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S E Q U E L

O F T H E

Evangelical Demonstration.

C H A P. I.

The Examination of the Christian Covenant, by the common Proof of all Treaties.

W H E N we submit the Declaration of the Evangelical Covenant to an Inquiry; do we not thereby act contrary to the Rule which, we have seen, ought to be complied with by all Minds, even the most acute? Are we not herein inconsistent with ourselves?

As there is an Inquiry full of Arrogance and Illusion, there is one likewise that is just and suitable to our Condition. No Creature is intitled to reject or discuss by Argument Things which are the
Work

Work of a Will different from his own, much less to reject or discuss Things which are the Work of the free Will of God. But, whoever is resolved to act in a rational Manner with regard to this Fact, is intitled and even obliged to make himself certain of it by the testimonial Proofs authorised among Men. Nobody will ever examine, whether such or such a Man, who lived in the Time of *Lewis XIII.* ought or ought not to have gratified in Point of Advantage one particular Branch of his Family, without so much as mentioning the others: Much less can one pretend to dispense with that Disposition in his Will, by alledging that he does not think it sufficiently just and judicious. There is but one reasonable Thing to be done here, *viz.* examining whether this Man, who was Master of his own Estate, has any how disposed of it: And this may be ascertained by the Copy of the Deed of Gift, and by the Notary-Publick Keeper of the original Instrument, in short by a sufficient Degree of Authenticity.

The same Method is used with regard to the Proposals the Envoys of any foreign Power come to make, and with regard to the Statutes of a Corporation appointed to regulate the Polity, to administer Justice, or manage the Finances. We only ask if they are duly authorised, and we become assured of it by the unsuspected Attestations given in their Favour. This Method, which is satisfactory to Men of the narrowest Capacity, was never rejected by the most sublime Genius's. It is even equally necessary to them, because they should in vain look for in their own Reason what did not proceed from it, and what cannot of course be found in it.

But, if this be the only Way for us to know the Things independent on ourselves, and chiefly to verify the Reality of an Embassy which offers to
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treat with us ; of course, it is the only Proceeding can be used in the Examination of the Legation of J. C. and his Disciples. Let us set aside the Treaty and Proposals which they pretend to be charged with, let us see their Powers : We might commit Mistakes in the Examination of the Treaty ; and this cannot but deserve our utmost Veneration, if their Powers are Divine. Now, the Examination of the Powers is easy to be made ; it is a common and ordinary Proceeding, and what we are used to. The Rules of it are found in Society. Is the Mission of the Apostles known ? Were they expected ? Have they any Credentials ? Do they exhibit any satisfactory Testimonies ?

There are two Sorts of Testimonies, *viz.* that which we bear in favour of ourselves, and that which others bear in our Favour. The first, which may be called the personal Testimony, is allowable in Proportion to the good Qualities of the Person that bears it. But, generally speaking, the Testimony we bear in favour of ourselves is but a weak Proof, when single ; because the Disguises of Self-Love are a just Motive of Mistrust. It is no longer so when this first Testimony is corroborated by another naturally more worthy of Credit. I mean the outward passive Testimony, which comes from without ; as when speaking of other Men we certify that we know them to be Men of an unblameable Character, that we found them true in their Reports, and that we have been informed by unsuspected Means that they are charged with a Commission which makes them worthy of being attended to.

The necessary Attestations.

This outward Testimony is forcible and valid in Proportion to the Number and good Qualities of those who bear it in Favour of the Author of an Action or of the Bearer of a Commission : And I must

must add, that it becomes more and more convincing in Proportion to the Circumstances that corroborate the Depositions of the Witnesses of an Event, or that give a Commission the requisite and usual Authenticity. The Concurrence of these various Indications of one and the same Thing, remote from us by a Distance of Place and Time, becomes as great a Security to us as the Testimony of our Eyes, and the Sight of the Object itself: And we even find upon Consideration, that the very Reports of our Eyes and of all our Senses are nothing but Attestations of the Excellence and Qualities of the Objects without us. We know not the Sun itself, farther than our Inquiries into its Nature inform us: And how could we go about such an Inquiry? It is the Perseverance and the Uniformity of the Reports of our Eyes and of our whole Body that assure us of the Presence and Power of the Sun. It is likewise the Perseverance and the Uniformity of the Reports made of a Parliament established at *Paris*, that determines us to carry our Causes thither without any Apprehension of mistaking. This Notoriety, grounded upon the Multitude of the Circumstances and the Nature of the outward Testimonies, is the greatest Assurance that Man can possibly desire to regulate his Conduct by. What will then his Security and his Gratitude be, if God has been pleased to render the Ministry that brings to him the Covenant of Salvation as durable and as authentick as the Ministry entrusted by the Republick of *Venice* to her Senate, or by the *United Provinces* to their States-General?

Let us not, however, attempt to prove this, without previously borrowing from Society a clear and sure Idea of the Testimonies, the Want whereof betrays those who assume to themselves a Power which they have not, and the exhibiting of which shews those who are truly invested with it. This

Means

Means of Certainty is easy, and procures us the utmost Tranquillity.

Three Politicians, let us suppose, after having meditated upon the Posture of Affairs in *Europe* in this present Year 1748, have taken it into their Heads to form each of them a-part, and cause a Plan of General Pacification to be received, that shall, by equitable Compensations, regulate the respective Pretensions of the Princes, and the Fate of the Nations of our Continent. They all three shew some Genius, and have had the Communication of good Memoirs wherein the Interests and even the Intentions of the Potentates are enumerated. The latter have already explained themselves by their Agents, and have sent their Plenipotentiaries to a Congress. Several Articles are already agreed upon, whereof the Nations have taken Notice, and in a great many Places they consent to accept of the Treaty which is to put a Stop to a destructive War.

The Want of Testimonies, a Proof of the Want of Powers.

But *Martin*, one of our three Politicians, is not pleased with, and is for altering many Articles in it. *John* makes new Reforms in the same, and *Faustus* goes further still. The last alters nothing in the Terms of the Treaty, but he puts upon them Constructions that were not thought of, and interprets them in a Manner altogether different from the Meaning they generally used to bear: So that the Word which used to signify a King means now no more than a Prime-Minister; what signified an Heir and a Proprietor means only an Usufructuary, and so of the rest: By which Method the Treaty turns out quite different from what it was thought to be.

They, moreover, pretend all three to be displeased with the Envoys who were charged with the Commission of negotiating the Reconciliation, or
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of notifying the Intentions of their Masters. They accuse them of Prepossession, of Pageantry, and of Defects; by which they pretend the Commission is annulled. And, as they fancy they understand these Matters better than any other, our three Reasoners, without further Ceremony, set themselves in the Room of the Embassy. They will be the Plenipotentiaries.

However, in order to procure themselves a seeming Commission and a Shadow of Authority, they go so far as to lay down a Principle of a very odd Tendency as to the future, *viz.* That whenever a Nation shall be displeas'd with the Embassadors of a foreign Court, it may strip them of their Functions, and chuse others out of their own Body to replace them: So that if *England* is not pleas'd with the Embassador of *Spain*, it may send him back, give his Title to my Lord *Harrington*, and duly and fully acquaint him with the Resolutions of the Court of *Madrid*.

This Conduct is singular enough, but the Reason they give for it is no less so. Every Society, they say, is intitled to chuse itself the Ministers necessary to its own Preservation: It may therefore appoint the Envoys of another Power, it may have them of its own Choice, and take them wherever it pleases, even out of its own Body.

Martin, John, and *Faustus* cloak the Oddness of these Novelties with an Air of Erudition and Assurance. They gain Credit, and find some Partisans whom the Captiousness of Arguments or a Love of Independency have warmed into a Zeal for them. But all the rest of *Europe* let them talk and beat the Air; because having received from the Superiors no Powers to act, nor any Testimonies of an Authority, there is no need of listening to them: They shall operate nothing, as they can exhibit nothing. These three People have no
greater

greater Influence over the Affairs of *Europe* than three News-mongers that should gather an Audience round them in the great Walk of the *Tuileries*, and with their Canes mark their own Schemes upon the Sand.

As it is an easy Matter to know those who have no Powers nor any Testimonies to exhibit; it is no less so to discern, without Danger of a Mistake, those who are provided with them.

Here we are in no Danger of losing ourselves either in the complex Intricacies of a deep Geometry, or in the Multitude of different Lights in which the same Thing may be considered by Metaphysicians; or in the Evasions of Self-Love and of a Love of Singularity. The Certainty of the Testimonies is commonly annexed to the plainest of Means, to a bare Proclamation, to a taking of Possession, to an Admittance of form. Those of whom occasional Congresses or standing Corporations are composed, have at first exhibited the Marks of the Power that rendered them Members thereof. From that Time the Publick, without requiring any further Production of their first Title, acknowledge them with the utmost Security for what they are; and even bear in their Favour a Testimony superior to any Suspicion. The least Doubt in this Respect would render any Man ridiculous. Nobody uses vain Arguments against the publick Ministry, or against Establishments that are well known: But Men are for ever going astray and bewildering themselves in Doubts and endless Discussions against the Evangelical Ministry, whose Notoriety is the same as that of human Establishments. A very great and yet very common Injustice this: We shall render it more palpable, by setting it forth under the Notion of another which is parallel to it.

Infalible Means
to know the
Envoys.

What must we think of an Inhabitant of the City of *Dieppe*, that should refuse to carry his Cause to the Parliament of *Normandy* by Virtue of the following Argument: Before I carry my Cause to any Tribunal, in order to make myself dependent thereon, I must previously be persuaded of the Existence and Prerogatives of that Tribunal. Now, those who are reputed to administer Justice at *Roan*, and who style themselves Presidents and Judges in the Parliament of *Normandy*, have no lawful Title to do it. For our Kings have never made any Establishment that was intirely against their own Interest. And what could be more against the Interest of the Kings of *France*, than to alienate from themselves the Nobles of a rich maritime Province, by divesting them of the honourable Privilege they had Time out of Mind been in Possession of, of administering Justice, in order to invest Lawyers with the same. Have we then forgot the Indignation of these Lords of *Lower Normandy*, who favoured the Descent of the *English* in *France*, and revenged their own personal Pique by shaking the whole State? What they call the Parliament of *Normandy* being a Derogation from the common Law and sound Politicks, is then either a fabulous Establishment, or an unwarrantable Undertaking. Besides, I would fain know if the Laws followed by that pretended Tribunal be just, and emanent from the supreme Tribunal of Reason. My Resolution is fixed, and I shall carry my Cause before the most Judicious among the ancient Nobility of the Province; and no where else.

What does it avail you, one would be inclined to say to this Madman, thus to cavil against a Fact attested both by great and small? Do you imagine you will ever be able to strike at the Truth of it by the Freedom of your Doubts? The first Judges appointed by the King, who kept their See in that

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Parliament in the Year 1501, shewed their Patents signed in the Year 1499 by *Lewis XII*; with all the Marks of a lawful Authority issuing from the Throne. It was the Nobility themselves that required this Establishment, that they might be better able to discharge the military Service, which was hardly consistent with the Study of the Laws, and with dilatory Discussions. They looked upon it as a Means, as well of Ease to them, as of Security to private People, the Interests of whom had before been too slightly decided in the short Sessions of the Exchequer Court.

Ever since that Time, the whole Body of the Public, even without requiring the Exhibition of the Letters Patent of the new Corporation, or of the List of the Magistrates that have succeeded one another in that Tribunal, has from Time to Time, and even to this Day, born Testimony to the actual Judges, that they were and are the Successors of the foregoing. Add to these Attestations the Series of public Statutes, and Bills given from Year to Year by that Body of Men, the Buildings they have always been in Possession of for the discharging of the same Functions, the Robes and all the Marks of their Dignity, the Offices preserved in some Families, the Subaltern Employments, the Honorary Prerogatives, and the Uses relating to the Functions of that Corporation: All contributes to demonstrate the Power and Perpetuity of it.

