrous thing to see in one heart at one time •this sensitivity to trifles and •this *strange* insensitivity to the biggest things. It's an incomprehensible enchantment—a supernatural stupor—which indicates an all-powerful force as its cause.

It seems incredible that anyone should be in that state; yet here's someone who boasts of being in it; something in human nature must have turned itself backwards! I have encountered a surprisingly large number of them—or it would be surprising if we didn't know that most of them aren't really like this and are putting on a show. They're folk who have heard it said that it is the fashion to act crazily in this way. They call it 'having shaken off the yoke', and they're trying to imitate it. But it wouldn't be hard to get them to understand how greatly they're letting themselves down by seeking •esteem in that way. That's not the way to get •it, even among

men of the world who take a 'healthy' view of things, and know that the only way to succeed in this life is to *seem* to be honourable, faithful, judicious, and capable of helping a friend,

because men naturally like only what can be useful to them. Well, what advantage do we get from hearing it said of a man that he has 'shaken off the yoke', that he doesn't believe there is a God who monitors our actions, that he considers *himself* to be the sole master of his conduct and the only

person to whom he is answerable? [Pascal surely meant to write: 'What advantage do we expect to get from a man who says that he has' etc.] Does he think he is bringing it about that from now on we'll have complete confidence in him and look to him for consolation, advice, and help in every need of life?

Do they—the counterfeit yoke-shakers—think they have *delighted* us by telling us that they hold our soul to be only a puff of smoky wind, and (what's more) by telling us this in a haughty and self-satisfied tone of voice? Is this a thing to say cheerfully? Isn't it, rather, a thing to say sadly, as the saddest thing in the world?

If they thought about it seriously, they would see that this is such a bad mistake, so contrary to good sense, so opposed to decency, and so far in every way from the good breeding they're trying to display, that they'd be more apt to correct than to corrupt those who were inclined to follow them. Ask them *why* they doubt religion; and their replies will be so feeble and so *low* that they'll convince you of the contrary! As someone once said to some of them: 'If you go on arguing in that way, you really will convert me.' And he was right, for who wouldn't be horrified to see himself sharing opinions with such contemptible people?

Thus those who only feign these opinions must be very unhappy over restraining their natural feelings so as to make themselves the most unreasonable of men! If deep in their hearts they're troubled at not having more light, they should say so openly; there will be no shame in that. The only shame is to have no shame.

- Nothing shows extreme weakness of mind more than not knowing how miserable a godless man is.
- Nothing better indicates a badly disposed heart than not to want the eternal promises to be true.
- Nothing is more cowardly than to act with bravado before God.

They should leave these impieties to those who are ill-born enough to be really capable of them. If they can't be Christians, let them at least be honest men. And let them recognise that only two kinds of people 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 don't know him.

As for those who live without knowing God or seeking him—i.e. unbelievers who aren't feigning anything—they are so far from seeing themselves as worthy of their own care that they aren't worthy of anyone else's care either; and it needs all the charity of the religion they despise not to despise *them* and leave them to their folly. But because this religion requires us always

- to regard them, so long as they are in this life, as capable of being enlightened by grace, and
- to believe that they could quickly become more full of faith than we are, and
- to believe that we, on the other hand, could fall into the blindness that they are in,

we must •do for them what we would want them to do for us if we were in their place, and •call on them to have pity on themselves and take at least some steps in the attempt to find enlightenment. I urge them to give to reading *this* a few of the hours that they otherwise employ so uselessly; whatever distaste they bring to the task, they might learn something, and anyway they won't lose much. As for those who bring to the task perfect sincerity and a real desire to encounter the truth, I hope they'll be satisfied and convinced by the proofs of so divine a religion, which I have collected here and present in something like this order. . .

195. Before going into the proofs of the Christian religion, I have to point out the *wrongness* of men who aren't interested in searching for the truth about something that is so

important to them and touches them so nearly.

Of all their errors, this is certainly the one that most convicts them of folly and blindness, and the one where it's easiest to stop them in their tracks by the first glimmerings of common sense and natural feelings. That's because it can't be doubted •that this life lasts for only a moment; •that the state of death—whatever it consists of—is eternal; and thus •that the directions of all our actions and thoughts must be different depending on the state of that eternity—so different that we can't intelligently and sensitively take a single step that isn't guided by our view about that.

There is nothing more obvious than this; so it's obvious that according to the principles of reason the conduct of men who don't live like that is wholly unreasonable. That's what we should think about those who •live without thought of that ultimate end of life, who •let themselves be guided by their inclinations and pleasures without thinking or caring about what they are doing, and who •think only of making themselves happy for the moment—as though they could annihilate eternity by not thinking about it.

Yet this eternity exists; and inevitably death—their doorway into it, which threatens them every hour—will quite soon confront them with the dreadful necessity of being non-existent for ever or unhappy for ever, without knowing which of these eternities lies in wait for them.

The upshot of this doubt is terrible. The people I'm talking about are in peril of eternal misery, and they don't bother to investigate whether this is •one of those opinions that credulous people accept too easily •or one of those which, though obscure in themselves, have a firm though hidden foundation. They neglect this question as though it weren't worth the trouble! Thus they don't know whether there's truth or falsity in the matter, or whether there's strength or weakness in the proofs. Having the proofs before their eyes,

they refuse to look at them; they're willing to wait for death to tell them whether the proofs are any good; and in that ignorance they opt for the way of life that involves everything needed to suffer this misfortune of eternal misery if it exists. And they are very content to be in this state—they announce it and indeed boast of it. Can we take the importance of this subject *seriously* without being horrified by this wild conduct?

This resting in ignorance is a monstrous thing, and those who live their lives in it should be made to feel its wildness and stupidity by having it shown to them, so that they may be stopped in their tracks by the sight of their folly. For when men choose to live in such ignorance of what they are, and without seeking enlightenment, this is how they reason: 'I don't know', they say. . .

[The tailing-off incompleteness of that item is in the original; the next item has nothing to do with it. In the Sellier edition, based on groupings and orderings found in Pascal's papers, what immediately follows is the item that is 229 in this version, which makes it look as though 229 is what 'they say'. But that can't be right. The 'they' discussed in 195 are complacent and even boastful about their ignorance; the speaker in 229 is aching to know the truth about religion.—This note is a warning (others could be given) against assuming that Sellier's procedure would make more coherent sense than Brunschvicg's does.]

196. These people are heartless. One wouldn't want them as friends.

197. Insensitivity to things that matter to us, treating them as negligible, and becoming insensitive to what matters to us *most*.

198. Man's sensitivity to trifles, and his insensitivity to great things—the sign of a strange inversion!

199. Imagine this:

A number of men are in chains, all condemned to

death; each day some are slaughtered while the others watch; those who remain see their own condition in that of their fellows; they look at each other sadly, hopelessly, waiting for their turn.

That is a picture of the human condition.

200. A man is in a dungeon; he doesn't know whether his death-sentence has been pronounced, and he has only one hour to find out; but if he knew that it had been pronounced, this hour would be enough to get it revoked. It would be *unnatural* for him to spend that hour playing cards. So it's beyond nature for man to etc. This is making the hand of God *heavy*.

Thus God is proved not only by the zeal of those who seek him but also by the blindness of those who don't.

201. All the objections of both lots go only against themselves, not against religion. Everything that unbelievers say. . .

202. [Deleted by Pascal]

203. 'Fascination with trivialities' [quoted in Latin from the apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*]. So as not to be harmed by passion, let us act as if we had only eight hours to live.

204. If we ought to devote eight days of our life, we ought to devote a hundred years.

205. When I consider

- how short my life is, swallowed up in the eternity before and after it, and
- the smallness of the space that I occupy, and even of the space I can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces that I know nothing of and that know nothing of me,

I'm frightened and astonished at being *here* rather than *there*; for there's no reason why here rather than there, why

now rather than then. Who put me here? Who assigned this place and time to me?

206. The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me.

207. How many kingdoms there are that know nothing of us!

208. Why is my knowledge limited? Why my height? Why my life to a hundred years rather than a thousand? What's nature's reason for setting those limits rather than others in the infinity of those it could choose from, with no more reason to choose any one rather than any other, when none is more tempting than any other?

209. Does your master's loving and favouring you make you less a slave? You are indeed well off, slave—your master favours you. Soon he will beat you. [In this item, 'you' translates *tu*, which is more informal or affectionate or condescending than *vous*. This is the only occurrence of *tu* in this work, except in quotations.]

210. The last act is bloody, however agreeable the rest of the play is. At the end earth is thrown on the person's head, and that's it—for ever.

211. What a comic figure we cut, relying on the society of our fellow-men! Wretched like us, powerless like us, *they* won't help us; each of us will die alone. So we should act as though we were alone—and if we were, would we build grandiose houses etc.? We should seek the truth without hesitation; and refusing it would show that we value men's esteem more than the search for truth.

212. It's a horrible thing to feel everything we possess slipping away.

213. Between us and hell or heaven there is only our intervening life, which is the frailest thing in the world.

214. *Que la présomption soi jointe à la nécessité, c'est une extrême injustice.*

215. Fear death when you aren't in danger, not when you are; for one must be a man.

216. The only thing to be afraid of is sudden death; that's why the great keep confessors in their households.

217. An heir finds the title-deeds of his house. Will he say 'Perhaps they are forged' and not bother to examine them?

218. Dungeon. I approve of not examining the opinion of Copernicus; but this. . . !

It's important to our whole life to know whether the soul is mortal or immortal.

219. It's beyond doubt that the mortality or immortality of the soul must make all the difference in morality. Yet philosophers have developed their theories of morality without bringing this in. They *think* just to pass the time.

Plato, to incline to Christianity.

220. The falsity of philosophers who didn't discuss the immortality of the soul. The falsity of their dilemma in Montaigne. [Montaigne writes of philosophers who say: 'If the soul is mortal it will be without pain; if it is immortal it will go on improving.']

221. Atheists should say things that are perfectly clear, and it is *not* perfectly clear that the soul is material.

222. Atheists. What reason have they for saying that we can't rise from the dead? Which is more difficult—

- to be born or to be resuscitated?
- for something that has never happened to happen, or for something that has happened to happen again?
- to come [*venir*] into existence or to return [*revenir*] to it?

One seems easy because it happens so often; we don't see the other happening, so we think it is impossible. The thinking of the man in the street!

Why can't a virgin bear a child? Doesn't a hen lay eggs without a cock? . . . Who tells us that the hen can't form the germ as well as the cock?

223. What do they have to say against resurrection, and against virgin birth? Which is more difficult, to •produce a man or an animal or to •reproduce it? If they had never seen any sort of animal, could they have guessed whether animals were produced without having anything to do with one another?

224. How I hate these stupidities of not believing in the Eucharist [see Glossary], etc.! If the Gospel is true, if Jesus-Christ is God, what's the problem?

225. Atheism shows strength of mind, but only to a certain degree. [Ariew has a note on this, which is also relevant to the next item: 'Another word for atheist. . . would be *esprit fort*; thus, strength of mind, or *force d'esprit*, is a play on words.']

226. Infidels, who profess to follow reason, ought to be exceedingly strong [*forts*] in reason. What do they say, then? 'Don't we see that the lower animals live and die like men, and that Moslems live and die like Christians? They have their ceremonies, their prophets, their doctors, their saints, their priests, like us', and so on.

Is this contrary to Scripture? Doesn't it say all this?

If you don't care much about knowing the truth, that's enough of it to leave you at peace. But if you want with all your heart to know it, that's not enough; look at it in detail. What I have said would be sufficient for a question in philosophy; but here, where the topic concerns every. . .

And yet, after a trifling reflection of this kind, they'll go on with their thinking as a pastime, etc.

Qu'on s'informe de cette religion même si elle ne rend pas raison de cette obscurité; peut-être qu'elle nous l'apprendra.

227. 'What ought I to do? All I see is darkness everywhere. Will I believe I am nothing? Will I believe I am God?'

228. Objection of atheists: 'But we have no light.'

[This next paragraph presumably has to be read as not by Pascal but by a certain kind of unbeliever. The sentence following it may be a response to 'if I saw the signs of a Creator everywhere, I would remain peacefully in the faith'.]

229. This is what I see and what troubles me. I look in every direction and see nothing but darkness everywhere. Everything that nature offers me is a subject for doubt and disquiet. If I saw nothing in nature pointing to a Divinity, I would come to a negative conclusion; if I saw the signs of a Creator everywhere, I would remain peacefully in the faith. But, seeing too much to deny and too little to be sure, I'm in a pitiful state in which I have a hundred times wished that nature, if a God is running it, would unambiguously testify to him, and that if the signs of him that it gives are deceptive it would suppress them altogether. I wish that nature would say everything or say nothing, so that I might see which way to go. In my present state I don't know what I am or what I ought to do. My heart inclines wholly to know where the true good is, so as to follow it; no price would be too high for me to pay for eternity.

I envy those whom I see living in the faith with such carelessness, making such a bad use of a gift that it seems to me I would use very differently.

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

231. Do you think it's impossible for God to be infinite yet have no parts? 'Yes.' Well, let me show you an infinite

thing that is indivisible, ·i.e. does not have parts·. It's a point moving everywhere with an infinite velocity; for it—this one point—is in all places ·and is therefore infinite· and is entirely in every place ·and is therefore indivisible, because if it had parts one of its parts would be in some place that didn't contain the whole thing·.

Let this effect of nature, which you previously thought impossible, show you that there may be others that you still don't know about. Don't infer from these beginner's lessons ·I'm giving you· that there's nothing more for you to learn. What you should infer is that there's an infinity of things for you to learn.

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

[This next long item, which ends on page 41, presents the famous **Pascal's wager**, with its famous heading *Infini. Rien.*]

233. Infinite. Nothing. Our soul is thrown into the ·world of· body, where it finds number, time, dimensions. It reasons about this, and calls it *nature, necessity*, and can't believe in anything else.

Joining unity to infinity doesn't increase it, any more than adding one foot to an infinite line lengthens it. In the presence of the infinite, the finite is annihilated and becomes a pure nothing. That's what happens to our spirit in the presence of God, and to our justice in the presence of divine justice.

The disproportion between our justice and God's is not as great as that between unity and infinity.

God's justice must be vast, like his mercy [see Glossary]; ·but· justice for •the damned is less vast, and ought to be less of a jolt to us, than mercy for •the chosen.

We know that there is an infinite, and we don't know what

its nature is. A comparable case:

We know it to be false that numbers are finite, and that therefore it's true that there is an infinity in number. [That is faithful to the French—*il y a un infini en nombre*—but Pascal goes on as though he had said 'there is an infinite number'.] But we don't know what it is. It's false that it is even, and it's false that it is odd, because adding *one* to it doesn't alter it in any way. Yet it is a number, and every number is odd or even (this is obviously true of every finite number).

So one might well know that there's a God without knowing what he is [or 'what it is'—French doesn't distinguish these. From now on the personal pronoun will be used.]

Isn't there one substantial truth, given that there are so many *true things* that are not *the truth* itself?

We know, then, that *the finite* exists, and know what its nature is, because we are finite and extended as it is. We know that *the infinite* exists (because it has extension like us) but we don't know what its nature is (because it doesn't have limits as we do). But we don't know that God exists or what God's nature is, because God has neither extension nor limits.

But by faith we know God's existence; in glory we *will* know his nature. And I have already shown that it's possible to know the existence of a thing without knowing its nature.

Let us now speak according to ·our· natural lights, ·setting faith aside·.

If there is a God, he is infinitely incomprehensible ·by us· because, having neither parts nor limits, he has no relation to us. So we are incapable of knowing what he is or whether he exists. This being so, who will venture to undertake an answer to this question? Not we, who have no relation to him.

So who will blame Christians—who preach a religion for

which they can't give reasons—for not being able to justify their belief by giving reasons for it? When they proclaim it to the world they declare that it is a foolishness [1 Corinthians 1:21], and then you complain that they don't prove it! If they proved it, they wouldn't be true to their own preaching; it is in *not* having proofs that they show their good sense.

'Yes, but although this excuses those who preach such a religion, clearing them from blame for presenting it without reasons, it doesn't excuse them for having such a religion in the first place.'

Let us look into this, starting with 'God is, or he is not'. Which side will we favour? Reason can't settle anything here: there's an infinite chaos separating us from the answer. At the extremity of this infinite distance a game is being played—heads or tails! which will you bet on? Reason won't let you make either bet; it won't give you a basis for either.

Those who have made a choice—don't blame them for error, because you know nothing about it.

'No, but I'm blaming them not for making *this* choice but for making *a* choice. He who chooses heads and he who chooses tails are equally in error. The right course of action is not to place any bet.' Yes; but you *must* bet; it isn't optional. You are committed. Which will you choose, then? Let us see.

Since you must choose, let us see how each option connects with your interests. You have

- two things to lose—(1) the true and (2) the good; and
- two things to stake—(3) your reason and (4) your will, your knowledge and your happiness;

and your nature has

- two things to shun—(5) error and (6) misery.

Neither bet will offend your reason more than the other, since you *have to* choose. That settles (3), but what about (4) your happiness? Let us see what gains and losses are at stake

in wagering that God does exist. Well, if you win, you win everything; if you lose, you lose nothing. So jump to it: bet that God exists!

'Well done! Yes, I must wager; but perhaps I'll wager too much.'

Let's see. When **the odds against winning are fifty-fifty**, if this were the situation:

by staking one lifetime you stand to gain two lifetimes if you win,

that's a bet that you **could** take without being convicted of irrationality. But if it were this:

by staking one lifetime you stand to gain three lifetimes if you win,

that's a bet that you **should** take (since don't have the option of not betting at all). It would be imprudent—and in that sense irrational—not to chance your life to gain three in a game where there's an equal risk of loss and gain.

[The next paragraph departs considerably from what Pascal wrote: his version is excessively hard to follow; and it seems to be logically and grammatically defective in several ways. The present version is in the spirit of what he wrote, and fits well enough with the rest. The original French and a conservative translation of it are given on page 49.]

But in the bet we are discussing, we don't know that the chances are equal. Then let's suppose that **the odds against winning are infinity-to-one**. Even then, if the situation is that

by staking your one lifetime you stand to gain an infinite and infinitely happy life if you win,

this again is a bet that you could make without being guilty of irrationality. (It would be irrational to place an infinite stake against a possible infinite gain, with only one chance in infinity of winning. But in the situation we are considering here, the stake is *not* infinite—it is merely the earthly life of one human being.) And there is no reason to suppose that the odds are infinity-to-one. What we should work with is

the thesis that **the odds against winning are n-to-one where n is unknown but finite**. In that case, the situation where

by staking your one lifetime you stand to gain an infinite and infinitely happy life if you win,

it would be stupidly irrational of you not to place the bet. With a finite stake, an infinite possible gain, and a merely finite chance of losing, there's nothing more to be weighed or calculated; you should just make the bet. If you don't, you'll be renouncing reason to preserve your life, instead of risking your life for an infinite gain that is as likely to happen as the loss, which is after all a loss of *nothingness*.

It's no use your saying:

·If I make this bet·, it's uncertain that I'll win, and it is certain that I'll risk something; and the infinite distance between •the certainty of what is staked and •the uncertainty of what will be gained equals ·the distance between· the finite good that I am certainly **staking** and the uncertain infinite ·**gain**·. [That is: With S finite in size and G infinite in size, but S infinite in certainty and G finite in certainty, the two cancel through; there's no case here for saying that I *ought* to make this bet.]

That is just wrong. Every bet stakes a certainty to gain an uncertainty; someone who stakes a finite certainty to gain a finite uncertainty isn't automatically convicted of being unreasonable, ·which he would be if the above indented passage were right·. There isn't an infinite distance between the certainty staked and the uncertainty of the gain—that's just false. What is true is that there is an infinity between the certainty of gain and the certainty of loss. But the *uncertainty of winning* is proportioned to the certainty of the stake according to the proportion of the chances of gain and loss. So if there are as many chances on one side as on the other, it's an even bet; and then—far from there being 'an infinite distance between the certainty of the stake and the

uncertainty of the gain'—they are *equal*! So there's infinite force in my proposition:

·One *ought* to stake S· when S is finite, the gain from winning is infinite, and there are equal risks of gain and of loss.

This is demonstrable; and if men are capable of any truths, this is one.

'I confess it, I admit it. But, still, isn't there any way to see the faces of the cards?' Yes, Scripture and the rest, etc.

'Yes, but my hands are tied and my mouth closed; I am forced to bet, and am not free. The pressure is still on me, and I'm so made that I *can't* believe. So what do you want me to do?'

That is true. But at least take in that your inability to believe comes from your passions. ·That must be its source·, because reason brings you to belief and yet you can't believe. Work on it, then, to convince yourself, not •by strengthening the proofs of God but •by weakening your passions. You want to achieve faith and don't know the way to it; you want to cure yourself of unbelief and are asking for the remedy for it. Learn from those who have had their hands tied, like you, and who now stake everything they have. These are people who know the route that you want to follow, and are cured of an illness that you want to be cured of. Follow their lead: they acted *as if* they believed, taking holy water, having masses said, and so on. Even this will naturally make you believe, and will make you stupid. [Could Pascal really have meant to say that? Well, it is what his words mean: *et vous abêtira*. Ariew translates the sentence thus: 'This will make you believe naturally and mechanically.' He explains: 'Pascal's word is *abêtira*—literally, will make you more like the beasts. Man is in part a beast or a machine, and one needs to allow that part its proper function: that is, one needs to act dispassionately or mechanically.' This is certainly less jarring and bewildering. What Ariew calls the 'literal' meaning of the verb *abêtira* is

based on the word's coming from the noun *bête* = 'beast'. Dictionaries don't agree that that's what the word means; but Ariew's reading does rescue us from an embarrassment, as well as providing an explanation for most of Pascal's uses of 'the machine' [see Glossary].]

'But that's what I am afraid of.' Why? What do you have to lose?

But to show you that this leads you there. This will lessen the passions that are your stumbling-blocks.

* * * *

The end of this discourse. Well, now, what harm will it do you to make this bet? You will be faithful, honest, humble, grateful, generous, a sincere friend, truthful. Certainly you won't be awash in poisonous pleasures—in glory, in luxury—but won't you have others? I tell you, you'll be a winner in this life: at each step you take along this road, you'll see so much certainty of gain and so much *nothingness* in what you are risking that you'll eventually realise that you have wagered a *nothing* against the certainty of an infinite gain.

'Ah! This discourse transports me, charms me, etc.'

If this discourse pleases you and seems to have force, know that its author is a man who has knelt, both before and after it, in prayer to the infinite and indivisible being before whom he lays all he has, praying that all that *you* have may also be laid before him for •your good and for •his glory, so that power may harmonise with this lowliness.

234. If it's wrong to act on anything but a certainty, then we shouldn't do anything for religion, for it is not certain. But we do things on the basis of uncertainty—sea-voyages, battles! ·If it were wrong to etc.·, then it would be wrong for us to do anything at all, for nothing is certain. And there's more certainty in religion than there is that the sun will rise

tomorrow; for it is not certain that it will, and it's certainly *possible* that it won't; and we can't say that about religion. It's not certain that religion is ·true·, but who will dare to say that it's certainly possible that it isn't?

Now, when we work for tomorrow, and ·thus· for something uncertain, we are acting reasonably; for we ought to work for what is uncertain, according to the doctrine of chance that was demonstrated ·above·.

Saint Augustine saw that at sea, in battles etc. we work for an uncertainty; but he didn't see the doctrine of chance which proves that we should do so. Montaigne saw that we are shocked by a mind that lurches around, and that habit is all-powerful; but he didn't see the reason for this effect.

All these people saw the effects, but didn't see the causes. They relate to those who have discovered the causes in the way that people who have only *eyes* relate to those who ·also· have *intellect*. That is because the effects are perceptible by the senses whereas the causes are visible only to the intellect. And although these effects are seen by intellect, *this* intellect relates to the intellect that sees causes in the way that the bodily senses relate to intellect.

235. *Rem viderunt, causam non viderunt.*

236. According to the doctrine of chance, you ought to take trouble to search for the truth; for if you die without worshipping the true cause, you are lost. You say: 'But if he had wanted me to worship him, he would have left me signs of this.' He *has* done so, but you neglect them. So look for them; it's well worth it.

237. Chances. How we live in the world should depend on whether we assume that

- (1) we can always remain in the world,
- (2) we certainly won't be here for long, and it's not certain that we'll be here for one more hour.

Of these, **(2)** is the human condition.

238. *Que me permettez-vous enfin (car dix ans est le parti) sinon dix ans d'amour-propre, à bien essayer de plaire sans réussir, outre les peines certaines?*

239. Objection. 'Those who hope for salvation are happy in that, but they have as a counter-weight the fear of hell.'

Reply. Who has more reason to fear hell: someone who doesn't know whether there is a hell and is certain of damnation if there is, or someone who is certain that there is a hell and hopes to be saved if there is?

240. They say: 'I would soon have given up pleasure if I'd had faith.' And I tell them: 'You would soon have had faith if you had given up pleasure.' Now, it's for you to make a start. I would give you faith if I could, but I can't, so I can't test the truth of what you say. But you *can* give up pleasure, and test whether what I say is true.

241. *J'aurais bien plus de peur de me tromper, et de trouver que la religion chrétienne soit vraie, que non pas de me tromper en la croyant vraie.*

Section 4: The routes to belief

242. Preface to the second part. Talk about those who have discussed this matter.

I'm astonished by how boldly these people undertake to speak of God.

In addressing their argument to unbelievers, their opening move is to prove divinity from the works of nature. I wouldn't be surprised by this if they were speaking to believers; for it's certain that those who have the faith alive in their hearts see at once that everything that exists is the work of the God they worship. But they are trying to rekindle the light in hearts in which it is extinguished; and these folk who are without faith and without grace, if they try by their own best lights to find in nature something that can bring them to this knowledge of God, will find only darkness and shadows. If you

- tell them that they have only to look at the smallest things around them, and they'll see God revealed, or
- talk about the course of the moon and planets, and claim that this is a complete proof of this great and

important matter, you'll be giving them reason to think that the proofs of our religion are very weak. And both reason and experience tell me that nothing is more apt to arouse their contempt.

Scripture doesn't talk about God in that way, and it has a better knowledge than we do of matters relating to God. What *it* says is that God is a hidden God, and that ever since nature went bad, he has left men with a blindness that they can't escape except through Jesus-Christ, without whom all communion with God is cut off. 'No-one knows the Father except the Son and any to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.' [Matthew 11:27, quoted in Latin]

That is what Scripture is telling us when it says—so often—that those who seek God find him. It's not talking about light 'like the noonday sun': we don't say that those who seek the noonday sun or water in the sea will *find* them! So the evidence of God can't be of this blazingly obvious nature. In one place it says: 'You are indeed a hidden God!' [Isaiah 45:15]

243. It's a striking fact that no biblical writer has ever made use of nature to prove God. They all try to make us believe in him. David, Solomon, and the rest have never said 'There is no vacuum, therefore there is a God!' They must have been abler than the ablest people who came after them, all of whom *have* argued in that way. That is well worth thinking about.

244. 'What? Don't you yourself say that the heavens and birds prove God?' No. 'And doesn't your religion say so?' No. For although it is true, in a sense, for some souls to whom God gives this light, it is false for most.

245. There are three routes to belief: •reason, •custom, •inspiration. The Christian religion—the only religion that has reason—doesn't acknowledge as its true children those who believe without inspiration. It doesn't exclude reason and custom—quite the contrary. You must open your mind to •reasoned· proofs, and settle them in your mind by •custom; but you must also offer yourself humbly to •inspiration, which is the only thing that can produce a true and saving effect. '... lest the cross of Christ should have no effect.' [quoted in Latin from 1 Corinthians 1:17]

246. Order. After the letter 'that one should search for God', put the letter 'to remove obstacles, which is the argument of the machine', to prepare the machine [see Glossary], to 'search by reason'.

247. A letter of exhortation to a friend, aiming to get him to search. And he will reply 'But what's the use of searching? Nothing turns up.' Then reply to him 'Don't despair'. And he'll answer that he would be glad to find some light, but that according to this very religion if he believed it, that won't be any use to him, and that therefore he prefers not to search. Answer to that: 'The machine.'

248. A letter indicating the use of proofs. By the machine.

Faith is different from proof; one is human, the other is a gift of God. 'The righteous live through faith' [quoted in Latin from Romans 1:17]. It's this faith that God himself puts into the heart. Proof is often its instrument, but this faith is in the heart ·not the head·, and makes us say not *scio* ['I know'] but *credo* ['I believe'].

249. Putting one's hope in rituals—that's superstition. Refusing to perform rituals—that is pride.

250. To get anything from God we must combine the external with the internal: we must kneel, pray with the lips, etc., so that the proud man who wouldn't submit to God may now submit to the creature. To expect anything from these externals is superstition; to be unwilling to combine them with the internal is pride.

251. Other religions, such as the pagan ones, are more suited to the common people because they consist in externals; but they aren't suited to learned people. A purely intellectual religion would fit *them* better, but it wouldn't do anything for the ·common· people. The Christian religion is the only one that fits everyone, because it combines external and internal elements. It raises the populace to the internal, and brings the proud down to the external. It isn't complete without both of those: the populace must understand the spirit [*esprit*] of the letter, and the learned must submit their mind [*esprit*] to the letter.

252. ... For we mustn't misunderstand ourselves; we are as much automata as minds; and that's why demonstration isn't the only the instrument by which conviction is achieved. How few things are demonstrated! Proofs convince only the mind. Our strongest and most believed proofs come from custom: it draws the automaton, which gets the mind to follow along without thinking about it. Who has *demonstrated* that the sun will rise tomorrow and that we

will die? Yet what is more believed? So it's custom that persuades us of it; it's custom that makes so many men Christians; custom that makes Moslems, pagans, artisans, soldiers, etc. . . . And one more role for custom: once our mind has seen where the truth is, we need custom to keep us filled by—drenched in—the belief that keeps slipping away. Always to have proofs ready is too much trouble. We need an easier way of retaining belief, namely that of custom. Without violence, without art, without argument, custom makes us believe things and bends all our powers to this belief, so that our soul falls into it naturally. It's not enough to believe only by force of conviction if the automaton is inclined to believe the contrary. Both our working parts must be made to believe—the mind by reasons that it needs to see only once in a lifetime, and the automaton by custom and by not allowing it to lean the other way. . . .

Reason acts slowly, looking from so many angles, using so many principles which it must always have present that it keeps falling asleep or drifting off-course because it *doesn't* have all its principles present. Feeling [*sentiment*] doesn't behave like that: it acts in an instant, and is always ready to act. So we must surround our faith with feelings; otherwise it will be always vacillating.

253. Two excesses: excluding reason, admitting only reason.

254. It's not unusual to have to reproach people for being too docile [= 'too easy to teach']. It's a natural vice like incredulity, and as harmful. Superstition.

255. Piety is different from superstition.

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

Heretics reproach us for this superstitious submission—thus doing what they reproach us for doing. . . .

Impiety—not believing in the Eucharist [see Glossary] because it isn't seen.

Superstition de croire des propositions. Foi, etc.

256. There aren't many true Christians; I'm saying this even as regards faith; if you go by conduct as well as faith, there are even fewer. There are many who believe in a superstitious way. There are many who believe because they are irresponsible in religious matters. [Pascal wrote that there are many who *don't* believe because etc., but this must have been a slip. His intended topic is clearly *people who are superficially Christian* but aren't 'true Christians'.] There aren't many between the two.

I don't count as 'not true Christians' those who are truly pious in their *mœurs* or those who believe from a feeling in their heart.

257. There are only three kinds of people:

- those who serve God, having found him;
- those who are seeking him but haven't found him;
- those who live without seeking him or finding him.

The first are reasonable and happy, the last are foolish and unhappy; those between are unhappy and reasonable.

258. *Unusquisque sibi Deum fingit. Le dégoût.*

259. Ordinary people have the power to *not think* about anything they don't want to think about. 'Don't think about the passages concerning the Messiah', said the Jew to his son. And our Christian people often do the same thing. That's how false religions—and even the true one—are preserved for many people.

Some people don't have this power to prevent themselves from thinking, and who think all the more if they are forbidden to. They abandon false religions—and even the true one if they don't find solid arguments.

260. *Ils se cachent dans la presse, et appellent le nombre à leur secours. Tumulte.*

Authority. So far from making it a rule to believe a thing because you have heard it, you shouldn't believe anything

without getting into the frame of mind of someone who has never heard it.

What should make you believe is your assent to yourself, and the constant voice of your reason, not the voice of others.

Le croire est si important!

Cent contradictions seraient vraies.

If antiquity were the rule of belief, would the ancients then not have a rule?

If general consent were the rule of truth, what would become of the truth if all mankind perished?

Fausse humilité, orgueil.

Raise the curtain.

It's no use struggling, if you *have to* believe or deny or doubt.

Then won't we have any rule?

We judge that animals do well what they do.

Won't there be a rule for judging men?

Denying, believing, doubting are to men what running is to horses.

Punition de ceux qui pèchent, erreur.

261. Those who don't love the truth offer the pretext that it is disputed, and that many deny it. So their error comes only from their not loving the truth or not loving charity, and so they are not excused.

262. *Superstition, et concupiscence.*

Scrupules, désirs mauvais.

Bad fear—not the one that comes from believing in God, but the one that comes from not being sure whether he exists. Good fear comes from faith; false fear comes from doubt. Good fear is joined to hope, because it is born of faith and men have hope in the God they believe in. Bad fear is joined to despair, because men fear the God they have no faith in. One lot fear to lose him; the others fear to find him.

263. 'A miracle'—someone says—'would strengthen my faith.' He says this when he does not see one.

Reasons, seen from afar, appear to limit our view; but when we come up to them our view starts getting wider. Nothing stops our mind from chattering along. 'There's no rule'—we say—'that doesn't have some exceptions, no truth so general that it doesn't fail somewhere.' If it doesn't hold absolutely universally, that clears the way for us to bring the notion of *exceptions* to bear on our present topic, saying 'This isn't always true; so there are cases where it isn't.' Then all we have to do is to show that this is one of them; and we'll have to be very clumsy or very unlucky not to succeed with that.

264. We aren't bored by eating and sleeping every day; we *would* get bored with them if hunger and sleepiness didn't recur; but they do. In the same way, spiritual things bore us unless we are hungry for them. Hunger after righteousness, the eighth beatitude. [see Mathew 5:5]

265. Faith says well things that the senses don't say at all, but it doesn't contradict what the senses see. It is above, not against, the senses.

266. How many stars telescopes have revealed to us that didn't exist for our philosophers of old! Holy Scripture was openly tackled on the number of stars: 'There are only 1022 stars; we know this.' [Ptolemy's catalogue lists that many stars. The Bible implies that there are more than that (Genesis 15:5 and elsewhere).]

'There are plants on the earth; we see them—we wouldn't see them from the moon—and on the plants there are filaments, and in these filaments are small animals; but after that no more.' You presumptuous man!

'Mixtures are composed of elements, and the elements are not.' You presumptuous man! . . .

'We mustn't say something exists if we don't see it.' So we must talk like the others, but not think like them.

267. Reason's final step is to recognise that there's an infinity of things that are beyond it. It's feeble if it doesn't get that far.

But if natural things are beyond it, what are we to say of supernatural things?

268. We must know where to doubt, where to feel certain, where to submit. Someone who gets any of these wrong doesn't understand the power of reason. There *are* people who get them wrong by

- affirming everything as demonstrative, because they don't know what demonstration is; or by
- doubting everything, because they don't know where they should submit; or by
- submitting in everything, because they don't know where they should judge.

269. Submission and the use of reason, which is what true Christianity consists in.

270. Saint Augustine: reason would never submit if it didn't judge that sometimes it *ought* to submit.

So it's right for it to submit when it judges that it ought to submit.

271. Wisdom sends us back to childhood. 'Unless you become like little children' [quoted in Latin from Matthew 18:3].

272. Nothing conforms to reason as well as this disavowal of reason.

273. If we submit everything to reason, our religion won't contain anything mysterious and supernatural. If we offend the principles of reason, our religion will be absurd and ridiculous.

274. All our reasoning comes down to *giving in to feeling* [sentiment].

But fancy [see Glossary] is like feeling though opposed to it; so that we can't distinguish between these contraries. One person says that my feeling is fancy, another that his fancy is feeling. We need a rule. Reason is proposed, but it can be stretched in every direction; so there is no rule.

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

276. M. de Roannez said: 'Reasons come to me afterwards; at first a thing pleases or shocks me without my knowing why; and I discover later why it shocked me.' But I believe not that it shocked him for the reasons that were found afterwards, but that these reasons were found only because it shocked him.

277. The heart has its reasons, which reason doesn't know; we know this in a thousand things. I say that the heart—if it works at it—naturally loves the universal being, and also naturally loves itself; and it hardens itself against one or the other as it chooses. You have rejected the one and kept the other. Is it through *reason* that you love yourself?

278. It's the heart that feels God, not reason. That's what faith is—God felt by the heart, not by reason.

279. Faith is a gift of God; don't believe that we've been saying that it's a gift of reasoning. Other religions don't say that about *their* faith. They present reasoning only as a way of arriving at their faith (though it doesn't in fact lead there).

280. It's such a long way from knowing God to loving him!

281. Heart, instinct, principles.

282. We know truth, not only through reason but also through the heart; and it's through the heart that we know first principles. Reason, which has no part in bringing us to first principles, tries in vain to fight them. The pyrrhonians,

whose whole project is to challenge first principles by reason, are getting nowhere. We know that we aren't dreaming, and our **inability** to prove it by reason shows only •the weakness of our reason and not—as they claim—•the uncertainty of all our knowledge. For the knowledge of first principles—such as that *there are such things as space, time, motions, numbers*—is as sure as any of the items of knowledge [see Glossary] we get from reasoning. And reason must •trust these items of knowledge from the heart and from instinct, and •base its whole procedure on them. (The heart detects that space has three dimensions and that there are infinitely many numbers; and reason then shows that there are no two square numbers one of which is double the other. Principles are sensed ·or intuited·, propositions are inferred, and all this goes through with certainty, though in different ways.) For reason to say

‘I won't accept any of the heart's first principles until the heart proves them’

would be as useless and absurd as it would be for the heart to say

‘I won't accept any demonstrated propositions until reason has enabled me to sense ·or feel or intuit· them’.

So this **inability** ought to serve only to •humble reason in its effort to judge everything, and not to impugn our certainty, as though reason were the only thing that could teach us anything! Would to God we didn't *ever* need it, and knew everything by instinct and feeling! But nature has refused us this benefit; indeed it has given us very little knowledge of this kind; and all the rest can be acquired only by reasoning.

That's why those to whom God has given religion through the feeling of the heart are very fortunate, and convinced in a correct way. As for those who don't have religion, *we* can't give it to them through the feelings of the heart, and

without that the faith is a merely human affair and useless for salvation.

283. Against the objection that Scripture has no order.

The intellect has its own order, which is by principle and demonstration. The heart has a different order. You don't prove that you ought to be loved by setting out in order the causes of love; that would be ridiculous.

Jesus-Christ and Saint Paul use the order of charity, not of intellect, because they wanted to uplift, not to instruct. It's the same with Saint Augustine. This order consists chiefly in developing each point that relates to the end, so as to keep the end always in sight.

284. Don't be surprised to see simple people believing without reasoning. God gives them love of him and hatred of themselves. He inclines their heart to believe. Men will never have a saving and faith-based belief unless God inclines their heart; and as soon as he inclines it, they will believe. That's what David knew well: ‘Incline my heart, O Lord, unto your testimonies’ [quoted in Latin from Psalm 119:36].

285. Religion is suited to all kinds of minds. Some attend only to its establishment; their religion is of such a kind that its truth is proved by the mere fact that it is now established. Others trace it right back to the apostles. The more learned go back to the beginning of the world. The angels see it better still, and from further off.

286. Some people believe without having read the Old and New Testaments; that's because they have an entirely holy inward disposition, and what they hear about our religion fits into it. They feel that a God has made them; they want to love God alone; they want to hate only themselves. They feel that they have no strength of their own, that they can't go to God, and that if God doesn't come to them they can't have any communication with him. They hear it said in our religion

that men must love only God, and hate only themselves; but that because we are all corrupt, and incapable of relating, unaided to God, God made himself into a man so as to unite himself to us. That is quite enough to convince men who have this disposition in their heart, and this knowledge of their duty and of their powerlessness.

