

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 ?? 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 ?? 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 ??-??. 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 ?? 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 ?? 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 ??, 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 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 apocalyptics [see note in item **651**]. But the difference is that the apocalyptics 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 apocalyptics, 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. [Apocalyptics 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.