What distinguishes here a prevailing Genius from an ordinary one, is not the Privilege of cavilling with what is public and notorious, but a greater Aptness in the former than in the latter to discern the whole Force of the Testimonial Proof.

Now, this Proof, so very short and peremptory among Men, to distinguish those who are from those who are not, invested with lawful Powers, is the Means (a Means equally expeditious and unsuspected)

which God refers us to in the Affair of the Covenant he vouchsafes to contract with us through his *Messiah*. He has entrusted his Powers to that Descendant of *Abraham*, to whom^a the Blessings had been promised, and has communicated those Blessings to all Nations through a Ministry ever recognizable and for ever surrounded with the Characteristics of the Divinity of its Mission. So that, as it is God that has made and from afar shewn us the Preparation of the Gospel, it is God again that has made the Demonstration of the same; and that Demonstration is as plain as that whereby we are assured of the Establishments made in Society.

If the Gospel was only a History, it might be considered in many different Lights, and many different Proofs of it equally solid and good might be produced, without entering into the Question of the Ministry conducting the promised Blessings. There would be some Prudence, methinks, in dropping that Question: Because among the Multitude of Societies that have either rejected the Ministry or introduced a new one, or broken the Ties of the Churches by breaking those of the Sacerdotal Body; that Question may give Offence to the Minds, the Reunion of whom we ought always to aim at.

We certainly have nothing more sincerely at Heart than to remove to the best of our Power the Obstacles that separate us, nor do we abhor any Thing more than the Thought of offending those whom we should be glad to bring back to a Spirit of Concord. But, expatiating upon what is insufficient, and suppressing what is indispensably necessary, would be doing them a very bad Piece of Service.

The End of our Treatise on Man, which we were led to by the Chain of Matters, ought not to be different from the End of Man himself, which is his Union with God. The Gospel is to him the

^a Genes. xxii. 18.

blesſed Publication of the eternal Covenant which God is pleaſed to invite him into. The Almighty Being was at full Liberty to make this Invitation through the Miniſtry of Angels or of Men; or to leave our Liberty no Room to exert itſelf, by ſaving us without any Invitation. His Choice ſettles us, nor can we deliberate upon the Means of Communication. If in order to be Partakers of it we needed only to be convinced of the Reality of the Evangelical Hiſtory, there are a hundred Proofs of that, out of which we might pick and chuſe. But there is but one Proof of the Evangelical Covenant, and it is our Happineſs that this Proof ſhould be ſingle, palpable, and equally ſatisfactory to the ſharpeſt Genius, and intelligible to the narroweſt Capacities. It is even what bars at once all empty Sarcaſms, all prepoſterous Affectations of Erudition, and all ſuch Diſcuſſions as are fitter to breed than to clear Difficulties. It is a publick Matter of Fact now ſubſiſting before our Eyes, that there is a Society of Men who pretend to have been charged with the excluſive Commiſſion of declaring the News of Salvation to all Nations. Now, all thoſe who come to us with a Commiſſion ſhew their Powers; that is the Sum total of the whole; therefore the Evangelical Miniſtry is known as well as any other Miniſtry. The Certainty of it reſts upon what is both neceſſary and cuſtomary in all Treaties: It reſults from the infinitely plain and palpable Means by which Men procure to themſelves a reaſonable Security in whatever is tranſacted among them through Agents.

The Privilege of injoying the Eaſe reſulting from Certainty is acquired two different Ways, and according to two Maxims of common Senſe that muſt procure Eaſe and Tranquillity to every Mind. The firſt Rule of Security, is, that *when the Envoys of*

The firſt Rule
of Security.

an absent Potentate have notified their Powers, we may from that Moment be certain of the Intentions of that Potentate, and it is only through his Envoys that we can contract with him. By a necessary Consequence of the same Maxim it is plain, that those who should have taken Notice, or obtained a Copy of the Treaty proposed without any express Commission, are not therefore authorized to style themselves Envoys, and that they cannot thereby establish any Correspondence between the Parties who are disposed to transact. In short, the Treaty, whether verbal or in writing, is not what serves or will cause the Envoys to be known; but the Envoys once known serve to warrant the Treaty, and to communicate the Reality of the Covenant.

The second
Rule of Security.

All Men make use of another Maxim equally plain, *viz.* that *when a Corporation of Judges, or of other Persons duly qualified, cannot transport themselves to a Place, if they send thither one of their Members with a Commission presented in the Form that gives it an Authority; one transacts with the Deputy with as much Security as with the whole Body that sent him.*

I stand in need of the first of these two Maxims to demonstrate the Truth of the Gospel to the Persons who have improved themselves by being conversant with the World and with the Transactions of Society. That Principle, which satisfies the most judicious Minds, is intelligible and equally satisfactory to the narrowest Capacities. It inlightens them all, and puts them all on the same Footing.

I need but add the second Maxim to the former, to shew the simplest of Men, those for Instance who know no Body but the Vicar of their own Parish, that they ought not to think their Condition worse or less certain with regard to Salvation than that of the Persons that have been best instructed.

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The only Business of both Great and Small is to know, whether *there is an Apostolate directed to all Nations and to all Ages.* But, we are not to ask if there is one, nor if there be but one, nor where that one is. Two Embassies would be mutually destructive of each other, nor does any body go to meet an Embassy. The only Truth is, that those who have heard of it cannot in reason neglect knowing of, or refuse to receive it. But no body troubles himself about looking out for it: It is the Embassy that comes to us. The Apostolate of J. C. has been upon its March for above seventeen hundred Years together: Since which Time the Envoys have not ceased to tell to all Nations: *Here we are.* They continue to declare to us the Word of Life, and to shew us the Proofs of the Mission with which they are invested. By that Means the Ignorant are instructed and the Learned are settled. This is then the Proof which we are indispensably obliged to insist upon in a Treaty like this: Since it is the only sufficient one to us all; whereas, without it, all general Methods of proving Christianity will not render us *Christians.*

The Testimonies born to the Evangelical Ministry.

C H A P. II.

Was I to give the History of the Peace of *Munster* or of *Aix-la-Chapelle*, I would not produce the Powers of the Plenipotentiaries in Substance, any more than the Acts signed by those Ministers. I would only give Copies of them, which, altho' they could of themselves be of no Authority, yet would become certain by the *After-testimonies* of the several Courts that have acknowledged the said Acts, and of the Nations that have conformed in
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their Conduct to the same. We may, in like manner, take out of the Books of the first Ministers of the Gospel, the Recital of the Wonders by which Almighty God has manifested and sealed his Work. We need not here prove the Inspiration of the said Books nor the Reality of the Miracles that stood in lieu of Credentials to the Evangelical Workmen. What we assert on that Head is but conditional. 'The Spirit of God has communicated' himself to Mankind, if the Facts are but attested. Every Thing remains in Suspence till those Attestations are produced: But there remains no manner of doubt concerning the Work of God and the Books that relate it, as soon as we can shew the whole Body of Society full of the Testimonies that have, upon Examination, Scrutiny, and knowingly, been borne to the Work, the Evangelical Books, and the Ministry constant Bearer of the Covenant.

We may, according to the Style of the first *Christians*, divide this Matter into three Testimonies, which are that of the Spirit, that of the Water, and that of the Blood.

The Testimonies of the Spirit are the Characteristics of Divinity with which the Spirit of God has illustrated his Envoys. We have not seen them, but they are replaced, with regard to us, by the other Testimonies which ascertain them.

The Testimony of the Water is that which is borne to the Gospel by Baptism, and by the new Life of the first *Christians*. Although the *Christian* Baptism had, by its new Institution, acquired an Efficacy very different from that of a bare Ceremony; yet it kept within the common Notion of a Purification. All Antiquity swarms with Instances which shew that those who had a Mind to change their Life or to atone for great Crimes, put themselves under the Direction of some Personage

sonage that was respectable by his Station or Doctrine, and began first and foremost by a Purification, which was in a Manner the publick Profession of renouncing their former Life. This Purification, as we observed in another Place, was known among the Heathens as well as among the *Jews*; and the Use of it was so universal, that we find it instanced in the very Fables, as in that of *Hercules*, who was purified by *Eumolpus*^b, in that of *Apollo* who was purified by *Carmanor*^c, of *Theſeus* who was purified by the *Pytalides*^d; and of *Bellerophon*, who for a Murder, though involuntary, caused himself to be purified by *Prætus* King and High-Priest of *Argos*^e.

To the Testimony of Water, or of the Change of Life through Baptism, the first *Christians* have added that of Blood or of Martyrdom, which is the strongest of all; and those three Testimonies are properly but one. It is the Spirit of Truth that bears a real Testimony to the Gospel, because the new Life of the *Christians* and their Martyrdom have sufficiently confirmed the Testimony of the Works of the Holy-Ghost; just as the Acts of our Parliament and the Persuasion the Publick is under of the Existence of it, are to us the same Thing as the Inspection of the Letters-Patent of its Establishment. It is again three Testimonies that constitute but one.

The Testimony of the Spirit.

Promises had been made, and the Execution of them was expected. God, at last, sent the Minister of the great Covenant into the World, and bore the clearest of Testimonies to the Evangelical Legation, by the Characteristicks of a Power much

^b *Diod. Sic.* L. iv. ^c *Pausan.* L. x, ^d *Plutarch.* in *Theſeo.* ^e *Apollodor.* L. ii,

above Humanity, and by a Variety of Gifts which are in their Nature superior to the Might of all created Intelligences, and whose Concurrence is moreover superior to any Illusion imaginable.

Besides the Resurrection of the Saviour, which is the great Proof of Christianity, and the Foundation of the *Christian* Hope, the Spirit of God has made use of a Number of Gifts which he has varied according to his Views. Some of them were in a special Manner designed for the Edification of the Church already formed, such as Wisdom, or the profound Knowledge of the Mysteries which had not as yet been heard of. Such is the intirely new Doctrine which *St. Paul* preaches up to the *Jews of Antioch, of Rome, and Galatia*, upon the Destination of the Law and of the Priesthood of *Aaron*; a Doctrine diametrically opposite to that he had been taught at the Feet of *Gamaliel*. Of the same Kind were the special Revelations that related to the Advantage of some private Persons or of a whole *Christian* Congregation; the discerning of Spirits, and chiefly of the Labourers who offered their Ministry for the preaching of the Gospel, some out of Good-Will and from Conviction, others out of Interest and from Disguise. There were other Gifts which aimed in a special Manner at convincing those who knew not the Gospel, or who refused to believe it. We shall content ourselves with recalling in brief the most eminent of them, and those that have properly speaking formed the Church by authorising the Envoys in the most publick Manner. These are the Gift of curing Diseases, that of speaking Languages, and the Gift of Prophecy.

The Gift of Cures.

That of working extraordinary Cures, which was of itself the fittest to draw the Attention of the Multitude, by the lively Concern they might take in it,

it, was on that Account the most universal. It attended our Saviour and his Disciples every where. The bare touching of the Garment of *J. C.* the Shadow of *Peter*, and the Handkerchiefs which had been touched by *Paul's* Hand, wrought the sudden Cure of sick People^f. These miraculous Cures were multiplied so much at last, and so notoriously, that the Unbelievers, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, thought it more convenient to attribute them to Magick, than flatly to deny what was publick and universal.