287. People whom we see to be Christians without knowing about prophets and proofs have as good a religious judgment as those who do have that knowledge. They judge concerning it by the heart, as others judge do by the intellect. It's God himself who inclines them to believe, so they are most effectively convinced.

I freely admit that one of those Christians who believe without proofs may be unable to convince an infidel [see Glossary] who will say that *he* believes without proofs. But those who know the proofs of the Christian religion will have no trouble proving that such a believer is truly inspired by God, even though he can't prove this himself.

For God said through his prophets (who undoubtedly were prophets) that in the reign of Jesus-Christ he would spread his spirit abroad among nations, and that the youths and maidens and children of the Church would prophesy; so it is certain that the spirit of God is in these simple Christian believers and not in the others.

288. Instead of complaining that God has hidden himself, you will give him thanks for having revealed himself so much; and you will also thank him for not revealing himself to

arrogant sages who aren't worthy to know such a holy God.

Two kinds of people *know*: •those who have a humble heart, and who love lowliness, whatever level of intellect they have, whether high or low; and •those who have enough intellect to see the truth, however opposed to it they are.

289. Proofs.

1. The Christian religion, by its establishment, having established itself so powerfully, so gently, while being so contrary to nature.
2. The sanctity, the dignity, and the humility of a Christian soul.
3. The miracles 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 religion has perpetuity.
10. Doctrine that explains everything.
11. The sanctity of this law.
12. By the conduct of the world [see Glossary].

After considering what life is and what this religion is, we certainly shouldn't resist the inclination to follow it if it comes into our heart; and there are certainly no grounds for jeering at those who follow it.

290. Proofs of religion. Morality, doctrine, miracles, prophecies, figures.

* * * * *

The apparently defective passage from page 39.

Mais il y a ici une infinité de vie infiniment heureuse à gagner, un hasard de gain contre un nombre fini de hasards de perte, et ce que vous jouez est fini. Cela ôte tout parti; partout où est l'infini, et où il n'y a pas infinité de hasards de perte contre celui de gain, il n'y a point à balancer, il faut tout donner. Est ainsi, quand on est forcé à jouer, il faut renoncer à la raison pour garder la vie, plutôt que de la hasarder pour le gain infini aussi prêt à arriver que la perte du néant.

But here there is an infinite life of infinite happiness to be won, there is one chance of winning against a finite number of chances of losing, and what you are staking is finite. All bets are off; whenever there is an infinity and wherever there isn't an infinite number of chances of losing against the chance of winning, there's nothing to be weighed or calculated; you must stake everything. And thus, when you are forced to play, you should renounce reason to preserve life, instead of risking your life for an infinite gain, which is as likely to happen as a loss of *nothing*.

Section 5: Justice. The causes of effects

291. In the letter On Injustice can come: the absurdity of the law that the older son gets everything.

‘My friend, you were born on this side of the mountain, so it’s just that your older brother gets everything.’

Pourquoi me tuez-vous?

292. *Il demeure au-delà de l’eau.*

293. ‘Why are you killing me?’ ‘What! Don’t you live on the other side of the water? If you lived on this side, my friend, what I am doing would make me an assassin—it would be unjust to kill you like this. But since you live on the other side, I’m a warrior and what I’m doing is just.’

294. The world that man wants to govern—what will he base its organisation on? On the caprice of each individual? What confusion! On justice? He knows nothing about that.

If he *had* known about it, he wouldn’t have established the maxim—the most general of all the maxims that are at work among men—that each person should follow the *mœurs* [see Glossary] of his own country. True equity would have reigned, shining, over all nations, and legislators wouldn’t have taken as their model the whims and fancies of Persians and Germans instead of this unchanging justice. We would have seen justice rooted in all the States on earth at all times, rather than what we actually have—namely no justice or injustice that doesn’t change its nature with changes in the weather! Three degrees of latitude turn all jurisprudence upside-down; a meridian decides the truth. Basic laws change after a few years of holding sway; right has its epochs; the entry of Saturn into Leo marks for us the origin of such and such a crime. A funny kind of justice that is bounded by a river! Truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on the other side.

Men admit that justice doesn’t consist in these customs, and that it resides in natural laws that are known in every country. They would certainly maintain this obstinately if chance—which recklessly scatters human laws (like scattering seed) around the planet—had brought their way even one law that was universally accepted; but the joke is that human whims are so various that there isn’t any law that everyone accepts. Theft, incest, infanticide, patricide, have all been counted as virtuous actions. A man has a right to kill me because he lives on the other side of the ocean and his ruler has a quarrel with mine, though I have none with him—could *anything* be more ridiculous than that? No doubt there *are* natural laws, but our wonderful *corrupt* reason has corrupted everything. ‘There’s nothing left that is ours; when we call things “ours”, that’s a mere construct.’ ‘It’s because of the actions of legislators that anything counts as a crime.’ ‘We used to suffer from our vices; now we suffer from our laws.’ [Quoted in Latin from Cicero, Seneca and Tacitus, respectively.]

This confusion brings it about that one scholar says that the essence of justice is the authority of the legislator; another that it’s the interests of the sovereign; a third that it’s the prevailing customs. This last is the view that is expressed with most confidence. It goes as follows (to the end of this paragraph). If we go purely by reason, nothing is intrinsically just; everything changes with time. Custom creates the whole system of rights and wrongs, simply because it is accepted. Acceptance is the magic basis of its authority; if you try to avoid that conclusion and trace the authority of custom back to first principles, you’ll destroy it. Nothing is so faulty as those laws that

correct faults. He who obeys them 'because they are just' is obeying •imaginary justice and not •the essence of the law. There the law sits, self-contained; it is just the law, and nothing more. If you examine what drives it, you'll find it to be so feeble and so trifling that—unless you're used to contemplating the feats of human imagination—you'll marvel that one century has given the law so much pomp and reverence. The art of opposition and of revolution is to shake up established customs, tracing them right back to their source, pointing out their lack of authority and justice. 'We must'—they say—'get back to the basic elemental laws of the State, which unjust custom has abolished.' If you make *that* bet, you'll certainly lose everything: nothing will be just when weighed on that balance. Yet people willingly listen to such arguments. They 'shake off the yoke' the moment they recognise it; and those at the top of the social heap profit by the ruin of ordinary people and of those who intrusively investigate accepted customs. That's why the wisest of legislators said that it was necessary to deceive men for their own good; and another, a good politician, said 'Since he doesn't know the truth that could free him, it's good that he should be lied to' [quoted in Latin from Augustine]. He—the man in the street—mustn't be made aware of the facts about the usurpation ·that led to the existence of the present government·. There was no reason for it back then when it happened, but it has become reasonable. It should be regarded as authoritative, eternal, and its origin should be hidden—that's if we want it to survive.

295. Mine, yours. 'This dog is *mine*', said those poor children; 'That's *my* place in the sun.' You see there the start of, the template for, the usurpation of all the earth.

296. When there's a question as to whether to make war and kill so many men—condemn so many Spaniards to

death—the decision is made by just one man, and his interests are involved in the question. There should be another decider who is disinterested.

297. 'True justice'—Cicero's phrase. We don't have it any longer; if we did, we wouldn't take the *mœurs* of our country to be the rule of justice.

Thus, not being able to find what is just, we have found what is powerful, etc.

298. Justice, power. It is *just* to follow what is just; it is *necessary* to follow what is the most powerful. Justice without power can't achieve anything; power without justice is tyrannical. Justice without power is challenged, because there are always bad people; power without justice is condemned. So we must combine justice with power, by making what is just powerful or making what is powerful just.

There can be disputes about *what* is just, whereas power is easily recognised and is not disputed. So it hasn't been possible to make justice powerful, because power has challenged justice, calling it unjust and saying that it—power—was just. So, not being able to make what is just powerful, we have made what is powerful just.

299. The only universal rules are the law of the land in ordinary affairs and ·the will of· the majority in other matters. How does that come about? Through the power that they have.

That's how it comes about that kings, who have another source of power, don't follow the majority of their ministers.

No doubt equality of goods is just; but men, not being able to bring it about that power enforces justice, have made it just to obey power; unable to empower justice, they have justified power, so that what's just and what's powerful should unite, bringing peace, the greatest good.

300. 'When a strong man armed keeps his goods, his goods

are in peace.’ [adapted from Luke 11:21]

301. Why do we follow the majority? Is it because they have more reason? No, more power.

Why do we follow the ancient laws and opinions? Is it because they’re the soundest? No, but they are unique, and deprive us of the root of diversity. [Perhaps he means: ‘but it’s quite clear *what* they are, so they leave us with nothing to quarrel about’.]

302. . . . It’s the effect of power, not of custom, for not many people are capable of originality. The numerically most powerful are mere followers, and refuse to celebrate the original people who seek glory through their feats. And if the original ones •persist in demanding recognition and •belittle those who aren’t original, the others will call them by ridiculous names and would physically beat them ·if they could get away with it·. So don’t be puffed up with pride over your subtlety, or at least keep your pride to yourself.

303. Power rules the world, not opinion. ‘But opinion *uses* power.’ And what *makes* opinion? Power does! Slackness is beautiful in our opinion. Why? Because someone who wants to dance on a tightrope will do it on his own, while I’ll get together a more powerful mob who will say that that’s no way to behave.

304. The bonds that hold in place the social relations men have to each other are mainly bonds of necessity; because there have to be different social ranks, and everyone wants to dominate but only some are able to.

Suppose we are watching social ranks in the process of formation. Men will certainly fight till the stronger party oppresses the weaker, and eventually a dominant faction is established. But once this is settled, those on top—not wanting to continue this war—decree that the power in their hands is to be passed on by some method chosen

by them—popular election, heredity, etc.

And that’s where imagination comes into play. Up to here, pure power has held the reins; but now power is held in place by the imagination of a certain group, in France the nobility, in Switzerland the commoners, etc.

So these bonds that hold in place men’s relations to such-and-such a particular ·ruling group· are bonds of imagination.

305. The Swiss object to being called ‘nobles’, and display their status as commoners so as to be thought worthy of high office.

306. As the ranks of duke, king and magistrate are real and necessary (because power rules over everything), they exist everywhere and always. But there’s nothing constant and unvarying in *who* occupies these ranks, because that depends on a fancy [see Glossary].

307. The chancellor is solemn, and ornately clothed, because his position is a false one. Not so the king: he has power, and has nothing to do with imagination. Judges, physicians, etc. have nothing but imagination.

308. The custom of seeing a king accompanied by guards, drummers, officers, and all the things that bend the machine [see Glossary] towards respect and fear, brings it about that when seen alone without this paraphernalia, his face still impresses respect and fear on his subjects; because they can’t mentally separate his person from the surroundings that they usually see him in. And the world, not realising that this effect is the result of custom, believes that some natural force is at work, and so people say things like ‘The character of Divinity is stamped on his face’.

309. Fashion settles the question of what is charming—and of what is just.

310. King and tyrant. I will also have thoughts at the back of my mind.

I will be wary whenever I am travelling.

Grandeur d'établissement, respect d'établissement.

The pleasure of the great is the ability to make people happy.

The proper function of riches is to be given liberally.

The proper function of each thing should be sought. The proper function of power [*puissance*] is to protect.

When power [*force*] attacks humbug, when a simple soldier takes a chief magistrate's square cap and whisks it out the window.

311. A government based on opinion and imagination is pleasant and voluntary, and it reigns for some time; a government based on power lasts for ever. Thus opinion is like the world's queen, but power is its tyrant.

312. Justice is what is established; so all our established laws will inevitably be regarded as just, without examination, since they are established.

313. Normal healthy opinions of the populace. Civil wars are the greatest of evils. They are inevitable if merit is to be rewarded, because everyone will say that *he* has merit. The evil to be feared from a fool who *inherits* the crown is less, and not as inevitable.

314. God created everything for himself.

He has bestowed upon himself the power of pain and pleasure.

You can apply it to God, or to yourself.

If to God, the Gospel is the rule.

If to yourself, you will take the place of God.

As God is surrounded by persons full of charity, who ask of him the blessings of charity that are in his power, so . . .

Recognise and learn, then, that you are only a king of greed [see Glossary], and take the ways of greed.

315. Cause and effect. It's amazing: I'm supposed not to honour a man clothed in brocade and followed by seven or eight lackeys! Well! he'll have me thrashed if I don't salute him. Those clothes are power. It's the same with a horse in fine harness compared with another! Montaigne is a fool not to see what a difference there is, to wonder at our finding any, and to ask why. . . .

316. Normal healthy opinions of the populace. Elegance isn't mere vanity; it shows that you have many people working for you. It shows •by your hair that you have a valet, a perfumer, etc., •by the decorative features of your clothing etc. It is not merely superficial—not a merely outward show—to have many hands •at your command•. The more hands you have, the greater your power. To be elegant is to show your power.

317. Deference means *putting yourself to some trouble*. This seems pointless, but it's quite right. It amounts to saying 'I would indeed put myself to some trouble if you needed me to, as witness the fact that I am now doing so when it doesn't do you any good.' Besides, deference is a way of marking off the great; and if you could show deference by sitting in an arm-chair you'd be showing deference to everybody, and thus not marking off anyone in particular. But by deference that involves taking trouble we very clearly distinguish the great from the rest.

318. *Il a quatre laquais.*

319. How right we are to distinguish men by external appearances rather than by internal qualities! Of the two of us, which one will stand back and let the other go first? The less clever? But I'm as clever as he is; on this basis we would have to fight it out. He has four lackeys, and I have only one; this can be seen—we have only to count. It's for

me to stand back, and I'm a fool if I contest this. In this way we keep the peace, which is the greatest of all goods.

320. The most unreasonable things in the world become the most reasonable because of human unruliness. Choosing the eldest son of a queen to rule a State—what is less reasonable than that? We don't choose as captain of a ship the passenger who is of the best family. This law by which royal status is hereditary would be absurd and unjust; but because *men* are and always will be absurd and unjust, the law becomes reasonable and just. Whom are we to choose? The most virtuous and the cleverest? We at once come to blows, as each claims to be the most virtuous and the cleverest. So let's attach this position to something indisputable—being the king's eldest son. That is clear, and there is no dispute. Reason can do no better, for civil war is the greatest of evils.

321. Children astonished to see deference given to their friends.

322. Noble birth is a great advantage. It gets an eighteen-year-old well launched, known and deferred to, a situation that someone else might have earned by the age of fifty. That's a sheer gift of thirty years.

323. What is the *self*? [see Glossary]

A man stands at the window to see the passers-by. If I walk past, can I say that he went to the window to see me? No—he isn't thinking about me in particular. But a person who loves a man on account of his beauty—does he really love him? No; for the small-pox, which will kill beauty without killing the person, will cause him to love him no longer.

And if someone loves me for my judgement, for my memory, he doesn't love me, my self, for I can lose these qualities without losing myself. Then where is this *self* if it isn't in the body or in the soul? And how can anyone love

the body or the soul except for those qualities which aren't what constitute my *self*, because they are perishable? What about loving a person's soul in the abstract, independently of qualities it might have? You can't do that, and even if you could it would be wrong to do so. So we never love *anyone*, only qualities.

Let us then stop scoffing at those who are honoured for their rank and position; for we love people only on account of borrowed qualities.

324. The populace [see Glossary] has very healthy opinions, for example:

(1) Preferring diversion and hunting to poetry. The half-learned laugh at this, and boast of being above the folly of the world; but for a reason that *they* don't fathom, the choice is a good one.

(2) Distinguishing men by external marks, e.g. by birth or wealth. The world again boasts of showing how unreasonable this is; but in fact it is very reasonable. . . .

(3a) Being offended when one's face is slapped; a man who simply accepts a slap in the face is overwhelmed with taunts and indignities.

(3b) Desiring glory so much. Glory is very desirable because of other goods—essential ones—that come with it.

(4) Working at risky things—sea-travel, walking along a plank.

325. Montaigne is wrong. The only reason custom should be followed is that it is custom, not that it is reasonable or just. But the common people follow it solely because they think it is just. They wouldn't follow it simply because it is custom, for they'll only submit to reason or justice. Custom without reason or justice would be regarded as tyranny; but the sovereignty of reason and justice is no more tyrannical than that of pleasure. They are principles [see Glossary] natural to

man.

So it would be a good thing if laws and customs were obeyed *because they are laws*, and if it were realised that there are no *true and just* laws to be introduced—that we have no knowledge of any such, and must therefore follow the established laws, and thus never have any reason to depart from them. But the people aren't receptive to this doctrine. They believe that truth *can* be found, and that it exists in laws and customs; they believe the accepted laws, and take their antiquity as a proof of their truth (and not simply of their authority, leaving truth out of it). Thus they obey the laws, but they're liable to revolt when these are proved to be worthless; and for any given law there's always an angle from which that is how it looks.

326. It's dangerous to tell the people that the laws are unjust, because they obey them only because they think they are just. So if you tell them that the laws are unjust you ought to tell the people at the same time that they should obey them because they are laws; as they should obey their superiors not because they are just but because they are superiors. If this is grasped, and along with it the proper definition of justice, all sedition will be prevented.

327. The world judges things well, because it is in **natural ignorance**, which is man's true state. The sciences have two extremes which meet. The first is the pure natural ignorance that we have at birth. The other extreme is the one that great souls arrive at after working through everything that humans can know; what they learn from this is that they don't know anything, and so re-enter the ignorance from which they started. But this is a **learned man's ignorance** which is conscious of itself. Those who are caught in the middle—having left natural ignorance and not been able to reach the other—have some smattering of a pretentious kind

of knowledge, and preen themselves. They trouble the world, and get everything wrong. . . .

328. Cause and effect. Continual switching between pro and con.

We have shown, then, that man is vain [see Glossary], by the high value he sets on things that aren't essential; and all these opinions are refuted.

We showed next that all these opinions are very healthy; so the populace isn't as vain it's said to be. So we have refuted the opinion that contradicted the opinion of the populace.

But we must now refute this last proposition and show that it is still true that the populace is vain, although its opinions are healthy. That is because it doesn't detect truth where it is, and thinks it detects it where it isn't; so its opinions are always very false and very unhealthy.

329. *La faiblesse de l'homme est la cause de tant de beautés qu'on établit: comme de savoir bien jouer le luth n'est un mal qu'à cause de notre faiblesse.*[None of the repairs that have been suggested for this obviously defective passage turns it into good sense.]

330. The power of kings is based on reason and *especially* on the folly of the populace. Thus, the greatest and most important thing in the world is based on weakness.

And this is a wonderfully dependable foundation, because nothing is surer than the fact that the populace will always be weak. Anything based on healthy reason is very poorly founded—admiration of wisdom, for example, is a very unstable foundation because at any time people could stop having any respect for wisdom.

331. We always think of Plato and Aristotle in grand academic robes. But they were honest men [see Glossary] laughing with their friends as such men do. When they amused themselves by writing their *Laws* and their *Politics*,

they were just *playing*. That part of their life was the least philosophical and the least serious; the most philosophical part consisted in living simply and quietly.

When they wrote on politics, it was as though they were laying down rules for a lunatic asylum.

They gave the impression of speaking of something important, but that's because they knew that the madmen they were addressing thought themselves to be kings and emperors. Plato and Aristotle went along with their lunacy so as to get it to do as little damage as possible.

332. Tyranny consists in the desire to dominate *everywhere* and not merely in one's own proper sphere.

[When Pascal speaks of 'chambers' (*chambres*) he is likening these groups to parliaments, like the French 'chamber of deputies'.] There are different chambers—of the strong, the handsome, the sensible, the pious—each of which governs itself but nothing else. Sometimes they meet, and fights break out—e.g. between the strong and the handsome—over which will have mastery; but this is idiotic, because their mastery is of different kinds ·that can't be measured on a single scale·. They don't understand one another; and their mistake is to want to govern everywhere. *Nothing* can govern everywhere—not even power, which can't have any effect in the scientists' domain, and only governs external actions.

It would be false and tyrannical to say: 'I am handsome, so you should fear me', 'I am strong, so you should love me', 'I am. . .'

Tyranny is the wish to get by one means something that can only be had by another. Different kinds of merit call for different responses: charm calls for love, power calls for fear, scientific knowledge calls for belief. These calls must be answered: it is unjust to turn them down, and unjust to issue others—e.g. for charm to call for fear·. So it is false and tyrannical to say 'He isn't strong, so I won't admire him',

'He isn't able, so I won't fear him'.

333. Haven't you encountered people who protest that you are under-rating them by boasting of the distinguished men who rate them highly? ·If anyone tried that with me·, I would reply: 'Show me the merit by which you charmed these people and I'll rate you as highly as they do.'

334. Greed and power are the source of all our actions; greed causes voluntary actions, power involuntary ones.

335. So it's true to say that everyone is under a delusion; for although the opinions of the populace are healthy, they aren't healthy *as conceived by them*, because they don't *locate* the truth correctly. There is indeed truth •in their opinions, but not *where* they think it is. For example, it's true that we should honour the nobility, but not because noble birth has given them some real merit, etc.

336. We should keep our thoughts to ourselves, •judging everything in terms of them while •speaking like the populace.

337. Rankings. •The populace honours people of high birth. The •semi-clever despise them, saying that birth is a matter of chance and not personal merit. •Really clever people honour them, not for the same reason as the populace but for reasons they keep to themselves. •Devout persons who have more zeal than knowledge despise them, in spite of the facts that lead the clever people to honour them, because they judge them by a new light that piety gives them. But •perfect Christians honour them by another and higher light. So opinions swing for and against, according to people's lights.

338. But true Christians do go along with foolishness, not because they respect it but because God—punishing men ·for their sins·—has made them subject to these follies: 'The creature was made subject to vanity. He will be delivered' [quoted in Latin from Romans 8:20-21]. Thus Saint Thomas explains the

passage in Saint James [James 2:3] on giving preference to the rich, that if they don't do it in the sight of God they are

going against the command of their religion.

Section 6: The philosophers

339. I can easily conceive a man without hands, feet, head (for it's only from experience that we know the head to be more necessary than the feet). But I can't conceive man without thought; that would be a stone or a lower animal.

340. The arithmetical machine produces results that come closer to thought than do any of the actions of animals; but it doesn't do anything that would let us credit it with having will, which we do attribute to animals.

341. *L'histoire du brochet et de la grenouille de Liancourt: ils le font toujours, et jamais autrement, ni autre chose de l'esprit.*

342. If an animal did by intellect what it does by instinct, and if it spoke by intellect what it 'speaks' by instinct—e.g. telling its mates (when they are hunting) that the prey is found or lost—it would surely also speak about the things that matter to it most, for example, 'Bite through this cord—it's hurting me and I can't reach it'.

343. *Le bec du perroquet qu'il essuie, quoiqu'il soit net.*

344. Instinct and reason, signs of two natures.

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

346. Thought is the greatness of man.

347. Man is only a reed, the weakest thing in nature; but he's a thinking reed. To wipe him out there's no need for the whole universe to take up arms against him—a vapour, a drop of water, is enough to kill him. But if the universe

did wipe him out, man would still be nobler than his killer; because he knows that he is dying and that the universe has the upper hand; the universe knows nothing of this.

So all our dignity consists in *thought*. That's what we must rely on—not on space and time, which are too big for us to fill. So let us work at *thinking well*; that's the driving force of morality.

348. For my own dignity I should look not to space but to thinking properly. It won't do me any good to own land: in terms of space, the universe grasps me and swallows me up like a speck; in terms of thought, I grasp it.

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

350. Stoics. If something can be done sometimes, they infer that it can be done always; and that because the desire for glory enables those who are gripped by it to do something well, others can also do that thing well. These are feverish inferences that health can't imitate.

From the fact that there are steadfast Christians, Epictetus infers that everyone can be like that.

351. Regarding the great mental efforts that the soul sometimes achieves: the soul doesn't get a permanent hold on them—it *jumps* to them for a moment; it doesn't *settle* on them permanently, as on a throne.

352. The strength of a man's virtue should be measured not by his efforts but by his ordinary life.

353. I don't admire the excess of any virtue (such as courage) unless it is accompanied by an excess of the opposite virtue—for example, Epaminondas, who was extremely brave and extremely kind. Someone who lacks the opposite virtue doesn't *rise* to great courage, he *falls* to it! To display greatness a man needs not to •go to one extreme but to •extend to both at once and •fill all the •moral• space between them.

'But perhaps his soul doesn't spread, but merely darts from one extreme to the other, without ever being at both of them at the same time, like a •whirling• firebrand.'

So be it. But even if he isn't showing the breadth of his soul, he is at least displaying its agility.

354. It's not in man's nature to keep *going*; he naturally has his goings and his comings.

Fever brings shivers and hot flashes. And the cold is as good a sign as the heat of how severe the fever is.

Human inventiveness comes and goes down the centuries. So does the world's over-all kindness and its over-all malice. 'Most of the changes are agreeable to the wishes of princes' [quoted in Latin from Horace]... .

355. Continuous eloquence is tedious.

Princes and kings sometimes play. They aren't always on their thrones—they get bored there. To appreciate grandeur you have to set it aside sometimes; continuity in *anything* is nasty. It's pleasant to be cold, so as to get warm.

Nature's progress is a back-and-forth affair. It goes and returns, then goes further and returns twice as far, then •advances• more than ever, etc.

The tides of the sea are like that—[and here Pascal drew an erratic zig-zagging line sloping down the page] and so it seems is the sun in its course.

356. The nourishment of the body is little by little. Not much

food, plenty of nourishment.

357. When we try to pursue virtues to their extremes, vices quietly work their way in from the direction of the infinitely small; and vices turn up in a crowd from the direction of the infinitely large, so that we get lost among them and no longer see virtues.

We find fault with perfection itself.

358. Man is neither angel nor beast; the sad thing is that anyone who tries to become an angel becomes a beast.

359. We don't hold ourselves upright in virtue by our own •moral• strength, but by the balancing of two opposed vices. It's like standing upright in winds blowing in opposite directions. Remove one of the vices, and we tumble into the other.

360. What the stoics propose is so difficult and so pointless!

The stoics claim that all those who aren't at the high level of wisdom are equally foolish and vicious, as those who are two inches under water •can't breathe any more than can those who are a hundred feet under•.

361. Dispute about the supreme good. 'So as to be satisfied with yourself and with the good things that you give rise to' [quoted in Latin from the stoic Seneca]. There is a contradiction, for they finally advise suicide. Oh! what a happy life that we free ourselves from, as from a plague!

362. *Ex senatus-consultis et plebiscitis...*

Demandeur des passages pareils.

[Pascal gives the quotations in 363 and 364 in their original Latin; he has taken them from writings of Montaigne.]

363. •'Crimes are committed by decrees of the Senate and the votes of the people.' (Seneca)

•'There's nothing so absurd that it hasn't been said by some philosopher.' (Cicero)

•‘Pledged to certain fixed opinions, they have to defend things that they don’t approve of.’ (Cicero)

•‘Too much learning is burdensome as is too much *anything*.’ (Seneca)

•‘What suits each man best is what is especially *his*.’ (Cicero)

•‘Nature first gave them these limits.’ (Virgil)

•‘You don’t need to be learned to have a good mind.’ (Seneca)

•‘Something that isn’t disgraceful becomes disgraceful when the mob applaud it.’ (Cicero)

•‘This is how I do it; you do as you wish.’ (Terence)

364. •‘People rarely pay enough respect to themselves.’ (Quintilian)

•‘So many gods rioting around in one head.’ (Seneca)

•‘Nothing is more disgraceful than asserting something before you know whether it is true.’ (Cicero)

•‘Unlike *them*, when I don’t know something I’m not ashamed to say so.’ (Cicero)

•‘They’d have done better not to begin.’ (Seneca)

365. All the dignity of man consists in thought.

So thought is by its very nature a wonderful and incomparable thing. It would have needed *strange* faults to be contemptible. But it does have them—to such an extent that nothing is more ridiculous. How great thought is in its nature! How vile in its defects!

Thought—*what* thought? That thought is stupid!

366. The mind of this sovereign judge of the world is not so self-sufficient that he isn’t apt to be disturbed by the first clatter going on around him. For his thoughts to be impeded, the roar of a cannon isn’t necessary—the job can be done by the creaking of a weather-vane or pulley.

Right now he isn’t reasoning well; that’s not surprising—he hears a fly buzzing, and that’s enough to make him incapable of taking in good advice. If you want him to be

able to reach the truth, drive away that *animal* that holds his reason in check and disturbs this powerful intellect that rules towns and kingdoms. What an absurd god this is! . . .

367. The power of flies: they win battles, prevent our soul from acting, eat our body. [Montaigne reports an event in which one side in a siege was helped by honey-bees (in early modern French *mouches à miel* = ‘honey-flies’.)]

368. When we’re told that **heat** is only the motions of certain particles, and that **light** is a centrifugal force that we feel, we are amazed. What! Is **pleasure** nothing but the dancing of our animal spirits? [see Glossary]. We have had a *very* different idea of these! These accounts imply that there are likenesses between sensations that strike us as being very different! The sensation from the fire—*warmth*—affects us in a quite different way from the sense of touch; our reception of sound and light appears to us to be mysterious, yet really it is crude physical event like being hit by a brick. It’s true that the incoming spirits are so fine that they can get in anywhere, but all they do is to affect *nerves*, which are strictly material things.

369. Memory is necessary for all the operations of reason.

370. What thoughts you have is a matter of chance; what thoughts you lose is also a matter of chance. There are no rules for getting or keeping thoughts.

A thought has escaped; I would like to write it down; I write instead that it has escaped me.

371. [Deleted by Pascal.]

372. Sometimes when I am writing down my thought it gets away from me; but this serves as a reminder—which I constantly need—of how weak I am. This is as good a lesson as the forgotten thought could give; for all I care about is knowing my nothingness.

373. Pyrrhonism. I'll write down my thoughts here without putting them in order, though there's a point to this confusion. It is in fact true order, which will always indicate my object by its very disorder.

I would be flattering my subject if I treated it with order, since I want to show that it is incapable of order.

374. What astonishes me most is to see that people are not all astonished by their own weakness. Men act seriously, each in accordance with his own social position—not for the right reason, namely that it's customary to do so, but on the assumption that he knows for sure where reason and justice are. They keep finding themselves deceived, and humbly believe—what a joke!—that it's the fault of •themselves and not of •the art they always boast of having. But it is well for the glory of pyrrhonism that there are so many of these people who are not pyrrhonians; it shows that man is quite capable of the most extravagant opinions, since he is capable of believing that he is in a state not of natural and inevitable weakness but of natural wisdom.

Nothing fortifies pyrrhonism more than that some people are not pyrrhonians; if all were so, they would be wrong.

375. I have passed a great part of my life believing that there was justice, and in this I was not mistaken; for there is justice according as God has willed to reveal it to us. But I did not understand it in that way, and this is where I made a mistake; for I believed that our justice was *essentially* just, and that I had what I needed to know and judge concerning it. But I have so often found my solid judgement at fault that eventually I have become distrustful of myself and then of others. I have seen changes in all nations and men, and thus, after many changes of judgement regarding true justice, I have recognised that continual change is our nature, and I haven't changed since; and if I did, that would confirm my

opinion.

The pyrrhonian Arcesilaus, who returned to being a dogmatist.

376. This sect derives more strength from its enemies than from its friends, because man's weakness is more evident in those who don't know they are weak than in those who do.

377. Discourses on humility are a source of pride in the self-satisfied and of humility in the humble. Similarly, those on pyrrhonism cause believers to believe. Few men speak humbly of humility, chastely of chastity, doubtingly of pyrrhonism. We are nothing but lying, duplicity, inconsistency; we both conceal and disguise ourselves from ourselves.

378. Pyrrhonism. Extreme intellect is accused of madness; so is extreme lack of intellect. Nothing is good but the middle. It's the majority who have settled that, and they deal fiercely with anyone who escapes the middle at either end. I won't oppose it. I quite consent to be put in the middle; I refuse to be at the lower end, not because it is low but because it is an end; for I would likewise refuse to be placed at the top. To leave the middle is to abandon humanity.

The greatness of the human soul consists in knowing how to stay there. Greatness is so far from consisting in leaving it that it consists in *not* leaving it.

379. It is not good to have too much liberty. It is not good to have none.

380. All the good maxims are in the world, •i.e. are available to us•. All that's missing is our applying them. For instance:

- We don't doubt that we ought to risk our lives in defence of the public good; but for religion, no.
- It is true there must be inequality among men; but conceding this is opening the door not only to extreme domination but to extreme tyranny.

- We must relax our minds a little; but this opens the door to the greatest debauchery. Limits should be set.
- There are no limits in things; laws try to put them there, and the mind can't endure it.

381. When we are too young, we don't judge well; too old, the same.

If we don't think enough about something, or if we think about it too much, we get obstinate and infatuated with it.

If we consider our work immediately after having done it, we're entirely prepossessed in its favour; if we delay too long, we can no longer enter into the spirit of it.

So with pictures seen from too far or too near; there's just one exact point which is the true place.

The rest are too near, too far, too high or too low. For the art of painting, perspective determines that point. But who will determine it for in truth and morality?

382. When everything is moving in the same way, nothing appears to be moving, as in a ship. When everyone is heading towards uproar, none appears to do so. Anyone who *stops* draws attention to the excess of others, like a fixed point.

383. Men who are living badly tell those who are living well 'You are straying from nature's path; I am following it'. Like people on a ship who think that it's the people on the shore who are moving. The language is the same from all directions. We must have a fixed point in order to judge. The harbour decides for those who are in a ship; but where will we find a harbour in morality?

384. Contradiction or the lack of it is a bad sign of truth; several things that are certain are contradicted; several things that are false pass without contradiction. Contradiction is not a sign of falsity; lack of contradiction is not a sign of truth.

385. Pyrrhonism. Each thing here [= 'in this world'] is partly

true and partly false. Essential truth is not so; it is wholly pure and wholly true. This admixture of falsity dishonours and annihilates it: nothing is purely true, so nothing is true—meaning by that *pure* truth. You will say it is *true* that homicide is wrong. Yes; for we know well the wrong and the false. But what will you say is good? Chastity? I say no; for the human world would come to an end. Marriage? No; continence is better. Not to kill? No; for without capital punishment lawlessness would be horrible, and the wicked would kill all the good. To kill? No; for that destroys nature. We possess truth and goodness only in part, and mingled with falsehood and evil.

386. If we dreamed the same thing every night, it would affect us as much as the objects we see every day. If a carpenter were sure of having every night a twelve-hour dream of being a king, I believe he would be almost as happy as a king who every night had a twelve-hour dream of being a carpenter.

If we dreamed every night that we were pursued by enemies and harassed by these painful phantoms, and that we passed every day in different occupations, as in making a voyage, we would suffer almost as much as if this were real; and we would be anxious about going to sleep, as we are anxious about waking up when we have fears of such miseries occurring in reality. And in fact the evils would be about the same either way.

But since dreams are all different, and each one is diversified, what is seen in them affects us much less than what we see when awake because of the continuity of waking experience. (The latter is not perfectly continuous and level; it changes too, though less abruptly except in special cases such as when we travel—and then we say 'This seems like a dream'.) For life is a slightly steadier dream.

387. It may be that there are true demonstrations; but this

is not certain. So all this proves is that it is not certain that everything is uncertain—to the glory of pyrrhonism.

388. They are reduced to saying ‘You are not acting in good faith; we are *not* asleep’ etc. How I love to see this arrogant reason humiliated and pleading! This isn’t the language of a man whose right is disputed, and who defends it with armed force. He doesn’t waste time saying that his opponents aren’t acting in good faith; he punishes this bad faith with force.

389. Ecclesiastes shows that man without God •knows nothing and •is inevitably miserable. For it is wretched to have the wish but not the power [the French is . . . *de vouloir et ne pouvoir*]. Well, he wants to be happy and assured of some truth; yet he can neither know nor stop desiring to know. He can’t even doubt.

390. My God! How foolish this talk is! ‘Would God have made the world to damn it? Would he ask so much from persons so weak? etc.’ Pyrrhonism is the cure for this evil, and will take down this vanity.

391. Great words: Religion, I deny it.
Pyrrhonism helps religion.

392. Against pyrrhonism. We assume that all conceive things in the same way; but we assume this quite gratuitously, for we have no proof of it. I see the same words being applied on the same occasions; whenever two men see a body change its place, they report what they see with the same word, both saying that it has *moved*; and from this •verbal agreement we derive a strong conviction of an agreement of •ideas. There’s a case to be made for this, but it’s not absolutely or finally convincing, because we know that we often draw the same conclusions from different premises—and so we might be using the same words to report different thoughts.

This is enough, at least, to obscure the •issue over the existence of the world of •matter, though it doesn’t

completely extinguish the natural light which assures us of these •material• things. . . . But it does tarnish the natural light, and troubles the dogmatists to the glory of the sect of pyrrhonism, which consists in this ambiguous ambiguity and in a certain doubtful dimness from which our doubts can’t take away all the clearness, nor our own natural lights chase away all the darkness.

393. There are people in the world (e.g. the soldiers of Mahomet, robbers, heretics, etc.) who have renounced all the laws of God and nature and then made laws for themselves which they strictly obey! It’s enough to make one laugh. It is the same with logicians.

It seems that what they permit themselves must be without any limits or barriers, seeing that they have broken through so many that are so just and sacred.

394. All the principles of pyrrhonians, stoics, atheists etc. are true. But their conclusions are false, because the opposite principles are also true.

395. Instinct, reason. We have an inability to prove anything, invulnerable to all dogmatism. We have an idea of truth, invulnerable to all pyrrhonism.

396. Two things instruct man about his whole nature: instinct and experience.

397. The greatness of man is great in that he knows himself to be miserable. A tree does not know itself to be miserable.

It is, then, being miserable to know oneself to be miserable; but it is also being great to know that one is miserable.

398. All these same miseries prove man’s greatness. They are the miseries of a great lord, of a deposed king.

399. We are not miserable without feeling it. A ruined house is not miserable. Only man is miserable. ‘I am the man that has seen •affliction by the rod of his wrath.’ (quoted in Latin from Lamentations 3:1)

400. We have so great an idea of the human soul that we can't endure being despised—or not being esteemed—by any soul; and all the happiness of men consists in this esteem.

401. The beasts don't admire each other. A horse doesn't admire his stable-mate. Not that they aren't rivals in a race, but that is of no consequence; for, back in the stable, the heavier and worst-formed of the two doesn't give up his oats to the other, as men would have others do to them. Their virtue is satisfied with itself.

402. The greatness of man even in his greed: to have been able to extract an admirable code from it, and to have made from it a picture of benevolence.

403. *Les raisons des effets marquent la grandeur de l'homme, d'avoir tiré de concupiscence un si bel ordre.*

404. Man's greatest baseness is the pursuit of glory; but that is also the greatest mark of his excellence; for whatever possessions he may have on earth, whatever health and basic comfort, he isn't satisfied unless he has the esteem of men. He values human reason so highly that, whatever advantages he may have on earth, he isn't content if he doesn't also have an advantageous place in the ranking of human reason. This is the finest place in the world. Nothing can turn him from that desire, which 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 men. They contradict themselves by their own feelings; their **strong** nature convinces them of the greatness of man more strongly than their **weak** reason convinces them of their baseness.

405. Pride outweighing all miseries. Man either hides his miseries, or discloses them and boasts of knowing them.

406. Pride outweighs and takes away all miseries. Look at

that strange monster who has obviously lost his way. Having fallen from his place he is anxiously trying to find it. This is what all men do. Let us see who will have found it.

407. When malice has reason on its side, it becomes proud and parades reason in all its splendour. When austerity or stern choice has not arrived at the true good, and people have to revert to following nature, it is made proud by this return.

408. Evil is easy, and has countless forms; good is almost unique. But a certain kind of evil is as hard to find as what we call 'good'; and often this fact leads to this evil's being passed off as good. An extraordinary greatness of soul is needed in order to attain to it as well as to good.

409. The greatness of man is so evident that it is proved even by his misery. For what in animals is *nature* we call *misery* in man. That is our recognition that while his nature now is on a par with that of animals, he has fallen from a better nature that was once his.

For who is unhappy at not being a king, except a deposed king? Was Paulus Aemilius unhappy at being no longer consul? On the contrary, everybody thought him happy to *have been* consul, because that office could be held only for a time. But men thought Perseus so unhappy in being no longer king—because kingship implies being always king—that they thought it strange that he endured life. Who is unhappy at only having one mouth? And who will not be unhappy at having only one eye? Probably no-one ever mourned not having three eyes; but anyone who has none is inconsolable.