But this Attribution was void of Sense, and had nothing intelligible in it but the Confession of the Facts; which makes it become one of the Proofs of Christianity.

It would be a vain Attempt to pretend to elude the Force of it, by confounding the Doctrine of the *Christians*, and that of the *Heathens* concerning Spirits, together, and by striving to cast the same Veil of Uncertainty and Ridicule upon the whole. This would be imitating the *Pyrrhonians*, who rank in one and the same Class the Dreams of those who sleep, and the Chain of the Ideas of those who are awake. But the World lets the *Pyrrhonians* talk, and it still knows the Difference between Waking and Sleeping. No Creature mistakes that Matter; nor do they ever mistake it themselves.

What the *Christians* admit concerning the Ministry of the Angels and the Wickedness of the Spirits fallen from Righteousness, is grounded, as well as the rest of the Revelation, upon the Uniformity of the Facts that conspire to one and the same End. The Gospel being then proved by a Series of Facts of that Kind, it becomes the Rule of what we are allowed to assert concerning the Powers granted by God to both good and evil Spirits. The narrow Bounds within which God

^f Math. xiv. 36. Acts v. 15. Acts xix. 12.

has confined his Revelation on that Head, are also those within which the *Christians* confine themselves. They do not borrow their Proofs from what is dark: But, like upright and judicious Men, they see in those uniform Wonders of which the Three Continents are Witnesses, not indeed independent Powers that throw the Universe into a general Confusion, but the single and likewise uniform Design of the Sovereign of Nature, who causes his Voice to be heard every where, and publishes the News of Salvation among his Creatures. On the contrary, the Doctrine of the *Heathens* upon the Nature and the Operations of Spirits, had no Certainty in its Origin, no Bounds in its Extent, no Conformity in its Principles.

Magick, Theurgy, Sorcery, all the Divinations by Birds, by Serpents, by Foliages and other pretended Methods, together with all the Inchantments, have had the same Origin as Idolatry, and had no greater Reality in them. Lust and Ignorance having at last mistaken the Figures that were the Vehicles of the ancient Instruction, for so many powerful Beings; and the Forms of Melody which attended them, for so many Means of obtaining whatever they pleased; the human Mind, now destitute of a Rule, contracted a Devotion as terrestrial as its Desires, towards the indulging of which it fell into all the absurd Practices naturally resulting from the first Mistake. All and every Part of the Universe, being thus become so many petty Deities both benevolent and mischievous, and so many Genii, which had at least the Prerogative of prophesying, Men took great Care not to leave those Powers unemployed: They presented to them their Offerings, their Victims, and their Perfumes, attended with the ancient Forms of Melody, and Prayers which were no longer understood: And this
gave

gave Birth to the Visions of the Inchantments and the Pretensions of the Black Art.

The second Source of the Progress of these raving Fancies was the Recitals of the Wonders performed, as they said, by the Priests that were best skilled in the Knowledge of the Gods and of the religious Ceremonies. Cupidity encouraged the contriving of these Fables: Nor was it less necessary to the Introduction of them.

The last Thing that brought them into Esteem was their being both espoused and explained by the Philosophers, to the eternal Confusion of the latter. These Men who had meditated much, and most of whom had been great Travellers, had found every where some Remains of Veneration for Chastity and Sobriety, for Prayers, Abstinence and Recollection, as being so many Means of bringing Man to Perfection, and of making him fit for Acts of Religion. Such were the indelible Vestiges of the Rules and Instructions of the ancient Worship which the whole of Mankind paid to God from the Beginning. But Men (and the Philosophers still less than common Men) have never been willing to content themselves with a Degree of Learning answerable to and not extended beyond the Limits of their real Wants. They must needs enfranchise themselves; they must search and dive: And after the Nations had changed all the Earth over the Ideas of the first Revelation, by substituting to them others that were the more monstrous as they were those of their own Imagination led astray by their Lusts; they moreover attempted to adjust and set them in Order. The Philosophers, more conceited than the rest, took this Task upon them. Sure, nothing could be inaccessible to the Sagacity of Men who had conceived that the three Angles of a Triangle were equal to two right Angles.

They thought that Reason, which had informed them of the Proportions and Measures of what was round them upon the Earth, intitled them to comprehend every Thing within the Circle of their Knowledge. They accordingly discanted equally upon what was on high, and what was below. They distributed into their respective Classes the Gods and the Goddeſſes, the Demi-Gods and the Genii. They ſtudied the Inclinations of every one of them, and very gravely taught by what ſpecial Sacrifices and Ceremonies they were to be pleaſed; what Sorts of Requeſts might be preſented to them, and what Degree of Abſtinance was fitteſt to lead privileged Souls to an extatick Union with them.

Such were, they ſaid, the bleſſed Fruits of their Experience and Travels. They certainly would not have meditated and wandered ſo much to arrive at nothing? Such was the Depth of the Learning of *Apollonius*, of *Eunapius*, of *Porphyry*, and *Julian*. They were Genii that could not be ſatiated with Novelties, and that ran at random after the Marvellous. Men of this Stamp were not very apt to captivate their own Underſtanding and keep it under the yoke of Faith, which never ſhews us more than is neceſſary. How ſhocking the *Chriſtian* Religion muſt have been to them, is very plain: Nor is it more ſurpriſing to ſee ſo many fine Genius's infatuating themſelves with the mad Dreams of *Theurgy*^g, than to ſee a Multitude of others loſing both their Reſt and Fortunes for three thouſand Years ſucceſſively, out of a fond Perſuaſion that Means may be found to live many hundred Years together, and to make Gold with what is no Gold.

The Interſt and Eloquence of the Philoſophers retarded the Work of Salvation as much as the Perſecutions did. Every Man made himſelf eaſy

^g The Operations of the Gods and the Genii.

in his own Unbelief from this Argument: *Christ* must certainly have been a great Philosopher, and have had very powerful Genii at his Disposal, to have been able to attain to so many wondrous Cures, and perhaps his own Resurrection: But, we have also our own Gods and Genii, which we are very well pleased with: The Benefit of honouring the Genii of *Christ* and the *Christians*, is too much confined.

This Way of reasoning, which was very common among those of the *Gentiles* who were infatuated with the Promises of the Magicians, was a great Annoyance to the Gospel: But, the cloudy Part of this Argument vanished by Degrees; what remained of it was the Acknowledgment of the Reality of the Facts; and Time unvelled every Thing, even to the least attentive Eye. They found out that the idle Stories published by *Apollonius*, upon the Faith of the Adventurer *Damis*, above a hundred Years after the Event, were followed by no Effects; that it was the same as to the Gods and the Genii so much extolled by the Philosophers of After-times; that all those strange Devotions were destitute of Vouchers; and that the whole of this Antichristian Philosophy amounted to much vaunting Noise and Conceit.

What sincere Hearts had apprehended at the very first Publication of the Gospel, became more and more palpable, *viz.* That there was no Room for any Comparison between the Evangelical Mission and the Operations of the magical Art or of Theurgy, which differed only in Name.

Here, they found no longer any Thing but a Heap of unconnectable discordant Stories, utterly destitute of Aim and Reason; a heap of Fables espoused by Fear, brought into Esteem by Superstition, turned to Advantage by Avarice, and handed about by Quackery. What was given out of the
Force

Force of the Inchantments, and of the Operations of the Genii, was transacted in the Dark Nothing was, nor could be examined: Much less could it be searched into and sifted.

To cause the Moon to come down from Heaven upon the Earth; to poison and kill Serpents by the bare muttering of a requisite set Form of Words; to emaciate and put the neighbouring Fields quite out of Condition, for the Benefit of one's own; to send a Plague or divert and turn away a Hail Storm; in short, to master and change Nature in a trice, were but the common Atchievements and the Pastime of Conjurers: Which is as much as to say, they could atchieve nothing.

The Difference between the Works of Magick and the Miracles of the Gospel.

All the real Part of Magick commonly amounted to Malefice and Poisoning. God, in order to punish Men full of Pride and unruly Desires, seems to have permitted sometimes that they should be struck with the Sight of a Phantom, or with the apparent Accomplishment of some Prediction: But, what the evil Spirits may have introduced of their own into whatever is styled occult Science, never came up to any Thing coherent. All is limited, ambiguous, inefficacious, and counterfeit in it. It is Craftiness, Indecency, Shallowness, and Cruelty all over. But what cannot be too well observed is, that these Works never establish any Thing durable, the magick Power recurred to in *Asia* never troubling itself about that on Foot in *Europe*. The Interposition of a Sea is not necessary to hinder a Genius from knowing the Assertions of another. A single Partition-Wall is sufficient to disconcert two Demons, or set two Cheats into a State of Contradiction^h.

^h See the numberless Proofs of it in *Tully's* Second Book *De Divinat.*

The Works of the *Christ* and those of his Disciples dispersed every where, had but one Tendency; and shewed an Author constantly like himself, permanently and equally powerful and beneficent. The Wonders that were either uttered or wrought in *Asia* and in *Europe*, were equally conducive to the Sanctification of Hearts and the Glory of God through the same Truths. The Maladies of the Bodies were cured only to convince the Intentions of him, who was given out and manifested as the Destroyer of Sin and Death.

All was done in an open Manner. If the *Christians* have sometimes been fond of hiding themselves, it was either to pray in Silence, or to avoid Persecution. But the Miracles of the Gospel were wrought before the Sun and in the publick Places. Every one was Judge of them: And as the *Christians* reported without any Concert and in an infinite Number of Places at once the Things which they had seen with their own Eyes, and touched with their own Hands; their Testimony could not be excepted against with any Sort of Reason.

These Cures being then so very distinguishable from the Prestiges of Magick by their Decency, by their Authentickness, and by their palpable Reality, they have always had the twofold Advantage of inclining all Hearts to Virtue, and of invincibly proving the same Truth by their Connexion. Are we to wonder after that, if the little and the ignorant have been clear-sighted, whilst the Great and the Learned were blinded by the Illusions of false Learning?

It will not be needless here to observe that this Privilege of mastering Nature has sometimes been attended in the first Apostles with that of inflicting sudden Punishments on those in whom the deepest Disguise made itself evident. But this dreadful Power was seldom made use of. We see it take effect

fect only in the Hands of *St. Peter*, who struck *Ananias* and *Sapphira* with Deathⁱ; and then in those of *St. Paul*, by whom *Barjesus*^k was struck blind, and the incestuous Man of *Corinth* afflicted with an Illness that turned afterwards to his Advantage^l.

The Gift of Languages.

To the Gift of working miraculous Cures God added that of speaking a Variety of Languages, in order to make up for the Want of Talents in the Envoys. They were most of them Fishermen and Artisans. They were hardly able to speak their own Language; in consequence of which they seemed incapable of rendering the News of Salvation and the Doctrine of the Saviour intelligible to Foreign Nations. These Preachers were nevertheless understood every where. They introduced Faith and quickly formed numerous Churches in Towns where the most eloquent Philosophers had hardly got together a few Disciples destitute of Occupation or fond of Disputes, and even in Provinces where the *Roman* Ambition had not been able to penetrate.

The Gift of Languages, though necessary in the Ministers of the Gospel for the conveying Predication, seems on the other hand to contradict the first Intention, which had chosen them simple, uncouth, and illiterate. The Intention of that Choice was that the conquering of Souls might not appear to be the Work of Eloquence and Learning, but that it should appear, what it really was, the manifest Work of the Almighty Being. We, accordingly, see that the Gift of Languages was given in a reserved Manner only. Those whom the Spirit enabled to speak a Foreign Language could be understood: But that Gift rendered them neither polite Writers nor great Orators. It left them the Turn of their *Hebrew* or *Syriack* Language, and

ⁱ Acts v.
² Cor. ii.

^k Acts xiii.

^l 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. and

the Simplicity of their Education. The whole of the Marvel consisted in declaring in an intelligible Manner the Mission of the Saviour and their own, among Nations whose Eloquence they had not learned. They understood Strangers and were reciprocally understood by them. But there was Force and Conviction in their Works, rather than Beauties and Elegance in their Discourses.

The very small Extent of their Talents, together with an Exterior that bespoke no Subtilty nor any Education, caused every Thing to be attributed to God, not to Man.

Very often the Apostle who was able, under the Influence of the Spirit, to speak to Strangers a Language intelligible to them, did not himself understand the Words which God put in his Mouth, or was not capable to make them be understood by those of the Assistants who spoke another Language. He frequently stood in need of another Interpreter, to instruct and edify his own Church by the Explanation of the intelligible Things he had said to some Strangers who were present. Oftentimes, the Gift of Interpretation was suddenly communicated to another Disciple, not only that the whole might be understood; but also for the better characterising the Efficacy of the Spirit, which was exerting his Power through Instruments full of Weakness and Incapacity. The Preacher himself raised no Admiration. The Audience was taken up neither with his Person nor with his Genius, but with the great Object of his Mission, and with the Force of the Proofs with which he supported it.

The Epistles of *St. Paul*, and chiefly the Acts of the Apostles are a perpetual Recital of the Effects of that Gift of Languages, by which a Set of Men destitute of Learning conveyed Faith into every Part of the World, and in a very short Time reunited Nations, that knew not one another, in the

Persuasion of the same Truths, and in one and the same Spirit.

St. Paul, who wrote his two Epistles to the *Corinthians* to clear several Difficulties of which they had desired the Solution, and to remedy some Abuses that began to creep in among them, gives them proper Directions towards using the miraculous Gifts with Discretion and Edification. He insists in particular, and lays it down as a Rule, that whoever has the Gift of speaking Foreign Languages exclusive of that of Interpretation, must keep Silence in their Assembly, unless the Gift of Interpretation had been given to some of the Assistants, that nobody may be desirous of shewing his personal Advantages to no purpose, but only of edifying the Church of God by the Communication of some further Instruction, towards facilitating the understanding of what has been said to every one.

As for the rest, however advantageous these miraculous Gifts of Foreign Languages and of sudden Cures may be to the Church in its Dawn, the Apostle^m shews very plainly what Spirit he is actuated by, by inculcating with great Force, that there are Gifts more precious and more conducive to the Good of the Churches, such as the discerning of the true and the false Preachers; the Knowledge of the Things that lie concealed in the inmost Recesses of the Hearts of Men, and the understanding of the Scriptures. He next extolls some other Gifts still more desirable for the Church and for themselves, *viz.* Faith, Hope, and the Love of God and of one's Neighbour. This gives him Occasion to unfold the Excellence and the Characteristics of Charity, of that only durable Gift, that shall subsist for ever and ever, after the total Cessation of all the rest.

^m 1 Cor. xiv.

These Letters of *St. Paul* bear then the Proofs of their own Truth, in the very Unaffectedness of the particular Cases upon which those Faithful had required the Instructions of their Master.

Is it natural, or even possible, to cause a large Society to receive two Letters, wherein they are reproached with several Disorders that are not real, or that contain Directions for them concerning the good Use to be made of the Gift of Languages and Interpretation, if they have never heard of it? This Proof is of the utmost Simplicity: It demonstrates at one and the same Time the Existence and the Œconomy of the miraculous Gifts, that left the Ministers of the Gospel in a State of Imperfection, to the end that nothing might be seen in their Progress but the Power of the invisible Hand that guided them all.

On the other hand, there is not the least Room to doubt of the Reality of these Letters, which were quoted a few Years after by *St. Clement* the *Roman* writing to the *Corinthians* themselves. About the End of the first, *St. Paul* acquaints the Faithful of that Church with what passed in *Macedonia* and *Judæa*, at *Ephesus* and *Ancyra*, and in all the Churches of *Asia*. All these Particulars prove to be true. It is in the very same Places that the most famous Churches were formed at first. They began by directly shewing the Letters they had likewise received from *St. Paul*. They mutually communicated them to each other, nor did they ever cease to read them in their Assemblies. These Letters cannot be false but in one single Case, *viz.* if these Churches had exposed themselves to Persecution, in order to have the Pleasure of publishing that *St. Paul* had been their Master, although they had never seen or heard him. But let us not anticipate the After-testimonies that have warranted and perpetuated the Testimonies of the Spirit. If

These Gifts are real, the Ministry is divine. This Consequence is plain, it suffices us for the present: What is but conditional here shall next be demonstrated.

The Gift of
Prophecy.

The Gift of Prophecy has finished the Illustration of the Mission of the Saviour and of the Apostles, by revealing through their Ministry the just Application that was to be made of the ancient Prophecies to the corresponding Events; and by making them utter and write down new Prophecies, the fulfilling of which is perpetuated in our very View. This last Gift is truly and literally the Seal that has been put to the Credentials. It has rendered the Envoys perfectly recognisable at the very opening of their Mission, and it appears still intire in the last Ages. Time has even added a new Degree of Force to it by successively putting before the Eyes of Mankind Revolutions and Particulars that were foretold and written down, even before the Reign of *Titus*. The Characteristick of the Spirit of God lies there.

“ All Things, says *J. C.* ⁿ must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of *Moses*, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.”

Many of the Prophecies of the ancient Scripture, some of which have been distinctly mentioned by *J. C.* are not so much Discourses, as they are representative Actions or Sketches of Futurity. Such is the Sacrifice which *Isaac* survived. Such is the Life of *Joseph* sold by his Brethren, delivered up to Strangers, falsely accused, rescued from Death, raised in Glory, then made the Dispenser of Favours and of Life, the Preserver of Strangers and finally of his own People. Such is the Symbol of Life lifted up by *Moses* in the Wilderness. Such are the Characteristicks of the new Prophet who is to succeed *Moses*, to be, like him, a Law-giver, to assume the Quality of Saviour, and to put the People

ⁿ Luke xxiv. 44.

ple of God in Possession of the promised Blessings. Such are so many Pictures of the Mysteries of *J. C.* drawn by Way of Anticipation in the Weakness and the Victory of the Soldiers of *Gideon*; in the Sufferings of *David*, first calumniated, then rejected, and then crowned; in the Glory of *Solomon*, King of Peace and Founder of a permanent Tabernacle; in the Prediction of *Jonas*, who would avoid to speak to the *Gentiles*, and does not speak to them at last, till after a Sort of Resurrection.

Several of these Prophecies are literal and in express Terms. We shall not repeat any more those that were made to *Abraham* and *Ismael*, to *Isaac* and *Jacob*, to *Judah*, *David*, and many others, of which it is palpable that the Accomplishment was not known till after the publishing of the Book that contains them.

We shall forbear mentioning here the celebrated Prophecies of *Isaiab* concerning the Man of Sorrows; of *Haggai* upon the Glory which the second Temple was to be filled with by receiving the Desired of all Nations, who was to bring Peace to them; of *Daniel* concerning the Time when the Son of Man should be invested with the Sovereignty over all Nations.

Instead of insisting any further upon these Particulars and many others, so recently, and so excellently cleared by the Writings of a Croud of judicious Interpreters; we shall now lay the Stress upon some of the *Psalms* which *J. C.* has applied to himself. The very Manner in which he does it is a Characteristick of Truth.

He invites^o us in a general Manner “to look out
“for him in the *Psalms*; because he is mentioned
“there.” He himself assists our Labour, by quoting a Word of one, and a Word of the other. But he takes Advantage of nothing: He does not,

^o Luke xxiv. 44.

as the Learned do, shew a Mistrust of his Reader or of his Proof, by laboriously unfolding the Conformity of the minutest Particulars of the Things foretold with the real Events. The Saviour quotes what relates to him in the *Psalms* with the Security and the Dignity of a Lord, who knows his own Titles, and who contents himself with pointing out the publick Records where they have been deposited a long while before he was born. They are accessible to the *Gentiles* as well as to the *Jews*: And he knows that the bare reading of them is sufficient to establish and set his Rights in the clearest Light.

J. C. stirs^p up the Curiosity of the *Jews* and ours, by asking them the Generation of the *Christ*, and whose Son he is. The *Jews* reply: "He is the Son of *David*. How, then, says J. C. does *David* call him his Lord?"

We open^a the *cxth Psalm*, which he refers us to, and which begins with these Words: "The Lord said unto my Lord," &c. We find in it in Substance what follows:

The Analysis of the *cxth Psalm*.
 1st, God shares his Power with him whom *David* sees in Futurity, and whom he calls his Lord. The Prophet sees him in the Glory in the same Rank with the Almighty, and reigning in spite of his numberless Enemies, who are subdued by him one after another, and prostrated at his Feet by successive Defeats.

2dly, His Sovereignty shall have its Beginning at *Jerusalem*, and he shall exert it among those very Men who had combined to bring on his Destruction.

3dly, His supreme Power shall be manifested in the Eyes of the whole Universe, by the Multitude of the Just that shall obey him not only as an admirable Man, but also as a God. And Men, at the same Time that they shall honour him as the

^p Matth. xxii. 41.

^a Ps. cix. Hebr. cx.

Descendant of *David*, shall acknowledge in him another Nature, another Birth, that has preceded his Mother, and the *Aurora*, and ali Ages^s.

4th, This is the durable Work. God makes an Oath never to retract or change it. The Man whom he has placed at his right Hand, with the Quality of King shall also be called a Priest, not after the Order of *Aaron*, in which the Blood of Animals is spilt and the Priests die and succeed one another, but after a different Order, in which a single Offering replaces all others, and that knows not of any Predecessors or Successors; so that for the future it is through him alone and for ever that Men shall have Access to the Father.

5th, He who is King and a Priest for ever, is also become the Judge of all Men. He appeared upon the Earth only as a Saviour: He judged nobody, and was himself condemned. But, being once invested with the Power of the Father, he shall exert a most dreadful Judgment upon the Kings and the Nations. All shall either submit to or be demolished before him.

6th, Thus he shall have appeared in two States infinitely different from each other; in the one, his Functions shall have cost him great Fatigues, and a Drought like that of a Traveller who drinks the muddy Water of the Torrent in his Way; and in the other he shall be great and raised in Glory.

The Synagogue has sung this Psalm, and the Church sings it now: But the *Jews* had only a Reverence for the Sense and the Promises of it without understanding them; whereas it is in the Mouth of the *Christians* a perfect triumphal Song, which the Event has rendered intelligible, and which is the Expression of their Happiness.

^s Hebr. *Præ utero & præ aurorâ tibi est genitura tua.* This Hebrew Turn of Phrase amounts to this: *Eras priusquam esset Mater tua, & ante conditam Lucem.*

Among the several Words proceeding from the Mouth of *J. C.* let us fix upon those he uttered on the Cross. *Father*, cried he ^t ready to give up the Ghost, *into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.* The thirty-first *Psalms*, from which these Words are borrowed, is from one End to the other a Prayer most suitable to his Condition at that Time. It contains a lively Picture of his Sufferings, and that of the Expectation he is in of a speedy Deliverance. He even proposes the new Life granted him, as the most powerful Motive of the Confidence of all the Just who suffer.