410. *On reprochait à Persée de ce qu'il ne se tuait pas.*

411. Despite seeing all our miseries, which press upon us and take us by the throat, we are lifted up by an instinct that we can't repress.

412. There is internal war in man between reason and the passions.

If he had only reason without passions. . .

If he had only passions without reason. . .

But having both, he can't be without war, because he can't be at peace with one of the two without being at war with the other. Thus he is always divided and opposed to himself.

413. This internal war of reason against the passions has divided the would-be peacemakers into two sects. One would renounce their passions and become gods; the other would renounce reason and become brute beasts. . . . But neither has succeeded: •reason still remains, to condemn the vileness and injustice of the passions and to disturb the peace of those who abandon themselves to them; and •the passions always remain alive in those who want to renounce them.

414. Men are so *necessarily* mad that not being mad would be another sort of madness.

415. Man's nature can be viewed in two ways: one according to his end, ·his goal·, and then he is great and incomparable; the other according to what people in general attend to—as they evaluate the natures of horses and dogs by how well they run and how controlled they are—and then man is abject and vile. These are the two ways that make us judge man differently, and lead to such disputes among philosophers.

For one of them denies the assumption of the other. One says 'He isn't born for this end, for all his actions are repugnant to it'. The other says 'When he does these base actions he is steering away from his end'.

416. Misery being deduced from greatness, and greatness from misery: **(a)** some have inferred man's misery all the more because they have taken his greatness as proof of it,

and **(b)** others have inferred his greatness with all the more force because they have inferred it from his misery. All that **(b)** could say in proof of his greatness has only served **(a)** as evidence of his misery. On the side of **(a)**:

•the greater the height from which we have fallen, the more wretched we are;

and on the side of **(b)**:

•vice versa.

The battle continues in an endless circle, because it's certain that to the extent that men have insight, they discover both the greatness and the misery of man. In short, man knows that he is wretched. So he is wretched, because he is so; but he is great because he knows it.

417. This twofold nature of man is so evident that some have thought that we had two souls. It seemed to them that a single undivided subject couldn't undergo such variations—such *sudden* variations—from inordinate self-satisfaction to a dreadful dejection of heart.

418. It is dangerous to make man see too clearly how greatly he resembles the beasts without showing him his greatness. It is also dangerous to make him see his greatness too clearly, apart from his vileness. It is still more dangerous to leave him in ignorance of both. But it is very advantageous to show him both.

Man should not think that he is on a level either with the brutes or with the angels, nor must he be ignorant of both ·aspects of his nature·. He must know both.

419. I won't allow man to rest content with either one ·of the aspects of his nature·; I want him to be without a firm floor and without rest.

420. If he exalts himself, I humble him; if he humbles himself, I exalt him; and I always contradict him, till he understands that he is an incomprehensible monster.

421. I blame equally those who choose to praise man, those who choose to blame him, and those who choose to fool around; I can approve only of those who seek, lamenting.

422. It is good to be defeated and worn out by the useless search for the true good, so that we may stretch out our arms to the Redeemer.

423. After showing man's vileness and his greatness. Let man now know his value. Let him love himself, for there is in him a nature **capable** of good; but don't let this lead him to love the vileness that is in him. Let him despise himself, for this **capacity** is barren; but let him not therefore despise this natural capacity. Let him hate himself. Let him love himself:

he has within him the capacity for knowing the truth and being happy, but he doesn't have within him any constant or satisfying truth.

I would then lead man to the desire to find truth; to be free from passions, and ready to pursue truth wherever he may find it, knowing how much his knowledge is obscured by the passions. I want him to hate the greed that pushes his will around, so that it doesn't blind him in making his choice or block him after he has chosen.

424. All these contradictions, which seem most to keep me from the knowledge of religion, have led me most quickly to the true one.

Section 7: Morality and doctrine

425. Second part. That man without faith can't know the true good, or justice. [For Pascal's introduction of 'First part', 'Second part', see **60** on page 8. See also **242** on page 42.]

All men seek happiness. There are no exceptions to this; they *all* work towards this goal, however differently they go about it. One man goes to war while another avoids it; but they are driven by the same desire, accompanied by different beliefs. The will never takes the least step towards anything but this object of happiness. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.

And yet, after so many years, no-one without faith has reached that point that everyone continually aims at. All complain—monarchs, subjects, noblemen, commoners, old, young; strong, weak, learned, ignorant; healthy, sick; of all

countries, all times, all ages, and all conditions.

Such a long, continuous, and uniform trial *should* convince us that we can't reach the good by our own efforts; but we don't learn much from this experience. There is always some slight difference between our present situation and any previous one; so we keep hoping that *this* time we'll have success. And thus with the present never satisfying us, experience dupes us and leads us—one misfortune at a time—to the culminating eternal misfortune, death.

This desire and this inability proclaim to us that there was once in man a true happiness of which he now has only the mark, only the empty trace that he in vain tries to fill from his environment, seeking from absent things the help he doesn't get from present ones. But these are all

inadequate, because the infinite abyss can only be filled by an infinite and unchanging object, i.e. by God himself. [In the original, this paragraph is presented as a single rhetorical question.]

He only is our true good, and since we have forsaken him it's a strange thing that there is nothing in nature that has not been serviceable in taking his place: the stars, the heavens, earth, the elements, plants, cabbages, leeks, animals, insects, calves, serpents, fever, pestilence, war, famine, vices, adultery, incest. And since man has lost the true good, everything can appear equally good to him—even his own destruction, opposed though that is to God, to reason, and to the whole course of nature.

Some seek good in authority, others in collecting and in the sciences, others in pleasure. Others, who are in fact nearer true good, have held that the universal good that all men desire can't consist in any of the particular things that can •be possessed by only one man or •be divided so that someone's enjoyment of one part may be less than his suffering from not having the rest. They have understood that the true good should be something that

- everyone can possess at once, without diminution and without envy, and
- no-one need lose against his will.

Their reasoning goes as follows. This desire ·for the true good· is natural to man because necessarily all men have it and it's impossible not to have it; from which they infer. . .

426. True nature being lost, everything becomes man's nature; just as the true good being lost, everything becomes his true good.

427. Man doesn't know in what rank to place himself. He has plainly gone astray and fallen from his true place without being able to find it again. He searches everywhere through impenetrable darkness, looking for it anxiously and

unsuccessfully.

428. If it's a sign of weakness to prove God by nature, don't despise Scripture; if it is a sign of strength to have known these contradictions, esteem Scripture.

429. Man's *lowness* in submitting himself to the beasts—even worshipping them.

430. The greatness and the misery of man are so evident that the true religion *must* teach us both •that there is some great source of greatness in man and •that there is a great source of misery.

It must then give us a reason for these astonishing contradictions.

In order to make man happy, it—the true religion—must show him

- that there is a God;
- that we're obliged to love him;
- that our true happiness is to be in him, and
- that our one evil is to be separated from him.

It must recognise that we are full of darkness that hinders us from knowing and loving him; and that thus, as our duties oblige us to love God and our greeds [see Glossary] turn us away from him, we are full of unrighteousness. It must explain to us this opposition we have to God and to our own good. It must teach what the remedies are for these weaknesses, and how to obtain them. So let us examine all the world's religions to see if any other than the Christian religion meets these requirements.

Will it be •the philosophers who hold that *the good in ourselves* is the whole good? Is that the true good? Have they found the remedy for our ills? Is man's arrogance cured by placing him on an equality with God? Have •those who have made us equal to the beasts, or •the Moslems who have offered us earthly pleasures as the whole good even in

eternity, produced the remedy for our greeds? Well, then, what religion *will* teach us to cure pride and greed? What religion will teach us our good, our duties, the weaknesses that turn us from them, the cause of these, the remedies for them, and the means of obtaining these remedies?

No other religion has been able to do so. Let us see what the wisdom of God will do.

‘Don’t look to men for truth or consolation. I formed you, and only I can teach you what you are. But you are not now in the state in which I formed you. I created man holy, innocent, perfect, full of light and intelligence; I communicated to him my glory and my wonders. Back then, the eye of man saw the majesty of God. He wasn’t then in the darkness that blinds him, or subject to mortality and the miseries that afflict him. But he couldn’t sustain so much glory without falling into arrogance. He wanted to make himself his own centre and independent of my help. He withdrew himself from my rule; and when he put himself on a par with me by trying to find his happiness in himself, I left him to himself. And setting in revolt the creatures that had been subject to him, I made them his enemies; so that man is now become like the beasts and so estranged from me that in his faint or confused states of knowledge he hardly retains a dim vision of his author. His senses, independent of reason and often dominating it, have led him into the pursuit of pleasure. All created things either torment or tempt him, and they dominate him, either subduing him by their strength or—a more awful and harmful domination—fascinating him by their charms.

‘That is the state men are in today. They retain some feeble sense of the happiness of their previous state; and they are plunged in the miseries of their

blindness and of the greed that has become their second nature.

‘From what I am revealing to you now you can recognise the cause of those contradictions that have astonished all men and have divided them into parties holding such different views. Observe now all the feelings of greatness and glory that the experience of so many woes can’t stifle, and see if the cause of them mustn’t be in another nature.

‘Men, it’s no use seeking within yourselves the remedy for your miseries. All your insights can achieve only the knowledge that you won’t find truth or good in yourselves. The philosophers promised you that, and they couldn’t make good on their promise. They don’t know what your true good is, or what is your true state. How could they have given remedies for your ills, when they didn’t even know them? Your chief maladies are •pride which takes you away from God and •greed which binds you to the earth; and the philosophers have done nothing but keep one or both of these diseases going. If they told you to focus on God, it was only to administer to your pride; they made you think that you are by nature like him. And those who saw the absurdity of this claim •threw you down the other cliff by making you think that your nature was like that of the beasts, and •led you to seek your good in the low pleasures that are all the animals have.

‘This is not the way to cure you of your unrighteousness, which these wise men never knew. I alone can make you understand who you are. . . .’

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.

Thus this double capacity. . .

You are not in the state of your creation.

As these two states are open, it is impossible for you not to recognise them.

Follow your own feelings, observe yourselves, and see if you don't find the living characteristics of these two natures. Would so many contradictions be found in a simple subject [i.e. in one that had no parts]?

Incomprehensible? Everything that is incomprehensible nevertheless exists. Infinite number. An infinite space equal to a finite one.

Incredible that God should unite himself to us? This thought comes only from the view of our vileness. But if you sincerely have that view, follow it as far as I have done and recognise that we are indeed so vile that we are can't, unaided, know whether his mercy can make us capable of him. I would like to know how this animal that knows itself to be so weak has the right to measure God's mercy and set limits to it suggested by his own fancy. He knows so little about what God is that he doesn't know what he himself is; and all upset by his view of his own state, he dares to say that God can't make him capable of communion with him.

But I'd like to ask him •if God asks from him anything but to know and love him, and •why—given that he is naturally capable of love and knowledge—he believes that God can't make himself knowable and lovable by him. He doesn't doubt that he at least knows that he exists, and that he loves something. Therefore, if he sees anything in the darkness that surrounds him, and if he finds some object of his love among the things on earth, why, if God imparts to him some ray of his essence, will he not be capable of knowing and of loving *him* in the manner in which it will please him to communicate himself to us? There must, then, be certainly an intolerable presumption in arguments of this

sort, although they seem to be based on an apparent humility, which is neither sincere nor reasonable if it does not make us admit that, not knowing of ourselves what we are, we can only learn it from God.

[The rest of this item is presented under quotation marks. Presumably it is God who speaks, despite the use of 'God' and 'he' rather than 'I'.]

'I don't want you to submit your belief to me without reason, and I don't aim to overcome you by tyranny. But nor do I aim to give you a reason for everything. And to reconcile these contradictions I aim to make you see—clearly, by convincing proofs—divine signs in me that convince you of what I am and gain authority for me by wonders and proofs that you can't reject; so that you may then believe the things I teach you, since you won't find any reason to reject them except that you can't know *unaided* whether they are true or not.

'God wanted to redeem men and to open salvation to those who seek it. But men render themselves so unworthy of it that it's right for God to •refuse to some because of their obstinacy what that he •grants others from a compassion that he doesn't *owe* them. If he had wanted to overcome the obstinacy of the most hardened, he could have done so by revealing himself to them so clearly that they couldn't have doubted of the truth of his essence—as it will appear at the last day with such upheavals and convulsions of nature that the dead will rise again and the blindest will see him.

'That is not how he wanted to appear in his gentle coming, because, with so many men making themselves unworthy of his mercy, he wanted to leave them without the good that they don't want. So it wouldn't have been right for him to appear in a manifestly divine manner that would completely convince all men; but nor would it have been right for him to come in such a hidden way that he couldn't be known •even•

by those who sincerely sought him. He wanted to make himself perfectly knowable by the latter. Thus, wanting to appear openly to those who seek him with all their heart, and to be hidden from those who flee from him with all their heart, he has regulated the knowledge of himself so as to give signs of himself that are visible to those who do seek him and not to those who don't.

'There is enough light for those who only want to see, and enough darkness for those who have a contrary disposition.'

431. No-one else has known that man is the most excellent creature. **(i)** Some have thoroughly recognised the reality of his excellence ·but· have considered as mean and ungrateful the low opinions men naturally have of themselves; and **(ii)** others have thoroughly recognised how real this vileness is and have treated with arrogant ridicule the feelings of greatness that are also natural to man.

'Lift your eyes to God', say **(i)**, 'see him whom you resemble and who has created you to worship him. You can make yourselves like him; wisdom will make you equal to him if you will follow it.' 'Raise your heads, free men', says Epictetus. And **(ii)** say 'Bend your eyes to the earth, wretched worm that you are, and consider the beasts whose companion you are.'

Then what will man become? Will he be equal to God or to the beasts? What a terrifying difference! What will we be, then? Who doesn't see from all this that man has gone astray, that he has fallen from his place which he anxiously seeks and can't find again? And who will direct him to it? The greatest men have failed.

432. Pyrrhonism is true; for men before Jesus-Christ didn't know where they were, or whether they were great or small. And those who have said 'great' or 'small' knew nothing about it and guessed without reason and by chance. They were

always wrong, also, in rejecting 'great' or 'small'.

'What you ignorantly seek, religion announces to you.'
[Misquoted, in Latin, from Acts 17:23]

433. For a religion to be true it must know our nature, knowing its greatness and its littleness, and the reason for both. What religion but the Christian has known this?

434. The chief arguments of the pyrrhonians (I skip the lesser ones) are these. **(a)** We have no certainty of the truth of these principles apart from faith and revelation. It's true that we naturally perceive them in ourselves, but this is not a convincing proof of their truth because apart from faith we have no certainty whether man was created by •a good God, •a wicked demon, or •chance, so it is doubtful whether these principles we find in ourselves are •true, •false, or •uncertain.

(b) Apart from faith, no-one is certain whether he is awake or sleeping, given that during ·dreaming· sleep we believe that we're awake as firmly as we do when we are awake; we believe we see spaces, shapes, and motions; we're aware of the passage of time, and measure it; in short, we act as if we were awake. So that on our own admission, half of our life is passed in sleep, when we have no idea of the truth, however things may appear, because at those times all our states of mind are illusions. So who knows whether this other half of our life, in which we think we're awake, is not another slightly different kind of sleep?

And who doubts that if we dreamed in company and our dreams happened to fit together (which they quite often do), and if we were always alone when awake, we would believe that matters were reversed? In short, as we often dream that we dream, piling one dream on another, mightn't the following be the case?

Our ·supposedly waking· life is itself only a dream

on which the other dreams are grafted; a dream from which we wake at death, and during which we have as few principles of truth and goodness as during natural sleep, these different thoughts that disturb us being only illusions like the passage of time and the vain fancies of our ·actual· dreams.

I omit minor arguments, such as the pyrrhonian talk against the impressions of custom, education, *mœurs*, country and the like. Though these impressions influence the majority of common folk, who dogmatise only on shallow foundations, they are upset by the least breath of the pyrrhonians. If you aren't sufficiently convinced of this, see their books; you will very quickly become convinced, perhaps too much so.

On the dogmatist side I mention their one strong argument, namely that when speaking in good faith and sincerely we can't doubt natural principles.

Against this the pyrrhonians oppose the uncertainty of our origin, including uncertainty about our nature. The dogmatists have yet to reply to this objection. . .

These are the chief arguments on one side and on the other.

So there it is—open war among men, in which each must choose a side, either with dogmatism or pyrrhonism. Anyone planning to remain neutral is a paradigm pyrrhonian. This neutrality is the essence of the sect: he who is not against them is splendidly for them. They are not *for* themselves; they are neutral, indifferent, not committed to anything, even themselves.

So what is man to do in this state? Doubt everything? Doubt whether he is awake, whether he is being pinched, or whether he is being burned? will he doubt whether he doubts? whether he exists? We can't go so far as that; and I declare that in fact there never has been a completely

thorough pyrrhonian. Nature sustains our feeble reason and prevents it raving to this extent.

Then is man to say on the contrary that he certainly possesses truth? He who, when pressed ever so little, can show no title to it and is forced to let go his hold?

What a chimera, then, is man! What a novelty, what a monster, what a chaos, what a contradiction, what a freak! Judge of all things, imbecile worm of the earth; depository of truth, sewer of uncertainty and error; the glory and garbage of the universe!

Who will unravel this tangle?

Nature confutes the pyrrhonians, and reason confutes the dogmatists. You men who try to find out by your natural reason what your true condition is, what will you become? You can't avoid both these sects, but you can't adhere to either one of them.

Know then, arrogant man, what a paradox you are to yourself. Weak reason, humble yourself! Foolish nature, be silent! Learn that man infinitely surpasses man, and learn from your master your true condition, of which you are ignorant. Hear God!

In short, if man had never been corrupted, he would in his innocence have an assured enjoyment of both truth and happiness; and if man had always been corrupt he would have no idea of truth or bliss. But, wretched as we are—and *more* wretched than if there were no greatness in our condition—we have an idea of happiness and can't reach it; we detect an image of truth and possess only a lie. We're incapable both of absolute ignorance and of certain knowledge, which makes it obvious that we used to have a level of perfection from which we have unhappily fallen.

It's an astonishing thing, though, that the mystery furthest removed from our knowledge should be something without which we can't have any knowledge of ourselves; I'm

talking about the transmission of sin.

It is quite certain that nothing shocks our reason more than the claim that the first man's sin has conferred guilt on those who are so distant from this source that they seem incapable of having any part in it. This transmission [*écoulement* = 'trickle-down'] doesn't only appear to us impossible; it also strikes us as very unjust. For what is more contrary to the rules of our miserable justice than to damn eternally an infant who is incapable of will, for a sin that he seems to have so little part in—a sin that he supposedly committed six thousand years before he was in existence? Certainly nothing jolts us more roughly 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 this mystery is not as inconceivable to man as man is inconceivable without this mystery.

From this it appears that God wanted to make the difficulty of our existence unintelligible to us, and has therefore concealed the knot so high—or, better, so low—that we are quite incapable of reaching it; so that we can truly know ourselves only by the simple submission of our reason, not by its proud exertions.

These foundations, solidly established on the unshakable authority of religion, let us know that there are two equally certain truths of faith:

(a) Man, in the state of creation or in the state of grace, is raised above all nature, made like God and sharing in his divinity;

(b) Man, in the state of corruption and sin, has fallen from this state and been made like the beasts.

These two propositions are equally solid and certain.

Scripture plainly declares this to us when it says in some places: **(a)** 'And my delights were with the sons of men'

[Proverbs 8:31]; 'I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh' [Joel 2:28]; 'You are gods' [Psalm 82:6]. And in other places: **(b)** 'All flesh is grass' [Isaiah 40:6]; 'Man being in honour abideth not. He is like the beasts that perish' [Psalm 49:12]; 'I said in my heart concerning the sons of men that they might see that they themselves are beasts.' [Ecclesiastes 3:18—Pascal gives all these quotations in Latin].

From which it clearly appears that man by grace is made like God, sharing in his divinity, and that without grace he is like the brute beasts.

435. Without these divine items of knowledge, what could men do but become either elated by the inner sense they still have of their past greatness or despondent at the sight of their present weakness?

That is because they, not seeing the whole truth, haven't been able to achieve perfect virtue. So they couldn't escape both the sources of all vice,

- pride, for those who saw nature as uncorrupt, and
- apathy [see Glossary], for those who saw it as corrupt beyond repair,

leaving them with no option but to surrender through cowardice or escape through pride. If they knew man's excellence they were ignorant of his corruption; so that they easily avoided apathy but were swallowed up by arrogance. And if they recognised the infirmity of man's nature they were ignorant of its dignity; so that they could easily avoid vanity but were plunged in despair.

Thence arise the different schools of the stoics and epicureans, the dogmatists, platonic sceptics, etc.

The Christian religion alone has been able to cure these two vices, not

- in accordance with earthly 'wisdom', by using one to expel the other, but
- in accordance with the simplicity of the Gospel, by

expelling both.

For it teaches the righteous—whom it raises even to participation in divinity itself—that in this lofty state they still carry the source of all corruption, which makes them throughout their life subject to error, misery, death, and sin; and it calls out to the most ungodly that they are capable of their Redeemer’s grace. Thus, frightening those whom it justifies and consoling those whom it condemns, religion so justly tempers fear with hope, through the double capacity we all have for grace and for sin, that it

- humbles infinitely more than reason alone can do, but without creating despair; and
- exalts infinitely more than natural pride can do, but without puffing men up;

thus making it evident that it—the Christian religion—the only source that is free from error and vice, is the only thing whose role is to instruct men and correct them.

Who then can refuse to believe and worship this heavenly light? Isn’t it crystal clear that we sense within ourselves indelible marks of excellence? And isn’t it also true that we experience *hourly* the results of our deplorable condition?

What does this chaos and monstrous confusion proclaim to us—with an irresistibly powerful voice—but the reality of these two states?

436. All men’s occupations aim at the acquisition of some good; and they can’t have a title to show that they possess it justly (for *ownership* is a product of human whims, not justice), nor do they have strength to hold it securely. It is the same with knowledge, for disease takes it away. We are incapable of truth and of goodness.

437. We hope for truth, and find within ourselves only uncertainty.

We seek happiness, and find only misery and death.

We can’t *not hope for* truth and happiness, and we can’t *have* certainty or happiness.

We are left with this desire as much to punish us as to give us a sense of the height from which we have fallen.

438. If man isn’t made for God, why is he happy only in God?

If man is made for God, why is he so opposed to God?

439. Man does not act by reason, which constitutes his being.

440. The corruption of reason is shown by the existence of so many different and extravagant *mœurs*. For man to stop living within himself, the truth had to come.

441. As for me, I declare that as soon as the Christian religion reveals the principle that *human nature is corrupt and has fallen away from God*, that opens my eyes to see signs of this truth everywhere; for nature testifies everywhere—both within man and outside him—to a lost God and a corrupt nature.

442. There is no way of separating the knowledge of man’s true nature, of his true good, of true virtue, and of true religion.

443. The more light we have, the more greatness we discover in man, and the more baseness. Ordinary men. Those who are more educated. Philosophers. They astonish ordinary men. Christians astonish the philosophers.

So who will be surprised to see that religion only makes us know in depth things that we already recognise as far as our enlightenment takes us?

444. What men have been able to discover through the utmost stretch of their knowledge are things that this religion taught to her *children*.

445. Original sin is foolishness to men, but it is offered as such. You mustn’t reproach me for the lack of reason in

this doctrine, because I present it as being without reason. 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men' [1 Corinthians 1:25]. For without this doctrine, what shall we say that man is? His whole state depends on this elusive point. And how would it be perceived by his reason, since it is contrary to reason and his reason, far from discovering it, *pushes it away* when it is presented?

446. Ample tradition of original sin according to the Jews.

Genesis 8:21: 'The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.'

Moses Haddarschan: 'This evil leaven is placed in man at the moment he is formed.'

Massechet Succa: 'This evil leaven has seven names in Scripture. It is called "evil", "foreskin", "uncleanness", "enemy", "scandal", "heart of stone", "north wind"; all this signifies the wickedness concealed and impressed in the heart of man.'

Midrash Tehillim says the same thing, and says that God will rescue man's good nature from the evil.

This wickedness is renewed every day against man, as it is written in Psalm 37:32: 'The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him; but God will not abandon him.' This wickedness tempts the heart of man in this life and will accuse him in the next.

All this is found in the Talmud.

Midrash Tehillim, writing on Psalm 4:4 'Stand in awe and sin not', says 'Stand in awe and terrify your greed, and it won't lead you into sin'. And writing on Psalm 36:1 'The wicked has said in his heart "These is no fear of God before me", Midrash Tehillim says 'That is to say that the wickedness natural to man has said that to the wicked.'

Midrash el Kohelet: 'A child who is poor and wise is better than an old and foolish king who can't foresee the future.'

The child is man's virtue, and the king is his wickedness. It is called 'king' because all the members obey it, and 'old' because it is in the human heart from infancy to old age, and 'foolish' because it leads man on the road to perdition, which he does not foresee.

The same thing is in Midrash Tehillim.

Bereshith Rabbah, on Psalm 35:10 'Lord, all my bones will bless you, who deliverest the poor from the tyrant', writes: 'And is there a greater tyrant than the evil leaven?' And on Proverbs 25:21 'If your enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink', he writes: 'That is to say, if the evil leaven is hungry give him the bread of wisdom that it is spoken of in Proverbs 9, and if he is thirsty give him the water that it is spoken in Isaiah 55.'

Midrash Tehillim says the same thing, and says that when Scripture in that passage speaks of the 'enemy' it means the evil leaven; and that in giving it that bread and water we are heaping coals of fire on its head.

Midrash el Kohelet on Ecclesiastes 9:14 'A great king besieged a little city' writes 'This great king is the evil leaven; the great siege-engines he built against it are temptations; and the poor wise man who delivered it is virtue.' [This is actually a commentary on verses 14–15: 'There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. . .']

And on Psalm 41:1: 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor.'

And on Psalm 78:39 'The spirit passeth away, and cometh not again', el Kohelet writes ' . . . from which some have erroneously argued against the immortality of the soul. But the sense is that this spirit is the evil leaven, which accompanies man till death and will not return at the resurrection.' And on Psalm 103: the same thing. And on Psalm 16.

Principles of the rabbis: two Messiahs.

447. Men have declared that righteousness has departed the earth—‘No-one is happy before death’ [quoted in Latin from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*]. Will it be said that this shows that they knew of original sin? Does that mean that they knew death to be the beginning of eternal and essential happiness?

448. Miton sees well that nature is corrupt and that men are opposed to honesty; but he doesn’t know why they can’t fly higher.

449. After the treatment of Corruption, add this: ‘It is just that all those who are in that state should know it, both those who are content with it and those who aren’t; but it isn’t just that all should see redemption.’

450. Anyone who doesn’t know himself to be full of arrogance, ambition, greed, weakness, misery, and injustice is indeed blind. What can we say of a man who knows this and doesn’t want to be delivered from it?

So what can we have but •esteem for a religion that knows man’s defects so well, and •desire for the truth of a religion that promises such desirable remedies?

451. All men naturally hate one another. They employ greed as far as possible in the service of public good; but this is only pretence, a false image of love, because basically it is only hate.

452. Pitying the unfortunate is not contrary to greed. On the contrary, we like to be able to provide such evidence of friendship and to acquire a reputation for kindly feeling, without *giving* anything.

453. Excellent rules of policy, morality, and justice have been based on—extracted from—greed.

But basically this vile basis of man, this *figmentum malum*, is only covered over, not taken away. [The Latin phrase

is from Genesis 8:21: ‘the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth’.]

454. Injustice. They haven’t found any other way of satisfying their greed without harming others.

455. The *self* [see Glossary] is hateful [see Glossary]. That doesn’t lead you, Miton, to take it away; rather, you cover it up. So you are still hateful.

‘No; for in acting as we do to oblige everybody, we give no more cause for hatred of us.’

That is true, if what we hate in the *self* is only the vexation that comes to us from it.

But if I hate it because it is unjust, and because it makes itself the centre of everything, I will always hate it.

In short, the *self* has two qualities:

- it is unjust in itself, since it makes itself the centre of everything;
- it is annoying to others, because it wants to enslave them; for each *self* is the enemy of all others and would like to be their tyrant.

You take away the annoyance but not the injustice; so you don’t make the *self* lovable to those who hate injustice. You make it lovable only to the unjust, who don’t any longer see it as an enemy. So *you* remain unjust and can please only the unjust.

456. What a perverted judgement it is that makes everyone place himself above the rest of the world, and prefer his own good—and the continuance of his own good fortune and life—to that of the entire rest of the world!

457. Each person is an *everything* to himself; for when he dies, everything dies for him. That leads to each person’s thinking that he is everything to everyone. We shouldn’t judge nature according to ourselves, but according to nature.

458. ‘All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, or the

lust of the eyes, or the pride of life' [1 John 2:16]. Wretched is the cursed land that these three rivers of fire enclose rather than irrigate! Happy are those who—

- on these rivers but not *in* them,
- not carried along by them but unmoving, fixed,
- not standing but seated on a low and secure base

—don't stand up before the light [of the day of judgment?] but, after resting in peace, stretch out their hands to him who will lift them up and make them stand firmly upright in the porches of holy Jerusalem! Their pride will no longer be able to attack them and beat them down; yet they will weep, not at the sight of all the perishable things swept away by the torrents, but in the remembrance of their beloved country, heavenly Jerusalem, which they never stop remembering during their long exile. [Re 'lust', see Glossary.]

459. The rivers of Babylon rush and fall and sweep away. O holy Zion, where all is firm and nothing falls!

We must sit on the waters: not under them or in them but *on* them; and not standing but seated. Seated to be humble, and *on* them to be secure. But in the porches of Jerusalem we will stand.

Let us see if this pleasure is stable or transitory; if it passes away, it is a river of Babylon.

460. Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride, etc.

There are three orders of things: the flesh, the mind, and the will. The carnal [= 'flesh-oriented'] are the rich, the kings; their concern is with the body. Inquirers and scientists; their concern is with the mind. The wise are concerned with justice.

God must reign over all, and everything must be related to him. In things of the flesh, lust reigns specially. In intellectual matters, inquiry *reigns* specially. In wisdom, pride specially. It's not that a man can't boast of wealth

or knowledge, but in those cases pride is not appropriate; granting to a man that he is scientifically learned, one can still convince him that he is wrong to be proud. The proper place for pride is in wisdom, for you cannot grant to a man that he has made himself wise and tell him that that he is wrong to be proud; for it is not wrong. God alone gives wisdom, and that is why 'he that glories, let him glory in the Lord' [1 Corinthians 1:31].

461. The three lusts have made three sects; and the philosophers have done nothing but follow one of the three lusts.

462. Search for the true good. Ordinary men place the good in fortune and external goods, or at least in diversion. Philosophers have shown the vanity of all that, and have placed it where they could.

463. Against philosophers who have God without Jesus-Christ.

Philosophers believe that only God is worthy to be loved and admired; and they have wanted to be loved and admired by men; and they don't know their *own* corruption. If they feel that they are suffused by feelings of love and admiration, and find their chief delight in that—fine! let them think themselves good! But if they dislike having no inclination but the desire to establish themselves in the esteem of men; if their whole perfection consists only in getting (not forcing) men find their happiness in loving *them*, I declare that this 'perfection' is horrible. What! they have known God and have not wanted solely that men should love him but that they should stop short at *them*! They have wanted to be the object of the happiness that men seek.

464. We are full of things that take us out of ourselves.

Our instinct makes us feel that we'll have to seek our happiness outside ourselves. Our passions impel us outside, even when there's nothing there to arouse them. External

objects tempt us of themselves, and call to us, even when we're not thinking of them. So it has been no use for the philosophers to say: 'Retire within yourselves, you will find your good there.' We don't believe them, and those who do believe them are the most empty and the most stupid.

465. The stoics say: 'Retire within yourselves; that is where you will find your rest.' And that is not true.

Others say: 'Go out of yourselves; seek happiness in diversion.' And that is not true. Illnesses come.

Happiness is neither outside us nor in us. It is in God, both outside us and in us.

466. Even if Epictetus saw the way perfectly, he only says to men 'You are following a wrong road'; he shows that there is another way, but he doesn't lead to it. It is the way of *wanting* what God *wants*. Jesus-Christ alone leads to it: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life' [John 14:6].

The vices of Zeno himself.

467. [This item is perfectly inscrutable. It concerns the stoic philosopher Epictetus, and a side-swipe he once made against the Christians.]

468. No other religion has proposed to men to hate themselves. So no other religion can please those who hate themselves and seek a being who is truly lovable. . . . [The rest of the item doesn't make sense. Evidently some kind of mishap in the original.]

469. I sense that I might not have existed; for the *self* [*moi*] consists in my thought; so I [*moi*] who think would not have existed if my mother had been killed before I was born. So I am not a necessary being, nor am I eternal or infinite; but I see very well that there exists in nature a being that is necessary, eternal and infinite.

470. 'If I had seen a miracle,' they say, 'I would have been converted.' How can they be sure they would do something

that they know nothing about? They have a *picture* of this conversion as consisting in a socially familiar kind of looking-up to God and being in conversation with him. Genuine conversion consists in •annihilating oneself before the universal being whom one has so often provoked, and who can justly destroy one at any time, and in •recognising that we can do nothing without him, and have deserved from him nothing but his displeasure. It consists in •knowing that there is an unconquerable opposition between us and God, and that without a mediator there can be no communion with him.

471. It's not right that men should attach themselves to me, even if they do it with pleasure and voluntarily. I would be deceiving anyone in whom I had created this desire, because I am not anyone's goal and I don't have what is needed to satisfy them. Aren't I about to die? So the object of their attachment will die. Thus, just as •I would be to blame if I caused people to believe a falsehood—even if I did this with gentle persuasion, and even if their having this belief gave pleasure to them, which gave pleasure to me—so also •I am to blame for getting anyone to love me. If people are on the brink of accepting a lie, I ought to warn them not to believe it, whatever advantage I might get from their doing so; and in the same way if I attract persons to attach themselves to me, I ought to warn them not to do so; for they ought to spend their life and their care in pleasing God or in seeking him.

472. Self-will won't ever bring satisfaction, and wouldn't do so even if it could achieve everything it wanted; but from the moment we renounce it we are satisfied. Without it we can't be discontented; with it we can't be content.

473. Let us imagine a body full of thinking members.

474. To regulate the love we owe ourselves, we must •imagine a body full of thinking members, for we are members of the

whole, and must •see how each member should love itself, etc... .

475. If the feet and the hands had a will of their own, they wouldn't be in good order unless they submitted this particular will to the primary will that governs the entire body. If they didn't do that, they would be in disorder and misery; but in willing only the good of the body, they would achieve their own good.

476. We must love only God and hate only ourselves.

Suppose that

- the foot has never known that it belongs to the body—that there's a body on which it depends—and that
- the only thing it knows of or loves is itself; and that then
- it discovers 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 brought it life, the body which would have annihilated it if it had rejected and pulled apart from the foot, as it—the foot—had kept itself apart from the body! What prayers for its preservation in the body! And with what submission would it let itself be governed by the will that rules the body, even as far as consenting to be amputated if that were necessary. Without that last point it would lose its character as a member, because every member must be quite willing to perish for the body, for which every member exists.

477. It is false that we are worthy of the love of others; it is wrong of us to want them to love us. If we had been born reasonable and impartial, knowing ourselves and others, we wouldn't have given this bias to our will. However, we *are* born with it; so we are born in the wrong, for everything inclines to itself. This is contrary to all order. We should

incline to the general good; and the inclination to oneself is the beginning of all disorder, in war, in politics, in economy, and in the individual human body. So the will is depraved.

If the members of natural and civil communities are inclined to the welfare of the body, ·i.e. of the community they belong to·, the communities themselves ought to incline to another more general body of which *they* are members. So we ought to incline to the whole. So we are born unjust and depraved.

478. When we want to think of God, is there nothing that turns us away and tempts us to think of something else? All this is bad, and is born in us.

479. If there is a God, we should love only him and not transitory creatures. The reasoning of the ungodly in the Book of Wisdom is based on there being no God. 'On that supposition', they say, 'let us take delight in creatures' [Wisdom of Solomon 2:6]. That is a last resort. But if there were a God to love, they would have reached not that conclusion but its opposite. That is what the wise conclude: 'There is a God, so let us not take delight in creatures.'

So everything that incites us to attach ourselves to creatures is bad, because it prevents us from •serving God if we know him or •seeking him if we don't. Well, we are full of greed; so we are full of evil; so we ought to hate ourselves and everything that arouses us to attach ourselves to anything but God.

480. For the members to be happy, they must have a will and must conform it to the body.

481. The examples of the noble deaths of Spartans and others scarcely touch us, for what do they matter to us? But the example of the death of the martyrs does touch us, because they are 'our members'. We have a common tie with them. Their resolution can make us resolute, not only by

example but also, perhaps, because this is something we owe them. There is nothing of this in the examples of the pagans. We have no tie with them; just as you aren't enriched by seeing a wealthy foreigner, but are enriched by seeing your father or husband wealthy.

482. Having made heaven and earth, which don't know the happiness of their being, God wanted to make beings who *would* know it and who would constitute a body of thinking members. For our members—our hands, feet, etc.—don't have the experience of being happy that they are united, that they are wonderfully adaptable, and that nature takes care to send to them the animal spirits that make them grow and endure. How happy they would be if they saw and felt this! But for this they would need to have •intelligence to know it, and •good-will to consent to the will of the universal soul. But if after getting such intelligence each member used it to keep nourishment for itself without letting it pass to the other members, it would be not only unjust but also miserable, and would hate rather than love itself. The blessedness of the members, as well as their duty, consists in their consent 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 neither life, being, nor movement except •through the spirit of the body and •for the body.

The separate member, seeing no longer the body to which it belongs, has only a perishing and dying existence. Yet it believes it is a whole, and since it can't see the body on which it depends, it thinks it depends only on itself and wants to make *itself* the centre and the body. But not having in itself a source of life, it can only wander around, stunned in the uncertainty of its being; because it sees that it is not a body but doesn't see that it is a member of a body. Finally, when

it comes to know itself, it comes back home, as it were, and no longer loves itself except for the body. It deplores its past wanderings.

It can't by its nature love anything else except *for* itself and as subject *to* itself, because each thing loves itself more than all. But in loving the body it does love itself, because the member exists only in the body, by it, and for it. 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit' [1 Corinthians 6:17].

The body loves the hand; and if the hand had a will, it ought to love itself in the same way that the soul loves it. All love that goes beyond that is wrong.

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, one is in the other, like the Three Persons ·of the Trinity·.

484. Two laws suffice to rule the whole Christian Republic better than all the political laws.

485. So the true and only virtue is •to hate oneself (for greed makes one hateful [see Glossary]) and •to seek a truly lovable being to love. But we can't love what is outside ourselves, so we must love a being who is *in* us without *being* us; and that is true of every single man. Now, only the universal Being answers to this description. The kingdom of God is within us; the universal good is within us, is ourselves, and is not us. [That's what he wrote: *le bien universel est en nous, est nous-même, et n'est pas nous.*]

486. The dignity of man in his innocence consisted in using and having dominion over creatures, but now ·it consists· in separating himself from them and subjecting himself to them.

487. Every religion which
•in its faith: doesn't worship one God as the source of everything, and

•in its morality: doesn't love a single God as the object of everything
is false.

488. . . . But it is impossible that God should ever be the goal if he is not the driving force. We lift our eyes on high, but are standing on sand; and the ground will melt and we'll fall while looking at the heavens.

489. If there is one source of everything, one goal of everything, everything by him, everything for him, then the true religion will have to be one that teaches us to worship only him and to love only him. But as we find ourselves unable to •worship what we don't know, and unable to •love anything but ourselves, the religion that instructs us in these duties must also instruct us concerning these •two• inabilities, and teach us the remedies for them. It teaches us that •by one man all was lost and the bond between God and us broken, and that •by one man the bond is renewed.

We are born so opposed to this love of God, and it is so necessary, that we must be born guilty—otherwise God would be unjust.

490. Men, not being accustomed to create merit, but only to reward it where they find it already created, base their thoughts about God on themselves.