This Sentiment may cause the Words quoted by *J. C.* upon the Cross, to be thought little consistent with those he had uttered a few Moments before ^u: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Celsus and the other Enemies of the Christian Name, far from disowning that these Words came out of the Mouth of *J. C.* nailed to the Cross; have taken them up as the Shame of our Religion. These are Words of Despair, they say. There is no Majesty nor any Patience in him whom the *Christians* have a Reverence for: And he is so far from having the Spirit of God, that he does not even shew the Tranquillity of a stedfast resolute Man.

We shall not reply to *Celsus*, that he who was made a Victim for us all, was bearing that Moment the whole Weight of the Divine Justice. *Celsus* would not understand that Language at first. But, we shall make him observe that these Words were very well known to the *Jews* who heard them, and that they served to touch the Heart of some of them, and to convict the rest of the most criminal Stubbornness. Their Fathers had already sung these Words in their Assemblies for a thousand Years to-

^t Luke xxiii. 46. ^u Matth. xxvii. 46.

gether. When the *Israelites* recited them, together with the whole Canticle of which they are the Beginning, they were taken up with the two Conditions of an extraordinary Man, who was to be treated as an Impostor, and reduced to the most horrid State of Dejection, and then raised in Glory, in order to preach with his own Disciples the true God among all Nations, and to establish Justice among a peculiar People which God was to give Birth to.

The Analysis of the xxxiii Psalm, which has a much greater Energy in the *Hebrew* Text than in the *Vulgar* Bible.

Who is the Man, what is the Event wherein the two Characteristicks that fill the whole *Psalme* will be found reunited: I mean the State of a Man so far prosecuted as to have his Feet and Hands pierced like a Malefactor, and then the Transition of the same Man from his dismal Situation to a new Life, wherein he shall be set at the Head of the Worshippers, who are to come again to God from all the Nations of the Earth?

These two Characteristicks are reunited in none but *Jesus Christ*. His Disciples were not long without perceiving, and without inculcating to others the singular Correspondence which is between this whole Canticle, and the several Particulars which had attended and followed the Death of their Master. But his Enemies, to whom the Quotation of that Part of the Canticle ought to have been a Guide for the Understanding of the rest, far from applying it to what was transacted before their own Eyes, added a thousand Insults, expressed in the *Psalme*, to the ill Treatment he had experienced from the *Roman* Soldiers, who had executed the Orders of the publick Magistrate; and divided his Spoils among themselves. Thus did the Soldiers of the Governour, and the *Jews*, fulfil, even unknown to themselves, all the Particulars which are

enumerated in the first Part of the Prophecy with as much Clearness as they are in the Evangelical History.

The Propagation of the Doctrine of that Man profecuted even to Death, and the Adoration of the true God, who was made known to all Nations by the Envoys of *Christ*, are the Events no less clearly pointed out in the second Part. A distinct Mention is made there of the Repast given in the Assembly of Religion to which the Little and the Great shall be admitted, where the Poor shall find the most excellent Food, and where the great Men of this present World shall most humbly prostrate themselves before the Author of all Blessings.

The Man, who, in the Beginning of that Prayer, experiences the excessive Sadness suitable to human Nature, under the Obligation of dying by the Effort of his conquering Enemies, and to his Condition of a Victim that heaps upon him the Curse due to our Sins; gives Glory to his Father afterwards for the numerous Posterity he grants him, and finally for the Distribution of the true Blessings which is going to be effected by his Preachers dispersed from one End of the Earth to the other.

Can any other Spirit than that of God himself have ranged, in this anticipated Detail, 1. The exact Particulars of the Death of *Christ*; 2. The Exclamation that suits best his apparent Want of Power which causes his Enemies to triumph over him; 3. His Deliverance and his coming to Life again; 4. The most distinguished Articles of his Doctrine; 5. The Worship of the true God, that was going to spread all over the Earth through the Ministry of his Envoys; 6. The Birth of a People which God is going to create with a Denomination hitherto unknown? All this happened to a very
Title.

Can

Can any other Spirit than that of God himself have been able at the proper Time to direct the Tongue of a Man, overwhelmed with Ignominy and in the very Pangs of Death, to the exactest Quotation of the first Words of a Psalm the Remainder of which is a faithful Epitome of his History and the Picture of whole Futurity? *Christ* must needs, for that, have truly and fully understood the Meaning of the Scriptures. Nay, he himself is the Key of them: It is for him every Thing was said.

Nor must we forget observing that the Evangelists shew themselves on all Occasions to be veridical, by the Care they have taken to relate Particulars which are at first Sight either indifferent or contrary to the Intention they have to extol the Work of *Christ*. They, in reality, are very far from being either contrary or indifferent to it. Altho' they should inform the Readers of nothing of any Importance; they characterize the Historians: They testify their Candour and their Assurance. Their Candour is evidenced by their not studying to please by the Choice of the Facts. They relate them such as they are. Their Assurance is equally plain, because instead of contriving or omitting any Particulars from a Motive of Interest, they, on the contrary, engage in Recitals which are not favourable to them, and in Particulars with regard to which Crouds of Witnesses might convince them of Imposture. Of this Kind is the Mistake of a few of the Witnesses of *Christ's* Passion, who not understanding the *Hebrew* of the *Psalms*, imagined that *Jesus*, when he uttered these first Words of the *xxiid Psalm*, *Eli, Eli*, my God, my God, called *Elias* to his Assistance.

But this Piece of Sincerity, which is of so little Benefit, and even, according to human Notions, disadvantageous to the Gospel; proves with equal
Evi-

Evidence that the Historian did not contrive this Expression of Discouragement, and that *Jesus*, when on the Cross, used these first Words of the *xxiid Psalm*, which occasioned the Foreigners Mistake. Now, making use of these Words in the Pangs of his Agony, was explaining to us the whole Remainder of the Prophecy, and the whole Œconomy of the Work of our Salvation.

The same Spirit which had revealed to *David* the several States of the *Messiah*, has taught the Apostles, notwithstanding their Want of Education and Science, how to distinguish all these prophetic Strokes in the *Psalms*. They hardly understood the plainest Words before the Effusion of the Holy Ghost upon them. This last Event no sooner came to pass, but they are no longer those Sailors on the Lake of *Tiberias*, who knew nothing but their Nets, their Boats, and the ten Commandments. *Jesus* had told them every Thing before that Effusion: But they understood not the Meaning of it till after they had received the Holy Ghost on the Day of *Pentecost*. The Vail fell off their Eyes from that Moment. They consult and with Understanding quote the Book of *Psalms* and all the Scriptures. There they discern, as they might have done in publick Records, the several Titles of the Saviour, and exhibit them afterwards. Their Preaching is, on every Occasion, supported by the Strokes they borrow from the sacred Text, and which never had a right and perfect Meaning but in being applied to the several States and Conditions of their Master: So that the fulfilling of every Thing is to be found in him alone.

They see in the second * *Psalm* the Inefficacy of the Efforts of those who oppressed him; the Manifestation of the new Life which he has received from the Father through his Resurrection; and the

* Acts iv. 25. Hebr. i. 5. *Hodie genui te.*

Omnipotence of God, who fulfils his Promises and effects his own Decrees, by means of the Plots of the most wicked Men.

They see in the sixteenth *Psalms* ^y the Prayer of *J. C.* laid in the Tomb, and the most positive Prophecy of his Resurrection. “The Sepulchre of *David*, say they to the *Jews* ^z, is with you unto this Day. Ye have his Body in a Heap of Dust among ye.” The rising from the Tomb, and the Preservation from Corruption were promised to another.

They acknowledge ^a in the fortieth *Psalms* the Insufficiency of the Sacrifices of the Law, of which they had entertained such a high Notion from their Infancy. And those among them who have shewed themselves most zealous for the Law, even so far as to persecute Christianity with Fury; are now those who publish more loudly, that the Ceremonial Law was only an *Æconomy* levelled to the gross Notions of their Fathers, and conducive to a more perfect Law.

They quote ^b the xlist *Psalms* as a wonderful Picture of the Charity of *Jesus Christ*, and of the horrid Wickedness both of the Man who betrayed him into the Hands of his Persecutors, and of his own People who condemned and refused to own him.

The *Messiah* whom they see generally represented to them as a Man of Sorrows, is the very same whom they see full of Beauty and replete with Glory in the xlvth *Psalms*. But the Throne he is invested with is not that earthly Kingdom which the carnal *Jew* was waiting for: It is a Scepter of Truth, Meekness, and Righteousness: Its Duration shall be eternal; and he whom God has anointed to establish the Reign of Truth in all Hearts, is himself raised above all Things. All the Heavenly

^y Acts iv. 26.

^z Acts ii. 25. and xiii. 35.

^a Hebr. x.

35. ^b Acts i.

Intelligences are submitted to him, and adore him. He is God as well as he from whom he received every Thing.

The same Disciples have pointed out to us in the sixty-ninth *c Psalm* the Zeal of the *Messiah* for the Establishment of true Justice; the Stubbornness of his People who refused to listen to him; the horrid Abuses they made him undergo as a Stranger and an Impostor ^d; the bitter Gall they made him take down ^e, and the long Dispersion that was to be the Chastisement of their Infidelity ^f.

These Applications of the *Psalms*, and a great many others made by *J. C.* or by his Deputies, borrow a new Degree of Force from the Circumstances of the Time at which they were made, and from the Events that have answered to them from Age to Age. Innumerable Strokes of these were actually recognisable at the very Time of the Apostles. But however, the Temple, the ancient Priesthood, and the Nation were still subsisting as a Body and Republick. Altho' the Name of the God of *Abraham*, the promised Blessings, and the Religion of the Heart began already to be preached every where; altho' Instances of an ever-bountiful Charity and of the most perfect Purity were multiplied every where along with the *Christian Societies*; yet was there Room to doubt whether that Work would support itself, and the Prophecies were still susceptible of a more compleat Accomplishment.

The powerful Testimony of the prophetic Spirit did then shine with new Splendor, when the *Jews* came to be dispersed, as in the sixth *Psalms* had been foretold, and when God had, according to that *Psalms*, substituted a more perfect Worship to the ancient Sacrifices; when he had substituted

^c Heb. i. 8.

^d John ii. 17.

^e Matth. xxvii. 48.

^f Rom. xi. 9.

to the ancient People Societies that confessed the Name of God^s ; when, in short, he had established a new *Sion* of which every Man became without Distinction the Citizen and the undisturbed Possessor, by adding the Love of the Name of God to the outward Profession.

The *Israelites* had hitherto recited the Eighty-seventh *Psalms*, without being able to understand it. They, indeed, knew the Glory which had been granted to the holy City in Preference to the other Establishments of *Jacob*. But they did not conceive how the *Egyptians*, the *Persians*, the *Africans*, and the *Asiatic* Nations could ever become dear to God, nor how they would be ranked among those who give Glory to his Name. Much less did they conceive, how the *Philistines*, the *Tyrians*, and all the Strangers could become the Children of the City of God, nor how the Lord could, in making the Enumeration of all the Nations of the Earth, acknowledge such and such among them to be become the Inhabitants of his City.

The Preaching of the Apostles has unveiled the Riddle, and the Fall of the earthly *Jerusalem* has cleared it up for the *Jews* themselves, if they were but willing to understand it. All Nations may now receive the new Life, be incorporated to the People that worship the true God, and have a Share in the inestimable Prerogatives of the holy City, of which the Most High has himself laid the Foundation.

We don't wonder after this, to see the Church recite these *Psalms* for ever and ever: She knows the Person that speaks in the major Part of those Canticles, and instead of leading us astray by a certain Set of Interpreters, who shew us in the said Hymns no other Personages save *David*, or *Solo-*

^s Psalm lxxix. 32. *Juda* signifies the Confession, the Praise, the Worship paid to God.

Jon, or *Ezechias,* or *Zorobabel*; she averts from our Mind Events of little Duration and not worthy to fill up the Thoughts of the right Worshippers of God through the Series of all Ages. She sings the Man of Sorrows, the Man who took our Sins upon him, and made himself a Victim for us. She sings the King of Peace and Justice, the Deliverer. She points him out to us, and will have us see him in the several Circumstances which answer exactly the Expressions of the *Psalms*, and fulfil the Meaning of them. Most of them have indeed no longer any real Meaning, and they degenerate into overstrained Emphasy, when they are no longer made to relate to the Mysteries of our Saviour. Most commonly, they can well be applied to nobody but him.

These Canticles are evidently the Prayers of *Christ* in the several Circumstances of his Work, by which Means his Sentiments, which become those of the Faithful, are both the Food and the Support of their Piety.

But, as all the *Psalms* have not an immediate Relation to his Person; some of them being only moral Instructions; others only the expressive Lamentations of a contrite Heart thoroughly sensible of its own Iniquity; and others being only Pictures of the several Conditions which Providence had decreed the *Jews* should undergo; these Canticles vary according to all our Exigencies. They are the true Language of Piety, and the Summary of the Proofs of Religion.

None of them can be more affecting than the Promise made by our Saviour, of preserving the Remains of *Israel* dispersed to the four Quarters of the World, and of recalling them one Day to himself. But he illustrated this Proof in a wonderful Manner, by shewing us the same Events prophesied in the *Psalms*. Truth had never been found
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in the *Psalms*, no more than in the Words of *Jesus Christ*, if both the Temple and the Nation of the *Jews* had been preserved where they were. It would have argued the same Untruth, if the slight Remains of that Nation had sunk under the universal Hatred that pursues them all the World over. But, we are now going to see that it was the incarnate Word which inspired *David*, and that preserves *Israel* to this very Day against all Manner of Probability.

Jesus Christ, after having lamented with Tears in his Eyes the Hard-heartedness of his People bent upon rejecting him, declares at several Times to the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*^h, that they are going to lose both their Town and Temple; that not a single Stone of the latter shall remain upon another; that they are going to be compelled to quit that Land which had been granted to them by a special Gift; and that he shall not visit them nor do them any more good in common till the Time when they shall acknowledge him for the Head of the Corner, for that fundamental Stone which had been rejected by the Builders; and when they shall say coming to him again: *Blessed be he that comes in the Name of the Lord.*

Here again *J. C.* goes on with his most remarkable Custom of quoting the Scripture, by dropping as it were one single Stroke of it that leaves indifferent Hearts in their Ignorance, at the same Time that it stimulates the Desires of those who search after Truth. He points out to them the Place where the Proof lies, but he leaves it to them to unravel it: He makes it the Reward of their Inquiries. Every one knows that it is in the *cxviii*th *Psalms* that Mention is made of the rejected Stone that shall be the Support of the two Walls: Open-

^h Luke *xiii* 35. and *xix*. 44. *Matth.* *xxi*. 42. *Mark* *xii*. 10. *Luke* *xx*. 17.

ing the Book where that Canticle is, we find immediately after these Words the Acclamation with which the Envoy of the Lord is to be received by the whole Nation. But *J. C.* at the same Time that he puts this publick Blessing in the Mouth of the *Jews* now returned to him whom they have rejected, informs us of the critical Circumstance in which this Discourse shall take Place. Those who speak in the Acclamation are not different from those who at last acknowledge the Stone rejected. It is those very Men that speak in the remaining Part of the *Psalms*. They acquaint us there with the horrid Punishments God has made them undergo among all Nations, and the blessed Recalling that shall bring on their Acclamations and the pouring out of their Joy.

When *J. C.* was quoting that *Psalms*, adding to it a positive Prediction of the long Separation which he was going to effect between him and the *Jewish* Nation, he made his Prophecy and that of *David* run upon four great Events, none of which had as yet come to pass, *viz.*

1st, The Reprobation of the Envoy of God by the Doctors of his People ;

2dly, The Dispersion of that People, together with the Fall of their Temple ;

3dly, Their long Obstinacy in the same blind Disposition ;

4thly, And finally their future Conversion.

The three first of these Events have begun and to this very Day have continued to be accomplished, for sixteen hundred Years and upwards. They are Securities to us for the Accomplishment of the fourth, which is the merciful Visitation intended them by *J. C.* Let us imagine ourselves living at that Moment when the *Israelites* converted to the Lord shall sing the *Psalms* of their thankful Homage ;

mage: The Meaning of it shall, in that Case, be Clearness, and Coherency all over.

The *Israelites* now recalled begin in that *Psalms* by returning Thanks for the wonderful Mercy that has signalized itself upon them. After having been detested, prosecuted, and crushed by Crowds innumerable of Enemies; after having incurred the greatest Abuses from all those Nations incensed against them like so many busy furious Bees, or like inflamed Thorns; they give Thanks to the Lord who is at last pleased to rid them from Oppression. They acknowledge their long Misery to be a just though severe Chastisement, and they give Glory to him for his not having given them over to utter Destruction.

The Analysis
of the cxviiiith
Psalm.

But, what is then their Fault? What is the Guilt with which they ought to reproach themselves, and which they all of them had a Hand in? They have not, ever since the Captivity of *Babylon*, shewed the least Disposition to return to Idolatry. They always professed to honour the God of *Abraham*, the Creator and the Preserver of all, the true God. Who then is he whom they now confess and acknowledge at last for their Lord and God?

The great Mistake, the enormous Crime they are now avowing, is their having refused to acknowledge him who was the Door by which Righteousness is to be come at. They confess that Door to be the only Avenue to it, and that their going astray from him who is the Door, has carried them very far from Righteousness, which they looked for only in themselves. They direct their Words to him whose Mercy was beforehand with their Repentance, to him, in short, who, after having been rejected by their Fathers, as a Stone out-cast, and needless to the Edifice of the Church of God, is at last be-

come the Head Stone of the Corner, appointed to make the whole Fabrick stedfast and unshaken,

That great Truth which they have so long and so obstinately opposed, becomes to them, what it really is, *the most wonderful Work of the Lord*, and the Matter of their Surprise. That Work was not known to them, and there, indeed, did their Misfortune lie. But it is revealed to them at last; and that Knowledge makes them pass successively from the deepest Repentance to an extatick Jubilation. They break out into Acclamations, and give themselves over to the most transporting Joy, begging their Salvation of him whom they have rejected, They must needs give a Loose to their Raptures, They go and publish the same Salvation among all Nations, declaring that the Man they had rejected is the Envoy of the Lord: They summon them to know the Object of their repeated Blessings. Shades and Darknes are now vanished from their Eyes, and the Lord has made his Light to shine upon them. They will needs share in the Solemnities and the Banquet of the Church. They are not tired with repeating again and again with Admiration, that he whom they refused to acknowledge is their God and their Saviour.

J. C. by pointing out to us in the Prediction of *David* Things that have ever been accomplished ever since he forewarned us of them, sets in the brightest Light this Truth, that past and future Events are equally submitted to him. Thus was the Church taught at the School of the Preacher of all Truth how to busy herself with a remote Futurity as though it were actually present. She anticipates the Injoyment of it, nor does she doubt of the future Conversion of *Israel*, any more than of their persevering Hard-heartedness. She anticipates the Moment of the happy Return of that desolate Nation, as she at other Times invites them to it,

egging

egging them on by both the Picture of its Misery and the Prediction of its future happy Change. *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere.*

Our Saviour did not content himself barely with producing the Proofs of his Legation, by pointing out the prophetical Strokes of the ancient Scriptures wherein it was promised to the *Jews*. *J. C.* already recognizable by the accomplishing of the ancient Prophecies, is no less so by that of his own. He has added to the old Prophecies, other Predictions concerning the Formation of his Church and the Perpetuity of the Ministry of his Envoys, the faithful accomplishing of which will ever illustrate their Powers.

The Prophecies of *J. C.*

Those who have Doubts concerning the Reality of the Prophecies of *Jesus Christ*, confess, that there is no Advantage to be made by saying that the Books of the Gospel have been forged after the Event; because they are undeniably foregoing to the Fall of *Jerusalem*, and because they cannot but be divine, let the Time in which they have been written be what it will, if they foretell Events that came to pass after the Publication of the Books, and that were of such a Nature that they could not be foretold without the utmost Rashness. But, they pretend that a little Knowledge of the common Course of Things in the World, was sufficient to *Christ*, without any prophetical Spirit, to make him sensible, that the uneasy Temper of the *Jews* would soon bring on the Destruction of their Town; and that his Disciples would, after some Resistance, at last establish his System of Religion, it being of a Character very fit to make it acceptable. Let us see if the Thing was so very easy to be brought about, and to be foretold.

After having read the Gospel, or only the three Chapters that have been called *Christ's* Sermon on

the Mountain, wherein he has collected the noblest Branches of his Doctrine, let us try to calculate the Horoscope of it as it were: Let us make use of our Experience and of the Knowledge we have of the natural Dispositions of the human Heart, to foresee the Reception this Religion will meet with in the World. We shall afterwards compare our Prediction with that of *J. C.* and then both Prophecies with the Event.

The Prophecy of *J. C.* concerning the Persecutions.

The *Christian* Religion may be published Sword in Hand, or be left to itself, without any further Support. What will the Event in the first Case be?

If a Prince that has a great Name, and Armies at Command, would give himself the Trouble of introducing this Religion into the World, it might perhaps take in some Places, proportionably to the good Success of the Conqueror. One might think, however, that this could not be brought about without much Opposition, or in a durable Manner, because this Religion is contrary to the received Notions and the Prejudices of Infancy, to the publick Religion and the Interest of the most flourishing Cities. For Instance, let that Religion be carried to *Ephesus*. This Town is full of Goldsmiths, who make a considerable Traffick by the Representations they sell both in Silver and Copper of the magnificent Temple of the great Goddess. Demolishing the Worship of the Goddess, is pulling down their Trade and Fortune. It may be surmised, that the same Religion proposed at *Eleusis* and *Epidaurus*, or at *Cythera* and *Paphos*, will give the Alarm to the Priests of *Ceres*, *Æsculapius*, and *Venus*. Alike incompatible will it be found every where else. We may judge of the Opposition which a Prince would have met with in the establishing Christianity by main Force, from the obstinate Resistance and
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the furious Proceeding of the *Normands*, or of the Nations about the *Baltick*, who had been exasperated by the Severity of the Laws established by *Charlemaign* and his Son *Lewis* towards making them *Christians*. The *Prussians* behaved in the same Manner in the twelfth Century, towards *Bolleslas* surnamed *the Frizzled*, King of *Poland*, who brought the Gospel to them Sword in Hand.

It according to the Prediction and Intention of *Jesus Christ*, his Religion is left to itself; if it is published by Ministers who never busy themselves about making any Provisions of Money, nor about preparing any of their Speeches or Answers, no more than about getting Protectors, or about using the Sword against those who resist them (which was the Case of *Christianity*) let us endeavour to foretell what the Success of it will be. It will be with that Religion as with the Notions of *Diogenes*, of *Zeno*, of *Aristotle*, or of *Plato*. It will thrive in a few Schools, or perhaps at the most in the Head of a few *Enthusiasts*. The Commonalty of Men, whose Notions are gross and changeable, will either be but little affected by so wise a Religion, or not adhere to it with Perseverance, and the Whole will in Time come to nothing.