491. The true religion must have as a characteristic the obligation to love its God. This is very just, yet no •other• religion has commanded this; ours has done so. It must also recognise •human• greed and weakness; ours has done so. It must have provided remedies for these; one is prayer. . . .

492. Someone must be really blind if he doesn't hate •his own self-love and •the instinct that leads him to make himself God. Who doesn't see that there is nothing so opposed to justice and truth? For it is false that we deserve this, and it is unjust and impossible to achieve it, because everyone is

asking for the same thing. So it is a manifest injustice that is innate in us: we can't get rid of it, and we must get rid of it.

Yet no •other• religion has •indicated 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 remedies for it.

493. The true religion teaches our duties, our weaknesses (pride and greed), and the remedies (humility and mortification).

494. The true religion must be one that teaches greatness and misery, that leads to self-esteem and self-contempt, to love and to hate.

495. If it is an extraordinary blindness to live without investigating what we are, it is a terrible one to live an evil life while believing in God.

496. Experience shows us an enormous difference between piety and goodness.

497. Against those who, trusting to God's mercy, live heedlessly without doing good works. Just as the two sources of our sins are pride and apathy, God has revealed to us two of his attributes to cure them, his mercy and his justice.

The distinctive role of justice is to humble pride, however holy our works may be, 'And enter not into judgment with your servant: for in your sight will no man living be justified' [Psalm 143:2]; and the distinctive role of mercy is to combat apathy by urging good works, according to this: 'The goodness of God leads to repentance' [Romans 2:4], and this, said by the Ninevites: 'Let us do penance to see if perhaps he will have mercy on us' [roughly quoted from Jonah 3:9]. And thus mercy is so far from authorising slackness that it is on the contrary the quality that outright attacks it; so that instead of saying 'If God weren't merciful, we would have to make every kind of effort after virtue', we should say on the contrary that it's

just because God is merciful that we must make every kind of effort.

498. It is true there is difficulty in entering into piety. But this difficulty comes not from piety's coming into us, but from the impiety that is still there. If our senses weren't opposed to penitence, and if our corruption weren't opposed to God's purity, we wouldn't have any difficulty about this. We suffer only in proportion as the vice that is natural to us resists supernatural grace; our heart feels torn apart by these opposed efforts; but it would be very unfair to impute this violence to God's drawing us on rather than to the world's holding us back. Comparably: a child in pain from being torn from the arms of robbers by its mother should love the loving and legitimate violence of her who procures its liberty, and hate only the impetuous and tyrannical violence of those who detain it unjustly. The most cruel war that God could make with men in this life would be to leave them without the war that he came to bring. 'I came not to send peace, but a sword' [Matthew 10:34], and 'I am come to send fire on the earth' [Luke 12:49]. Before him the world lived in this false peace.

499. Outward acts. There nothing so perilous as what pleases God and men, because the states that please God and men have one property that pleases God and another that pleases men. Take the case of the great Saint Teresa: what pleased God was her deep humility in her revelations; what pleased men was their content. So we strain every nerve and muscle trying to imitate her discourses, thinking that this is the way to imitate her state, whereas actually the way to do that is to love what God loves and to put ourselves in the state that God loves.

It is better not to fast and be humble about this than to fast and be self-satisfied.

Pharisee, Publican. [This refers to the parable in Luke 18:9–14.]

What good will it do me to remember it [perhaps meaning 'to remember the rules laying down my duties'] if that can hurt me as much as help me, and everything depends on the blessing of God, who blesses only things done for him, according to his rules and along his paths, the *how* being thus as important as the *what*—and perhaps *more* important, because God can bring forth good out of evil, and without God we bring forth evil out of good?

500. Understanding the words 'good' and 'evil'.

501. First level: being blamed for doing evil and praised for doing good. Second level: being neither praised nor blamed.

502. Abraham took nothing for himself, but only for **his servants**. So the righteous man takes for himself nothing of the world (not even its applause), but only for **his passions**, which he treats as servants, telling one to go and another to come. [This is an echo of Matthew 8:9.] 'Unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him' [Genesis 4:7]. His passions thus mastered are virtues: avarice, jealousy, anger. Even God attributes these to himself, and they are as much virtues as kindness, pity, constancy, which are also passions. We must use them as slaves, leaving them their food and preventing the soul from taking any of it; for when the passions are in charge they are vices; and then they give some of their food to the soul, which takes it in and is poisoned by it.

503. Philosophers have consecrated the vices by placing them in God himself. Christians have consecrated the virtues.

504. The just man acts by faith in the least things; when he reproves his servants, he wants them to be corrected by the spirit of God, and prays to God to correct them; he expects as much from God as from his own reproofs, and prays to

God to bless his corrections. And so in his other actions.

505. All things can be fatal to us, even the things made to serve us; as in nature walls can kill us, stairs can kill us if we don't walk carefully.

The least movement affects all nature; throw a rock into the water and the entire ocean changes. Thus, in grace, the least action affects everything by its consequences; so everything is important.

In each action we must look beyond the action at our past, present, and future states, and at others whom the action affects, and see the relations of all those things. And then we will be very cautious.

506. May God not impute to us our sins, i.e. all the consequences and upshots of our sins, which are dreadful, even those of the smallest faults if we follow them out coldly!

507. The movements of grace, hardness of the heart, external circumstances.

508. Grace is needed to turn a man into a saint; and anyone who doubts this doesn't know what a saint is or what a man is.

509. Philosophers. A fine thing to tell a man who doesn't know himself that he should, unaided, come to God! And a fine thing to say this to a man who *does* know himself!

510. Man is not worthy of God, but he is not incapable of being made worthy.

It is [would be?] unworthy of God to unite himself to wretched man; but it is not unworthy of God to pull him out of his misery.

511. Someone who says that man is too insignificant to deserve communion with God must be very great to make a judgment on such a matter.

512. All of it is the body of Jesus-Christ, but it can't be said to be all of the body of Jesus-Christ. [The 'it' in question is

the bread used in the eucharist [see Glossary].] If two things unite without either of them changing, that doesn't entitle us to say that one becomes the other. Thus the soul being united to the body. The fire to the timber, without change. But change is needed for the form of the one become the form of the other. Thus the union of the Word [i.e. of God] to man.

Because my body without my soul would not constitute the body of a man, my soul united to any matter whatsoever will constitute my body. This doesn't 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 body.

Individual identity in regard to the same time requires identity of matter. Thus if God united my soul to a body in China, that very body would be in China. . . .

513. Why God has established prayer.

(1) To give his creatures the dignity of causality.

(2) To teach us from whom our virtue comes.

(3) To make us deserve other virtues by work.

But to keep his own pre-eminence, he grants prayer to whom he pleases.

Objection: But they will believe that they are drawing the prayer out of themselves.

That is absurd: for since without faith they cannot have the virtues, how are they going to have faith? Isn't there more distance from infidelity to faith than from faith to virtue?

[In the rest of this item, 'worthy' translates *mérite* once, then *Meruit* (Latin) twice, then relatives of *dignus* (Latin) four times.]

'Worthy' - this word is ambiguous.

' . . . which made us worthy of such a redeemer' [ceremony for Holy Saturday]

' . . . which made us worthy to touch the holy limbs' [ceremony for Good Friday]

' . . . I am not worthy' [Luke 7:6]

'... who eats unworthily' [1 Corinthians 11:29]
 '... worthy to receive' [Revelation 4:11]
 '... find me worthy' [ceremony of the Holy Virgin]. . . .

Saint Augustine said openly that strength would be taken away from the righteous. But it is by chance that he said it; for the occasion for saying it might never have occurred. But his principles show us that when the occasion for it did occur, he couldn't possibly not say it or say anything contradicting it. So what is necessarily true is that

when the occasion presented itself he was forced to say it;

what is true only by chance is that

he said it when an occasion presented itself.

But the two are all that we can ask.

514. [This long item concerns prayer. It is astonishingly obscure, and some of the original text seems to be corrupt.]

515. The elect don't know their virtues, and the damned don't know how great their sins are. 'Lord, when have we seen you thirsty, hungry, etc?'

516. 'Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith' [Romans 3:27]. Then faith is not within our power like the works of the law, and is given to us in another way.

517. Comfort yourselves! It is not from yourselves that you should expect it [= grace?]; on the contrary you have to expect it by expecting nothing from yourselves.

518. Every kind of person, even the martyrs, have something to fear, according to Scripture.

The greatest pain of purgatory is the uncertainty of the judgement.

'a God that hidest thyself' [Isaiah 45:15]

519. 'Many believed on him. Then Jesus said: "If you continue. . . then you are my disciples indeed, and the truth

will make you free." They answered him: "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou 'You will be made free?'".' [John 8:30-33]

There is a great difference between disciples and true disciples. The test for this is to tell them that the truth will make them free: if they answer that they *are* free and that it's in their power to come out of enslavement to the devil, they are indeed disciples, but not true disciples.

520. The law didn't destroy nature; it instructed it. Grace didn't destroy the law; it caused it to be obeyed.

Faith received at baptism is the source of the whole life of Christians and of the converted.

521. Grace will always be in the world, and nature also; so that grace is in way natural. And thus there will always be **a** Pelagians, and always **b** Catholics, and always strife; because the first birth makes **a** one lot and the grace of being born-again makes **b** the other. [Pelagians denied the doctrine of original sin, and held that a person's salvation depends partly on a free act of his own rather than solely on God's grace.]

522. The law required what it did not give. Grace gives what it requires.

523. All faith consists in Jesus-Christ and in Adam, and all morality consists in greed [see Glossary] and in grace.

524. There's no doctrine more appropriate to man than this one that teaches him **•**his double capacity for receiving and losing grace, because of **•**the double peril to which he is exposed, of despair or of pride.

525. The philosophers did not prescribe states of mind suitable to the two states.

They inspired feelings of pure greatness, and that is not man's state.

They inspired feelings of pure lowness, and that is not man's state.

There should be feelings of lowness,

- not from nature but from penitence,
- not to stay in them but to go on to greatness.

There should be feelings of greatness,

- not from merit, but from grace,

and after having passed through lowness.

526. Misery induces despair, pride induces presumption.

The incarnation shows man how great his misery is by how great a remedy he required for it.

527. Knowledge of God without knowledge of man's misery causes pride. Knowledge of man's misery without knowledge of God causes despair. Knowledge of Jesus-Christ constitutes the middle course, because in him we find both God and our misery.

528. Jesus-Christ is a God whom we approach without pride, and before whom we humble ourselves without despair.

529. . . . Not a degradation that makes us incapable of good, nor a holiness exempt from evil.

530. Someone told me once that on coming from confession he felt great joy and confidence. Someone else told me that he remained in fear. That prompted the thought that these two together would make one good man, and that each was defective in lacking the feeling that the other had. It's often like that with other things.

531. He who knows the will of his master will be beaten with more blows [Luke 12:47], because of the power he has by his knowledge. 'He that is righteous, let him be righteous still' [Revelation 22:11], because of the power he has by justice. From him who has received most the most will be demanded [cf. Luke 12:48], because of the power this help has given him.

532. Scripture has provided passages of consolation for all conditions and of intimidation for all conditions.

Nature seems to have done the same thing by its two infinities, natural and moral; for we'll always have higher and the lower, more and less clever, the most exalted and the meanest, in order to humble our pride and exalt our humility.

533. [A small obscure passage involving Paul's letter to the Romans, a play by Corneille, and circumcision.]

534. There are only two kinds of men: righteous ones who believe they are sinners, and sinners who believe they are righteous.

535. We owe a great debt to those who point out faults, because they mortify us. They let us know that we have been despised. They don't prevent our being so in the future, for we have plenty of other faults to be despised for. They prepare us for the exercise of correction and freedom from fault.

536. Man is so made that when he is told he is a fool he believes it, even if it is him telling himself that he is a fool. 'Telling himself? Yes', because man does have internal conversations with himself, and it's important that he should conduct these well: 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' [1 Corinthians 15:33] We should keep silent as much as we can, and talk with ourselves only about God, whom we know to be the truth; and in this way we convince ourselves of it.

537. Christianity is strange. It orders man to recognise that he is vile, even abominable, and orders him to want to be like God. Without such a balance, this dignity would make him horribly vain or this humiliation would make him terribly abject.

538. How little pride goes with a Christian's belief that he is united to God! How little humiliation goes with his placing himself on a level with earthworms!

The good way to welcome life and death, good and evil!

539. How, so far as obedience is concerned, does a soldier differ from a Carthusian monk? For they are equally obedient and dependent, and engaged in equally laborious exercises. But the soldier always hopes to command, and

—though he never attains this, for even captains and princes are always slaves and dependants—

he always hopes for it and always works to attain it. Whereas the monk makes a vow never to be anything but dependent. So they don't differ in the perpetual servitude in which they both always exist, but in the hope that one has always and the other never.

540. Christians' hope of possessing an infinite good is mingled with real enjoyment as well as with fear; it's not like hoping for a kingdom that they'll have no part of because they'll be subjects of it; they are hoping for holiness, for freedom from injustice, and they do have something of this.

541. No-one is happy like a true Christian, or reasonable, virtuous, or lovable.

542. The only thing that makes man lovable *and* happy is the Christian religion. Merely being an honest man [see Glossary] can't make one both lovable and happy.

543. The metaphysical proofs of God's existence are so remote from human reasoning, and so long-drawn-out, that they make little impression; and if anyone was convinced by one of them, that would last only for the moment in which he saw the demonstration; an hour later he would fear he had been deceived.

'What they have found by their curiosity, they have lost by their pride.' [quoted in Latin from Augustine]. That's the result of the knowledge of God obtained without Jesus-Christ—communion without a mediator with the God whom they have known without a mediator. Whereas those who have

known God by a mediator are not proud; they know their own misery.

544. The God of the Christians is a God who •makes the soul feel that he is its only good, that its only rest is in him, that its only delight is in loving him; and who at the same time •makes it detest the obstacles that pull it back and prevent it from loving God with all its strength. Self-love and greed, which hold the soul back, are unbearable to it. This God makes it feel that it has this root of self-love that destroys it and that he alone can cure.

545. Jesus-Christ did nothing but teach men

- that they loved themselves,
- that they were slaves, blind, sick, wretched, and sinners;
- that he must deliver, enlighten, bless, and heal them;
- that this would be brought about by their hating themselves and by following him through suffering and the death on the cross.

546. Without Jesus-Christ man must be in vice and misery; with Jesus-Christ he is free from both. In him is all our virtue and all our happiness. Apart from him there is only vice, misery, errors, darkness, death, despair.

547. We know God only through Jesus-Christ. Without this mediator, all communion with God is taken away. All those who have claimed to know God, and to prove him without Jesus-Christ, have had only weak proofs. But to prove Jesus-Christ we have the prophecies, which are solid and palpable proofs. And these prophecies—being accomplished and proved true by the outcome—mark the certainty of these truths and thus prove the divinity of Jesus-Christ. So in him and through him we know God. Apart from that, and without Scripture, without original sin, without a necessary mediator promised and arrived, we can't absolutely prove

God or teach either good doctrine or good morality. But through Jesus-Christ, and in Jesus-Christ, God is proved and morality and doctrine are taught. Jesus-Christ is, then, the true God of men.

But we know at the same time our misery; for this God is none other than the Redeemer of our misery. So we can know God well only by knowing our iniquities.

Therefore those who have known God without knowing their misery have not glorified him but have glorified themselves. 'For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' [1 Corinthians, 1:21]

548. Not only do we know God only through Jesus-Christ, but we know ourselves only through Jesus-Christ. Apart from Jesus-Christ we don't know what our life is, what our death is, what God is, or what we are.

Thus without the Scripture—which is about Jesus-Christ and nothing else—we don't know anything, and when we try to look into the nature of God and our own nature, we see only darkness and confusion.

549. It is not only impossible but useless to know God without Jesus-Christ. They have not departed from him, but approached; they have not humbled themselves, but. . .

'The better one is, the worse one becomes, if one attributes the cause of this goodness to oneself.' [Saint Bernard]

550. I love poverty because He loved it. I love riches because they give me the means of helping the very poor. I keep faith with everybody; I don't harm those who harm me, but I wish them a condition like mine, in which they will receive neither harm nor help from men. I try to be just, true, sincere, and faithful to all men; I have a tender heart for those to whom God has more closely united me; and whether I am alone or seen by men, I perform all my actions in the sight of God,

who must judge them and to whom I have consecrated them.

These are my sentiments; and every day of my life I bless my Redeemer, who has implanted them in me and who has used the power of his grace to turn a man full of weakness, miseries, greed, pride and ambition into one who is free from all these evils; all the glory of this is due to his grace, because all I have to contribute is misery and error.

551. 'Although I deserve blows rather than kisses, I am not afraid—because I love.' [quoted in Latin from Saint Bernard]

552. The Sepulchre of Jesus-Christ. Jesus-Christ was dead, but seen on the Cross. He is dead and hidden in the sepulchre.

Jesus-Christ was buried by the saints alone.

Jesus-Christ did no miracles in the sepulchre.

Only saints entered it.

That is where Jesus-Christ takes a new life, not on the cross

It is the last mystery of the Passion and of the Redemption.

Jesus-Christ had nowhere to rest on earth but in the Sepulchre. Only there did his enemies stop persecuting him.

553. The Mystery of Jesus. Jesus suffers in his passion the torments that men inflict on him; but in his agony he suffers torments that he inflicts on himself: 'And he troubled himself.' [John 11:33] This is torture from a hand that isn't human but almighty, and only someone almighty could bear it.

Jesus seeks some comfort at least in his three dearest friends, and they are asleep. He asks them to watch with him for a little, and they leave him with entire indifference, not having enough compassion to keep them awake for a while. And thus Jesus was left alone with God's anger.

Jesus is alone on the earth, with no-one to feel and share

his suffering or even to know of it; he and heaven were alone in that knowledge.

Jesus is in a garden, not like the garden of delights where the first Adam lost himself and the whole human race, but a garden of tortures where Jesus saved himself and the whole human race.

He suffers this affliction and this desertion in the horror of night.

I believe that Jesus never complained except on this one occasion; but then he complained as if he could no longer bear his extreme suffering. 'My soul is sorrowful, even unto death.' [Matthew 26:38]

Jesus seeks companionship and comfort from men. This is the only time in all his life, it seems to me. But he doesn't get it, because his disciples are asleep.

Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world. We should not sleep during that time.

Jesus, deserted by everyone including the friends he chose to watch with him, finds them asleep and is vexed by this because of the danger they are exposing themselves to—not *him*, but themselves. He cautions them for their own salvation and their own good, with a heartfelt tenderness for them during their ingratitude, and warns them that the spirit is willing and the flesh weak. [Matthew 26:41]

Finding them still asleep, not having been kept awake by any concern for themselves or for him, Jesus has the kindness not to waken them and leaves them in repose.

Jesus prays, uncertain of •the Father's will, and fears death; but when he knows •it, he goes forward to offer himself to death. 'Let us be going.' [Matthew 26:46] 'He went forth.' [John 18:2]

Jesus asked of men, and they did not fulfill his requests.

While his disciples slept, Jesus brought about their salvation. He did this for each of the righteous while they

slept, both in their nothingness before their birth and in their sins after birth.

He prays only once that the cup pass away, and then with submission; and twice that it come if necessary.

Jesus is distressed.

Seeing all his friends asleep and all his enemies on the alert, Jesus commits himself entirely to his Father.

What Jesus sees in Judas is not •his enmity, but •God's order, which he loves and admits; so he calls him 'friend'.

Jesus tears himself away from his disciples to enter into his agony; we must tear ourselves away from our nearest and dearest to imitate him.

With Jesus in agony and in the greatest affliction, let us pray longer.

We beg for God's mercy, not for him to leave us at peace in our vices but for him to deliver us from them. . . .

'Console yourself; you wouldn't seek me if you hadn't found me.'

'I thought of you in my agony, I have spilled such drops of blood for you.'

'When you wonder whether you would do such-and-such if the occasion arose, what is at issue is not your conduct but mine; I will act in you if the occasion arises.'

'Let yourself be guided by my rules; see how well I have led the Virgin and the saints who have 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 yourself giving tears?'

'Your conversion is my affair; fear not, and pray with confidence as •though you were praying• for me.'

'I am present to you by my word in Scripture, by my spirit in the Church and by inspiration, by my power in the priests, by my prayer in the faithful.'

'Physicians won't heal you, for you *will* eventually die. I am the one who heals you and makes the body immortal.'

'Endure chains and bodily servitude; at present I deliver you only from spiritual servitude.'

'I am more a friend to you than this or that person, for I have done for you more than they have; they would not have suffered what I have suffered from [*de*] you, and they would not have died for [*pour*] you at a time when you were unfaithful and cruel, as I have done and as I am ready to do, and *do* indeed do among my chosen and at the Holy Sacrament.' [This refers to the Eucharist—see Glossary.]

'If you knew your sins you would lose heart.' Then I will lose heart, Lord, for on your assurance I believe their malice. 'No, because I from whom you learn about your sins can cure you of them, and what I say to you is a sign that I want to cure you. You will know them in proportion as you expiate them, and you will be told "Behold, your sins are forgiven you".'

'Repent, then, for your hidden sins and for the secret malice of those you know.'

'Lord, I give you all.'

'I love you more ardently than you have loved your abominations.' [Isaiah 45:15]

'When my own words are to you an occasion of evil or of vanity or curiosity, ask your confessor about this.'

I see my depths of pride, curiosity and greed. There is no relation between myself and God, or myself and Jesus-Christ the righteous. But he has been made sin by me; all your lashes have fallen on him. He is more abominable than I am, and far from detesting me he holds himself honoured that I go to him and support him.

But he has cured himself, and even more surely will cure me.

I should add my wounds to his, and join myself to him; and he will save me in saving himself. But this should not

be postponed.

'You will be like gods, knowing good and evil' [Genesis 3:5]. Everyone acts as his own god when judging 'This is good or bad', and when mourning or rejoicing too much at events.

Do small things as though they were great, because of the majesty of Jesus-Christ who does them in us and who lives our life; and do great things as though they were small and easy, because of his omnipotence.

Pilate's false justice serves only to make Jesus-Christ suffer, for he has him whipped and then he kills him. That's how it is with those who are falsely just: they do good works and bad ones to please the world and to show that they are not entirely on the side of Jesus-Christ, for they are ashamed of him. And finally, given great occasions and temptations, they kill him.

554. It seems to me that after his resurrection Jesus-Christ allowed only his wounds to be touched : 'Do not touch me' [John 20:17]. We should unite ourselves only to his sufferings.

At the Last Supper he presented himself as mortal; to the disciples at Emmaus as risen from the dead; to the whole Church as ascended into heaven.

555. 'Don't compare yourself with others, but with me. If you don't find me in those you compare yourself with then you are comparing yourself with someone abominable. If you do find me in them, compare yourself to me. But will you be comparing •yourself or •me in you? If it is yourself, it is one who is abominable. If it is me, you are comparing me to myself. Now, I am God in all.

'I speak to you, and often counsel you, because your guide can't speak to you, for I don't want you to lack a guide.

'And perhaps I do so at his prayers, and thus he guides you without your seeing it.

'You wouldn't seek me if you didn't already have me.

'Therefore be not troubled.'

Section 8: The fundamentals of the Christian religion

556 Men blaspheme what they don't know. The Christian religion consists in two points. They are on a par in how important it is for men to know them, and how dangerous it is not to—and in how merciful it is of God to give pointers to them.

Yet men take occasion to conclude that one of these points doesn't exist, their reason for this being something that should have led them to infer the other.

The sages who have said there is only one God have been persecuted—the Jewish ones hated and the Christians ones even more so.

They have seen by the natural light that if there is a true religion on earth, the course of all things must tend towards it as to a centre. The whole course of things should have for its object the establishment and the greatness of the *·one true·* religion; men's states of mind should conform to what the religion teaches us; and, finally, the religion should be the object and the centre to which all things tend, in such a way that anyone who knows its principles can explain the whole nature of man in particular and the whole course of the world in general.

And on this ground they take occasion to blaspheme against the Christian religion because they know so little about what it is. They imagine that it consists simply in the worship of a God considered as great, powerful, and eternal; and that is strictly *deism*, which is almost as far removed from the Christian religion as is *atheism*, Christianity's total opposite. And from this *·understanding of what Christianity is·* they conclude that this religion is not true, because they don't see that all things come together to point to the conclusion that God does not manifest himself to men with

all the evidence that he could show.

Let them conclude what they will against deism! They won't conclude anything against the Christian religion, which (properly understood) consists in the mystery of the Redeemer who unites in himself the two natures, human and divine, redeeming men from the corruption of sin in order to reconcile them, in his divine person, to God.

So the Christian religion teaches men these two truths:

- a** there is a God whom men can receive, and
- b** there is a corruption in *·their·* nature that makes them unworthy of him.

It is equally important to men to know *both* these truths; and it is equally dangerous for man **a** to know God without **b** knowing his own misery, or to **b** know his own misery without **a** knowing the Redeemer who can cure him of it. Knowing only one of them gives rise either to the **a** arrogance of philosophers, who have known God but not their own misery, or to the **b** despair of atheists, who know their own misery but not the Redeemer.

Thus, just as it is necessary for man to know these two truths, so is it merciful of God to have made us know them. The Christian religion does this; that's what it is.

In the light of that, let us examine the order of the world and see whether all things tend to establish these two chief points of this religion: *•*Jesus-Christ is end of all, and the centre to which everything tends; *•*whoever knows him knows the reason for everything.

Those who go astray do so only through failure to see one of those two things. Someone can know God without knowing his own misery, or know his own misery without knowing God. But no-one can know Jesus-Christ without at

the same time knowing both God and his own misery.

That's why I shan't try here to use natural reasons to show the existence of God, or the doctrine of the Trinity, or the immortality of the soul, or anything else of that kind; not only because I wouldn't feel able to find in nature arguments to convince hardened atheists, but also because without Jesus-Christ this knowledge is useless and barren. If a man became convinced of this:

Propositions about numbers are immaterial truths that are eternal and depend on a first truth in which they subsist and which is called *God*,

I wouldn't think that this had brought him much closer to his own salvation!

The God of Christians is not a God who is simply the author of mathematical truths and the order of the elements; that's the view of pagans and Epicureans. He is not merely a God who exercises his providence over the life and fortunes of men, to give a long and happy life to those who worship him; that's the view of the Jews. But the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of Christians, is a God of love and of comfort; a God who fills the soul and heart of those whom he possesses; who makes them conscious of their misery and his infinite mercy; who unites himself to their inmost soul; who fills that soul with humility, joy, confidence and love; who makes them incapable of any goal other than himself.

All who seek God without Jesus-Christ and who stay within nature either **a** find no light to satisfy them or **b** invent a way of knowing and serving God without a mediator. Thereby they fall either into **a** atheism or into **b** deism—two things that the Christian religion abhors almost equally.

Without Jesus-Christ the world would not exist; for either it would have to be destroyed or it would be like a hell.

If the world existed to instruct man about God, his divinity

would indisputably shine through every part of it; but as it exists only by Jesus-Christ and for Jesus-Christ, and to instruct men about their corruption and their redemption, everything in the world proclaims proofs of these two truths.

What appears to us doesn't indicate a total exclusion of divinity or a manifest presence of it, but rather the presence of a God who hides himself. Everything bears this character.

Will the only one who knows nature know it only to be miserable? Will the only one who knows it be the only one to be unhappy?

He shouldn't see nothing at all, nor should he see so much of God that he thinks he possesses him. He should see enough of him to know that he has lost him. For to know of your loss, you must see and not see; and that is exactly the state that nature is in.

Whatever side he takes, I shan't leave him at rest in it. . .

557 So it's true that everything teaches man his condition, but don't misunderstand this; for it isn't true that everything reveals God, nor is it true that everything conceals God. But is true **both** that he hides himself from those *qui le tentent* [meaning, roughly 'those who try to show his reality by signs and proofs'] and reveals himself to those who seek him, because men are **both** unworthy of God and capable of relating to God; unworthy by their corruption, capable by their original nature.

558. What will we conclude from all our darkness, but our unworthiness?

559. If there never had been any appearance of God, this eternal deprivation would have been ambiguous: it might have gone with there not being a God, or with men being unworthy to know him. But his appearing sometimes but not always removes the ambiguity. If he appeared once, he exists always; and we would have to conclude from this that

there is a God and that men are unworthy of him.

560. We have no conception of Adam's glorious state, or of the nature of his sin, or of how it was transmitted to us. These are events that occurred under conditions of a nature altogether different from our own, and that are beyond the reach of our present understanding.

Knowing all this is useless as a means of escaping from it. What it's important for us to know is that we are miserable, corrupt, separated from God, but ransomed by Jesus-Christ; and of this we have wonderful proofs on earth.

So the two proofs of corruption and redemption are drawn from the ungodly, who live in indifference to the ·Christian· religion, and from the Jews who are its irreconcilable enemies.

561. There are two ways of proving the truths of our religion; one by the power of reason, the other by the authority of him who speaks. We don't use the latter, but the former. We don't say 'This should be believed because Scripture, which says it, is divine'. Rather, we say that it should be believed for such and such a reason; but those are feeble arguments because reason can be bent in any direction.

562. There's nothing on earth that doesn't show either man's misery or God's mercy, either man's weakness without God or man's strength with God.

563. It will be one of the confusions of the damned to see that they're condemned by their own reason, by which they claimed to condemn the Christian religion.

564. The prophecies, the very miracles and proofs of our religion, can't be said to be absolutely convincing; but it can't be said, either, that it is unreasonable to believe them. Thus there is both evidence to enlighten some and obscurity to confuse others. But the evidence for our religion is at least as strong as the evidence against it; so that men who

don't follow it can't be led by reason, and thus can be led only by greed and malice of heart. In this way, there is enough evidence to condemn ·the impious· and not enough to convince ·them·. So it seems that those who follow our religion are led by grace, not reason, while those who turn away from it are led by greed, not reason.

True disciple; a true Israelite; truly free; true bread. [John 8:31, 1:47, 8:36, 6:32]

565. Recognise, then, the truth of the religion in the very obscurity of the religion, in the little light we have of it, and in our indifference about knowing it.

566. If you don't start from the thesis that God has willed to blind some and enlighten others, you understand *nothing* about his works.

567. The two contrary reasons. That's the place to begin; without it we understand nothing, and everything is heretical; and we should even add at the end of each truth that we haven't forgotten the opposite truth.

568. Objection: the Scripture is plainly full of things not dictated by the Holy Spirit. Reply: then they don't harm the faith. Objection: but the Church has decided that all ·of Scripture· is from the Holy Spirit. Two-part reply: •the Church never so decided; and •if it had so decided, it could have been maintained.

Do you think that the prophecies cited in the Gospel are reported to make you believe? No, it is to keep you from believing.

569. The heretical books at the beginning of the Church serve to prove the canonical ones.

570. I should put into the chapter on Fundamentals what I now have on the chapter on Symbolism [see Glossary] concerning why it was prophesied that Jesus-Christ would come; why it was *obscurely* prophesied *how* he would come.

571. The reason for symbols. They had to deal with a •carnal people and to make them the depositary of the •spiritual covenant. To produce faith in the Messiah there had to be previous prophecies, which had to be made by people who were above suspicion, diligent, faithful, unusually zealous, and known to all the world.

To accomplish all this, God chose this carnal people, to whom he entrusted the prophecies that predict the Messiah as a deliverer and as a dispenser of the carnal goods that this people loved. And thus they've had an extraordinary passion for their prophets, and have in plain sight had charge of these books that predict *their* Messiah, assuring all nations that he would come, doing so in the way predicted in the books that they held open to everyone. Yet this people, deceived by the poor and ignominious manner of the ·real· Messiah's coming, have been his cruelest enemies. So that they, the people least open to suspicion of favouring us, the strictest and most zealous for their law and their prophets, have kept the books intact. So those who •rejected and crucified Jesus-Christ, who was to them •an offence, are the very ones who have charge of the books that testify concerning him and *say that* he will be •rejected and •an offence. Therefore they have shown him to be the Messiah; and he has been proved both by the righteous Jews who received him and by the unrighteous ones who rejected him, both facts having been predicted.

That is why the prophecies have a hidden meaning, a spiritual one, to which this people were hostile, hidden under the carnal meaning that they loved. If the spiritual meaning had been revealed, they couldn't have loved it, and, unable to bear it, they would not have been zealous in preserving their books and their ceremonies; and if they *had* loved these spiritual promises and had preserved them intact till the time of the Messiah, their testimony would have had no force

because they had been his friends.

That is why it was good for the spiritual meaning to be concealed; but if it had been so well hidden that nobody found it, it couldn't have served as a proof of the Messiah. What then was done? In a host of passages it was hidden under the temporal [see Glossary] meaning, and in a few it was clearly revealed. Besides which, both •the time of the coming and •the state of the world at that time were predicted with the clarity of noon-day sun. In some places this spiritual meaning is so clearly expressed that you would have to be blind not to see it.

See then how God handled this matter. In countless places the spiritual meaning is concealed under another, and in a few it is revealed; but this is done in such a way that the passages in which it is concealed are ambiguous and could express either meaning, whereas the passages where it is disclosed are unambiguous and can only express the spiritual meaning.

So this couldn't lead anyone into error, and could be misunderstood only by a people as carnal as those.

For when good things are promised in abundance, what prevented them from understanding *true* goods but their cupidity [see Glossary], which pinned the meaning down to worldly goods? But those whose only good was in God related the good things to God alone. For there are two drives that divide the wills of men—cupidity and charity. It's not that cupidity can't exist along with faith in God, or charity along with worldly riches; but cupidity uses God and enjoys the world, and charity is the opposite [i.e. enjoys God and uses the world].

Now the ultimate goal is what fixes the names things are given: anything that prevents us from attaining the goal is called our 'enemy'. Thus creatures, however good they are, who turn the righteous away from God, are their enemies;

and God himself is the enemy of those whose covetousness he confounds.

Thus as the meaning of 'enemy' depends on the ultimate goal, the righteous took their passions to be the enemy, and the carnal took the Babylonians for their enemy; so these terms were obscure only for the unrighteous.

And this is what Isaiah says: 'Seal the law among my disciples', and that Jesus-Christ 'will be a stone of stumbling' [Isaiah 8:16,14]. But 'Blessed are they who will not be offended in him' [Matthew 11:6]. Hosea 14:9 says excellently 'Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? The just will understand them, for the ways of the lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.'

572. Hypothesis that the apostles were impostors. The time clearly, the manner obscurely. Five proofs of the symbolic meanings of the Scriptures. . . .

573. 'The Scripture', said the Jews, 'says that we will not know whence the Christ will come' [John 7:27, and 12:34]. 'The Scripture says that the Christ abides for ever, and this man said that he would die.' Therefore, says John, they didn't believe, although he had done so many miracles, so that the word of Isaiah—'he has blinded them' etc.—might be fulfilled.

574. The religion is such a great thing that it's right that those who won't take the trouble to seek it, if it is obscure, should be deprived of it. What are they complaining of, if it is such that they could find it by seeking?

575. Everything works for good to the chosen, even the obscurities of Scripture; for the chosen honour those obscurities because of what is divinely clear. And everything works for evil for the others, even the clarities of Scripture; because they revile them on account of the obscurities that they don't understand.

576. The general conduct of the world towards the Church: God wanting to blind and to enlighten. The divinity of *these* prophecies was shown by what subsequently happened; so the rest ought to be believed. That shows us the order of the world in matters of this kind.

The miracles of the creation and the flood being forgotten, God sent the law and the miracles of Moses, the prophets who prophesied particular things; and to prepare a lasting miracle, he prepares prophecies and their fulfilment; but the prophecies could be suspected, so he wants to make them above suspicion, etc.

577. God made this people's blindness subservient to the good of the chosen.

578. There's enough clarity to enlighten the chosen, and enough obscurity to humble them. There's enough obscurity to blind the reprobate, and enough clarity to condemn them and make them inexcusable. Saint Augustine, Montaigne, Sebond.

The genealogy of Jesus-Christ in the Old Testament is intermingled with so many other useless ones that it can't be picked out from among them. If Moses had kept *only* the record of the ancestors of Jesus-Christ, that would have made his lineage too visible. If he hadn't noted the lineage of Jesus-Christ, it wouldn't have been visible enough. But, after all, if you look closely you'll see Jesus-Christ's genealogy clearly traced through Tamar, Ruth, etc.

Those who ordered these sacrifices knew their uselessness; those who declared their uselessness nevertheless practised them.

If God had permitted only one religion, it would have been too easily recognisable; but if you look closely at the confusion of religions, you'll clearly pick out the true one amongst them.

Moses was a clever man. So if he was governed by his intellect, he can't have said anything that was directly against intellect.

Thus all the very apparent weaknesses are strengths. Example; the two genealogies in Saint Matthew and Saint Luke. What can be clearer than that this was not a collaboration?

579. God (and the apostles), foreseeing that the seeds of pride would sprout into heresies, and not wanting them to do this with help from correct expressions, put into Scripture and the Church's prayers contrary [here = 'anti-heretical'] words and phrases to produce their fruit in time.

So in morals he gives charity, which produces fruit contrary to greed.

580. Nature has some perfections to show that it is the image of *God*, and some defects to show that it is only the *image* of God.

581. God would rather incline the will than the intellect. Perfect clarity would help the intellect and harm the will. To humble pride.

582. We make an idol of truth itself; for truth apart from charity is not God but his image, and an idol which we should not love or worship. Still less should we love or worship its opposite, namely lies.

I can easily love total darkness; but if God keeps me in a state of semi-darkness, this partial darkness displeases me because it doesn't show me the advantages of total darkness. This is a fault ·in me·, and a sign that I'm making an idol of darkness, apart from the order of God. His order is the only thing we should worship.

583. Villains are people who know the truth but uphold it only so far as it serves their interests to do so. When it doesn't, they abandon it.

584. The world exists for the exercise of mercy and judgment, not as if men were placed in it by God's hands, but as hostile to God; and by grace he grants them enough light •for them to return to him, if they are willing to seek and follow him, but •for them to be punished if they refuse to seek or follow him.

585. That God has willed to hide himself. If there were only one religion, God would be thoroughly manifest in it. If there were no martyrs except in our religion, same thing.

God being thus hidden, any religion that doesn't say that God is hidden is not genuine; and any religion that doesn't explain why he is hidden is not instructive. Our religion does both: 'Indeed, you are a God that hides yourself.' [Isaiah 45:15]

586. If there were no obscurity, man would have no sense of his corruption; if there were no light, man would have no hope of a remedy. So God's being partly hidden and partly revealed is not only •right but also •advantageous to us; because it is equally dangerous for man to know God without knowing his own misery and to know his own misery without knowing God.

587. This religion, so great in

- miracles and pure blameless saints,
- learned and great witnesses,
- martyrs,
- established kings (David) and Isaiah, a prince of the blood,

and so great in science, after having displayed all its miracles and all its wisdom, throws all that aside and declares that it has neither wisdom nor signs, but only the cross and foolishness. [1 Corinthians 1:18]

For those who by signs and wisdom have deserved your belief, and who have proved to you their character—*they*

declare that in all this nothing can *change* you and make you capable of knowing and loving God except •the power of the foolishness of the cross without wisdom and signs, and not •the signs without this power.

Thus our religion is foolish in respect to the effective cause and wise in respect to the wisdom that prepares it.

588. Our religion is wise and foolish. Wise, because it is the most learned and the most solidly based on miracles, prophecies, etc. Foolish, because it's not because of all this

that we have it as *our* religion. It makes us condemn those who don't have it as their religion, but it doesn't cause belief in those who do. What makes them believe is the cross, 'Lest the cross of Christ should be made to have no effect' [1 Corinthians 1:17]. And so Saint Paul, who came with wisdom and signs, says that he has come neither with wisdom nor with signs, for he came to *convert*. Those who come only to *convince* can say that they come with wisdom and with signs.

Section 9: Perpetuity

589. On Christianity's not being the only religion. Far from being a reason to believe that it is not the true one, on the contrary it makes us see that it *is* so.

590. In all religions one should be sincere: true pagans, true Jews, true Christians.

591. [This item is an obscure diagram showing (left to right) 'Pagans', 'Jesus-Christ', 'Mahomet', with a curved line under all three, and below that 'Ignorance of God'.]

592. Falseness of other religions. They have no witnesses. These ones do. God challenges other religions to produce such signs: Isaiah 43:9–44:8.