However, if the new Religion should, notwithstanding the Force of Prejudices and Passions, arrive at getting some Partisans; as these profess to love Men, and to pray for their own Persecutors, as they take Pattern by him who causes his Sun to rise and shine on the Good and the Bad, without ever ill using those who are not of their Opinion; such a Meekness cannot but render them very amiable. They will easily be pardoned a few odd Notions concerning the Resurrection and the Rewards they hope for. These Speculations can give no Trouble to any body: And Mankind will even be very glad

to have to deal with Neighbours of so easy, so just, and so kind a Disposition.

Our Prudence does then lead us to the making of two Predictions; one, that this Religion being destitute of Support, will, instead of spreading far and wide, soon dwindle into nothing: The other, that if it can get any Followers, they will be favourably looked upon, or overlooked at least, on Account of their small Number, and of that benevolent Disposition which is the most binding Cement of Society. Such are our two Prophecies, agreeable in every Respect to the Notions and Behaviour generally met with in the World. *J. C.* makes two others diametrically opposite to these; one, that the Kingdom of Heaven, or the publishing of the good News, shall, after a very small Beginning, make the greatest Progress, and last as long as the World itself; the other, that his Disciples shall be detested, persecuted, and cruelly used every where. How could he have any Hopes of being credited, by foretelling that his Gospel, which is the Condemnation of the Customs of all the World, would prosper every where, though destitute of Support; and how did he entertain the least Hope of getting Disciples and Preachers, by first and foremost promising to them nothing but Persecution and Tortures? Sure, this is the total Subversion of our Notions. From the Event we may judge whether of the two is the prophetic Spirit, that of *J. C.* or our own.

The Prophecy of *J. C.* concerning the Vocation of the Gentiles.

Events of it.

Here is another Stroke of the same Spirit, which demonstrates that *J. C.* dived into Futurity, because Futurity was submitted to him, and he is himself the Disposer of the

At the Time when the Gospel was published and then written, Idolatry was so universal and so reigning,

reigning, on account of the many Relations it had to all the unruly Desires of Man, that the wisest Philosophers had not had the Courage to contradict it. *Socrates, Plato, and Tully* had far other Notions than the Vulgar; and they nevertheless forewarned their Disciples to keep to the publick Regulations, to honour *Bacchus, Venus, Cupid, Flora,* and Gods still more infamous, in short to do all the Vulgar did. They were sensible how dangerous it was to contradict it, nor would any of them venture to attempt it. The Condescension went even so far as to take in Hand the Cause of Polytheism, by disguising it, as *Aristotle, Plutarch, and Pliny* did. They imagined they had wonderfully spiritualized it, by annexing the Idea of Fire to one Deity, that of Water to another, that of Vegetation to a third, and those of Generation and of all the Productions of Nature, to some of the Names which had been rendered venerable by Custom: As if the substituting of a trivial Sort of Physicks to the Notions of the Vulgar, could either atone for the Disorders still authorized by these ever-subsisting Notions; or exculpate the Worshippers who had transferred to inanimate Beings the Glory due to God alone. The Genii, with which the *Platonists* peopled all Nature, without having any the least Knowledge of what they asserted, suffered all the foregoing mad Practices to subsist, and even added new ones to them. They filled the whole Body of Society with Man-haters, always taken up with the Hopes of being able to converse Face to Face with the evil Spirits, always ruminating upon magick Sacrifices, Phantoms, and Apparitions. Such was the Imbecillity of antient Philosophy.

Idolatry, Materialism, and Magick, those three equally pernicious Systems, which the finest Genius's, though protected and admired, did not so much as dare to attack, and the Apology of which
many

many made one after another, J. C. undertook to demolish them by the Preaching of twelve Mariners. He foretold the Success of the Attempt, and the Event answered the Prophecy.

His Prediction set forth that his Work would extend itself over the whole Earth, and last through all Ages. Since the Departure of the *Galilean* Fishermen, who, according to this amazing Expression of his, were become *so many Fishers of Men*, the Gospel has subdued faithful Hearts among all Nations. It has reached the very new World, and is now giving the last Strokes to Idolatry.

But, if the Choice of the Envoys renders his Prediction improbable, the Means he desires them to employ, make it perfectly incomprehensible. He charges them over and over to be like Lambs among Wolves; never to have Recourse to Money, Protection, or Rhetorick; to any, I will not say studied, but even so much as considered Speeches, nor to the least Resistance. These Means were indeed very unfit to shake an Opinion universally grounded upon the unruly Desires of the human Heart; but the dismal Declaration J. C. makes to his Disciples of the Opposition and violent Contradictions they were appointed to undergo, seemed every whit as unfit to procure him Partisans. He, in real Truth, does whatever might hinder him from finding any Man willing either to listen to or to publish the Gospel.

Attempting by Means like these to pull down a Religion that was in no Part of the World distinguished from the Interest of the State and the Welfare of every private Person, is his being either God or distracted: There is no Medium to the Alternative. It is Madness to foretell the Destruction of Idolatry, without having the Power of effecting it, there being nothing in the World so strong as Idolatry, nor were any Men so utterly destitute of all
human

human Support as *J. C.* and his Deputies: It is being God, if the Event answers the Promise.

But, since this Predication, what is become of the *Osiris* and *Isis* of the *Egyptians*, the *Mithras* of the *Persians*, the *Mylitta* of the *Arabians*, the great Goddess of *Syria* and *Ephesus*, the *Venus* of *Paphos*, the *Cybele* and the *Atlys* of *Phrygia*, the powerful Gods Protectors of the *Grecians* and the *Romans*, the *Teutates* of the *Gauls*, the *Herminful* of the *Saxons*, and so many others? These Idols were nothing, I confess: But they opposed to the Attacks of *Christianity* Prejudices, the Splendor of the Solemnities, Infatuation, Seduction, Rhetorick, Philosophy, Magick, Barbarity. Nothing was able to stand against the Gospel. But what is the Gospel then in Reality? Why, a Word, a Breath: But a Breath proceeding from the Mouth of *J. C.*

There is something still more affecting here. Our Saviour was put to Death under the Emperor *Tiberius*, without having left *Judæa* or directed any one Speech to the *Gentiles*: And yet immediately after the Death of the *Christ* his Gospel was received among them. But this is the very Prediction which *John the Evangelist* puts in the Mouth of his Master. He makes him say without the least Shadow of Probability, that the Empire of the Spirit of Darkness, who caused himself to be adored in the Stead of the true God, was going to fall, and that the Death of the *Christ* would be followed with a general Commotion among the Nations, who were going to renounce Idolatry, in order to stick to him for ever.

“ Now, says *J. C.* ⁱ is the Judgment of this
“ World: Now shall the Prince of this World be
“ cast out: And I, when I shall have been lifted
“ up from the Earth, will draw all Men unto me.”
These Words, which it would avail nothing to

ⁱ John xii. 31.

suppose were invented by the Evangelist, were acknowledged for Truth in the very first Century; and that is enough for us, since Idolatry was still reigning in the Third. But it had received the mortal Blow. Its Losses may be reckoned to keep Pace with its Years: And the Prediction, destitute as it was of all Manner of Probability, preceded its first Decay.

Let us lay aside the Helplessness of his Legates, and the Extravagance of the Cross, which must naturally have taken all Manner of Credit from them. Pray, what Privilege can the Moment of his Crucifixion or of his Departure have, to ingage Men, who have hitherto given no Credit to his Wisdom any more than his Works, to come to him one after another, and to listen to his Deputies rather than to himself? There is either a total Want of Sense, or a most divine Prescience in thus annexing and fixing to a special Time the free Conversion of all Hearts, among a World of Circumstances most naturally fit to prevent it. This Prophecy is undeniably the strongest Testimony the Spirit of God could possibly bear in Favour of the Evangelic Work. It imprinted on the Legation of his Son so irresistible a Character of Credibility, that J. C. inculcated it a hundred different Ways, and under a Multitude of Allegories equally fit to make it always present to every Mind. All *Judæa* had heard from his own Mouth, and all Nations had been taught by his Envoys, before the Evangelists had written any Thing, that the Son of Man, the *Christ*, was going to give up his Life, and to see immediately after Crowds of Adorers come to him on the Preaching of his Disciples, from the four Quarters of the World, who should have a Place in the Banquet of the Kingdom of Heaven, and give Glory to the true God ^k in the Company of *Abraham*,

^k Matth. viii. 11. and Luke xviii. 29.

Isaac, and *Jacob*, whereas the ungrateful Children who rejected him, would be cast out. This Prophecy is, properly speaking, the Ground and the Œconomy of the Gospel, which must be said to have never existed, if this Prophecy be not real. Thus does the Gospel carry with it an immortal Proof of its Truth.

If the Prediction of the Overthrow of Idolatry fills all After-ages with a just Veneration for the Book that has undeniably foretold it long before its coming to pass; so was nothing more capable of causing the Preaching of the Apostles to be revered from the Beginning, than the Prophecy of the particular Events that were to follow the Death of our Saviour immediately, and to begin the Subversion of Idolatry.

J. C. declares on every Occasion to his Disciples, that his Task was ;

1. To bring all Men to Repentance, to which *John Baptist* had paved the Way.
2. To establish the Kingdom of Heaven, or true Holiness in every Heart.
3. To demolish the Empire of Idolatry, which had been extended by the Spirit of Darkness to every inhabited Corner of the Earth: *Christ*, in short, was sent into the World to convince Man of his own wretched Condition, to constitute Men just, and to pull down the Work of the old Seducer. But, chusing the fittest Moment to fix the Attention of his Disciples, he observes to them that none of these three Operations is to be effected in his Lifetime; that *the whole* Execution of them was left to the Spirit he was going to send down upon them to make them Amends for the Loss of him. Nay, he even declares to them that those *three notable Changes*, which were the Object of his Coming, and none of which had as yet taken Place, were just ready

The exact and literal Prediction of the Events that followed the Death of our Saviour immediately.

ready to break out forthwith ; that *all three* would begin to be effected in a very few Days, *and immediately* after his Departure.

“ Because I have declared unto you, said he to
 “ them, the Moment of my Departure to go to
 “ my Father, Sorrow has filled your Heart : Ne-
 “ vertheless, I tell you the Truth, it is expedient
 “ for you that I go away : For, if I go not away,
 “ the Comforter will not come unto you : But if I
 “ depart, I will send him unto you. It is he that
 “ shall, after he is come, manifest among Men
 “ Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment. It is an
 “ Office reserved for the Divine Comforter to ma-
 “ nifest Sin (and convince Men of their own Cor-
 “ ruption :) for you see they have not believed in
 “ me. (The World persists as yet in its Unbelief)
 “ It is the Divine Comforter that shall (in my Stead)
 “ manifest Righteousness, (and form the Society of
 “ the Saints :) for I am, as to my own Part, go-
 “ ing to my Father, and you will see me no more.
 “ It is he, in short, who will manifest Judgment ;
 “ for the Sentence is already pronounced against
 “ the Prince of this World¹.”

Persuading Men that Sin abideth in them ; forming a Nation of righteous Men in the middle of that Corruption ; and demolishing at last the Worship of false Gods, to cause the only adorable Being to be served, are so many Undertakings whose Success is not very probable in the Hands of a Man to Appearance so weak as J. C. But asserting, as he does, that these three Operations for which he came, and none of which is as yet performed, will begin to take Effect at the very critical Time of his leaving the World, is a still more unconceivable Assurance. Now, the Effect broke forth on the very first Days of his Departure, and is lasting at this very Day.

¹ John xvi. 6.