593. History of China. I believe only the histories whose witnesses were to be slaughtered.

Which of the two is more credible, Moses or China?

It is not a question of taking an over-all view of this. I tell you there is in it something to blind, and something to

enlighten.

By this one word I destroy all your reasoning. 'But China obscures', you say; and I answer 'China obscures, but there is clarity to be found; seek it.'

Thus all that you say helps one of the designs and *does* nothing against the other. So this serves, and does no harm.

So we must see this in detail; we must put the documents on the table.

594. Against the history of China. The historians of Mexico, of five suns, of which the last is only eight hundred years old.

The difference between a book accepted by a nation and one that makes a nation.

595. Mahomet had no authority.

So his reasons needed to be very strong, having only their own force.

What does he say, then? That he should be believed.

596. The psalms chanted throughout the whole world.

Who testifies to Mahomet? Himself. Jesus-Christ wants his own testimony to count for nothing.

The quality of witnesses requires them to be always and everywhere, and he—miserable—is alone.

597. Against Mahomet. The Koran is no more *of* Mahomet than the Gospel is *of* Saint Matthew, for it is cited by many authors down the centuries; even its enemies, Celsus and Porphyry, never disavowed it [i.e. never denies Matthew's gospel].

The Koran says Saint Matthew was a good man. So Mahomet was a false prophet for calling good men wicked, or for disagreeing with what they said about Jesus-Christ.

598. I would have Mahomet judged not by what is •obscure in his writings and may be thought to have a mysterious meaning, but by what is •clear—his 'paradise' and all that. That's where he is ridiculous. And since his clarities are ridiculous, it's not right to take his obscurities to be mysteries.

It is not the same with the Scripture. I accept that it contains obscurities as weird as Mahomet's; but it also contains admirably clear passages and outright prophecies that have come true. So the two are not on a par. We mustn't run together and put on one level things that are alike only in their obscurity, and not in the clarity that requires us to revere the obscurities.

599. The difference between Jesus-Christ and Mahomet.

Mahomet not predicted; Jesus-Christ predicted.

Mahomet killing; Jesus-Christ having his followers killed.

Mahomet forbidding reading; the apostles ordering reading.

The two are in fact so opposed that •if Mahomet took the way to success from a worldly point of view, Jesus-Christ from the same point of view took the way to death; and

that •instead of arguing that since Mahomet succeeded Jesus-Christ might well have succeeded too, we ought to say that since Mahomet succeeded Jesus-Christ had to die.

600. Any man can do what Mahomet did, for he performed no miracles, he wasn't predicted. No man can do what Jesus-Christ has done.

601. The basis of our faith. The pagan religion has no foundation now. They say that it used to have a foundation in the oracles that spoke. But what are the books that assure us of this? Does the virtue of their authors make them worthy of belief? Have they been preserved so carefully that we can be sure that they aren't corrupted?

The Mahometan religion is founded on the Koran and Mahomet. But this prophet who was to be what the world was ultimately waiting for—was he predicted? What mark •of his authenticity• does he have that couldn't be had by any man who chooses to call himself a prophet? What miracles does he himself say that he has done? What mysteries has he taught, even according to his own tradition? what morality? what happiness?

The Jewish religion seen in the context of the Holy Bible looks different from how it does in the tradition of the •Jewish• people. In the tradition of the people its morality and happiness are absurd, but they are admirable in the tradition of the Holy Bible. (The same thing holds for all religions: •even• the christian religion in the Holy Bible is very different from the christian religion of the casuists [see Glossary].) Its foundation is admirable: it is the most ancient book in the world, and the most authentic. And whereas Mahomet in order to keep his own book in existence forbade men to read it, Moses to keep *his* in existence ordered everyone to read it.

Our religion is so divine that another divine religion has only been the foundation of it.

602. To see what is clear and indisputable in the whole state of the Jews.

603. The Jewish religion is wholly divine in its authority, its duration, its perpetuity, its morality, its doctrine, and its effects.

604. The only knowledge contrary to common sense and human nature is the only one that has always existed among men.

605. The only religion contrary to nature, contrary to common sense, to our pleasure, is the only one that has always existed.

606. No religion but ours has taught that man is born in sin. No philosophical sect has said this; so none have spoken the truth.

No sect or religion has always existed on earth except the Christian religion.

607. Anyone whose view of the Jewish religion is coarse and superficial will misunderstand it. It is to be seen in the Holy Bible and in the tradition of the prophets, who have made it plain enough that they were not to be understood in a strictly literal way. So our religion is divine in the Gospel, in the apostles, and in tradition; but it's absurd in the hands of those who mangle it.

The Messiah, according to the carnal Jews, was to be a great temporal [see Glossary] prince. Jesus-Christ, according to carnal Christians, came •to free us from the obligation to love God and •to give us sacraments that will do their work without any contribution from us. This is all wrong about both religions.

True Jews and true Christians have always expected a Messiah who would make them love God and through that love triumph over their enemies.

608. The carnal Jews have a middle position between

Christians and pagans. The pagans don't know God and love only the world. The Jews know the true God and love only the world. The Christians know the true God and don't love the world. Jews and pagans love the same goods. Jews and Christians know the same God.

There were two sorts of Jews—ones with only pagan affections, and ones with Christian affections.

609. There are two kinds of men in each religion. Among the pagans,

- worshippers of beasts and •worshippers of one God in natural religion;

among the Jews,

- the carnal and •the spiritual, the latter being the Christians of the old law;

among Christians,

- the coarser-minded •and others who are the Jews of the new law.

The carnal Jews looked for a carnal Messiah; the coarser Christians believe that the Messiah released them from the obligation to love God; true Jews and true Christians worship a Messiah who makes them love God.

610. To show that the true Jews and the true Christians have 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 •of the covenant•, in the temple, in Jerusalem, and finally in the law and in the covenant with Moses. I say:

—that it consisted in none of those things but only in the love of God, and that God condemned all the other things;

—that God did not accept the posterity of Abraham;

—that the Jews, if they offend against God, will be punished like foreigners. 'If you at all forget the Lord your God and walk after other gods, I testify against you this day that you

will surely perish, like the nations which the Lord destroys before your face.’ Deuteronomy 8:19.

—that foreigners who love God will be received by him as the Jews are. ‘Let not the stranger say “The Lord will not receive me.” The strangers who join themselves to the Lord to serve him and love him I will bring to my holy mountain and accept sacrifices there, for my house is a house of prayer.’ [adapted from Isaiah 56:6–7.]

—that the true Jews considered their merit to be from God only, and not from Abraham. ‘Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; thou, O lord, art our father, our redeemer.’ [Isaiah 63:16]

—that Moses himself told them that God would not accept persons. ‘God’, he said, ‘does not regard persons or sacrifices.’ Deuteronomy 10:17.

—That the sabbath was only a sign (Exodus 31:13), and in memory of the escape from Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:19). So it is no longer necessary, because Egypt should be forgotten. Circumcision was only a sign (Genesis 17:11). (That is why they were not circumcised when they were in the desert, because they couldn’t be confounded with other peoples.) And after Jesus-Christ came it was no longer necessary.

—that the circumcision of the heart is commanded. Deuteronomy 10:16. ‘Be circumcised in heart; take away the superfluities of your heart, and do not harden yourselves. For your God is a mighty God, strong and terrible, who does not accept persons’ [adapted from Jeremiah 4:4].

—that God said he would one day do it. ‘God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, so that you will love him with all your heart.’ Deuteronomy 30:6.

—that the uncircumcised in heart will be judged. Jeremiah 9:26. For God will judge the uncircumcised peoples, and all the people of Israel because they are ‘uncircumcised in

heart’.

—that the external is useless apart from the internal. Joel 2:13: ‘Rend your heart’ etc.; Isaiah 58:3, 4, etc. The love of God is enjoined throughout Deuteronomy. ‘I call heaven and earth to record that I have set before you life and death, that you should choose life and love God and obey him, for God is your life.’ Deuteronomy 30:19.

—that the Jews, for lack of that love, would be condemned for their offences and the pagans chosen instead. Hosea 1:10. ‘I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end will be, for they are a very perverse generation, children in whom is no faith’... (Deuteronomy 32:20; also Isaiah 65:1.)

—that temporal goods are false, and that the true good is to be united to God. Psalm 143:15.

—that their feasts are displeasing to God. Amos 5:21.

—that the sacrifices of the Jews displease God. Isaiah 66:1–3. . . .

—that he has established them only for their hardness. Micah 6:6–8, an admirable passage; 1 Kings 15:22; Hosea 6:6.

—that the sacrifices of the Gentiles will be accepted by God, and that God will take no pleasure in the sacrifices of the Jews. Malachi 1:11.

—that God will make a new covenant through the Messiah, and the old one will be annulled. Jeremiah 31:31. ‘Statutes that were not good.’ Ezekiel 20:25.

—that the old things will be forgotten. Isaiah 43:18–19; 65:17–18.

—that the ark will no longer be remembered. Jeremiah 3:15–16.

—that the temple would be rejected. Jeremiah 7:12–14.

—that the sacrifices would be rejected, and other pure sacrifices established. Malachi 1:11.

—that the order of Aaron’s priesthood would be condemned, and that of Melchizedek introduced by the Messiah. Psalm

110.

—that this priesthood would be eternal. *ibid.*

—that Jerusalem would be rejected, and Rome admitted. *ibid.*

—that the name of the Jews would be rejected, and a new name given. Isaiah 65:15.

—that the latter name should be more excellent than that of the Jews, and eternal. Isaiah 56:5.

—that the Jews should have no prophets, no king, no princes, no sacrifice, no idol. Amos 7:9.

—that the Jews should nevertheless always remain a people. Jeremiah 31:36.

611. The Christian republic—and even the Jewish republic—has had only God as its ruler, as Philo Judaeus notes in his *On Monarchy*.

When they fought, it was only for God; their chief hope was only in God; they considered their towns only as to God, and kept them for God. 1 Chronicles 19:13.

612. ‘I will establish my covenant between me and you for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you.’ (Genwsis 17:7) ‘You will keep my covenant therefore’ (Genesis 17:9).

613. Perpetuity. The religion that consists in the belief that man has fallen from a state of glory and of communion with God into a state of sorrow, penitence and estrangement from God, but after this life we will be restored by a Messiah who is bound to come has always existed on earth. All things have passed away, and what has endured is this, which all things are *for*.

In the first age of the world men were carried away into every kind of debauchery, yet there were ·also· saints such as Enoch, Lamech and others, who waited patiently for the Christ who had been promised from the beginning of the world. Noah saw the wickedness of men at its height; and he was worthy to save the world in his person through the

hope of the Messiah of whom he was the symbol. Abraham was surrounded by idolaters when God revealed to him the mystery of the Messiah, whom he welcomed from afar. In the time of Isaac and Jacob, abomination was spread over all the earth; but those saints lived in faith; and Jacob, dying, interrupted his blessing on his children with an outburst: ‘I await your salvation, O Lord!’ (Genesis 49:18)

The Egyptians were infected with both idolatry and magic; even the people of God were led astray by their example. Yet Moses and others believed someone whom they didn’t see, and worshipped him, looking to the eternal gifts he was preparing for them.

Later, the Greeks and Romans set up false deities; the poets made a hundred different theologies, the philosophers broke up into a thousand different sects; and yet in the heart of Judaea there were always chosen men predicting the coming of this Messiah whom only they knew.

He came at last in the fullness of time; and since then there have been so many schisms and heresies, so many political revolutions, so many changes in everything; yet this Church, which worships him who has always been worshipped, has survived throughout. It is a wonderful, incomparable, and altogether divine fact that this religion, which has always endured, has always been attacked. A thousand times it has been on the brink of total destruction, and each time God has rescued it by extraordinary exercises of his power. Astonishingly, it has preserved itself without yielding to the will of tyrants. . . .

614. States would perish if they didn’t often make their laws yield to necessity. But religion has never allowed this, or practised it. Indeed, there must be these compromises—or miracles. It is not strange to be saved by yielding, and this isn’t strictly self-preservation; besides, in the end states perish entirely: none has lasted a thousand years. But the

fact that this religion has always preserved itself without yielding—that is divine!

615. It must be admitted that the Christian religion has something astonishing in it. Some will say ‘You think this because you were born in it.’ Far from it; I brace myself *against* it for this very reason, for fear that this prejudice will bias me. But although I am born in it, I still find it astonishing.

616. The Messiah has always been believed in. The tradition of Adam was still fresh in the times of Noah and Moses. Since then the prophets have predicted him, while also predicting other things which eventually happened, showing the truth of their mission and thus the truth of their promises concerning the Messiah. Jesus-Christ performed miracles, and so did the apostles, who converted all the pagans; and all the prophecies being fulfilled, the Messiah is for ever proved.

617. Consider these facts: •that men have been awaiting or worshipping the Messiah uninterruptedly since the beginning of the world; •that there have been men who said that God had revealed to them that a Redeemer was to be born who would save his people; •that later on Abraham said that he’d had a revelation that the Messiah was to be a descendant of one of his sons; •that Jacob declared that, of his twelve sons, the Messiah would descend from Judah; •that Moses and the prophets then came to declare the time and the manner of his coming; •that they said

- that their law was only temporary till that of the Messiah;
- that it would last until then, but that the other would last for ever;
- that thus either their law or the Messiah’s (of which theirs was the promise) would always be upon the

earth;

- that, in fact, it has always endured; and finally
- that Jesus-Christ came with all the circumstances predicted.

That is wonderful.

618. This is a matter of *fact*: While all the philosophers break up into different sects, there’s one corner of the world containing the world’s most ancient people declaring •that all the world is in error, •that God has revealed the truth to them, •that it—this truth— will always exist on the earth. In fact, all other sects come to an end; this one still endures and has for four thousand years.

They declare that they hold from their ancestors •that man has fallen from communion with God, and is entirely estranged from God, but that he has promised to redeem them; •that this doctrine will always exist on the earth; •that their law has a double meaning;

•that through sixteen hundred years they have had people whom they believed to be prophets, who predicted both the time and the manner of the Messiah’s coming;

•that four hundred years later they were scattered everywhere, because Jesus-Christ was to be announced everywhere;

•that Jesus-Christ came in the predicted manner and at the predicted time;

•that since then the Jews have been scattered abroad, under a curse yet still surviving.

619. I see the Christian religion founded upon a preceding religion, and here’s what I find the facts to be.

I don’t here speak of the miracles of Moses, of Jesus-Christ, and of the apostles, because they don’t at first seem convincing, and I want to put in evidence here only the foundations of tis Christian religion that are beyond doubt

and can't be called in question by *anyone*.

It is certain that we see in many parts of the world a unique people, separated from all other peoples of the world and called the Jewish people.

I see then a crowd of religions in many parts of the world and at all times; but they don't have a morality that can please me or proofs that can convince me. Thus I would equally have rejected the religion of Mahomet, of China, of the ancient Romans, and of the Egyptians, all for the same reason: none has more marks of truth than any other, or anything that would compel my belief, so reason can't incline to any one as against the others.

But in considering this changeable and weird variety of *mœurs* [see Glossary] and beliefs at different times, I find in one corner of the world a unique people, separated from all other peoples on earth, the most ancient of all, with stories that go back many centuries further than any other history.

I find, then, this great and numerous people, descended from one man, who worship one God and guide themselves by a law that they say they received from his hand. They maintain that •they are the only people in the world to whom God has revealed his mysteries; that •all men are corrupt and in disgrace with God; that •they have all allowed their senses and their own thoughts to take over, which is why they have been subject to strange wanderings and continual changes in religions and in customs; whereas they themselves—the people who say all this—remain firm in their conduct; but that •God will not leave other nations in this darkness for ever; that •a saviour will come for all; that •they are in the world to announce him to men; that •they were formed for just this role of forerunners and heralds of this great event, and to summon all nations to join with them waiting for this saviour.

To meet with this people is astonishing to me, and seems

to me worthy of attention.

I look at the law that they boast of receiving from God, and I find it admirable. It is the first law of all; it was uninterruptedly accepted and observed by the Jews for nearly a thousand years before the Greeks even had a word for *law*. I find it remarkable that this *first* law of the world happens to be the *most perfect*; so that the greatest legislators have borrowed their laws from it, as is apparent from the law of the Twelve Tables at Athens, afterwards taken over by the Romans; I could easily prove this, but Josephus and others have already dealt with this adequately.

620. Advantages of the Jewish people. In this inquiry the Jewish people at once attracts my attention by how many wonderful and singular facts there are about them.

I first see that they are a people wholly composed of brethren; whereas every other people is formed by the assemblage of countless families, this one, though so amazingly large, has all descended from one man and—being thus all one flesh and members one of another—they are one family constituting a powerful State. This is unique.

This family, or people, is the most ancient within human knowledge; and that seems to me to entitle it to a special veneration, especially in our present inquiry; because if God has from all time communicated with men, these are the people we must turn to for an account of what he has said.

This people is remarkable not solely for its antiquity but also for its having been in existence continuously from its origin until now. Whereas the peoples of Greece and Italy—Sparta, Athens, Rome and others who came long after—have long since perished, the Jewish people still remain. Despite the attempts of so many powerful kings who have countless times tried to destroy them—

as their historians testify, and as is only to be expected from the natural order of things during such a long

stretch of time

—they have nevertheless been preserved (and this preservation was predicted); and their history, extending from the earliest times to the latest, includes in its duration all our histories that it preceded by a long time.

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, without interruption, been observed in a State.

This is what Josephus admirably proves in his *Against Apion*, and also Philo the Jew in various places; they point out that it is so ancient that no word for *law* was known in the older nations until more than a thousand years later; so that Homer, who has written the history of so many States, never used it. And it's easy to judge its perfection by simply reading it; for we see that it has provided for all things with such great wisdom, fairness and judgement that the most ancient Greek and Roman legislators, having an inkling of it, borrowed from it their principal laws. This is evident from the so-called Twelve Tables, and from the other proofs that Josephus gives.

But this law is at the same time the severest and strictest of all in regard to religious worship, imposing on this people, in order to keep them to their duty, a thousand peculiar and troublesome observances, on pain of death. This makes it *astonishing* that it has been constantly preserved through so many centuries by a rebellious and impatient people like this one; while all other States have changed their laws from time to time, although these were far more lenient.

The book that contains this first of all laws is itself the oldest book in the world, those of Homer, Hesiod and others being six or seven centuries later.

621. The creation and the flood being past, God no longer

needed to destroy the world or create it anew or give such great signs of himself; so he began to establish a people on the earth, formed for a purpose, who were to last until the coming of the people whom the Messiah would form by his spirit.

622. With the creation of the world receding into the past, God provided a single contemporary historian, and appointed a whole people as guardians of this book ·that he wrote·, so that this history would be the most authentic in the world, and all men might learn from it something they absolutely needed to know and couldn't learn otherwise.

623. *Japhet commence la généalogie.*

Joseph croise ses bras et préfère le jeune.

624. Why does Moses give men such long lives and so few generations?

Because what makes things obscure is not the length of years but the multitude of generations. For truth is perverted only by the change of men. He puts the two most memorable things that were ever imagined—the creation and the flood—so near that we reach from one to the other.

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. People who understand this rightly find it conclusive.

626. The longevity of the patriarchs, rather than causing the loss of past history, conduced to its preservation. Why are we sometimes insufficiently instructed in the history of our ancestors? It's because we have hardly ever lived with them—in many cases they are dead before we have reached the age of reason. Well, back when men lived so long, offspring lived long with their parents, having conversations along the way. What could they talk about except the history of their ancestors, since that's what all history came down

to, and men didn't study the sciences or the arts which now form a large part of daily conversation? We see also that in those days the peoples took particular care to preserve their genealogies.

627. I believe that Joshua was the first of God's people to have this name, as Jesus-Christ was the last of God's people. ['Joshua' is a variant of 'Jesus'.]

628. Antiquity of the Jews. What a difference there is between one book and another! I'm not astonished that the Greeks made the *Iliad*, or that the Egyptians and the Chinese made their histories. We have only to see how this originates. These fabulous historians aren't contemporaneous with the things they write about. Homer wrote a romance, which he presented as such and was received as such, for nobody thought that Troy and Agamemnon existed any more than the golden apple did! He didn't think he was making a history but only an entertainment. He was the only writer of his time; the beauty of the work made the thing [i.e. the Trojan war] last. Everyone learned the work, talked about it, had to know it, and knew it by heart. Four hundred years after it was written, there were no living witnesses of these events; no-one knew, of his own knowledge, whether Homer's work was fable or history; it was simply something passed down from their ancestors and taken to be true.

Every history that isn't contemporaneous is suspect; thus the books of the sibyls and of Trismegistus and so many others that have been believed by the world are false, and have turned out to be false in the course of time. It is not so with contemporaneous writers.

There is a great difference between •a book that an individual writes and publishes to a people and •a book that itself *makes* a people. We can't doubt that the book is as old as the people.

629. Josephus hides the shame of his nation.

Moses doesn't hide his own shame or. . .

'Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets.'
(Numbers 11:29)

He was weary of the multitude.

630. *La sincérité des Juifs.* *Depuis qu'ils n'ont plus de prophètes, Machab.*

Depuis Jésus-Christ, Massorett.

'Ce livre vous sera un témoignage.'

Les lettres défectueuses et finales.

Sincères contre leur honneur, et mourant pour cela; cela n'a point d'exemple dans le monde, ni sa racine dans la nature.

631. Sincerity of the Jews. They preserve lovingly and faithfully the book in which Moses declares that they have been ungrateful to God through all their life, and that he knows they will be still more so after his death; but that he calls heaven and earth to witness against them, and that he has taught them enough.

He declares that •God, being angry with them, will eventually scatter them among all the nations of the earth; that •just as they have angered him by worshipping gods who were not their God, so he will provoke them by calling a people who are not his people; that •he wants all his words to be preserved for ever, and his book to be placed in the ark of the covenant to serve for ever as a witness against them.

Isaiah says the same thing, 30:8.

632. Ezra. The fable that the books were burnt with the temple proved false by Maccabees: 'Jeremiah gave them the law.'

The fable that he recited the whole thing by heart. Josephus and Ezra point out that he *read* the book. . . .

The fable that he changed the letters.

Philo in his *Life of Moses*: 'The language and characters in which the law was originally written remained unchanged

until the Seventy.’

Josephus says that the law was in Hebrew when it was translated by the Seventy.

Under Antiochus and Vespasian, when they wanted to abolish the books and when there was no prophet, they couldn’t do so. And under the Babylonians, when there had been no persecution and there were so many prophets, would they have let them be burned?

Josephus laughs at the Greeks who would not suffer. . .

Tertullian: ‘He could just as well have restored it from memory after it had been destroyed by the violence of the flood, just as every document of the Jewish literature was restored through Ezra after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian attack on it.’ (*The Cult of Women* 1:3)

He says that Noah could have restored from memory the book of Enoch’s that was destroyed by the flood, as easily as Ezra was able to restore the Scriptures lost during the captivity.

[Then a passage in Greek, meaning the same as the passage ‘when the Scriptures had been destroyed’ to the end of the next long paragraph.]

He takes this to show that it isn’t incredible that the Seventy should have explained the Holy Scriptures with that uniformity which we admire in them. And he took that from Saint Irenaeus.

Saint Hilary, in his preface to the Psalms, says that Ezra arranged the Psalms in order.

The origin of this tradition comes from the 14th chapter of the fourth book of Ezra. ‘God was glorified, and the Scriptures were recognised as truly divine, for they all rendered the same things in the same words and the same names, from beginning to end, so that even the heathen who were present knew that the Scriptures had been translated by the inspiration of God. And it is no marvel that God did this,

for when the Scriptures had been destroyed in the captivity of the people in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and the Jews had gone back to their country after seventy years, then in the times of Artaxerxes, the king of the Persians, he inspired Ezra, the priest of the tribe of Levi, to restore all the sayings of the prophets who had gone before, and to restore to the people the law given by Moses.’

633. Cyrus took occasion from the prophecy of Isaiah to release the people. The Jews held their property in peace under Cyrus in Babylon; hence they could well have the law.

Josephus, in the whole history of Ezra, doesn’t say a word about this restoration.

634. If the story in Ezra is credible, then we should believe that the Scripture is Holy Scripture; for this story is based only on the authority of those who assert that of the Seventy, which shows that the Scripture is holy.

So if this story is true, it gives us our account; if not, we get it elsewhere. So those who would destroy the truth of our Moses-based religion *establish* it by the same authority by which they attack it. Thus, by this providence, it still exists.

635. Chronology of Rabbinism. [This item is a fragmentary bibliography.]

636. [Two fragmentary references to Isaiah.]

637. Prophecies. The sceptre was not interrupted by the captivity in Babylon, because the return came quickly and was predicted.

638. Proofs of Jesus-Christ. Captivity with the assurance of deliverance within seventy years—that wasn’t real captivity. But now they are captives without any hope.

God has promised them that even if he scattered them to the ends of the earth, if they were faithful to his law he would bring them together again. They are very faithful to it, and remain oppressed.

639. When Nebuchadnezzar carried away the people, for fear they should believe that the sceptre had departed from Judah, he told them beforehand that they would be there for a short time and would be restored.

They were always consoled by the prophets; their kings continued. But the second destruction is without promise of restoration, without prophets, without kings, without consolation, without hope, because the sceptre is taken away for ever.

640. It's an amazing thing, and worth special attention, to

see this Jewish people existing so many years in perpetual misery, it being necessary for them •to exist as a proof of Jesus-Christ and •to be miserable because they crucified him; and although misery and existence are opposites, they nevertheless still exist in spite of their misery.

641. They are visibly a people created specifically to serve as a witness to the Messiah (Isaiah 43:9, 44:8). They keep the books, and love them, and don't understand them. And all this was predicted: that God's judgments are entrusted to them, but as a sealed book.

Section 10: Symbols

642. To prove the two Testaments at one stroke, all that's needed is to see if the prophecies in one are fulfilled in the other. To examine the prophecies, we need to understand them. For if we believe they have only one meaning, the Messiah will certainly not come; but if they have two meanings, he will certainly come in Jesus-Christ. The only question, then, is: do they have two meanings?

That the Scripture has two meanings, given by Jesus-Christ and the apostles, is shown by the following proofs:

- (1) Proof by Scripture itself.
- (2) Proofs by the rabbis. Moses Maimonides says that it has two aspects and that the prophets have prophesied only Jesus-Christ.
- (3) Proofs by the Cabala.
- (4) Proofs by the mystical interpretation that the rabbis themselves give to Scripture.
- (5) Proofs by the principles of the rabbis,
 - that there are two meanings,
 - that there are two comings of the Messiah, one glorious and the other humiliating, according to what the Jews deserve;
 - that the prophets have prophesied only concerning the Messiah;
 - that the law is not eternal, but must change when the Messiah comes;
 - that then they will no longer remember the Red Sea;
 - that the Jews and the Gentiles will then be mingled.
- (6) Proofs by the key to the two meanings that Jesus-Christ and the apostles give us.

643. Isaiah 51. The Red Sea an image of the Redemption. 'That you may know that the son of man has power on earth to forgive sins. . . I say to you, Arise.' (Mark 2:10–11) God made visible things because he wanted to show that he could form a people who were holy with an invisible holiness, and fill them with an eternal glory. As nature is an image of grace, he fashioned the benefits of nature to match the benefits of grace that he was to create, so as to get us to judge that since he made the visible so well, he could also make the invisible.

So he has saved this people from the flood; he has raised them up from Abraham. He has rescued them from their enemies, and set them at rest.

In saving them from the flood and raising this whole people from Abraham, God wasn't aiming merely to bring them into a rich land. What he aimed at had something to do with grace.

And even grace is not the ultimate goal—it is only the symbol of glory. It was symbolised by the law, and itself symbolises glory. But it is the symbol of it, and the origin or cause.

The ordinary life of men is like that of the saints. They all seek their satisfaction, and differ only in *what* will satisfy them; they call those who hinder them their 'enemies', etc. Thus God showed his power over invisible benefits by showing his power over visible ones.

644. Symbols. God, wanting to make for himself a holy people that he would separate from all other nations, deliver from its enemies and put into a place of rest, promised to do this and predicted through his prophets when and how this would happen. And until then, to confirm the

hope of his chosen people, he made them see an image of it through all time, never leaving them without assurances of his power and of his will to save them. For, at the creation of man, Adam was the witness, and guardian of the promise of a Saviour who would be born of a woman. Back then, men were still so near the creation that they couldn't have forgotten their creation and their fall. When those who had seen Adam were no longer in the world, God sent Noah, whom he saved, and drowned the whole earth through a miracle which showed his power to save the world, and his will to do so and to raise up from the seed of the woman Him whom he had promised. This miracle was enough to confirm the hope of men.

The memory of the flood being so fresh among men, while Noah was still alive, God made promises to Abraham, and while Shem was still living he sent Moses, etc.

645. Symbols. God, wanting to deprive his people of perishable benefits, created the Jewish people in order to show that this wasn't owing to lack of power.

646. The Synagogue didn't perish because it was a symbol. But because it was only a symbol it fell into servitude. The symbol existed until the truth came, so that the Church should be always visible—either •in the sign that promised it or •really.

647. That the law was symbolic.

648. Two errors: **(1)** To take everything literally. **(2)** To take everything spiritually.

649. Speak against excessively symbolic language.

650. Some symbols are clear and demonstrative, but others seem far-fetched and are convincing only to those who are already persuaded. These are like the apocalypics [see note in item **651**]. But the difference is that the apocalypics have none that are certain; so that it is utterly wrong for them to

claim that their symbols are as well founded as some of ours; for none of theirs are demonstrative, as some of ours are.

The two are not on a par. We shouldn't put these things on the same level and run them together just because they seem to be alike in one respect, given that they are so different in another. The clarity in divine things requires us to revere their obscurities.

651. Wild views of the apocalypics, preadamites, millenarians, etc. People who base extravagant opinions on Scripture will rely on, for example, things like this: It is said that 'this generation will not pass till all these things be fulfilled'. I respond to this that after that generation there will come another generation, and so on for ever. [Apocalypics base their predictions on the book of Revelations; preadamites believe that there were men before Adam; millenarians, relying on Revelations 20, hold that Christ will rule on earth for a thousand years before the day of judgment.]

In 2 Chronicles 'the King' and 'Solomon' are spoken of as though they were two different persons. I will say that they were two.

652. Particular symbols. Double law, double tables of the law, double temple, double captivity.

653. Symbols. The prophets prophesied by symbols—a girdle, a beard, and burnt hair, etc.

654. Difference between dinner and supper.

In God the word doesn't differ from the intention, for he is true; nor the word from the effect, for he is powerful; nor the means from the effect, for he is wise. Saint Bernard, *Last Sermon on the Incarnation*.

Saint Augustine, *City of God* v.10. This rule is general: God can do anything, except things such that if he could do them he wouldn't be almighty—dying, being deceived, lying, etc.

Several Evangelists for confirmation of the truth; their differences are useful.

The Eucharist after the Lord's Supper. Truth after symbol.

The ruin of Jerusalem, a symbol of the ruin of the world, forty years after the death of Jesus.

'I know not', as a man, or as an emissary (Matthew 24:36) Jesus condemned by the Jews and the Gentiles.

The Jews and the Gentiles symbolised by the two sons. Augustine, *City of God* xx.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.

656. Adam the symbol of him who was to come (Romans 5:14). Six days to form one, six ages to form the other. The six days that Moses says it took for Adam to be formed are only a picture of the six ages to form Jesus-Christ and the Church. If Adam hadn't sinned, and Jesus-Christ hadn't come, there would have been only one covenant, only one age of men, and the creation would have been represented as done all at once.

657. Symbols. The Jewish and Egyptian peoples were plainly predicted by the two individuals whom Moses met: the Egyptian beating the Jew. Moses avenging the Jew and killing the Egyptian, and the Jew being ungrateful for this.

658. The Gospel's symbols for the state of the sick soul are sick bodies; but one body can't be sick enough to express it well, so several were needed. Thus there are the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the paralytic, the dead Lazarus, the possessed. All this is in the sick soul.

659. Symbols. To show that the Old Testament is only symbolic, and that when the prophets spoke of temporal

blessings they were really speaking of other blessings, this is the proof:

(1) This—i.e. speaking only of temporal blessings—would be unworthy of God.

(2) Their discourses express very clearly the promise of temporal blessings, yet they say that their discourses are obscure and that their meaning won't be understood. So there was a secret meaning different from the one they openly expressed, and they meant to speak of other sacrifices, of another deliverer, etc. They say they will be understood only in the fullness of time (Jeremiah 30:24).

(3) Their discourses are contradictory, and neutralise each other (sometimes contradicting one another within a single chapter); so if they aren't to be found guilty of a plain and gross contradiction, they must have meant by the words for *law* and *sacrifice* something other than what Moses meant by them. Therefore they *did* mean something else.

Now, to understand the meaning of an author. . .

660. Greed has become natural to us, and has made our second nature. Thus 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' [Luke 17:21]. The rabbis.

661. Penitence, alone of all these mysteries, was openly declared to the Jews, and by Saint John the forerunner [= John the Baptist]; and *then* the other mysteries—to indicate that this order must be observed in each man as in the entire world.

662. The carnal Jews didn't understand either the greatness or the humiliation of the Messiah predicted in their prophecies.

•They misunderstood him in his predicted greatness, as when he said that the Messiah will be David's lord

though ·also· his son [Matthew 22:45], and that he was before Abraham, who had seen him [John 8:56,58]. They did not believe him so great as to be eternal.

•Similarly, they misunderstood him in his humiliation and in his death. ‘The Messiah’, they said, ‘exists eternally, and this man says he will die.’

Thus they believed him neither eternal nor mortal; they looked only for a carnal greatness in him.

663. Symbolic. Nothing is so like charity as cupidity [see Glossary], and nothing is so opposed to it. Thus the Jews, rich with goods that satisfied their cupidity, were very like Christians and very contrary to them. This gave them the two qualities it was necessary for them to have—to be very like the Messiah so as to symbolise him, and very contrary to him so as not to be suspect witnesses.

664. Symbolic. God made use of the greed [see Glossary] of the Jews to make them minister to Jesus-Christ, who brought the remedy for their greed.

665. Charity is not a symbolic precept. Jesus-Christ came to replace symbols by the truth; it would be horrible to say that he came only to replace some existing reality by the *symbol* charity.

‘If the light be darkness, how great is that darkness!’ [Matthew 6:23]

666. Fascination.

‘They have slept their sleep’ [Psalm 75:5].

‘the fashion of this world’ [1 Corinthians 7:31]

The Eucharist. ‘bread without scarceness’ [Deut. 8:9]

‘our daily bread’ [Luke 11:3]

‘The enemies of the Lord will lick the dust’ [Psalm 71:9]. Sinners ‘lick the dust’, i.e. love earthly pleasures.

The Old Testament contained symbols of future joy, and the New contains the means of arriving at it.

The symbols were of joy; the means were of penitence; and yet the paschal lamb was eaten ‘with bitter herbs’. [Exodus 12:8]. . . .

667. Symbolic. The expressions ‘sword’, ‘shield’. ‘O thou most mighty’ [Psalm 45:3]

668. We distance ourselves from one another only by distancing ourselves from charity.

Our prayers and our virtues are abominable before God if they are not the prayers and the virtues of Jesus-Christ. And our sins will never be the object of God’s mercy but ·only· of his justice if they are not the sins of Jesus-Christ. He adopted our sins, and brought us into his covenant; for the virtues are his own, and the sins are foreign to him; while the virtues are foreign to us, and our sins are our own.

Let us change the rule by which we have until now judged what is good. Our rule was our own will. Let us now take the will of God: whatever he wants is good and right to us, and whatever he doesn’t want is bad.

Anything that God doesn’t want is forbidden. Sins are forbidden by God’s general declaration that he didn’t want them. Other things that he has left without general prohibition, and for that reason are called ‘permitted’, are nevertheless not always permitted. For when God takes one of them from us, and when the upshot (which manifests God’s will) indicates that God doesn’t want us to have that thing, then that is forbidden to us—as sin is forbidden—because God’s will is opposed to it as much as to sin. There’s just one difference between the two things: it is certain that God will never allow sin, while it is not certain that he will never allow the other, ·i.e. the not-*generally*-prohibited act·. But so long as God doesn’t want it, we should regard it as sin; so long as the absence of God’s will, which alone is all goodness and all rightness, makes it bad and wrong.

669. Changing the symbol, because of our weakness.

670. Symbols. The Jews had grown old in these earthly thoughts:

- God loved their father Abraham, his flesh and what sprang from it;
- on account of this he had multiplied them and marked them off from all other nations, without allowing them to intermingle;
- when they were languishing in Egypt, he brought them out with all these great signs in their favour;
- he fed them with manna in the desert;
- he led them into a very rich land;
- he gave them kings and a well-built temple in which to sacrifice beasts before him, by the shedding of whose blood they would be purified; and finally
- he would send them the Messiah to make them masters of all the world, and predicted the time of his coming.

The world having grown old in these carnal errors, Jesus-Christ came at the time predicted, but not with the expected glory; so they didn't think he was the Messiah. After his death, Saint Paul came to teach men that all these things had happened symbolically; that the kingdom of God consisted not in the flesh but in the spirit; that men's enemies were not the Babylonians but their own passions; that God delighted not in temples made with hands but in a pure and contrite heart; that the circumcision of the body was useless but that circumcision of the heart was needed; that Moses had not given them the bread from heaven, etc.

But God, not having wanted to reveal these things to this people that was unworthy of them, but having wanted to predict them so that they might be believed, •predicted the time clearly and •expressed the things sometimes clearly but very often in symbols—so that those who loved symbols

might stop at them and those who loved what was symbolised might see it in them.

Anything that doesn't tend to charity is symbolic.

The sole topic of the Scripture is charity.

Anything that doesn't tend to the sole end is the symbol of it. For since there is only one end, anything that doesn't speak of it literally and explicitly is symbolic.

God thus varies that sole precept of charity to satisfy our curiosity which seeks for variety, using variations that still lead us to the one thing needful. For •just one thing is needed, and •we love variation, and God satisfies both of those by means of these variations that lead to the one needed thing.

The Jews loved the symbols so much, and so strictly expected them, that they misunderstood the reality when it came at the predicted time in the predicted manner.

The rabbis take the breasts of the Spouse [Song of Solomon 4:5], along with everything that doesn't express the only end they have, to be symbols of temporal goods.

And Christians take even the Eucharist as a symbol of the glory they aim at.

671. The Jews, who were called to subdue nations and kings, have been slaves to sin; and the Christians, whose calling has been to be servants and subjects, are free children.

672. When Saint Peter and the apostles deliberated about abolishing circumcision, where it was a question of acting against the law of God, they looked not to the prophets but simply to the reception of the Holy Spirit in persons who were not circumcised.

They thought it more certain •that God approves of those whom he fills with his Spirit than •that the law must be obeyed. They knew that the goal of the law was only the Holy Spirit; and that thus circumcision was not necessary,

because men who hadn't been circumcised certainly had the Holy Spirit.

673. 'Make them after their pattern, which was showed you on the mount.' [Exodus 25:40]

So the Jewish religion was been formed on its likeness to the truth of the Messiah; and the truth of the Messiah was been recognised through the Jewish religion, which was the symbol of it.

Among the Jews the truth was only symbolised; in heaven it is revealed.

In the Church it is hidden and recognised by its resemblance to the symbol.

The symbol has been made according to the truth, and the truth has been recognised through the symbol.¹

Saint Paul himself says that people will forbid marriages, and he himself speaks of them to the Corinthians in a way that is a snare. [And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but. . . .that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.] [1 Corinthians 7:35] For if a prophet had said the one, and Saint Paul had then said the other, he would have been accused.

674. 'Do all things according to the pattern which has been shown you on the mount.' On which Saint Paul says that the Jews have depicted heavenly things. [Hebrews 8:5]

675. . . . And yet this Testament, made to blind some and enlighten others, indicated in the very persons whom it blinded to the truth that was to be recognised by others. For the visible blessings they received from God were so great and so divine that he indeed appeared able to give them invisible blessings and a Messiah.

For nature is an image of grace, and visible miracles are images of invisible ones. 'That you may know. . . I say unto

you: Arise.' [Mark 2:10-11]

Isaiah says that Redemption will be like the crossing of the Red Sea.

So God has shown by the deliverance from Egypt and from the sea, by the defeat of kings, by the manna, by the whole genealogy of Abraham, that he was able to save, to send down bread from heaven, etc.; so that the people hostile to him are the symbol and the representation of the very Messiah whom they don't know, etc.

He has, then, taught us at last •that all these things were only symbols and •what is 'true freedom', a 'true Israelite', 'true circumcision', 'true bread from heaven', etc.

In those promises each one finds what he has most at heart, a temporal benefits or b spiritual ones, b God or a created things; but with this difference: a those who seek created things find them, but

- with many contradictions,
- with a prohibition against loving them,
- with the command to worship God only and—the same thing—to love him only, and finally
- with •the recognition• that the Messiah didn't come for them;

whereas b those who seek God find him,

- without any contradiction,
- with the command to love only him, and
- with the recognition• that the Messiah came at the predicted time to give them the blessings they ask for.

Thus the Jews had miracles, prophecies that they saw fulfilled; •the teaching of their law was to worship and love God only; •it was also perpetual. So •it had all the marks of the true religion, which indeed it was. But the teaching of the Jews should be distinguished from the teaching of the

¹ [In this sentence, the word *sur* is translated once by 'according to' and once by 'through'.]

Jewish law. The teaching of the Jews was not true, although it had miracles, prophecies and perpetuity, because it didn't speak of worshipping and loving God only.

676. The veil that is cast over these books for the Jews is there also for bad Christians and for all who don't hate themselves. But those who truly hate themselves—how well-equipped *they* are to understand the books and to know Jesus-Christ!

677. A symbol conveys absence and presence, pleasure and pain. A cipher has a double meaning, one clear and one that the cipher is said to have hidden in it.

678. Symbols. A portrait conveys presence and absence, pleasure and pain. The reality excludes absence and pain.

To know if the law and the sacrifices are **a** reality or **b** symbol, we must know whether the prophets in speaking of these things

- a** confined their view and their thought to *them*, seeing in them only the old covenant; or rather
- b** saw in them something else that they were depicting (for in a portrait we see the depicted thing).

For this we need only examine what they say of them.

When they say that the law will be eternal, do they mean to be speaking about the covenant that they say will be changed? Same question about the sacrifices, etc.

A cipher has two meanings. When we come across an important document in which we find a clear meaning, but we're told that its meaning is veiled and obscure, that it is hidden—so that we might see the document without seeing it, and understand it without understanding it—we have to think that it is a cipher with a double meaning, especially if we find in it obvious contradictions in the literal meaning.

The prophets said clearly that Israel would be always loved by God and that the law would be eternal; and they

said that their meaning wouldn't be understood and that it was veiled.

How greatly we should value those who decode the cipher and introduce us to the hidden meaning, especially if the principles they bring forth from it are perfectly clear and natural! That is what Jesus-Christ and the apostles did. They broke the seal; he tore aside the veil and revealed the spirit. They taught us through this •that the enemies of man are his passions; •that the Redeemer would be spiritual, and his reign spiritual; •that there would be two comings, one in misery to humble the proud man, the other in glory to exalt the humble man; •that Jesus-Christ would be God and man.

679. Symbols. Jesus-Christ opened their mind to understand the Scriptures.

Two great revelations are these. **(1)** Everything happened to them in symbols: 'true Israelite' [John 1:47], 'true freedom' [8:36], 'true bread from heaven'. **(2)** A God brought the whole way down to the Cross. The Christ had to suffer in order to enter into his glory, 'so that he would destroy death through his death' [Hebrews 2:14]. Two comings.

680. Symbols. Once this secret has been disclosed it's impossible not to see it. Read the Old Testament in this light, and ask whether the sacrifices were real, whether Abraham's fatherhood was the true cause of God's friendship with him, and whether the promised land was the true place of rest. Were they? No. So they were symbols. In the same way examine all those ordained ceremonies and commandments that aren't about charity, and you'll see that they are symbols of charity.

So all these sacrifices and ceremonies were either symbols or nonsense. Well, some clear things are too lofty to be thought nonsense.

To know whether the prophets confined their view •to

what lies on the surface· in the Old Testament or whether they saw other things in it.

681. Symbolism. The key to the cipher: ‘true worshippers’ [John 4:23]. ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ [John 1:29]

682. Isaiah 1:21. Change of good into evil, and the vengeance of God. Isaiah 26:20, 28:1. —Miracles: Isaiah 33:9, 40: 17, 41:26, 43:13, 44:20–24, 54:8, 61:17, 63:12–17.

Jeremiah 2:35, 4:22–24, 5:4,29–31, 6:16.

Jeremiah 11:21, 15:12, 17:9. ‘The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?’—i.e. who can know all its evil? For it is already known to be wicked. ‘I am the Lord’ etc. ‘I will do unto this house’ etc. Trust in external sacrifices. ‘For I spoke not unto your fathers’ etc. Outward sacrifice is not the essential point.—‘According to the number’ etc. [11:13] A multitude of doctrines. [23: 15–17; the other quotations in this item are attributed by Pascal, not very accurately, to Jeremiah 17.]

683. Symbols. The letter kills. Everything happened in symbols. The Christ had to suffer. A humiliated God. Here is the cipher that Saint Paul gives us [2 Corinthians 3:6]. Circumcision of the heart, true fasting, true sacrifice, true temple [Romans 2:29]. The prophets have indicated that all this must be spiritual.

Not the flesh that perishes, but that which does not perish [John 6:53–7].

‘You will be truly free’ [John 8:36]. Then the other freedom is only a symbol of freedom.

‘I am the true bread from heaven.’ [John 6:51]

684. Contradiction. To give a good account of someone’s character, one must bring all his contrarities; it isn’t enough to trace out a series of qualities that obviously agree with one another, without relating them to the ones that don’t

agree. To understand the meaning of an author, we must make all the contrary passages agree.

Thus, to understand Scripture it’s not enough to have a meaning that fits many concurring passages; we must have a meaning that fits even the contrary passages.

Every author has a meaning that fits all the contrary passages, or he has no meaning at all. We can’t say that—i.e. that they have no meaning—of Scripture and the prophets; they undoubtedly had an abundantly good meaning. So we must look for a meaning that reconciles all the discrepancies.

The true meaning, then, is not that of the Jews; but in Jesus-Christ all the contradictions are reconciled. The Jews couldn’t reconcile the end of the royalty and principality, predicted by Hosea [3:4] with the prophecy of Jacob [Genesis 49:10].

If we take the law, the sacrifices, and the kingdom as •realities, we can’t reconcile all the passages. So they *must* be only •symbols. Otherwise we couldn’t even reconcile passages of the same author, or in the same book, or sometimes in the same chapter, saying which was the author’s meaning. As when Ezekiel, chapter 20, says that man will live by God’s commandments and will not live by them.

685. Symbols. If the law and the sacrifices are the truth, it must be that it—i.e. the truth, i.e. the law and the sacrifices—please God and displease him. If they are symbols, they must please *and* displease.

Well, throughout Scripture they are both pleasing and displeasing.

It is said (**a**) that the law will be changed, that the sacrifice will be changed; that the Jews will be without law, without a prince, and without sacrifices; that a new covenant will be made; that the law will be renewed; that the precepts they have received are not good; that their sacrifices are abominable and God has not asked for them.

It is said, on the contrary, **(b)** that the law will last forever; that this covenant will be eternal; that sacrifice will be eternal; that the sceptre will never leave them because it won't leave them until the eternal King comes.

Do all these passages tell us what is reality? No. Do they tell us what is symbol? No. But they do tell us that we have here something that is either reality or symbol. The **(a)** set of passages are inconsistent with reality, so they must be only symbolic. They can't all be applied to reality; they can all be applied to the symbol; so they are being said not about reality but about the symbol.

'The lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' [Revelation 13:8]. Sacrificial judge.

686. Contradictions. The sceptre until the Messiah—without king or prince.

The eternal law—changed.

The eternal covenant—a new covenant.

Good laws—bad precepts. Ezekiel 20.

687. Symbols. When the word of God, which is really true, is false literally, it is true spiritually. 'Sit then at my right hand' [Psalm 110:1]—this is false literally, so it is true spiritually.

In this expression God is spoken of after the manner of men; and what it means is simply that God will have the intention that men have when they seat someone on their right. So it indicates God's intention, not his way of carrying it out.

Thus, when it is said 'God has received the odour of your incense, and will in recompense give you a rich land' [Genesis 8:21], that is equivalent to saying that God will have towards you the same intention that a man would have in giving a rich land to someone who pleased him with perfumes, because you have the same intention towards him as a man would have towards someone to whom he was giving rich

perfumes. Similarly 'he is angry' Isaiah 5:25, 'a jealous God', etc. The things of God are inexpressible, and can't be said in any other way than symbolically, and the Church uses such symbols still: 'For he has strengthened the bars' [Psalm 147:13].

It is not permissible to attribute to Scripture a meaning that isn't revealed to us as the one that it has. [Pascal gives examples of theories about the meanings of certain details in the Hebrew language, and says that it is not permissible to assert these theories.] But we say that the literal meaning is not the true meaning, because the prophets themselves said so.

688. I don't say that the Hebrew letter *mem* is mystical.

689. Moses (Deuteronomy 30) promises that God will circumcise their heart to make them capable of loving him.

690. When David or Moses says something like 'God will circumcise the heart', that one statement tells us how to take everything they are saying. Even if everything else they said was ambiguous, leaving us unsure whether they were philosophers or Christians, one statement of this kind would determine all the rest; just as one sentence of Epictetus settles the nature (the opposite nature) of all the rest of his writings. Ambiguity exists up to that point, but no further.

691. Suppose two persons A and B are telling silly stories, A using language with a double meaning that is understood only in his own circle, B using it with only one meaning. If you are not in on the secret of the two-meaning language, and hear them going on in this fashion, you'll pass the same judgment on both, namely that they are both foolish and noisy. But if later on you hear A saying angelic things while B utters only dull commonplaces, you'll judge that A had been speaking in mysteries and B hadn't; because A will have sufficiently shown that he is incapable of such foolishness

and capable of being mysterious, while B will have shown that he is incapable of mystery and capable of foolishness.

The Old Testament is a cipher.

692. Some people see clearly that

- man's only enemy is the greed that turns him away from God; and that
- man's only good is not a rich land but God.

Those who believe that human welfare is in the flesh, and that what's bad for man is what turns him away from sensual pleasures—let them gorge themselves on those pleasures and die in them! But those who seek God with all their heart, who are troubled only by their not seeing him, who have no desire but to possess him and no enemies but those who turn them away from him, who are grieved at seeing themselves surrounded and dominated by such enemies—let them take comfort, as I bring them good news. There exists a redeemer for them; I'll show him to them; I'll show that there is a God for them; I shan't show him to others. I'll make them see that a Messiah was been promised who would deliver them from their enemies, and that one has come to free them from iniquities but not from enemies.

When David predicted that the Messiah would deliver his people from their enemies, one might think (carnally) that he was referring to the Egyptians; and then I can't show that the

prophecy was fulfilled. But one might believe also that the enemies would be their iniquities; for indeed the Egyptians were not their enemies but their iniquities were so. The word 'enemies', then, is ambiguous.

But if David says elsewhere—as he does—that the Messiah will deliver his people from their sins [see Glossary], as indeed do Isaiah and others, the ambiguity is removed and the double meaning of 'enemies' is reduced to the simple meaning of 'iniquities'. For if he was thinking about sins he could well refer to them as 'enemies', but if he was thinking about enemies he couldn't refer to them as 'iniquities'.

Now Moses, David, and Isaiah used the same terms. Who will deny, then, that they have the same meaning and that David's meaning, which is plainly *iniquities* when he spoke of 'enemies', was also what Moses meant when he spoke of 'enemies'?

Daniel (chapter 9) prays for the deliverance of the people from the captivity of their 'enemies'; but he was thinking of *sins*. Evidence for this? He says that Gabriel came to tell him that his prayer was heard, and that there were only seventy weeks to wait, after which the people would be freed from iniquity, sin would come to an end, and the redeemer, the Holy of Holies, would bring eternal justice—not the legal kind, but the eternal one.

Section 11: The prophecies

693.When I see the blindness and the misery of man, when I regard the whole silent universe and man •without light, •left to himself, •as though lost in this little corner of the universe, •not knowing

who has put him there,

what he has come to do, or
what will become of him at death,

and •incapable of all knowledge, I become terrified, like a man carried in his sleep to a dreadful desert island and waking without knowing where he is and with no means of

escape. And this makes me wonder how people in such a wretched condition don't fall into despair. I see around me other persons who are like me; I ask them whether they are better informed than I am; and they tell me that they are not. These wretched lost beings ·don't despair because· they have looked around them, seen some pleasing objects, and have given and attached themselves to those. Speaking for myself, I haven't been able to attach myself to them; and, considering how strongly it appears that there's something more than what I see, I have explored whether ·this something more·, this God, hasn't left some sign of himself.

The many religions that I see contradict one another, so all but one of them are false. Each wants to be believed on its own authority, and threatens unbelievers; but that doesn't get me to believe any of them. Anyone can say that; anyone can call himself a prophet. But I see the Christian religion, in which I find prophecies; and this—·making prophecies that are fulfilled·—is not something that anyone can do!

694. . . . And what crowns all this is prediction, which blocks people from saying ·of the predicted event· 'this came about by chance'.

If someone has only eight days to live, won't he think that it's best to bet that this is *not* a stroke of chance. Well, if the passions had no hold on us, eight days and a hundred years would amount to the same thing.

695. Le grand Pan est mort.

696. 'They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.' [Acts 17:11]

697. Read what has been prophesied. Examine what has been accomplished. Work on what needs to be accomplished. [Pascal gives these in Latin.]

698. We understand the prophecies only when we see the events happen. Thus the proofs of retreat and of discretion, of silence etc., are proofs only to those who know and believe them.

Joseph so internal in a law so external.

Outward penances lead to inward, as humiliations lead to humility. Thus the. . .

699. The synagogue preceded the Church; the Jews preceded the Christians. The prophets predicted the Christians; Saint John predicted Jesus-Christ.

700. The history of Herod and of Caesar look fine when seen with the eyes of faith.

701. The zeal of the Jews for their king² and their temple (Josephus, and Philo Judaeus's . . . *ad Caium*).

What other people had such a zeal? They had to have it.

Jesus-Christ predicted regarding the time and the state of the world. The 'lawgiver from beneath his feet' [Genesis 49:10] and the fourth monarchy [Daniel 2:40].

How fortunate we are to have this light in this darkness!

How fine it is to see, with the eyes of faith, Darius and Cyrus, Alexander, the Romans, Pompey and Herod—all unknowingly working for the glory of the Gospel!

702. Zeal of the Jewish people for the law, especially since there stopped being any more prophets.

703. While the prophets were for maintaining the law, the people didn't care. But in the time since the last of the prophets, zeal has taken over ·from indifference·.

704. The devil troubled the zeal of the Jews before Jesus-Christ, because he would have done them good; but not afterwards.

The Jewish people scorned by the Gentiles; the Christian people persecuted.

² [unless *roi* was meant to be *loi* = 'law'; see items 702–703.]

705. Prophecies with their fulfilment; what has preceded and what has followed Jesus-Christ.

706. The prophecies are the strongest proof of Jesus-Christ. And they are what God made most provision for: the event that made them come true is a miracle existing from the birth of the Church to the end. Thus, God raised up prophets during sixteen centuries and then for four centuries after that he scattered all these prophecies among all the Jews, who carried them to all parts of the world. That was the preparation for the birth of Jesus-Christ; his Gospel was to be believed by everyone, there had to be prophecies to make it believed and these had to spread through the whole world so that the Gospel would be embraced by everyone.

707. But it wasn't enough that the prophecies should exist. They had to be distributed through all places and preserved through all times. And so that this coming of the Messiah wouldn't be taken to have happened by chance, it had to be predicted. . . .

708. The time predicted 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 predict the same thing in so many ways. It was necessary that the four idolatrous or pagan monarchies, the end of the kingdom of Judah, and the seventy weeks, should happen at the same time, and all this before the second temple was destroyed.

710. If *one man* had made a book of predictions about the time and the manner of Jesus-Christ's coming, and Jesus-Christ came in conformity to these prophecies, this fact would have infinite weight.

But we have much more than that. Here's a continuous unvarying series of men across four thousand years who, one after another, predict this same coming. Here's a whole

people that announces it and has existed for four thousand years, in order to testify as a body to the assurances they have regarding it—assurances they can't be diverted from by any threats and persecutions brought against them. This is of a quite different order of importance.

711. Predictions of particular things. They were foreigners in Egypt, with no private property there or anywhere else. There was not the slightest sign of •the royalty that existed for so long after that or of •the supreme council of seventy judges which they called the Sanhedrin and which, after being instituted by Moses, would last to the time of Jesus-Christ. All these things were as far removed from their state at that time as they could be, when Jacob—dying, and blessing his twelve children—told them that they would own a great land, and predicted that the kings who would one day rule them would be of the race of the family of Judah, and that all •the descendants of •his brethren would be their subjects; and that even the Messiah, who would be the hope of nations, would descend from him, and that the kingship would not be taken away from Judah, nor would the role of ruler and law-giver be taken from his descendants until the expected Messiah arrived in his family.

This same Jacob, disposing of that future land as though he were its ruler, gave to Joseph a portion more than he gave to the others: 'I give you one part more than to your brothers.' And blessing his two children Ephraim and Manasseh whom Joseph had presented to him, the elder Manasseh on his right and the young Ephraim on his left, Jacob crossed his arms and blessed them both, with his right hand on Ephraim's head and his left on Manasseh's. And when Joseph put it to him that he was preferring the younger, he replied with splendid firmness: 'I know, my son, I know; but Ephraim will increase more than Manasseh.' (This was so true in the upshot that, being alone almost as fruitful as the

two entire lines composing a whole kingdom, they have been usually called by the name 'Ephraim' alone.)

This same Joseph when he was dying told his children to take his bones with them when they went into that land, which they didn't reach until two centuries later.

Moses, who wrote all these things so long before they happened, himself assigned to each family a share of that land before they entered it, as though he were its ruler. He declared that God was to raise up from their nation and their race a prophet, of whom he was the symbol; and he predicted in detail everything that was to happen to them in the land they were to enter after his death: the victories God would give them, their ingratitude towards God, the punishments they would receive for this, and the other things that were going to happen to them. He gave them judges to supervise the sharing. He prescribed the entire form of political government that they were going to observe, the cities of refuge they would build, and. . .

712. The prophecies about particular things are mingled with those about the Messiah, so that the prophecies of the Messiah wouldn't be without proofs and the particular prophecies wouldn't be pointless.

713. Perpetual captivity of the Jews. Jeremiah 11:11: 'I will bring evil upon Judah from which they will not be able to escape.'

Symbols. Isaiah 5: The Lord had a vineyard, from which he looked for grapes; and it brought forth only sour grapes. 'I will therefore lay it waste, and destroy it; the earth will bring forth only thorns, and I will forbid the clouds to rain on it. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his good seed. I looked that they should do justice, and they bring forth only iniquities.'

Isaiah 8: 'Sanctify the Lord with fear and trembling;

let him be your only dread, and he will be to you for a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence for both the houses of Israel. He will be a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and many among them will stumble against that stone, and fall and be broken, and be caught in that trap and die in it. Hide my words, and cover my law for my disciples. I will then wait in patience upon the Lord that who hides and conceals himself from the house of Jacob.'

Isaiah 29:9–14: 'Be amazed and wonder, people of Israel; stagger and stumble, and be drunken, but not with wine; stagger, but not with drunkenness. For God has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep. He will close your eyes; he will cover your princes and your prophets that have visions.

(Daniel 12: 'The wicked will not understand, but the wise will understand.' After many temporal blessings Hosea 14:9 says: 'Who is wise, and he will understand these things?' etc.)

And the visions of all the prophets will become to you as a sealed book, which men deliver to one that is learned and can read; and he says "I cannot read it, for it is sealed". And when the book is delivered to those who are illiterate, they say "I do not know how to read".'

'And the Lord said to me: "Because this people honour me with their lips but have removed their heart far from me (and that is the reason and cause of it; for if they adored God in their hearts they would understand the prophecies)

and have served me only through human rituals, therefore I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; it is that the wisdom of their wise men will perish, and their understanding will be darkened".'

Isaiah 41: 'If you are gods, come near, tell us about future

things; we will incline our heart to your words. Teach us the things that have been at the beginning, and declare to us things that are to come. By this we will know that you are gods. Do good or evil if you can. Let us then behold it and reason together. But you are nothing, you are only abominations etc. Who among you has taught us (through contemporary writers) concerning the things done from the beginning and the origin, so that we may say to him “You are the righteous one”? There is no-one who teaches us, no-one who predicts the future.’

Isaiah 42:8–10: ‘I am the Lord; I will not give my glory to others. It is I who caused the predictions of the things that have happened, and who predict things that are to come. Sing to God a new song through all the earth.’

Isaiah 43:8–27: ‘Bring forth the people that have eyes and see not, who have ears and hear not. Let all the nations be gathered together. Who among them (or among their gods) will inform you about past things and things to come? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified; or let them hear me and confess that *this* is the truth. You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he.’

‘I have predicted, and have saved, and I alone have done wonders before your eyes: you are my witnesses, said the Lord, that I am God. It is I who for love of you have broken the forces of the Babylonians. It is I who have sanctified you and have created you. It is I who have made a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters, and who have drowned and destroyed for ever the mighty enemies that have resisted you. But forget these former benefits; do not look back on past things.’

‘Behold, I am preparing new things that will soon appear; you will know them. I will make the deserts and fruitful. I

have formed this people for myself; I have established them to show forth my praise, etc.’

‘But it is for my own sake that I will blot out your sins and will forget your crimes. For your sake, go over your memory of your ungrateful acts, to see if you have any way to justify yourselves. Your first father sinned, and your teachers have all been transgressors.’

Isaiah 44.: ‘I am the first and the last, says the Lord. Let him who will equal himself to me report on the order of things since I formed the first peoples, and let him announce the things that are to come. Fear nothing; have I not told you all these things? You are my witnesses.’

Prophecy of Cyrus. Isaiah 45:4: ‘For Jacob’s sake, mine elect, I have called you by your name.’

Isaiah 45:21: ‘Come and let us reason together. Who has declared things from the beginning? Who has predicted things ever since then? Was it not I, who am the Lord?’

Isaiah 46: ‘Think back to the former centuries, and know there is none like me—I who announce from the beginning the things that are to come at the end, telling the origin of the world. My decrees will stand, and all my wishes will be fulfilled.’

Isaiah 42: ‘The former things have happened as they had been predicted; and behold, now I predict new ones, announcing them to you before they happen’

Isaiah 48.3: ‘I have caused the former things to be predicted from the beginning, and they happened in the way I had said they would. Because I know that you are obstinate, that your spirit is rebellious, and your brow is of brass; that is why I wanted to announce them to you in advance, so that you couldn’t say that it was the work of *your* gods, and the effect of their commands.’

‘You see happening the things that were predicted; will not you declare it? Now I announce to you new things, which

I conserve in my power, and which you have not yet seen. It is only now that I am preparing them, not from long ago; I have kept them hidden from you, so that you could not boast of having foreseen them yourselves. For you had no knowledge of them; no-one spoke to you of them, and your ears heard nothing of them. For I know you, and I know that you are full of transgression, and I have called you “transgressors” ever since your origin’

Reprobation of the Jews and conversion of the Gentiles. Isaiah 65: ‘I am sought by those who did not consult me; I am found by those who were not looking for me. I said “Here I am! Here I am!” to a nation that did not call upon my name. I have spread out my hands all the day to an unbelieving people who follow their own desires and walk in a way that is bad, a people who provoke me to anger continually by the crimes they commit in my presence, who sacrifice to idols, etc. These will be scattered like smoke in the day of my wrath, etc. I will assemble your iniquities and your fathers’, and will recompense you for all according to your works.

‘Thus says the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it and the promise of fruit: for my servants’ sake I will not destroy all Israel. Thus I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob and out of Judah to possess my mountains, which my elect and my servants will have as a heritage, along with my fertile and wonderfully abundant plains; but I will destroy all the others, because you have forgotten your God to serve strange gods. I called, and you did not answer; I spoke, and you did not hear; and you chose things which I forbade.’

‘That is why the Lord says these things. Behold, my servants will eat, but you will be hungry; my servants will rejoice, but you will be ashamed; my servants will sing for joy of heart, but you will cry and howl for vexation of spirit.

‘And you will leave your name for a curse unto my chosen.

The Lord will slay you, and call his servants by another name, under which he who is blessed on the earth will be blessed in God, etc., because the former troubles are forgotten. For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and past things will not be remembered or come into your mind.’

‘But you will rejoice for ever in the new things I am creating, for I am creating Jerusalem, which is nothing but joy; and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and in my people, and cries and tears will no longer be heard.’

‘Before they call, I will answer; and when they are just starting to speak, I will listen to them. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, the lion and the bullock will eat the same straw; the serpent’s only food will be dust; and there will be no murder or violence in all my holy mountain.’

Isaiah 56:3: ‘The Lord says these things. Be just and honest, for my salvation is near and my righteousness will soon be revealed. Blessed is he who does these things and who observes my Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.’

‘And let not the strangers who have joined themselves to me say “God will separate me from his people”. For the Lord says these things: to all those who will keep my Sabbath, and choose to do the things that I want done, and keep my covenant, I will give a place in my house, and I will give them a better name than the one I have given to my children; it will be an everlasting name, which will never perish.’

Isaiah 59:9: ‘It is for our crimes that justice is far from us. We have waited for the light and find only darkness; we have hoped for clarity and we walk in the shadows. We have groped for the wall like the blind; we have stumbled at noonday as though in the middle of the night; we are in dark places like dead men.’

‘We all roar like bears, and moan like doves. We have

waited for justice, and it does not come; we have hoped for salvation, and it keeps its distance from us.'

Isaiah 66:18: 'But I will inspect their works and their thoughts when I come to gather them together with all the nations and peoples, and they will see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those who are saved to nations in Africa, in Lydia, in Italy, in Greece, and to peoples that have not heard of me and have not seen my glory. And they will bring your brethren.

Jeremiah 7. Reprobation of the Temple: 'Go to Shiloth, where I set my name at the first, 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 called upon,
- in which you trust, and
- which I myself gave to your priests

the same thing that I did at Shiloth.' (For I have rejected it, and made myself a temple elsewhere.)'

'And I will cast you out of my sight, in the same way as I have cast out your brothers the offspring of Ephraim.' (Rejected for ever.) 'Therefore pray not for this people.'

Jeremiah 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 about sacrifices and burnt offerings. The only precept I gave them went like this: "Be obedient and faithful to my commandments, and I will be your God, and you will be my people." (It was only after they had sacrificed to the golden calf that I gave myself sacrifices to turn into good an evil custom.)'

Jeremiah 7:4: 'Do not trust 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".'

714. The Jews witnesses for God. Isaiah 43:9; 44:8.

Prophecies fulfilled.- 1 Kings 13:2, 22:16; Joshua 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34; Deuteronomy 23.

Malachi 1:10: The sacrifice of the Jews rejected, and the sacrifice of the pagans (even out of Jerusalem), and in all places.

Moses, before dying, predicts the calling of the Gentiles, Deuteronomy 32:21; and the disapproval of the Jews.

Moses predicts what is to happen to each tribe.

'Your name will be a curse to my elect, and I will give them another name.' [Isaiah 65:16]

'Harden their heart.' But how? By flattering their greed and making them hope to satisfy it.

715. Prophecies. Amos and Zechariah: they have sold the just one, and therefore will never be recalled. Jesus-Christ betrayed.

They will no more remember Egypt. See Isaiah 43:16-19; Jeremiah 23:6-7.

The Jews will be scattered abroad. Isaiah 27:6. A new law, Jeremiah 31:32.

Malachi. Grotius. The second temple glorious. Jesus-Christ will come. Haggai 2:7-10.

The calling of the Gentiles. Joel 2:28; Hosea 2:24; Deuteronomy 32:21; Malachi 1:11.

716. Hosea 3. Isaiah 42, 48, 54, 60, 61, 66. 'I predicted it long since, so that they might know that it is I.' Jaddus to Alexander. [Josephus reports that the high priest Jaddus opposed Alexander the Great, converting him to Judaism.]

717. The promise that David will always have descendants. [Jeremiah 33:22]

718. The eternal reign of the race of David, 2 Chronicles, by all the prophecies, and with an oath. And it was not temporally fulfilled. Jeremiah 23:20.

719. One might think that when the prophets predicted that the sceptre would not depart from Judah until the eternal king came, they spoke to soothe the people, and that their prophecy was turned out false with Herod [at whose death the kingdom was carved up by the Romans]. But to show that this was not their meaning, and that they were well aware that this temporal kingdom would cease, they said that for a long time they would have no king, no prince. Hosea 3:4.

720. ‘We have no king but Caesar.’ [John 15:19; Pascal quotes this in Latin.] So Jesus-Christ was the Messiah, since they no longer had any king but a foreigner, and didn’t want any other.

721. We have no king but Caesar. [in French]

722. Daniel 2:27–46 ‘The mystery that you ask for cannot be revealed to you by all your priests and wise men. But there is a God in heaven who can do so, and who has revealed to you in your dream what is to happen in the last times. And it is not through my own knowledge that I know what this secret is, but through the revelation of this same God, who has revealed it to me so that I can make it manifest in your presence.

‘Your dream, then, was of this kind. You saw a great statue, tall and terrible, standing before you. Its head was of gold, its breast and its arms were of silver, its belly and thighs were of brass, its legs were of iron, its feet were made of a mixture of iron and clay. You saw it like this until the stone—cut out without hands—smashed the iron-and-clay feet of the statue and broke them into pieces.

‘Then the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces together, and the wind carried them away; but this stone that smashed the statue became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream, and now I will give you the interpretation of it.

‘You, who are the greatest of kings, and to whom God has given a power so vast that you are renowned among all peoples, are represented by the head of gold that you have seen. But after you another empire will arise, inferior to yours, and then there will come a third kingdom, of brass, which will rule over all the earth.

‘But the fourth kingdom will be as strong as iron; and just as iron pierces everything, breaks everything in pieces, so also will this empire break and crush everything. And as you saw the feet and toes to be partly clay and partly iron, that signifies that this kingdom will be divided, and that it will have in part the firmness of iron and in part the fragility of clay. But just as iron can’t be firmly mixed with clay, the two parts won’t durably bind together although united by marriage.

‘Now in the days of these kings God will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor ever be delivered up to another people. It will break all these other kingdoms into pieces and consume them, and it will stand for ever, according to what you saw concerning the stone that was not quarried by hand but fell from the mountain and broke into pieces the iron, the clay, the silver, and the gold. Thus God has made known to you what the future holds. This dream is genuine, and the interpretation of it is faithful.

‘Then Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face towards the earth, etc.’

[Extended quotations from the book of Daniel continue for several more pages; they are omitted from this version.]

723. Prophecies. The seventy weeks of Daniel are ambiguous as regards when they start, because of the terms of the prophecy; and as regards when they end, because of the differences among chronologists. But all this difference amounts only to 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—the pagans would be instructed, and brought to knowledge of the God worshipped by the Jews; that those who loved him would be delivered from their enemies, and filled with fear of him and love of him.

And so it happened: in the fourth monarchy, before the destruction of the second temple etc., the pagans in great number worshipped God and led an angelic life; maidens dedicated their virginity and their life to God; men renounced all pleasures. Something that Plato couldn’t make acceptable to a few specially chosen and instructed men was accepted by a hundred million ignorant men through a secret influence conveyed by a few words.

The rich leave their wealth. Children leave the elegant homes of their parents to go into the rough desert. (See Philo the Jew.) What is going on here? It is what was predicted so long before. Through two thousand years no pagan had worshipped the God of the Jews; and now at the predicted time a mass of pagans worship this God and only him. The temples are destroyed. The very kings submit to the cross. What’s going on here? It is the spirit of God being spread across the earth.

From the time of Moses to that of Jesus-Christ, no pagan ·believed·—the rabbis themselves confirm this. After Jesus-Christ a mass of pagans believed in the books of Moses, adhered to them in essence and spirit, and rejected only what was useless.

725. Prophecies. The conversion of the Egyptians (Isaiah 19:19); an altar in Egypt to the true God.

726. Prophecies. In Egypt. Pugio Fidei, p. 659. Talmud. ‘It is a tradition among us that when the Messiah comes the

house of God in which he is to give his word will be full of filth and impurity; and that the wisdom of the scribes will be corrupt and rotten. Those who are afraid to sin will be scorned by the people and treated as crazy fools.’

Isaiah 49: ‘Listen, distant peoples and inhabitants of islands in the sea: The Lord has called me by my name from the womb of my mother, protects me under the shadow of his hand, has made my words like a sharp sword, and has said to me: “You are my servant, through whom I will be glorified.” Then I said: “Lord, have I laboured in vain? have I spent my strength for nothing? Make this judgment, Lord, my work is before you.” Then the Lord—who formed me from my mother’s womb to be wholly his, to bring Jacob and Israel—said to me: “You will be glorious in my sight, and I will be your strength. It is a small task for you to convert the tribes of Jacob; I have raised you up to be a light to the Gentiles and to be my salvation to the ends of the earth.” Speaking to someone who had humbled his soul, who had been despised and hated by the Gentiles, and who had submitted to the powerful people of the world, the Lord said: “Princes and kings will worship you, because the Lord who has chosen you is faithful.”’

The Lord then said to me: “I have heard you in the days of salvation and of mercy, and I have established you as a covenant of the people, to put you in possession of the most desolate 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 will no longer be burdened by hunger or thirst or the heat of the sun; for he who has had compassion for them will guide them: he will lead them to living springs and will flatten the mountains that stand in their way.” Behold, people will come from all parts—from the east, the west, the north and the south. Let the heavens give glory to God; let

the earth rejoice in him; for it has pleased the Lord to comfort his people, and he will have mercy upon the poor who hope in him.

‘Yet Zion dared to say: “The Lord has forsaken me, and has forgotten me.” Can a woman forget her child? Can she lose her tenderness for the son she has carried in her womb? Even if she could, I will never forget you, Zion. I will carry you always between my hands, and your walls are always in my sight. Those who are to rebuild you have come, and your destroyers will be sent away. Look around you and behold the multitude that have gathered in order to come to you. I swear to you that all these people will be given to you as an ornament that you will always wear. Your deserts and uninhabited and desolate places will be too narrow for all your inhabitants, and the children who will be born to you after the years of sterility will say to you: “The place is too small; push out the boundaries and give us space to live.” Then you will say to yourself: “Who has given me this abundance of children, seeing that I stopped having children, became sterile, and was transported into captivity? And who fed them for me, when I was alone and helpless? Where have they all come from?” And the Lord will say to you: “Behold, I have made my power appear to the Gentiles, and set up my standard over those peoples; and they will bring you children in their arms and on their breasts. Kings and queens will feed your children; they will worship you with their face toward the earth, and kiss the dust from your feet; and you will know that I am the Lord, and that those who put their hope in me will never be disappointed; for who can steal the prey of the strong and powerful? But even if that could happen, nothing can prevent me from saving your children, and from destroying your enemies; and everyone will know that I am the Lord, your saviour and the mighty redeemer of Jacob.”’

Isaiah 50: ‘The Lord said these things: “What is this bill of this divorcement by which I have repudiated the synagogue? and why have I delivered it into the hand of your enemies? Haven’t I repudiated it because of its impieties and crimes? For I came, and no-one received me; I called out, and no-one heard. Is my arm shortened? Have I lost the power to save? That is why I will show signs of my anger; I will clothe the heavens with darkness and cover them with sackcloth.”’

‘The Lord has given me the tongue of the learned so that I will be able by my words to console anyone who is in distress. He has made me attentive to what he says, and I have listened to him as a master.

‘The Lord has revealed his will, and I was not rebellious.

‘I gave my body to be beaten, and my cheeks to outrages, not hiding my face from shame and spitting. But the Lord has helped me, which is why I have not been confounded.

‘He who justifies me is with me; who will venture to accuse me of sin when God is my protector?’

‘All men will pass away, and be consumed by time; so let those who fear God hear the words of his servant; let anyone who languishes in darkness put his trust in the Lord. But as for you, all you do is to set fire to God’s anger against you; you walk on the embers and through the flames that you yourselves have kindled. My hand has brought these evils upon you; you will perish in the sorrows.’

Isaiah 51: ‘Hear me, you who follow righteousness and seek the Lord. Look at the rock from which you were carved, and at the well from which you were drawn. Look at your father Abraham and at Sarah who bore you. See that he was alone and childless when I called him and gave him such an abundant posterity; see how many benedictions I have bestowed on Zion, how many blessings and consolations I have heaped upon her.

‘Consider all these things, my people, and make yourself

attentive to my words; for a law will come from me, and a judgment that will be the light of the Gentiles.’

Amos 8: ‘The prophet, having enumerated Israel’s sins, said that God had sworn to take vengeance on them..

He says this: ‘The Lord says “On that day I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day; and I will turn your formal feasts into mourning, and all your songs into laments.

“You all will have sorrow and suffering, and I will make this nation mourn as though for an only son; and its last times will be times of bitterness. Behold, the days are coming”—says the Lord—“when I will send a famine in the land, a hunger and thirst not for bread and water but for hearing the words of the Lord. They will wander from sea to sea, and from the north to the east; they will run to and fro looking for someone who will tell them the word of the Lord, and they will not find him.

“Their virgins and their young men will die of this thirst; those who have followed the idols of Samaria, and sworn by the god worshipped in Dan, and followed the cult of Beersheba, will fall and never rise up again.”’

Amos 3:2: ‘Of all the families of the earth you are the only one I have acknowledged as my people.’

Daniel 12:7. Having described all the extent of the reign of the Messiah, he says: ‘All these things will be brought about when the scattering of the people of Israel is brought about.’

Haggai 2:4: ‘The Lord says: “You who despise this second house by comparing it with the glory of the first, have courage! I say this to you, Zerubbabel, to you, high priest Jesus, and to all you people of the land. Do not stop working. For I am with you”, says the Lord of hosts; “I keep the promise I made to you when I brought you out of Egypt; my spirit remains among you. Do not lose hope, for the Lord of

hosts tells you: Before long I will shake the heaven and the earth, the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all nations. What is wanted by all the Gentiles will come, and I will fill this house with glory.

“The silver and the gold are mine. The glory of this new temple will be greater than the glory of the previous one”, says the Lord of hosts, “and in this place I will establish my house.” [Against the first sentence of this, Pascal has a marginal note: that is to say, ‘it is not by that that I wish to be honoured’; as it is said elsewhere: ‘All the beasts of the field are mine, what good does it do me to offer them to me in sacrifice?’]

Deuteronomy 18:16: ‘On the day when you were assembled in Horeb and said “Let us no longer hear the voice of the Lord himself, and let us not see this fire any more, for fear that we shall die”. And the Lord said to me “Their prayer is just. I will raise for them from among their brethren a prophet like you, and will put my words in his mouth; and he will tell them all the things that I will command him to tell. And it will come to pass that if someone doesn’t obey the words that this prophet utters in my name, I myself will judge him.”’

Genesis 49:8–10: ‘Judah, you will be praised by your brothers, and will vanquish your enemies; your father’s children will bow down before you. Judah, lion’s whelp, you have reached the prey, my son. You have couched as a lion, and as an old lion which is going to awake. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and the nations will gather around him to obey him.’

727. During the life of the Messiah. He speaks in a riddle. Ezekiel 17.

His forerunner. Malachi 3.

He will be born an infant. Isaiah 9.

He will be born in the town of Bethlehem. Micah 5. He

will appear chiefly in Jerusalem and will be a descendant of the family of Judah and of David.

He is to blind the learned and the wise, Isaiah 6, 8, 29 etc.; and to preach the Gospel to the lowly, Isaiah 29; to open the eyes of the blind, give health to the sick, and bring light to those who languish in darkness. Isaiah 61.

He is to show the perfect way, and be the teacher of the Gentiles. Isaiah 55, 42:1–7.

The prophecies are to be unintelligible to the ungodly, Daniel 12; Hosea 14:10; but they are to be intelligible to those who are properly instructed.

The prophecies that represent him as poor represent him as master of the nations. Isaiah 52:14, 53 etc.; Zechariah 9:9.

The prophecies that predict the time predict him only as master of the Gentiles and as suffering, and not as in the clouds or as judge. And the ones that do represent him thus, as judging and in glory, don't indicate the time.

He is to be the victim for the sins of the world. Isaiah 39, 53, etc.

He is to be the precious corner-stone. Isaiah 28:16.

He is to be a stone of stumbling and offence. Isaiah 8. Jerusalem is to dash against this stone.

The builders are to reject this stone. Psalm 117:22.

God is to make this stone the chief corner-stone.

And this stone is to grow into a huge mountain and fill the whole earth. Daniel 2.

Thus he is to be rejected, despised, betrayed (Psalm 108:8), sold (Zechariah 11:12), spat upon, buffeted, mocked, afflicted in countless ways, given gall to drink (Psalm 68), pierced (Zechariah 12), his feet and his hands pierced, slain, and his clothes gambled for.

He will rise again (Psalm 15), the third day (Hosea 6:3).

He will ascend to heaven to sit on the right hand. Psalm 110.

The kings will arm themselves against him. Psalm 2.

Being on the right hand of the Father, he will be victorious over his enemies.

The kings of the earth and all nations will worship him. Isaiah 60.

The Jews will continue as a nation. Jeremiah [21:36].

They will wander without kings, etc., Hosea 3, without prophets. Amos [9:9], looking for salvation and not finding it, Isaiah [59:9].

Calling of the Gentiles by Jesus-Christ. Isaiah 52:15, 55:5, 60, etc. Psalm 81.

Hosea 1:9–10: 'You will no longer be my people, and I will no longer be your God, when you are multiplied after the dispersion. In the places where you are said not to be my people I will call you my people.'

728. It was not permitted to sacrifice outside of Jerusalem, which was the place that the Lord had chosen, nor even to eat the tithes of their corn elsewhere. Deuteronomy 12:5 etc., 14:23 etc., 15:20, 16:2,7,11,15.

Hosea [3:4] predicted that they would be without king, without prince, without sacrifice, and without idol; and this prophecy is now fulfilled, as they can't make a lawful sacrifice out of Jerusalem.

729. Predictions. It was predicted that in the time of the Messiah he would come to establish a new covenant, which would make them forget the escape from Egypt, Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 43:16; that he would place his law not in externals but in the heart; that he would place his fear, which had only been from without, right in the heart. Who doesn't see the Christian law in all this?

730. . . . That then idolatry would be overthrown; that this

Messiah would throw down all the idols and bring men to the worship of the true God. [Ezekiel 30:13]

That the temples of the idols would be thrown down, and that among all nations and in all places of the earth he would be offered a pure sacrifice, not of beasts. [Malachi 1:11]

That he would be king of the Jews and of the Gentiles. And now look! This king of the Jews and the Gentiles—oppressed by both groups, who conspire to produce his death—rises above both: destroying both •the worship of Moses in Jerusalem, which was its centre, where he made his first Church; and •the worship of idols in Rome, which was its centre, where he made his chief Church.

731. Prophecies. That Jesus-Christ will sit on the right hand, till God has subdued his enemies.

So he won't subdue them himself.

732. '... Then they will no longer alert one another "Here is the Lord, for God will make himself known to all." [Jeremiah 31:34] ... Your sons will prophesy. [Joel 2:28] 'I will put my spirit and my fear in your heart.'; [Jeremiah 32:40]'

All that is the same thing. To prophesy is to speak of God, not from outward proofs, but from an inward and immediate feeling.

733. That he would show men the perfect way.

And neither before him nor after him has there been any man who taught anything divine approaching to this.

(734) ... That Jesus-Christ would be small in his beginning, and would then increase. The little stone of Daniel.

If I had never heard *anything* about the Messiah, nevertheless after such wonderful predictions of the course of the

world that I see fulfilled I ·would· see that this is divine. And, if I knew that these same books predicted a Messiah, I would be sure that he would 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 would be rejected by God, for this reason because the chosen vine produced only sour juice. That the chosen people would be faithless, ungrateful, and unbelieving [Isaiah 5:1-7]. A disbelieving and refractory people [quoted in Latin from Romans 10:21]. That God would strike them with blindness, and in full noon they would grope like the blind [Deuteronomy 28:28]. That a forerunner would come before he did [Malachi 3:1].

736. 'They have pierced' [Zechariah 12:10].

That a deliverer would come, who would crush the demon's head and free his people from their sins [Psalm 130:8]; that there would be a New Testament that would be eternal; that there would be another priesthood, following the order of Melchisedek [Psalm 110:4]; that it too would be eternal; that the Christ should be glorious, mighty, strong, and yet so lowly that he wouldn't be recognised; that he wouldn't be taken for what he is; that he would be rejected and killed; that his people who denied him would no longer be his people; that the idolaters would receive him and resort to him; that he would leave Zion to reign in the centre of idolatry; that nevertheless the Jews would continue for ever; that he would be of Judah even when there was no longer a king there.

Section 12: Proofs of Jesus-Christ

737. . . . Therefore I reject all other religions. In that way I find an answer to all the objections. It is right that a God so pure should reveal himself only to those whose hearts are purified. So I love this religion, and I find it sufficiently justified by its divine morality. But I find more in it to justify it.

I find it convincing that as far back as human memory goes, there has been this people more ancient than any other. Men are constantly told that they are all corrupt, but that a Redeemer will come. A whole people predicted this before his coming, a whole people worship him since his coming. It's not just one man who says this, but countless men; and a whole nation expressly made for this purpose and prophesying for four thousand years. Their books scattered for four hundred years.

The more I examine them, the more truths I find in them; what preceded and what followed; those people without idols or kings, and this synagogue which was predicted; and these miserable people who came after him and without prophets, who as our³ enemies are admirable witnesses of the truth of these prophecies in which their misery and their blindness are predicted.

The frightful predicted darkness of the Jews: 'You will grope at midday' [Deuteronomy 28:29]. 'A book that is given to a learned man and he says "I cannot read"' [Isaiah 29:11]. While the sceptre was still in the hands of the former foreign usurper. The rumour of Jesus-Christ's coming.

So I hold out my arms to my Redeemer, who, having been predicted for four thousand years, came to suffer and to die for me on earth, at the time and under all the circumstances

that were predicted. By his grace I await death in peace, in the hope of being eternally united to him. Yet I live with joy, whether in the prosperity it pleases him to bestow upon me or in the adversity that he sends for my good and that his example has taught me to bear.

738. The prophecies having given different signs that were all to happen at the coming of the Messiah, they all had to happen at the same time. So the fourth monarchy had to come when Daniel's 'seventy weeks' were ended [see end of item **692**]; and the sceptre then had to depart from Judah. And all this happened without any difficulty. The Messiah had to come then; and Jesus-Christ, who is called the Messiah, did come then. And all this again was without difficulty. This indeed shows the truth of the prophecies.

739. The prophets predicted, and were not predicted. After that, the saints were predicted, but did not predict. Jesus-Christ predicted and was predicted.

740. Jesus-Christ, with whom the two Testaments are concerned, the Old as its hope, the New as its model, and both as their centre.

741. The two oldest books in the world are those of Moses and Job, the one a Jew and the other a Gentile. Both of them regard Jesus-Christ as their common centre and their topic; Moses in relating God's promises to Abraham, Jacob etc., and his prophecies; and Job: 'Oh that my words etc., for I know that my redeemer liveth' [Job 19:23, 25].

742. The Gospel speaks of the virginity of the Virgin only up to the time of the birth of Jesus-Christ. All with reference to Jesus-Christ.

³ nos, perhaps a slip for ses = 'his'

743. Proofs of Jesus-Christ.

Why was the book of Ruth preserved?

Why the story of Tamar?

744. ‘Pray, so that you don’t enter into temptation’ [Luke 22:40]. It is dangerous to be tempted; and when people are tempted, it’s because they don’t pray.

‘And when you are converted [*conversus*], strengthen your brothers’ [Luke 22:32]. But before ‘And the Lord turned [*conversus*] and looked upon Peter’ [Luke 22:61; Pascal quotes both of these in Latin].

Saint Peter asks permission to strike Malchus and strikes before hearing the answer. Jesus-Christ replies afterwards.

The word ‘Galilee’, which the Jewish mob pronounced as if by chance in accusing Jesus-Christ before Pilate, gave Pilate a reason for sending Jesus-Christ to Herod. That accomplished the mystery [here = ‘fulfilled the prophecy’] that he was to be judged by Jews and Gentiles. Apparent chance was the cause of the mystery’s being accomplished.

745. Those who have difficulty in believing seek an excuse in the fact that the Jews don’t believe. ‘If that was clear,’ they say, ‘why didn’t *they* believe?’ And they would almost like it if they *had* believed, so as not to have the Jewish refusal as an obstacle to their own belief. But that very refusal is the foundation of our faith. We would be much less disposed to the faith if they were on our side. We would then have a more ample pretext for not believing. It is a wonderful thing is to have made the Jews so fond of predictions and so hostile to their fulfilment.

746. The Jews were accustomed to great and striking miracles, and so, having had the great events of the Red Sea and the land of Canaan as an epitome of the great deeds of their Messiah, they were waiting for even grander miracles, of which those of Moses were only a sample.

747. The carnal Jews and the pagans have their miseries, and Christians also. There is no Redeemer for the pagans, for they don’t so much as 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*.)

748. In the time of the Messiah, the people divided: the spiritual ones embraced the Messiah, the coarser-minded remained to serve as witnesses of him.

749. ‘If this was clearly predicted to the Jews, **a** why didn’t believe it? **b** Why weren’t they destroyed for resisting something so clear?’

I reply: in the first place, it was predicted both that **a** they wouldn’t believe something so clear and that **b** they wouldn’t be destroyed. And nothing is more to the glory of the Messiah; for it was not enough that there should be prophets; their prophecies must fulfilled, above suspicion. Now, etc.

750. If the Jews **a** had all been converted by Jesus-Christ, all our witnesses would have been suspect. And if they **b** had been destroyed, we would have had no witnesses.

751. What do the prophets say of Jesus-Christ? That he will obviously be God? No; but that he is a truly hidden God; that he will be unrecognised; that he won’t be thought to be who he is; that he will be a stumbling-block on which many will fall, etc. So people should stop reproaching us for the lack of clarity—it is something we *proclaim!*

‘But’, it is said, ‘there are obscurities.’ If there weren’t, no-one would have ‘stumbled’ over Jesus-Christ, which is one of the things the prophets explicitly said would happen: ‘Close their eyes’ etc. [Isaiah 6:10]

752. Moses first teaches the trinity, original sin, the Messiah.

David: a great witness; a king, good, merciful, a beautiful soul, a good mind, powerful. He prophesies, and his wonder comes to pass. This is infinite.

If he had been vain enough to do so, he had only to say that he was the Messiah; for the prophecies fit him more clearly than they do Jesus-Christ. Similarly with Saint John.

753. Herod believed to be the Messiah: he had taken away the sceptre from Judah, but he couldn't have been the Messiah because he was not of Judah. That was a considerable sect. Also Bar Kochba and another who was accepted by the Jews. And the rumour that was heard everywhere at that time. Suetonius, Tacitus, Josephus. . . .

What would the Messiah be like, given that through him the sceptre was to be eternally in Judah and that at his coming the sceptre was to be taken away from Judah?

To bring it about that 'seeing you will not see, and hearing you will not understand' [Isaiah 6:9], nothing could have been better done.

754. 'You, who are a man, make yourself God' [John 10:33]

'It is written "You are Gods" [Psalm 80:6]. . . and the Scripture cannot be broken' [John 10:34-35]. . . .

'Lazarus sleeps', and later he says 'Lazarus is dead'. [John 11:11,14]

755. The apparent conflicts in the Gospels.

756. If a man clearly predicts things that then happen, declares his intention to blind and to enlighten, and intersperses obscurities among the clear things that happen, what can we have but reverence for him?

757. The time of the first coming was predicted; the time of the second is not so. That is because the first was to be hidden, whereas the second was to be brilliant and so obvious that even his enemies would recognise it. But as he was to come the first time only obscurely, to be known only to those who searched the Scriptures. . . .

758. God had the Messiah predicted in this way so that he would be recognisable by the good and not recognisable by

the wicked. If the *manner* of the coming of the Messiah had been clearly predicted, there would have been no obscurity, even for the wicked. If the *time* had been obscurely predicted, there would have been obscurity, even for the good; for their goodness of heart wouldn't have made them understand, for instance, that the closed Hebrew letter *mem* signifies six hundred years. But the time was predicted clearly, and the manner in symbols.

By this means, the wicked, taking the promised blessings to be material ones, go astray, despite the clear prediction of the time; and the good do not go astray. For the understanding of the promised blessings depends on the heart, which calls 'a blessing' that which it loves; but the understanding of the promised time doesn't depend on the heart. And thus the clear prediction of the time, and the obscure prediction of the blessings, deceive only the wicked.

759. It must be that either the Jews or the Christians are wicked.

760. The Jews reject him, but not all of them: the holy ones receive him, and not the carnal ones. And so far from being against his glory, their rejection puts the finishing touches on it! Their reason for rejecting him—the only one found in all their writings in the Talmud and in the Rabbinical writings—is only that Jesus-Christ has not subdued the nations with sword in hand ('your sword, O most mighty' [Psalm 44:4]). Is that all they have to say? They say:

- Jesus-Christ was killed.
- He failed.
- He didn't subdue the pagans by force.
- He didn't give us the plunder;
- He doesn't give riches.'

Is *that* all they have to say? This is just what makes him lovable to me. I wouldn't want the one they are imag-

ining. Clearly, it's only their vices that prevented them from accepting him; and through this rejection they are irreproachable witnesses, and, what's more, they thereby fulfil the prophecies.

761. By killing him in order not to receive him as the Messiah, the Jews have provided him with the final proof that he is the Messiah.

And in continuing not to recognise him, they have made themselves irreproachable witnesses. Both in killing him and in continuing to deny him, they have fulfilled the prophecies (Isaiah 60; Psalm 71).

762. What could the Jews, his enemies, do? If they receive him, they give proof of him by their reception, for in that case he is received by the guardians of the expectation of the Messiah. If they reject him, they give proof of him by their rejection.

763. The Jews, 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 in showing that he was God; and the probabilities were equally great.

765. Sources of contradictions. A God humiliated, even to the 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. Symbols. Saviour, father, priest, sacrificial victim, food, king, wise man, law-giver, afflicted, poor, having to create a people whom he must lead and nourish and bring into its land. . .

Jesus-Christ. Offices. He alone had to create a great people, elect, holy, and chosen; to lead, nourish, and bring it into the place of rest and holiness; to make it holy to God;

to make it the temple of God; to reconcile it to God, to save it from God's anger; to free it from bondage to sin, which visibly reigns in man; to give laws to this people, and engrave these laws in their heart; to offer himself to God for them, to sacrifice himself for them; to be a sacrificial victim without blemish, and himself the sacrificer: having to offer himself, his body and his blood, and yet to offer bread and wine to God. . .

'When he comes into the world' [Hebrews 10:5].

'Stone upon stone' [Mark 13:2].

What preceded and what followed. All the Jews surviving as wanderers.

767. Of all that is on earth, he shares only in the sorrows, not in the joys. He loves those who are near to him, but his charity doesn't confine itself within these bounds, and overflows to his enemies and then to God's.

768. Jesus-Christ symbolised by Joseph: the beloved of his father, sent by his father to see his brethren etc., innocent, sold by his brothers for twenty pieces of silver, and through that becomes their lord, their saviour, the saviour of foreigners and the saviour of the world; which wouldn't have happened but for their plot to destroy him, their sale and their rejection of him.

In prison, Joseph innocent between two criminals; Jesus-Christ on the cross between two thieves. Joseph predicts release for one and death for the other, from the same indications. Jesus-Christ saves the chosen and condemns the rejected for the same crimes. Joseph only predicts; Jesus-Christ acts. Joseph asks him who will be saved to remember him when he comes into his glory; and he whom Jesus-Christ saves asks to be remembered by him when he comes into his kingdom.

769. The conversion of the pagans was reserved for the grace

of the Messiah. The Jews had fought them for so long without success! All that Solomon and the prophets said about them was useless. Sages like Plato and Socrates couldn't persuade them.

770. After many persons had gone before, at last Jesus-Christ came to say: 'Here I am, and this is the time. What the prophets said would happen in the fullness of time will be brought about, I tell you, by my apostles. The Jews will be cast out. Jerusalem will be soon destroyed, and the pagans will enter into the knowledge of God. My apostles will do this after you have killed the heir to the vineyard.' [Mark 12:8]

Then the apostles said to the Jews 'You will be accursed', and to the pagans 'You will enter into the knowledge of God.' And that is what then happened.

771. Jesus-Christ came to blind those who saw clearly, and to give sight to the blind; to heal the sick, and leave the healthy to die; to call to repentance and justify sinners, and to leave the righteous in their sins; to fill the needy, and leave the rich empty.

772. Holiness. 'I will pour out my spirit' [Joel. 2:28]. All nations were in unbelief and greed. The whole world now became fervent with love. Princes abandoned their pomp; maidens suffered martyrdom. What force made these things happen? The coming of the Messiah; they resulted from his coming, and were signs of his coming.

773. Destruction of the Jews and pagans by Jesus-Christ: 'All peoples will come and worship him' [Psalm 21:28]. 'It is a light thing etc.' [Isaiah 49:6].⁴ 'Ask of me' [Psalm 2:8]. 'All kings will fall down before him' [Psalm 71:11]. 'False witnesses' [Psalm 35:11]. 'He gives his cheek to him who smites him' [Lamentation 3:30]. 'They gave me also gall for my meat' [Psalm 68:22]. [Pascal quotes all of these in Latin.]

774. Jesus-Christ for all. Moses for one people.

The Jews blessed in Abraham: 'I will bless those that bless you.' But 'All nations blessed in his seed' [Genesis 12:3] 'A light to lighten the Gentiles' [Luke 2:32].

'He has not dealt so with any nation', said David, speaking of the law [Psalm 167:20]. But when speaking of Jesus-Christ we must say 'He has dealt so with every nation'. So it is for Jesus-Christ to be universal. Even the Church offers sacrifice only for the faithful. Jesus-Christ offered the sacrifice of the cross for all.

775. There is heresy in always explaining *omnes* by 'all', and heresy in never explaining it by 'all'. 'Drink you *omnes* of it' [Matthew 26:27]—the Huguenots are heretics in taking this to mean 'all'. 'For *omnes* who have sinned' [Romans 5:12]—the Huguenots are heretics in taking this to exclude the children of true believers. So we should follow the Fathers and tradition in order to know when to do which, since there's a risk of heresy on each side.

776. 'Fear not little flock' [Luke 12:32]. 'With fear and trembling' [Philippians 2:12]. Therefore. . . ? Fear not, provided you fear; but if you fear not, then fear. [Pascal says this first in Latin.]

'Whoever receives me receives not me but him who sent me' [Mark 9:37].

'No-one knows. . . not even the Son' [Mark 13:32].

'A bright cloud overshadowed them' [Matthew 17:5].

Saint John was to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and Jesus-Christ to plant division [between them]. There is no contradiction here.

777. The semi-Pelagians are wrong to assert as a general truth something that is only a particular one; and the Calvinists are wrong in asserting as only a particular truth what is a general one (as I see it).

⁴ [This Isaiah phrase is repeated twice in item 774.]

778. ‘All the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, were all baptized by him’ [Mark 1:5]. Because of all the conditions of men who came there.⁵

‘Stones can be children of Abraham’ [Matthew 3:9].

779. If men turned from their ways, God would heal and pardon them. [Mark 4:12]

780. Jesus-Christ never condemned without a hearing. To Judas: ‘Friend, why have you come?’ [Matthew 26:50]. To the man who wasn’t wearing a wedding garment, the same [Matthew 22:12].

781. The symbols of the completeness of the redemption—e.g. that the sun gives light to *all*—indicate only completeness; but the symbols of exclusions—e.g. Jews selected to the exclusion of the Gentiles—indicate exclusion.

‘Jesus-Christ the redeemer of all.’ Yes, for he has made his offer, like a man who has ransomed all those who are willing to come to him. If any die on the way, that is their misfortune; but so far as *he* was concerned, he offered them redemption. ‘That holds good in this example, where he who ransoms and he who prevents death are two persons, but not in the case of Jesus-Christ, who does both.’ No, for Jesus-Christ in his role as redeemer is not perhaps master of all; and thus he is the redeemer of all *in so far as it is in him*.

When you say that Jesus-Christ did not die for all, you are catering to a vice of men who will immediately apply this to themselves, thus favouring despair; instead of turning them away from it so as to favour hope. For people accustom themselves to **a** internal virtues by these **b** external behaviours; ·that is, how they **b** talk affects their **a** mental attitudes·.

782. ‘The victory over death.’

‘What is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Whosoever will save his soul, will lose it.’ [Mark 8:36,35]

‘I am come not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. [Matthew 5:17]

‘Lambs did not take away the sins of the world, but I am the lamb that takes away the sins. [John 8:36]

‘Moses did not give you the bread of heaven.’ [John 6:32] ‘Moses has not led you out of captivity and made you truly free.’ [John 8:36]

783... Then Jesus-Christ comes to tell men that they have no enemies but themselves; that it is their passions that keep them apart from God; that he comes to destroy these, and give men his grace so as to make of them all one holy Church; that he comes to bring the pagans and Jews into this Church; that he comes to destroy the pagans’ idols and the Jews’ superstition.

To this all men are opposed, not only from the natural opposition of greed, but, above all, the kings of the earth unite to destroy this religion at its birth—as had been predicted: ‘Why do the heathen rage... and the rulers of the earth... against the Lord.’ [Psalm 2:1-2]

All that is great on earth is united together; the learned, the sages, the kings. The learned write; the sages condemn; the kings kill. And despite all these oppositions, these simple and weak men resist all these powers, subdue even these kings, learned men and sages, and remove idolatry from all the earth. And all this is done by the power that had predicted it.

784. Jesus-Christ did not want to have the testimony of devils or of those who hadn’t been called, but of God and John the Baptist.

⁵ [This is to explain the phrase *Jerosolomytae universi* in Pascal’s version of ‘they in Jerusalem’.]

785. I consider Jesus-Christ in all persons and in ourselves: Jesus-Christ as a father in his Father, Jesus-Christ as a brother in his brethren, Jesus-Christ as poor in the poor, Jesus-Christ as rich in the rich, Jesus-Christ as teacher and priest in the priests, Jesus-Christ as sovereign in the princes, etc. For by his glory he is all that is great, being God; and by his mortal life he is all that is poor and abject. That is why he took on this unhappy condition, so that he could be in all persons and the model of all conditions.

786. Jesus-Christ in an obscurity (by the world's standards of obscurity) such that historians, writing only of important matters of States, have hardly noticed him.

787. On the fact that neither Josephus, nor Tacitus, nor other historians spoke of Jesus-Christ. Far from telling against, this fact tells *for*. For it is certain that Jesus-Christ did exist, that his religion created a great stir, and that these historians knew about it. So it's clear that they purposely concealed it, or that they did speak of it and their account was suppressed or changed.

788. 'I have left me seven thousand' [1 Kings 19:18]. I love these worshippers unknown to the world and even to the prophets.

789. As Jesus-Christ remained unknown among men, so his truth remains ·unknown· among common opinions, not differing from them in any external way. So also the Eucharist among ordinary bread.

790. Jesus didn't want to be killed without the forms of justice; for it is far more ignominious to die by justice than by an unjust sedition.

791. The false justice of Pilate only serves to make Jesus-Christ suffer; for he causes him to be flogged by his false justice, and then he kills him. It would have been better to have had him killed at once. That's how it is with the falsely

just: they do good and evil works to please the world, and to show that they are not altogether of Jesus-Christ; for they are ashamed of him. And at last, under great temptation and on great occasions, they kill him.

792. What man ever had more renown? [see Glossary] The whole Jewish people predict him before his coming. The Gentile people worship him after his coming. The two peoples, Gentile and Jewish, regard him as their centre.

Yet what man ever enjoys this renown less? Of his thirty-three years he lives for thirty without appearing. For three years he is taken to be an impostor; the priests and the chief people reject him; his friends and his nearest relatives despise him. At last he dies, betrayed by one of his disciples, denied by another, and abandoned by all.

So what part has he in this renown? Never did a man have so much renown; never did man have more ignominy. All that renown has served only *us*, to enable us to recognise him; there was nothing in it for *him*.

793. [In this item the word *esprit* occurs a dozen times, sometimes translated by 'mind' and sometimes by 'spirit'. Neither translation is offered as obviously correct.] The infinite distance between bodies and minds is a symbol of the infinitely *more* infinite distance between minds and charity; for charity is supernatural.

All the renown of greatness has no lustre for people who are engaged in pursuits of the mind.

The greatness of men of the spirit is invisible to kings, to the rich, to captains, to all those great men of the flesh.

The greatness of wisdom, which is nothing if it doesn't come from God, is invisible to the carnal-minded and to men of the spirit. These are three different **orders**.

Great geniuses have their power, their renown, their greatness, their victory, their lustre, and have no need of worldly greatness, with which they have no relation. They

are seen not by eyes but by minds; this is sufficient.

The saints have their power, their renown, their victory, their lustre, and have no need of worldly or intellectual greatness, with which they have no relation; for these kinds of greatness add nothing to the saints and take nothing away from them. They are seen by God and the angels, and not by bodies or by curious minds. God is enough for them.

Archimedes, without renown, would have the same veneration. He fought no battles visible to the eyes, but he gave his discoveries to all minds. Oh! what renown he had to minds!

Jesus-Christ, without riches and without any external show of knowledge, is in his own **order** of holiness. He did not discover; he did not reign; but he was humble, patient, holy, holy, holy to God, terrible to devils, without any sin. Oh ! with what great pomp and wonderful splendour he appears to the eyes of the heart, which see wisdom!

It would have been useless for Archimedes to have acted the prince in his books on mathematics, although he was a prince.

It would have been useless for our Lord Jesus-Christ to come like a king, in order to shine forth in his kingdom of holiness. But he came there appropriately in the glory of his own **order**!

It is quite absurd to take offence at the lowliness of Jesus-Christ, as if this lowliness were of the same **order** as the greatness that he came to manifest. If we consider this greatness in his life, in his passion, in his obscurity, in his death, in the choice of his disciples, in their desertion, in his secret resurrection, and the rest, we will see it to be so immense that we will have no reason for being offended at a lowliness that is not of that **order**.

But there are some who can only admire bodily greatness, as though there were no spiritual greatness; and others who

only admire spiritual greatness, as though there weren't infinitely higher levels of greatness in wisdom.

All bodies, the firmament, the stars, the earth and its kingdoms, are not equal to the lowest mind; for the mind knows all these and itself; and these bodies know nothing.

All bodies together, and all minds together, and all their products, are not equal to the least impulse of charity. This is of an infinitely more exalted **order**.

From all bodies together we couldn't obtain one little thought; this is impossible and of another **order**. From all bodies and minds, we can't produce an impulse of true charity; that is impossible, and of another **order**, a supernatural one.

794. Why did Jesus-Christ not come in a visible manner, instead of getting proof of himself from earlier prophecies? Why did he cause himself to be predicted in symbols?

795. If Jesus-Christ had come only to sanctify, all Scripture and all things would tend to that end, and it would be quite easy to convince unbelievers. If Jesus-Christ had come only to blind, all his conduct would be confused, and we would have no means of convincing unbelievers. But as he came 'for a sanctuary and for a rock of offence', as Isaiah says [8:14], we can't convince unbelievers, and they can't convince us. But by this very fact we convince them, because *we say that* in his whole conduct there is no convincing proof on one side or the other.

796. Jesus-Christ does not say that he is not of Nazareth, in order to leave the wicked in their blindness, or that he is not Joseph's son.

797. Jesus-Christ said great things so simply that it seems as though he hadn't thought about them, yet so clearly that it's easy to see that he did think about them. This combination of clarity and simplicity is wonderful.

798. The style of the Gospel is admirable in so many ways, including its not hurling invectives against the executioners and enemies of Jesus-Christ. For there is no such invective in any of the ·evangelical· historians against Judas, Pilate, or any of the Jews.

If this restraint of the Gospel-writers had been assumed, as well as many other traits of such a fine character, and if they had assumed it only to attract notice to it even if they hadn't ventured to point it out themselves, they wouldn't have failed to secure friends who would have commented on it to their advantage. But as they acted in this way without pretence and from wholly disinterested motives, they didn't cause it to be noticed by anyone. And I believe that many of these things have not been noticed until now, which is evidence of how coolly the thing was done.

799. An artisan who speaks about wealth, a lawyer who speaks about war, about royalty, etc.; but the rich man speaks well about wealth, a king speaks coolly about a great gift he has just made, and God speaks well about God.

800. Who taught the evangelists the qualities of a perfectly heroic soul, that they depict it so perfectly in Jesus-Christ? Why do they make him weak in his agony? Don't they know how to depict a resolute death? Yes, for that same Saint

Luke depicts the death of Saint Stephen as more steadfast than that of Jesus-Christ.

So they make him capable of fear before the necessity of dying has come, and then absolutely steadfast.

But when they make him so troubled, it's when he troubles himself; and when men trouble him, he is absolutely steadfast.

801. The theory that the apostles were deceivers is quite absurd. Let us think it through. Let us imagine those twelve men, assembled after the death of Jesus-Christ, plotting to say that he was risen. By this they attack all the powers. The human heart is strangely inclined to fickleness, to change, to promises, to bribery. It would take only one of them to be led astray by all these attractions—and what's more by ·the fear of· prisons, tortures, and death—for them to be lost. Follow this through.

802. The apostles were either deceived or deceivers. Either supposition has difficulties; for it's not possible to take a man to have been raised from the dead. . .

While Jesus-Christ was with them, he could sustain them. But after that, if he didn't appear to them, who made them act?

Section 13: The miracles

803. Beginning. The miracles bring the doctrine into sharper focus, and the doctrine does the same for the miracles.

There are false ones and true ones. There must be something about them that shows us the difference; otherwise they would be useless. Well, they aren't useless; on the contrary, they are fundamental. Now, the rule that is given to us for distinguishing true from false miracles must leave intact the proof that the true miracles give of the truth, that being the main purpose of miracles.

Moses gave two rules (one negative, one positive): that the prediction doesn't come true (Deuteronomy 18:22), and that the miracles don't lead to idolatry (Deuteronomy 13); and Jesus-Christ gave one.

If the doctrine regulates the miracles, then the miracles are useless for the doctrine. If the miracles regulate. . .

Objection to the rule. Time-difference. One rule at Moses' time, another at present.

804. Miracle. It is an effect that surpasses the natural power of the means that are used in it; and a non-miracle is an effect that doesn't surpass the natural power of the means used in it. Thus, those who heal by calling on the devil don't work a miracle because that doesn't surpass the natural power of the devil. But. . .

805. The two fundamentals, one inward, the other outward: grace, miracles—both supernatural.

806. Miracles and the truth are necessary because the entire man, body and soul, has to be convinced.

807. At all times either men have spoken of the true God or the true God has spoken to men.

808. Jesus-Christ showed that he was the Messiah, never

by confirming his doctrine in terms of Scripture or the prophecies, but always by his miracles.

He proves by a miracle that he remits sins [Mark 2:10–11].

Don't get joy from your miracles, said Jesus-Christ, but from the fact that your names are written in heaven [Luke 10:20].

If they don't believe Moses, they won't believe someone who has risen from the dead [Luke 16:31].

Nicodemus recognises by his miracles that his teaching is from God. 'We know that you are a teacher come from God; for no man can do the miracles that you do unless God is with him.' [John 3:2] He does not judge concerning the miracles by the teaching, but judges concerning the teaching by the miracles.

The Jews had a doctrine of God as we have one of Jesus-Christ, and confirmed by miracles. They were forbidden to believe every worker of miracles; and they were further commanded to have recourse to the chief priests and to rely on them.

And thus all the reasons we have for refusing to believe miracle-workers they had with regard to their prophets.

Yet they were very much to blame for rejecting the prophets because of their miracles, and Jesus-Christ also. They would have been blameless if they had not seen the miracles: 'If I had not done. . . they would not have sinned.' [John 15:24] So all belief rests on miracles.

Prophecy is not called 'miracle'; as Saint John speaks of the 'first miracle' in Cana [2:11] and then of what Jesus-Christ says to the Samaritan woman when he reveals to her all her hidden life [4:17–19]; then he heals the centurion's son, which Saint John calls 'the second sign' [4:54].

809. The combinations of miracles.

810. The second miracle can presuppose the first, but the first can't presuppose the second.

811. If there had been no miracles there would have been no sin in not believing in Jesus-Christ.

812. 'I wouldn't be a Christian if it weren't for the miracles', said Saint Augustine.

813. How I hate those who pretend to doubt concerning miracles! Montaigne speaks of them [= miracles] as he should in two places. In one of them we see how careful he is; yet in the other he believes and mocks those who don't.

Be that as it may, the Church is without proofs if they are right.

814. Montaigne against miracles.

Montaigne for miracles.

815. It isn't possible to have a reasonable belief against miracles.

816. Unbelievers, the most believing! They believe the miracles of Vespasian in order not to believe those of Moses. [Tacitus reports that the Emperor Vespasian performed miracles of healing.]

817. Title: How does it come about that men believe so many liars who say they have seen miracles, and don't believe any of those who say they have secrets to make men immortal or restore youth to them? After thinking about how it happens that so much faith is put in so many impostors who say they have remedies—often to the point where people put their *lives* into their hands—it has appeared to me that the true cause is that some of them are true remedies. There couldn't be so much faith placed in so many false remedies if none of them were genuine. If there had never been any remedy for any illness, all illnesses being incurable, it's impossible

that men should have imagined that they could provide remedies, and even more impossible that so many others should have believed those who boasted of having them. In the same way, if a man claimed to prevent death no-one would believe him, because there are no examples of this. But many remedies have been found to be genuine by the greatest men, and this has affected what folk believe; this being known to be possible, they have concluded that it is so. The populace commonly reasons thus: 'A thing is possible, therefore it *is*'; because the thing can't be denied generally, since some particular effects are genuine; the people, who can't distinguish genuine effects from others, believe them all. In the same way, the reason why so many false effects are credited to the moon is that there are some true ones, such as the tides.

It is the same with prophecies, miracles, divination by dreams, sorceries, etc. If there had been nothing true in all this, none of it would have been believed. Thus, instead of concluding that there are no true miracles because there are so many false ones, we should go the opposite way and say that there certainly are true miracles because there are false ones, and that there are false miracles only because there are true ones. We should reason in the same way about religion, for men couldn't have imagined so many false religions if there hadn't been a true one. It is objected against this that savages have a religion; but the answer to that is that they have heard the true religion spoken of. . . . [And he rattles off—too briefly for clarity—bits of evidence for this, reported by Montaigne].

818. [This item is a virtual repeat of 817, followed by:] This arises from the fact that the human mind's being bent one way by the truth makes it open to being bent the other way by falsehood.

819. Jeremiah 23:32. The miracles of the false prophets. In the Hebrew and the restored text by the great 16th century scholar François Vatable they are the ‘tricks’.

‘Miracle’ doesn’t always signify miracles. In 1 Samuel 14:15 ‘miracle’ signifies fear and trembling, and is so in the Hebrew. The same obviously in Job 33:7; and also Isaiah 21:4, Jeremiah 44:12.

Portentum signifies *simulacrum*, Jeremiah 50:38; and it is so in the Hebrew and in Vatable.

Isaiah 8:18. Jesus-Christ says that he and his disciples will be in miracles.

820. If the devil favoured the doctrine that destroys him, he would be divided, as Jesus-Christ said. If God favoured the doctrine that destroys the Church, he would be divided. ‘Every kingdom divided’ [Matthew 12:25, Luke 11:17]. For Jesus-Christ worked against the devil, and destroyed his power over hearts (of which exorcism is the symbol) to establish the kingdom of God. And so he adds: ‘If I with the finger of God... the kingdom of God is come upon you’ [Luke 11:20].

821. There is a great difference between tempting and leading into error. God tempts but he doesn’t lead into error. To tempt is to provide opportunities—imposing no necessity—to do such-and-such if you don’t love God. To lead into error is to place a man under the necessity of concluding and following out what is untrue.

822. Abraham and Gideon: signs above revelation. The Jews blinded themselves in judging of miracles by the Scripture. God has never abandoned his true worshippers.

I would rather follow Jesus-Christ than any other, because he has miracles, prophecy, doctrine, perpetuity, etc.

The donatists. No miracle requiring one to say that he’s the devil [as the heretical donatists *did* say of the Emperor Constantine, who supported the catholic majority against them].

The more we particularise God, Jesus-Christ, the Church...

823. If there were no false miracles, there would be certainty. If there were no rule for picking out the true ones, miracles would be useless and there would be no reason for believing.

Well, there is, humanly speaking, no human certainty, only reason.

824. God has either confounded the false miracles or predicted them; either way he has raised himself above what we think of as ‘supernatural’, and has raised us to that level.

825. Miracles serve not to convert but to condemn. Thomas Aquinas.

826. Reasons why people don’t believe.

John 12:37. ‘But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they did not believe in him: so that the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled... He has blinded their eyes.’

‘These things Isaiah said when he saw his glory and spoke of him’ [John 12:41].

‘For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified.’ [1 Corinthians 1:22–23.] But you, full of signs and full of wisdom, preach a Christ not crucified and a religion without miracles and without wisdom. [Some editors think that ‘you’ here means ‘you Jesuits’.]

What makes us not believe in the true miracles is lack of charity. John [10:26]: ‘But you don’t believe because you are not of my sheep.’ What makes us believe falsehoods is lack of charity. 1 Thessalonians 2.

The foundation of religion. It is the miracles. What then? Does God speak against miracles, against the foundations of our faith in him?

If there is a God, faith in God must exist on earth. Now, the miracles of Jesus-Christ are not predicted by the

Antichrist, but the Antichrist's miracles are predicted by Jesus-Christ. And so, if Jesus-Christ were not the Messiah, he would have indeed led ·people· into error, but the Antichrist can't lead into error. When Jesus-Christ predicted the miracles of Antichrist, did he think he was destroying faith in his own miracles?

Moses predicted Jesus-Christ and ordered men to follow him. Jesus-Christ predicted the Antichrist and forbade men to follow him.

It was impossible in the time of Moses for men to believe in the Antichrist, who was unknown to them; but it is quite easy in the time of the Antichrist to believe in Jesus-Christ, already known.

There is no reason for believing in the Antichrist which isn't also a reason for believing in Jesus-Christ. But there are reasons for believing in Jesus-Christ that are not reasons for believing in the Antichrist.

827. Judges 13:23: 'If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have showed us all these things.'

Hezekiah, Sennacherib [2 Kings 19].

Jeremiah. Hananiah, false prophet, dies in the seventh month [Jeremiah 28:14–17].

2 Maccabees 3. The temple, ready for pillage, miraculously saved. 2 Maccabees 15.

1 Kings 17. The widow ·speaking· to Elijah, who had restored the child: 'By this I know that your words are true.'

1 Kings 18. Elijah with the prophets of Baal.

In the dispute concerning the true God and the truth of religion, there has never been a miracle that supported error and not truth.

828. Opposition.

Abel, Cain [Genesis 4]

Moses, the Magicians [Exodus 8]

Elijah, the false prophets [1 Kings 18]

Jeremiah, Hananiah [Jeremiah 28]

Micah, the false prophets [1 Kings 22]

Jesus-Christ, the Pharisees [Luke 5, John 9]

Saint Paul, Bar-jesus [Acts 13]

the Apostles, the exorcists [Acts 19]

Christians, unbelievers

Catholics, heretics

Elijah, Enoch,

Antichrist

With miracles the truth always prevails. The two crosses.

829. Jesus-Christ says that the Scriptures testify concerning him. But he does not show how.

Even the prophecies could not prove Jesus-Christ during his life; so those who didn't believe in him before his death wouldn't have been blameworthy if there hadn't been miracles that sufficed without doctrine. Well, those who didn't believe in him when he was still alive *were* sinners, as he said himself, and without excuse [John 15:22]. So they must have had a rigorous proof [*démonstration*] which they resisted. They didn't have ·proof from· Scripture, but only the miracles; so the miracles suffice when they don't clash with the doctrine, and they ought to be believed.

John 7:40. Dispute among the Jews as among Christians today. Some believed in Jesus-Christ; others didn't, because of the prophecies that said that he—the Messiah—was to be born in Bethlehem. They should have considered more carefully to see whether he was not in fact from there. His miracles were convincing, so they should have made very sure of these supposed contradictions between his teaching and Scripture; and this obscurity didn't excuse them—it blinded them. Thus those who refuse to believe in the miracles today, because of a flimsy supposed contradiction, are not excused.

To those who believed in him because of his miracles, the Pharisees said: 'These people who don't know the law are cursed; but has any prince or Pharisee believed in him? For we know that no prophet comes out of Galilee.' Nicodemus answered: 'Does our law judge any man before it hears him, specially a man who works such miracles?'

830. The prophecies were ambiguous; they are no longer so.

831. The five propositions were ambiguous; they are no longer so.

832. The miracles are no longer necessary, because we have already had them. But when the tradition is no longer attended to; when the Pope alone is offered to us; when he has been manipulated so that the true source of truth—the tradition—is excluded and the Pope, its trustee, is biased, the truth is no longer free to appear. Then, with men longer speaking of truth, truth itself must speak to men. That's what happened in the time of Arius. (Miracles under Diocletian and under Arius.)

833. Miracle. The people concluded this unaided; but if you must give a reason. . .

It is disturbing to be in conflict with the rule; we should be strict, and opposed to exceptions. Nevertheless, there *are* exceptions to the rule, and we should judge them strictly but fairly.

834. John 6:26: 'Not because you saw the miracles, but because you were filled.'

Those who follow Jesus-Christ because of his miracles honour his power in *all* the miracles it produces; but those who profess to follow him because of his miracles, but really follow him only because he comforts them and satisfies them with worldly blessings, discredit such of his miracles as are opposed to their own comforts.

John 9:16: 'This man is not of God, because he does not

keep the sabbath day.' Others said: 'How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles?'

Which is clearer?

'This house is not of God, because there they don't believe that the five propositions are in Jansenius.' Others: 'This house is of God, for strange miracles are performed there.'

Which is clearer?

John 9:17,33. 'What do you say? "I say that he is a prophet. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing".'

835. Miracles that should be kept out of our belief-system:

- In the Old Testament, miracles that try to turn you away from God.
- In the New, ones that try to turn you away from Jesus-Christ.

No others should be kept out.

Does it follow from this that they'd have been 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.

So when we see a miracle, we should either assent to it or have striking proofs to the contrary. We should see whether it denies a God, or Jesus-Christ, or the Church.

836. There's a great difference between •not being for Jesus-Christ and saying so, and •not being for Jesus-Christ and pretending to be so. The former party can do miracles, not the latter. For it is clear about the former that they are opposed to the truth, but not about the latter; and thus miracles are clearer.

837. That we should love only one God is so obvious that there's no need for miracles to prove it.

838. Jesus-Christ performed miracles, then the apostles, and many of the first saints; because the prophecies weren't yet accomplished but were being accomplished by them, so

the miracles alone bore witness to them. It was predicted that the Messiah would convert the nations. How could this prophecy be fulfilled without the conversion of the nations? And how could the nations be converted to the Messiah without seeing this final effect of the prophecies that prove him? So the prophecies weren't all accomplished until he had died, risen again, and converted the nations; which is why there had to be miracles during all this time. Now they're no longer needed against the Jews, for the accomplished prophecies are a continuing miracle.

839. 'If you don't believe in me, at least believe in the miracles' [John 10:38]. He is directing them, as it were, to the strongest proof.

The Jews as well as Christians had been told that they shouldn't always believe the prophets; yet the Pharisees and scribes make a great fuss about his miracles and try to show that they are false, or done by the devil. For if they acknowledged that the miracles were of God, they would have to be convinced that Jesus-Christ was the Messiah.

These days we don't have the task of making this distinction. Still, it's very easy to do: a miracle is certain if it is performed by someone who doesn't deny either God or Jesus-Christ. 'No man who does a miracle in my name can speak evil of me.' [Mark 9:39]

But we don't have to draw this distinction. Here is a sacred relic. Here is a thorn from the crown of the Saviour of the world, over whom the prince of this world has no power; it does miracles by the special power of the blood shed for us. Here is God himself choosing this house—i.e. this sacred relic—as a place in which to make his power blaze forth.

This is not a case of men doing miracles by an unknown and doubtful power, requiring from us the hard labour of finding out whether they are genuine. It is God himself. It is the instrument of the Passion of his only Son, who is in many

places but chooses *this*, getting men to come to it from all directions to receive this miraculous relief for their flagging spirits.

840. The Church has three kinds of enemies: the Jews, who have never been part of its body; the heretics, who have withdrawn from it; and the wicked Christians, who tear at it from within.

These three usually attack the Church in different ways. But here—on the topic of miracles—they attack her all in the same way. They don't have any miracles, and the Church has always had miracles against them; so they have all had the same interest in evading them, and they all use the excuse that doctrine should not be judged by miracles, but miracles by doctrine. There were two parties among those who heard Jesus-Christ: •those who followed his teaching on account of his miracles, and •those who said. . . There were two parties in the time of Calvin. . . There are now the Jesuits, etc.

841. In cases of doubt, miracles provide the test—between Jews and pagans, Jews and Christians, Catholics and heretics, the slandered and slanderers, between the two crosses. [Two crosses had been found, each claimed to be the one Jesus was crucified on.]

But miracles would be useless to heretics; for the Church, authorised by miracles that have already obtained belief, tells us that they don't have the true faith. There's no doubt that they don't have, because the first miracles of the Church rule out the trustworthiness of theirs. Thus there is miracle against miracle, the first and greatest miracles being on the side of the Church.

These nuns, astonished at what is said—that they are on the way to perdition, that their confessors are leading them to Geneva [i.e. to Calvinism] and getting them to think

that Jesus-Christ is not in the Eucharist or on the right hand of the Father—know that all this is false and, therefore, offer themselves to God in this state: ‘See whether the way of iniquity is in me’ [Psalm 139:24]. What happens then? [The ‘place’ referred to in what follows is presumably the body of a woman.] This place, which is said to be the temple of the devil, God makes his own temple. It is said that the children must be taken away from it; God heals them there. It is said to be the arsenal of hell; God turns it into the sanctuary of his grace. Lastly, they are threatened with all the fury and vengeance of heaven, and God overwhelms them with favours. You’d have to have lost your senses to conclude from this that they’re on the road to perdition.

(We have without doubt the same signs as Saint Athanasius.)

842. ‘Are you the Christ? tell us’ [Luke 22:66].

‘The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness of me. But you do not believe because you are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice.’ [John 10:26–27]

John 6:30. ‘What sign do you show, that we may see, and believe you.’ (They don’t say: What doctrine do you preach?)

‘No man can do these miracles that you do unless God is with him’ [John 3:2].

2 Maccabees 14:15. ‘The Lord, making manifest his presence, upholds those who are his own portion.’

‘And others, tempting him, asked him for a sign from heaven’ [Luke 11:16].

‘An evil generation looks for a sign; and no sign will be given to it’ [Matthew 12:39].

‘And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and said “Why does this generation seek for a sign?”’ [Mark 8:12] They asked a sign with an evil intention.

‘And he could do there no mighty work’ [Mark 6:5]. Despite which he promises them the sign of Jonah, and of the great

and wonderful miracle of his resurrection.

‘If you do not see. . . you will not believe’ [John 4:48]. He doesn’t blame them for •not believing unless there are miracles but for •not believing unless *they see* the miracles.

Antichrist in ‘signs and lying wonders’, says Saint Paul, 2 Thessalonians 2:9.

‘And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who perish; because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God will send them a strong delusion, so that they believe a lie’ [2 Thessalonians 2:9–11].

As in the passage of Moses: ‘The Lord your God tests you, to know whether you love the Lord’ [Deuteronomy 13:3]

‘Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they will say unto you, Behold. . .’ [Matthew 24:25–26]

843. This is not the country of truth, which wanders among men unrecognised. God has covered it with a veil, which leaves it unrecognised by those who don’t hear his voice. The field is left clear for blasphemy, even against truths that are (to say the least) very apparent. If the Gospel’s truths are published, so are their contraries, and the issues are so clouded that the people can’t distinguish truth from falsehood. And they ask, ‘What do you have to make yourself believed rather than the others? What sign do you give? You have only words, and so have we. If you had miracles, that would be different!’ Doctrine ought to be supported by miracles—that is true, a truth that these people are misusing to blaspheme against doctrine. And if miracles happen, they say that miracles are not enough without doctrine—another truth, which they are misusing to blaspheme against miracles.

Jesus-Christ cured the man born blind, and performed many miracles on the sabbath day, thereby blinding the Pharisees who said that miracles should be judged by doc-

trine.

‘We have Moses; but as for this fellow, we don’t know where he comes from.’ It is wonderful that you don’t know where he comes from, and yet he does such miracles.

Jesus-Christ did not speak against God or against Moses.

The Antichrist and the false prophets, predicted by both Testaments, will speak openly against God and against Jesus-Christ. ‘He who is not against me. . .’ If anyone was to be a secret enemy, God wouldn’t allow him to perform miracles openly.

In any public dispute where the two parties profess to be for God, for Jesus-Christ, for the Church, miracles are never on the side of the false Christians, and the other side never lacks miracles.

“He has a devil. . .”. And others said “Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?” [John 10:21-22]

The proofs that Jesus-Christ and the apostles draw from Scripture are not conclusive; for they say only that Moses predicted that a prophet would come, which doesn’t prove that this is he—which is the whole question. So these passages serve only to show that one is not contradicting Scripture ·in saying that Jesus-Christ is the Messiah·—that no inconsistency shows up, but not that there is agreement. So we have •exclusion of inconsistency, and •miracles; that is enough.

There is a reciprocal duty between God and men, for doing and for giving. We must pardon this saying: ‘What ought I to have done ·in my vineyard more than I have done in it·?’ [Isaiah 5:4] ‘Accuse me’ says God in Isaiah [1:18; that is from the Vulgate; the King James version has ‘Come let us reason together’].

God should keep his promises, etc.

Men owe it to God to accept the religion he sends. God owes it to men not to lead them into error. Now, they *would* be led into error •if the ·spurious· workers of miracles

announced a doctrine that common sense didn’t see as obviously false and •if a greater worker of miracles hadn’t already warned against believing them.

For example, if there was a division in the Church, with the Arians declaring themselves founded on Scripture just as the Catholics do, and if the Arians had performed miracles and the Catholics hadn’t, men would have been led into error.

For, just as a man who announces God’s secrets to us isn’t worthy to be believed on his private authority (which is why the ungodly doubt him), so also when a man shows the communion he has with God by raising the dead, predicting the future, moving the seas, healing the sick, no-one is so ungodly as not to bow to him; the incredulity of Pharaoh and the Pharisees is the effect of a supernatural hardening. [This echoes Exodus 4:21 and elsewhere: ‘I will harden Pharaoh’s heart.’]

So when we see miracles and a doctrine above suspicion, both on one side, there is no difficulty. But when we see miracles and suspect doctrine on the same side, then we have to see which is clearer. Jesus-Christ was suspected.

Bar-jesus blinded [Acts 13:6-11]. God’s power surpasses that of his enemies.

The Jewish exorcists beaten by the devils, saying ‘I know Jesus and Paul, but you—who are you?’ [Acts 19:15]

Miracles are for doctrine, and not doctrine for miracles.

If the miracles are true, will we be able to persuade men of all doctrine? No, for that won’t happen. ‘But if an angel. . .’ [Galatians 1:8].

Rule: we should judge concerning doctrine by miracles; we should judge concerning miracles by doctrine. All this is true, and not self-contradictory.

For we should distinguish the times.

How glad you are to know the general rules, thinking to use them to create dissension and make everything

useless! You won't be allowed to, Father; truth is one and constant. [Father' here translates *Mon Père*; he is addressing an imagined Catholic priest, presumably Jesuit.]

Because of God's duty to man, it is impossible that a man hiding his evil doctrine and showing only a good one, saying that he conforms to God and the Church, should perform miracles so as to instil insensibly a false and subtle doctrine. This can't happen.

And even less possible that God, who knows men's hearts, should perform miracles in favour of such a man.

844. The three signs of the true religion: perpetuity, a good life, miracles. They [here = the Jesuits] destroy perpetuity by probability, a good life by their morals, miracles by denying either their authenticity or their significance.

If we believe them, the Church will have nothing to do with perpetuity, holiness, or miracles. Heretics deny them or deny their significance; they do the same. But to deny them one would need to have no sincerity, and to deny their significance one would have to be out of one's mind. . . .

845. The heretics have always attacked these three signs, which they don't have.

846. First objection: 'Angel from heaven. [A pointer to Galatians 1:8 'But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.'] Miracles must be judged by truth, not truth by miracles. Therefore miracles are useless.'

Now, they are of use, and they must not be opposed to the truth. Hence, what Father Lingende has said, that 'God will not allow a miracle to lead anyone into error. . . .'

When there's a controversy within the Church, miracles will decide.

Second objection: 'But the Antichrist will do miracles.'

Pharaoh's magicians didn't entice men into error. Thus

we can't say to Jesus regarding the Antichrist 'You have led me into error'. For the Antichrist will perform them against Jesus-Christ, so they can't entice anyone into error.

Either God will not permit false miracles, or he will procure greater ones.

Jesus-Christ has existed since the beginning of the world: this is more impressive than all the miracles of the Antichrist.

If in a dispute within a Church a miracle occurred on the side of those in error, men would be led into error. Schism is visible; a miracle is visible. But schism is more a sign of error than a miracle is a sign of truth; so the miracle couldn't lead into error.

But leaving schism aside, error is not as visible as a miracle is; so the miracle would lead into error.

'Where is your God?' [Psalm 42:3] Miracles show him, like a flash of lightning.

847. One of the anthems for Vespers at Christmas: 'Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness.' [Psalm 111:4]

848. If God's compassion is so great that he instructs us to our benefit even when he hides himself, what light can't we expect from him when he reveals himself?

849. Will *It is and it isn't* be received in faith itself as well as in morals? . . .

When Saint Xavier performs miracles. Saint Hilary. 'Wretches who force you to speak of miracles.'

Unjust judges, don't make up laws on the spur of the moment; judge by laws that are established—established by yourselves. 'Woe unto those who decree unrighteous laws.' [Isaiah 10:1]

Continuing miracles—false.

To weaken your adversaries, you disarm the whole Church.

If they say that our salvation depends upon God, they

are 'heretics'. If they say they submit to the Pope, that is an 'hypocrisy'. If they are ready to subscribe to all the articles, that is not enough. If they say that we should not kill for an apple, 'they are attacking the morality of Catholics'. If miracles are performed among them, it's not a sign of holiness; on the contrary, it smacks of heresy.

The Church has survived through the truth's not being disputed, or if it has been disputed there has been the Pope, failing whom there has been the Church.

850. The five condemned propositions, but no miracle, because the truth was not attacked. But the Sorbonne. . . , but the ·papal· bull. . .

The Church is so evident that those who love God with all their heart couldn't possibly fail to recognise it. Those who don't love God couldn't possibly be convinced of the Church.

Miracles have such influence that God had to warn men not to believe in them in opposition to him, clear though it may be that there is a God. Without that warning, miracles could have disturbed men.

Thus, far from these passages (Deuteronomy 13) counting against the authority of miracles, nothing indicates their power more. And the same in respect of the Antichrist: 'To seduce even the chosen, if that were possible' [Matthew 24:24].

851. The story of the man born blind [John 9].

What does Saint Paul say? Does he constantly refer back to the prophecies? No, but his own miracle. What does Jesus-Christ say? Does he refer back to the prophecies? No; his death had not ·yet· fulfilled them. But he says 'If I had not done. . . ' [John 15:24]. Believe the works.

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 a symbol

of the Church, and with hatred because it was *only* the symbol, was restored when it was on the point of collapse when it was well with God; and thus a symbol.

Miracles prove God's power over hearts by the power he exercises over bodies.

The Church has never approved a miracle among the heretics.

Miracles, mainstay of religion: they have set apart the Jews; they have set apart the Christians, saints, innocents, and true believers.

There's little risk of a miracle among schismatics, because schism, which is more visible than a miracle, visibly indicates their error. But when there is no schism and error is in question, a miracle decides.

'If I had not done among them the works that no other man did' [John 15:24]. These wretched people who have obliged us to speak of miracles!

Abraham and Gideon confirm the faith by miracles.

Judith. God speaks at last in the final oppressions.

If the cooling of love leaves the Church with almost no true worshippers, miracles will arouse them. This is one of the last effects of grace.

If one miracle occurred among the Jesuits!

When a miracle disappoints the expectation of those in whose presence it happens, and the state of their faith is disproportionate to the instrument of the miracle, this ought to induce them to change; but you, otherwise. There would be as much reason in saying that if the Eucharist raised a dead man one should become a Calvinist as for saying that in such an event one should remain a Catholic. But when a miracle crowns the expectation, and those who hoped that God would bless the remedies see themselves healed without remedies,. . .

No sign has ever happened on the devil's side without a

stronger sign on God's side, or at least without its having been predicted that this would happen.

852. Unjust persecutors of those whom God visibly protects. If they reproach you for your excesses, 'they are speaking as heretics'. If they say that the grace of Jesus-Christ distinguishes us, 'they are heretics'. If miracles are performed, 'it is the mark of their heresy'.

We are told 'Believe in the Church' but not 'Believe in miracles'. That's because believing in miracles is natural, whereas believing in the Church is not. One of these needed a precept; the other didn't.

Ezekiel. It is said: Behold the people of God who speak thus. Hezekiah.

The synagogue was the symbol, so it did not perish; and it was *only* a symbol, so it perished. It was a symbol that contained the truth, so it lasted until it no longer had the truth.

My reverend father, all this happened in symbols. Other religions perish; this one doesn't perish.

Miracles are more important than you think. They have

served for the foundation, and will serve for the Church's continuation until the Antichrist, until the end.

The two witnesses.

In the Old Testament and in the New, miracles are performed by the attachment of symbols. Salvation, or useless thing, if not to show that we should submit ourselves to the Scriptures; symbol of the sacraments.

853. We must judge soberly concerning divine ordinances, reverend Father. Saint Paul in the isle of Malta [Act 28:1-10].

854. So the hardness of the Jesuits surpasses that of the Jews, since the Jews refused to believe Jesus-Christ innocent only because they doubted if his miracles were of God. Whereas the Jesuits, though unable to doubt that the miracles of Port-Royal [see Glossary] are of God, nevertheless doubt the innocence of that house.

855. You corrupt religion either in favour of your friends or against your enemies. You arrange it at your will.

856. On the miracle. As God has made no family more happy, let it also be the case that he finds none more thankful.

Section 14: Polemical fragments

857. Light, darkness. There would be too much darkness if there weren't visible signs of truth. This is a wonderful one, that it has *always* been preserved in one Church and one visible assembly of men. There would be too much light if there were only one opinion in this Church. That which has always existed is the true one; for the true one has always

existed, and nothing false has always existed.

858. The history of the Church ought properly to be called the history of the truth.

859. There is a pleasure in being in a ship beaten about by a storm, when we are sure that it won't sink. The persecutions that harass the Church are like that.

860. After so many other signs of piety, they are still persecuted, which is the best sign of piety.

861. When the Church is no longer sustained by anything but God, it is in an excellent state!

862. The Church has always been attacked by opposite errors, but perhaps never by both at the same time, as it is today. And if it suffers more from errors because there are so many of them, it also gets an advantage from this—namely that they destroy each other.

It complains of both, but far more of the Calvinists, because of the schism.

It is certain that many of the two opposite sects are deceived. They should be corrected.

The faith includes many truths that seem to contradict each other. Time to laugh, to weep, etc. [Ecclesiastes 3:3] Answer. Do not Answer [Proverbs 26:4–5].

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; everything doubled, with the same names remaining).

And finally the two men who are in anyone who is righteous (for they are the two worlds, both a member of Jesus-Christ and an image of him. And thus all the names suit them: righteous, sinners; dead, living; living, dead; chosen, damned, etc.)!

There are then many truths of faith and of morality that seem contradictory and that all hold good together in a wonderful system. The source of all heresies is the exclusion of some of these truths. And the source of all the heretics' objections against us is their ignorance of some of these truths. It usually happens that, unable to conceive the connection of two opposite truths, and believing that

the admission of one involves the exclusion of the other, they adhere to one, exclude the other, and think that we, on the contrary. . . . Now, exclusion is the cause of their heresy; and ignorance that we hold the other truth causes their objections. [Pascal doesn't mark the first sentence as tailing off unfinished, but it does.]

First example: Jesus-Christ is God and man. The Arians, unable to reconcile these things which they think are incompatible, say that he is man; in this they are Catholics. But they deny that he is God; in this they are heretics. They allege that we deny his humanity; in this they are ignorant.

Second example: on the subject of the Holy Sacrament. We believe that the substance of the bread is changed into the substance of the body of our Lord, so that Jesus-Christ is really present there. That is one truth. Another is that this Sacrament is also a symbol of the cross and of glory, and a commemoration of the two. That's the Catholic faith, which takes in both these truths that seem opposed.

The heresy of today, not conceiving that this Sacrament contains at the same time both the presence of Jesus-Christ and a symbol of him, and that it is a sacrifice and a commemoration of a sacrifice, believes that one cannot accept either of these truths without being led by that to deny the other.

They latch onto this one point that the Holy Sacrament is symbolic; and in this they are not heretical. They think that we deny this truth, which is why they raise so many objections to us on the basis of passages of the Fathers which assert it. Finally, they deny the ·real· presence; and in this they are heretics.

Third example: indulgences.

That is why the shortest way to prevent heresies is to instruct in all the truths; and the surest way to refute them is to declare all the truths. For what will the heretics say?

In order to know whether an opinion is a Father's. . .

863. The error they are all in is all the more dangerous because each is following one truth. Their fault is not in following a falsehood, but in not following another truth.

864. Truth is so obscured these days, and lies so established, that we can't recognise the truth unless we love it.

865. If there's ever a time when we ought to profess two opposites, it is when we are reproached for omitting one. So the Jesuits and Jansenists [see Glossary] are wrong to conceal them, but the Jansenists more so because the Jesuits have been better at professing both.

866. Two kinds of people make things equal to one another—holidays to working days, Christians to priests, every sin to every other, etc. One kind conclude that what is bad for priests to do is also bad for ·all· Christians to do; the other kind conclude that what is not bad for Christians is permissible for priests.

867. If the ancient Church was in error, the Church has collapsed. If it were in error today, that is different; because it always has the over-riding principle of tradition, of the faith of the ancient Church; and this submission and conformity to the ancient Church prevails and corrects everything. But the ancient Church did not presuppose and consider the future Church as we presuppose and consider the ancient.

868. What gets in our way when we are comparing earlier events in the Church with what we see there now is that we usually look on Saint Athanasius, Saint Theresa, and the rest as crowned with glory and years and considered almost as gods. Now that time has clarified things, that is indeed how they appear. But at the time when he was persecuted, this great saint was a *man* called Athanasius, and Saint Theresa was a *nun*. 'Elias was a man like us, and subject to the same passions as we are', says Saint Peter [actually James

5:17], to cure Christians of that false idea that makes us reject the example of the saints as not commensurable with our state. 'They were *saints*,' we say, 'and not like us.' Well, then, what happened back then? Saint Athanasius was a man called Athanasius, accused of many crimes, condemned by such-and-such a council for such-and-such a crime. All the bishops assented to this condemnation, and finally so did the Pope. What is said to those who opposed it? That they disturb the peace, that they create schism, etc.

Zeal, light. Four kinds of persons:

- zeal without knowledge;
- knowledge without zeal;
- neither knowledge nor zeal;
- both zeal and knowledge.

The first three condemn him. The last ones acquit him, are excommunicated by the Church and yet save the Church. [The weird arithmetic of this is in the original.]

869. If Saint Augustine came at the present time and was as little authorised as his defenders, he wouldn't accomplish anything. God governed his Church well by sending him earlier, with authority.

870. God didn't want to grant absolution without the Church. As it has a role in the offence, he wants it to have a role in the pardon. He endows it with this power as kings endow their regional law-courts. But if it absolves or condemns without God, it is no longer the Church. As in the case of a regional law-court: if the king has pardoned a man, that must be ratified; but if the court ratifies without the king, or refuses to ratify on the order of the king, it is no longer the king's court but a rebellious assembly.

871. Church, pope. Unity, plurality. Considering the Church as a unity, the Pope who is its head is like the whole. Considering it as a plurality, the Pope is only a part of it.

The Fathers considered the Church sometimes in one way and sometimes in the other; so they spoke of the Pope in different ways. But in establishing one of these two truths, they haven't ruled out the other. Plurality that isn't reduced to unity is confusion; unity that doesn't depend on plurality is tyranny.

France is almost the only country where it is permissible to say that the Council is above the Pope.

872. The Pope is chief. Who else is known by everyone? Who else is recognised by everyone, having power to insinuate himself into all the body because he holds the dominant branch, which insinuates itself everywhere?

How easy it was to make this ·papal system· degenerate into tyranny! That is why Jesus-Christ gave them this precept: 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them... but you will not be so.' [Luke 22:25-26]

873. The Pope hates and fears the learned, who haven't taken a vow to obey him.

874. We shouldn't judge concerning what the Pope is by a few *words* of the Fathers... but by the *actions* of the Church and the Fathers, and by the canons.

Two or three in one. Unity and plurality: an error to exclude one of the two, as do the papists who exclude plurality, and the huguenots who exclude unity.

875. Would the Pope be dishonoured by having his knowledge from God and tradition? Isn't it dishonouring him to separate him from this holy union?

876. God doesn't perform miracles in the ordinary conduct of his Church. It would be a strange miracle if infallibility existed in one man. But it appears natural for it to exist in a multitude; God's conduct is hidden under nature, here as in all his other works.

877. Kings do what they like with their power; but the Popes can't do what they like with theirs.

878. 'The strictest law, the greatest injustice.' [quoted from the Latin playwright Terence, and from Cicero]

The majority is the best way, because it is visible and has the power to make itself obeyed; yet it is the opinion of the least able.

If it had been possible, power would have been placed in the hands of justice. But we can't do what we like with power, because it is a palpable quality; whereas justice is a spiritual quality that men can do what they like with; so justice has been put into the hands of power. And so we call 'just' what we are forced to obey.

From this comes the right of the sword, for the sword gives a genuine right. Otherwise we would see violence on one side and justice on the other (end of the twelfth Provincial Letter). Hence comes the injustice of ·the French civil wars known as· the Fronde, in which supposed justice is raised up against power. It is not the same in the Church, where there is genuine justice and no violence.

879. Jurisdiction is given not for the sake of the judge but for the sake of the judged. It is dangerous to tell this to the people; but the people have too much faith in you; it won't harm them and may serve you. So it should be made known. 'Feed my sheep' [John 21:17], not 'your sheep'. You owe me pasturage.

880. Men like certainty. They like the Pope to be infallible in faith, and grave doctors to be infallible in morals, so as to have certainty.

881. The Church teaches, and God inspires, both infallibly. The work of the Church is of use only as a preparation for grace or condemnation. What it does is enough for condemnation, not for inspiration.

882. Every time the Jesuits take the Pope unawares they make all Christendom guilty of perjury.

The Pope is very easily taken unawares, because he is so busy and because he has such confidence in the Jesuits; and the Jesuits are well able to take him unawares by means of calumny.

883. The wretches who have obliged me to speak of the basis of religion.

884. Sinners purified without penitence, the righteous sanctified without love, all Christians without the grace of Jesus-Christ, God with no power over the will of men, a predestination without mystery, a redeemer without certainty!

885. Anyone who wants to be a priest is made a priest, as under Jeroboam.

It is a horrible thing that they claim the discipline of today's Church to be so good that it is made a crime to want to change it. In earlier times it was infallibly good, yet it wasn't thought sinful to change it; whereas now, such as it is, we can't even want it to be changed!

It *has* indeed been permitted to change the custom of making priests only with such great circumspection that hardly anyone was worthy; and it *won't* be permitted to complain of the custom which makes so many ·priests· who are unworthy!

886. Ezekiel. All the pagans spoke ill of Israel, and so did the prophet. But the Israelites were wrong to say to him ·reproachfully· 'You speak like the pagans'—so wrong that his greatest strength comes from the fact that the pagans speak like him.

887. The Jansenists are like the heretics in the reformation of *mœurs*; but you are like them in evil.

888. You are ignorant of the prophecies if you don't know that all this must happen—princes, prophets, pope, and

even the priests—yet the Church has to survive.

By the grace of God we haven't reached that point. Woe to those priests! But we hope that God will mercifully grant that we won't be among them.

Saint Peter, chapter 2: false past prophets, images of future ones.

889. . . . So that if it is true on the one hand that •some slack monks and some corrupt casuists [see Glossary], who are not members of the hierarchy, are awash in these corruptions, it is on the other hand certain that •the true pastors of the Church, who are the true guardians of the divine word, have preserved it unchangeably against the efforts of those who have tried to destroy it.

So believers have no excuse for following •the laxity that is offered to them only by the hands of outsiders, these casuists, instead of •the sound doctrine presented to them by the fatherly hands of their own pastors.

And the ungodly and heretics have no basis for parading these abuses as evidence that God doesn't perfectly watch over his Church; because the Church consists properly in the body of the hierarchy, so that—far from the present state of affairs showing that God has abandoned the Church to corruption—it has never been more apparent than it is today that God visibly protects it from corruption.

Let me explain. If

some of these men who (by an extraordinary vocation) have professed to withdraw from the world and to adopt monks' dress so as to live in a more perfect state than ordinary Christians have •fallen into aberrations that horrify ordinary Christians, and have •become to us what the false prophets were to the Jews,

this is a private and personal misfortune, which should indeed be deplored, but from which nothing can be inferred against God's care for his Church. Why? Because all these

things have been so clearly predicted—it was announced so long ago that these temptations would arise for people of this kind—that if we are well instructed, we see this as evidence of God’s care for us rather than of his forgetfulness.

890. Tertullian: ‘The Church will never be reformed.’

891. Heretics who exploit the Jesuits’ doctrine should be made to know that this isn’t the Church’s doctrine, and that our divisions don’t 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.—One outwardly harmful, the other inwardly.

893. In showing the truth, we cause it to be believed; but in showing the injustice of ministers we don’t correct it. Our mind is assured by a proof of falsehood; our purse is not made secure by proof of injustice.

894. Those who love the Church lament to see the corruption of *mœurs*; but at least the laws survive. But these people corrupt the laws: the model is damaged.

895. Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it out of conscience.

896. It is in vain that the Church has established the words ‘anathema’, ‘heresy’ etc. They are used against it.

897. The servant doesn’t know what his master is doing, because the master tells him only the act and not the goal; and that’s why he obeys slavishly and often defeats the goal. But Jesus-Christ has told us the goal.

And you defeat that goal.

898. They can’t have perpetuity, and they seek universality; so they make the whole Church corrupt so that they may be saints.

899. Against those who misuse passages of Scripture and pride themselves on finding one that seems to favour their error. The chapter for Vespers, Passion Sunday, the prayer for the king.

Explanation of these words: ‘He who is not for me is against me.’ And of these: ‘He who is not against you is for you.’ A person who says ‘I am neither for nor against’; we ought to reply to him. . .

900. Anyone who aims to give the meaning of Scripture, and doesn’t get it *from* Scripture, is an enemy of Scripture. (Saint Augustine, *Of Christian Doctrine*.)

901. ‘God gives grace to the humble.’ [James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5] But didn’t he give them humility?’

‘His own received him not; and as many as did receive him. . .’ [John 1:11–12]. . . weren’t *they* ‘his own’?

902. ‘It can’t be as certain as all that,’ says the Feuillant [here = ‘the Cistercian monk’], ‘because controversy indicates uncertainty. (Saint Athanasius, Saint Chrysostom; morals, unbelievers).’

The Jesuits have not made the truth uncertain, but they have made their own ungodliness certain.

Contradiction has always been allowed, to blind the wicked; for all that offends truth or charity is evil. *That* is the true principle.

903. All the world’s religions and sects have had natural reason for a guide. Only the Christians have been required to take their rules *from* outside themselves, and to learn about the rules that Jesus-Christ bequeathed to men of old to be handed down to believers. This requirement wearies these good Fathers. They want to be free, as other people are, to follow their own imaginations. In vain we cry to them, as the prophets said to the Jews of old: ‘Go into the Church; learn what the precepts are that the men of old left to it; and

follow those paths.’ They have answered as the Jews did: ‘We will not walk in them; we will follow the thoughts of our hearts’ [Jeremiah 6:16, 18:12]; and they have said ‘We will be like the other nations’ [1 Samuel 8:20].

904. They turn the exception into a rule.

Did the ancients give absolution before penitence? Do this in the spirit of an exception. But you turn the exception into a rule with no exceptions, so that you don’t even want the rule to be exceptional.

905. Confessions and absolutions without signs of regret.

God takes account only of the inward; the Church judges only by the outward. God absolves as soon as he sees penitence •in the heart; the Church absolves when it sees it in •in the works. God will make a Church pure within; its inward and entirely spiritual holiness will confound the inward impiety of the arrogant ‘wise men’ and of the pharisees; and the Church will constitute an assembly of men whose external *mœurs* are so pure that they confound the *mœurs* of the pagans. If there are hypocrites among them, but so well disguised that the church doesn’t discover their venom, it tolerates them; for though they aren’t accepted by God, whom they can’t deceive, they are accepted by men, whom they do deceive. And thus the church is not dishonoured by their conduct, which appears holy. But you hold that the Church doesn’t judge •by the inward, because that belongs to God alone, or •by the outward, because God attends only to the inward; and thus, taking all human choice away from the church, you retain in it the most dissolute men and those who dishonour it so greatly that the Jewish synagogues and philosophical sects would have banished them as unworthy, abhorring them as impious.

906. The easiest conditions of life by the world’s standards are the hardest by God’s, and vice versa: by the world’s

standards nothing is as difficult as the religious life; by God’s nothing is easier. Nothing is easier by the world’s standards than to hold a high office and be very wealthy; by God’s standards, nothing is more difficult than to live in this way without acquiring a concern and a taste for high office and wealth.

907. The casuists submit decision to reason (which is corrupt), and the choice of decisions to the will (which is corrupt), so as to give everything that is corrupt in human nature a role in human conduct.

908. But is it *probable* that *probability* brings assurance?

Difference between tranquility and assurance of conscience. Nothing provides assurance but truth; nothing provides tranquility but the sincere search for truth.

909. The whole society of their casuists can’t give assurance to a conscience in error, which is why it is important to choose good guides.

Thus they will be doubly at fault: •for following ways they should not have followed, and •for listening to teachers they should not have listened to.

910. Can it be anything but compliance with the world [see Glossary] that makes you find things [here = ‘moral judgments’] probable? Do you want us to believe that it is truth •that determines your judgments of probability•, and that if duelling were not the fashion and you thought about it just in itself, you would find it probable that duelling would be morally permissible?

911. Must we kill to prevent there being any wicked people? That replaces one •wickedness• by two. ‘Overcome evil with good’ (Saint Augustine.) [Romans 12:21]

912. The sciences of morality and language are special, but universal •i.e. special in their content, universal in their range of applicability•.

913. Probability: Anyone can add; no-one can take away.

914. They give greed free rein and hold back scruples, whereas they should do the opposite.

915. Montalte. Lax opinions please men so much that it's strange that *theirs* displease. It is because they have exceeded all bounds. Moreover, many people see the truth but can't live according to it; but nearly everyone realises that that the purity of religion is opposed to our corruptions. It is absurd to say that *mœurs* in the manner of Escobar [see Glossary] will receive an eternal reward. [Pascal published his *Provincial Letters* under the pseudonym Louis de Montalte.]

916. They have some true principles, but they misuse them. Now, the misuse of truths ought to be as much punished as the introduction of lies.

As if there were two hells, one for sins against love, the other ·for sins· against justice!

917. The saints' earnestness in seeking the truth was useless if the probable is trustworthy. The fear of the saints who always followed the most trustworthy way (Saint Theresa having always followed her confessor).

918. Take away probability, and you can no longer please the world; give probability, and you can no longer displease it.

919. These are the results of the sins of the nations and of the Jesuits. The great have wanted to be flattered; the Jesuits have wanted to be loved by the great. They have all deserved to be abandoned to the spirit of lying—the Jesuits because they deceived, the great because they were deceived. The great have been avaricious, ambitious, lustful; ‘·After their own lusts· they will heap to themselves teachers’ [2 Timothy 4:3]. Worthy disciples of such masters, they have sought flatterers and have found them.

920. If they don't give up ·their doctrine of· probability, their good maxims are no more holy than the bad ones, because they are based on human authority. If they are more just, that will make them •more reasonable but not •more holy. They take after the wild stem—·human authority·—on which they are grafted.

If this that I'm saying doesn't serve to enlighten you, it will serve the people.

If those are silent, the stones will speak.

Silence is the greatest persecution; the saints were never silent. It is true that a call is necessary; but what tells someone that he is called is not some decree of the Council but rather the necessity of ·his· speaking. Now, after Rome has spoken and it is thought to have condemned the truth and to have written it down, and after the books saying things contrary ·to Rome's pronouncements· are censured, the more unjustly we are censured and the more violently they try to stifle speech the more loudly we should cry out—until a pope comes who hears both parties and who consults antiquity to do justice. So the good popes will find the Church still in outcry.

The Inquisition and the Society, the two scourges of the truth. [Referring to the Society of Jesus, i.e. the Jesuits.]

Why don't you accuse them of Arianism? It's true that they have said that Jesus-Christ is God, but perhaps they mean this not literally but rather as something ·looser or more metaphorical· like ‘You are gods’ ·which he said to his disciples· [John 10:34]

My ·Provincial· Letters may be condemned at Rome, but what I condemn in them is condemned in heaven.

I appeal to your tribunal, Lord Jesus.

It is you who are corruptible.

I was afraid that I had written badly, seeing myself condemned; but the example of ever so many pious writings

makes me believe the contrary. It is no longer allowable to write well.

Because the Inquisition is so corrupt or ignorant.

'It is better to obey God than to obey men.'

I don't fear anything; I don't hope for anything. The bishops are not like that. Port-Royal fears, and it is bad policy to disperse them; for then they will stop being afraid and will make themselves even more threatening. I'm not even afraid of your censures, which are mere words if they aren't based on those of tradition. Do you censure everything? What! Even my respect? No. Then say *what*; if you don't point out what is wrong and why it is wrong, your censures are empty. And they won't find it easy to do that.

Their explanation of safety is a joke. Having laid down that all their ways are safe, they have no longer called 'safe' •the one that leads to heaven with no danger of not arriving there by it, but rather •the one that leads there with no danger of straying from it.

What good has it done you to accuse me of scoffing at sacred things? You won't do any better by accusing me of imposture.

I haven't said everything I have to say—you'll see!

921. . . . The saints split hairs in order to convict themselves and condemn their better actions. And these people I am now criticising split hairs in order to excuse the most wicked actions.

The pagan sages erected a structure equally fine outside, but upon a bad foundation; and the devil deceived men by this apparent resemblance based on a very different foundation.

Man never had so good a cause as I; and others have

never furnished so good a capture as you.

The more they point out weakness in my person, the more they authorise my cause.

You say that I am a heretic. Is that allowed?

You will feel the force of the truth, and you will yield to it. . . .

I am alone against thirty thousand? No! You, the court, go ahead and protect deception; let me protect the truth. It is all my strength. If I lose it, I am undone. I will not lack accusations, and persecutions. But I possess the truth, and we will see who wins the case.

I don't deserve to defend religion, but you don't deserve to defend error. I hope that God in his mercy, having no regard to the evil in me, and having regard to the good in you, will give us all the blessing that truth isn't overcome in my hands, and that falsehood isn't...

922. Probable. Let us see if we seek God sincerely, by comparison of the things we are fond of. It is probable that this food will not poison me. It is probable that I will not lose my lawsuit by not prosecuting it...

923. It is not only absolution that remits sins by the sacrament of penance, but contrition, which is not genuine if it does not seek the sacrament.

924. People who don't keep their word, without faith, without honour, without truth, deceitful in heart, deceitful in speech; like that amphibious animal in fable that was once reproached, which occupied a doubtful position between the fish and the birds.

It is important to kings and princes to be considered pious; therefore they must confess themselves to you.