He who uttered none but Words of Wisdom, was rejected by his own People. He had Crowds of Hearers and Witnesses; but a very few Disciples. Fear kept them back, and rendered his Work thus far abortive. He disappeared without having introduced Repentance and an Amendment of Conduct any where; without having rendered Sanctity more common among the Nations, or given the least Attack to the Tyranny of Error, which prompted Men to worship every Thing but God. If J. C. has not attempted it in one single idolatrous City, as for Instance at *Tyre* and *Sidon*, shall Men so unprovided of Talents as the Apostles, meet with a better Success than he had himself? All that remains for them to do is to go hide themselves; and his Death, as well as the Absurdity of his Prediction, ought to suffice towards undeceiving them. But, far from fleeing away, as they had done when their Matter was as yet alive, they publickly shew themselves, and preach him up in the very Temple. The Spirit which had been promised to them, makes them new Men all on a sudden. At the two first Predications of a rough Sailor, who styles himself the Disciple of *Christ*, eight thousand Men embrace Repentance, and are penetrated with a most cutting Regret for having themselves required his Condemnation of the Governor. Instances of a constant Faith and of a sublime Piety are multiplied at *Jerusalem* and throughout *Judæa*, in Spite of the Anger and Menaces of the Sacerdotal Order. The Church gets Ground as well as the same Virtues at *Damascus*, *Antioch*, *Paphos*, and *Corinth*, that is, in the most profligate Cities. The Gospel gives the first Shake to Idolatry in the very City of *Rome*, in the very Court of *Nero*, and in the Family of *Narcissus*, which is as much as to say, in the very Center of all Excesses^m.

^m Rom. xvi. 11.

There is no Day in the six following Ages, on which the Altar of some God, or to speak more properly, of some Monster is not overthrown. Idolatry loses its Partisans every where; it takes its Refuge in the Countries, and degenerates into Rusticity. Barbarity itself is ashamed of it at last: And the true God has Worshippers in the four Continents.

J. C. has then himself performed none of the three Parts of his Work: And by compleating them all according to his Promise immediately after his Departure, through the Ministry of Men of the utmost Incapacity, he only evidenced the Omnipotent *Spirit* that was in him, and which he had imparted to his Envoys.

Nothing but Darknes can be opposed to such a Proof. *J. C.* has not perhaps made that Prophecy: It is hardly credible that he ever said these Words. Some will tell you they are persuaded he never uttered them. They find in their own Reason the infallible Rule of the Conduct which God must needs have had.

In the same Time that we produce the Testimonies born by the Apostles to the Predictions of *Jesus Christ*, and the innumerable Testimonies that have been born to the Predication and the Writings of the holy Apostles themselves; let us for the present lay a Stress on the Character of the Evangelist from whom we had the last Prophecy. Let us look upon the Gospel that contains it as we would look upon any other Writing, or upon any other human Testimony which becomes credible in Proportion to the Characteristicks of Truth that set it off. There is nothing that renders his Recital suspicious, and every Presumption is in his Favour.

We know, from the Accounts of the Martyr *Polycarp*, of *Irenæus*, and *Eusebius*, that the Evangelist *John* resided at *Ephesus*, where he was known
and

and honoured by all the Churches of *Asia*. It was not his Gospel that introduced *Christianity* into those Quarters: But it was the Knowledge of the Apostolical Doctrine, and the high Esteem entertained of the Virtues of *St. John*, that caused his Gospel, which was written the last of the Four, to be received with Veneration. It was still the same Historyⁿ, as it had been delivered from the Mouth of the Eye-Witnesses who had been the Publishers of it; but better particularized under several Heads.

There never was any Testimony that could be more credible among Men than his. In the Dispersion of the Apostles overwhelmed with Terror, he alone had remained at the Feet of his Master, even after his Death: Which procured to us the more particular Recital of the Inscription put on the Cross; of the Lots cast upon *Christ's* Vesture; and of the Vinegar they made him drink. It is he that gives us an Account of the last Will of our Saviour, and of the Care he took of his Mother, by securing a Maintenance to her on the Means and Friendship of *John*, of whom this Testament is the Glory. He moreover relates the Particular of the piercing of the Side of *J. C.* after his Death; to which he applies the Prophecy^o that foretells that the *Christ* shall be pierced by the Weapons of his own People; and that one Day they shall know him again whom they have pierced.

The Evangelist *John* is the only Apostle that was, critically speaking, Eye-Witness of every Thing. But he was not alone. He was there in Company with a Multitude of Assistants, who were either curious of Novelties, or bitter Enemies to *J. C.* and more desirous of taking his Honour than his Life from him. All those Particulars, which

ⁿ *Sicut tradiderunt qui ab initio ipsi viderunt. Ecce Ministri fuerunt Sermonis.* Luke i. 2.

^o *Zechar. xii. 10.*

they had been informed of by their own Eyes, enabled them to confound and refute the Narration of the Evangelist, if he should any how swerve from Truth.

There were Men still more to be feared by him in that Case, than the very Enemies of the Gospel. We ought, in the Inquiry we are now making into the human Means that might naturally cause his Recital to be credited, likewise to reckon all the Things that were apt to discredit it under the Supposition of Imposture. His Recital ought to have offended the Selfishness and Jealousy of the other Disciples, he styling himself every where *the beloved Disciple*, priding in having received into his House that venerable Mother of whom *Jesus* had made a special Legacy to him; and casting upon all the Apostles the Blame of having run away, an Accusation little conducive to the Progress of the Gospel.

But you every where see in the Recitals of *St. John*, the Confidence of a Man who fears no Refutations, no Disclaimings, nor any Complaints: you find throughout his Narration the Exactness of a Witness thoroughly acquainted with every Thing, who tells without any Preparation or Choice the Things that favour his Cause, those that are indifferent, and even those that seem to be against it, for no other Reason but barely because he was present, and he frankly relates Matters of Fact such as they were transacted before his own Eyes.

According to the Rules of the soundest Criticism, the exact Conformity of the Recital of the Expeditions of *Cæsar*, with every Particular of the Places and Transactions of those Times, demonstrates the Truth of it, although the Witness had, in the Judgment of *Tully* and *Sallust*, no Religion nor any Uprightness in him: Much more will the same Exactness in recording the minutest Particulars, and in ever mentioning without the least Mistake those

Names of Places, Persons, and publick Transactions, be a Demonstration of Truth, when the Witness is of acknowledged Probity.

If this Proof is susceptible of any farther Degree of Evidence, it naturally results from this Consideration, that the Evangelist adds to the most eminent Virtue the Simplicity of a Babe. We may judge of it by the candid Style of his Letters. How could a Man of that frank open Disposition have been the Inventor of a Narration, of which it would be impossible for even the most errant Cheat, to adjust the Particulars without stumbling every Step, and without being frequently convicted of Falshood? There is then no Testimony in which a greater Number of Characteristicks of Truth are united, than in the Recitals of the Evangelist *John*.

Whence it follows, that if Men are resolved to suspect any Deceit in the extraordinary Prediction of the three Works reserved to the Spirit, with which the Apostles were filled immediately after the Departure of their Master, the Evangelist is fairly discharged of the Accusation. He can, at the most, have been deceived by a Man more cunning than himself, and have repeated his Words with too much Credulity; but the Matter of Fact being real, and those Words being certainly come out of the Mouth of him to whom they are attributed, how can one pretend that a Cheat may dive both into the nearest and the remotest Futurity. The three Points foretold, and most anciently recorded in the Gospel of St. *John*, have begun to take Effect immediately after *Christ's* Departure. Societies of penitent and righteous Men were directly seen at *Jerusalem*, at *Samaria*, and among the Heathens themselves.

The God of *Abraham*, that is, the Creator who had promised to *Abraham* to bless all the Nations of the Earth in his Posterity, is preached up among

them in the Name of his Descendant; and the Decay of Idolatry begun at that Predication is from Age to Age greater and greater. The persevering Execution of that Promise in a very remote Futurity, is what shews above all with what Spirit the Evangelist and his Master were actuated. No Cheat can then here be found either in the Historian or in the Prophet, and the *Christian* Mission is divine.

One final Remark sets this Prophecy still more beyond all Manner of Suspicion. St. *John* published it at first, no otherwise than by Word of Mouth, as he had done the rest of the Life of his Master. He wrote but late, and when the first Century was in great Measure expired. The two first Parts of the Prediction took Place on all Parts, as we have seen: But these Beginnings of Repentance and Sanctity might have been of no Duration. The third Part of the Prediction, which was the most important, and the most visibly reserved to the Power of God alone, was not by far so remarkable by its being fulfilled. Idolatry subsisted in the Time of the Evangelist, and had crushed the Apostles themselves. The Efforts of Philosophy and of the temporal Power during the following Ages, must, as it seemed, bring on the utter Destruction of *Christianity*. It was more than once attempted to convict the Predictions of the *Messiah* of Falshood: But these Attempts testify the Truth, and ascertain the fulfilling of the Prophecy. Idolatry is no more, and the Words of *Christ* have their full Effect.

The Obstacles opposed to the fulfilling of the Prophecies, have themselves been prophesied,

These Obstacles that have rendered the Prophecy more eminent, by contradicting it on set Purpose, have themselves been predicted. *J. C.* has, many a Time and in the most express Words, foretold, that the Doctrine of the true God and good Manners were

were going to be introduced among Men; that the Gospel would be conveyed from one City to another, and keep its Ground there notwithstanding a World of incessant Oppositions.

When a Man who has not received the Spirit of Prophecy, takes upon him to foretell future Things, he must at least take Care, not to be in a State of Contradiction to the most constant Experience. Humanity might very well foresee that the Gospel would meet with Contradictions; but, there was no Room for expecting that the Success would be as constant as the Prosecution. The Knowledge of the human Heart teaches us the Reverse: And it is the highest Pitch of Rashness to foretell that a Doctrine will be ever thwarted and ever be victorious and flourishing. It even suffices that Opinions should cease to be protected, to make them fall into a general Discredit. The Gods of the *Greeks* and the *Romans* did not undergo any Persecutions at first. The Emperors, when they became *Christian*, never put to Death the Priests any more than the Worshippers of Idols. When the civil Magistrate shut the Temples of the Gods in the Cities, the Worship of them maintained itself in the Countries, and *Pagis* or Villages: Whence it assumed the Name of *Paganism*. However, the bare Want of Protection caused it to be intirely discarded a little after. People pleaded to no Purpose for the Preservation of the Altar of *Peace* and the Temple of *Victory*. *Bacchus* and *Venus*, those gay jovial Deities, which the whole World ought to have sided with, fell down like the rest; and, were it not for our Theatres, they would have no Altar or Refuge left.

'Tis true, whenever Men have attempted to strike at the reigning Religion, to overturn the ancient Polity, or change the Customs of Nations, they have met with some Opposition more or less.

But every Thing yields and gives Way in Time, The Love of one's Ease insensibly brings on new Notions: Nor is there any Alteration but what a lasting Persecution has brought about at last. It was exclusively granted to the Faith in the Promises and to the Sanctity of the *Christian* Morals, to undergo incessant Persecutions both within and without, without ever yielding to their Torrent. The Prophecy is then so much the more affecting as it was destitute of Probability, and the full Accomplishment of it has caused Men (who are naturally good natured to those who do them no Harm) to act contrary to their Character, in the Inveteracy with which they have prosecuted *Christianity*.

On the other hand, it is natural to Man to wean his Heart from the Things that bring upon him nothing but Disasters, when they are never compensated by any Amends. But altho' the Preservation of the Church amidst the many Agitations raised in it by the human Mind and by temporal Powers, be a palpable Proof of the Providence that watches over her, and supports her against all Manner of Probability, this Proof borrows a perfect Illustration from the Prediction of so incredible an Event. *J. C.* does not actually shew himself: But his Word appears but the more powerful for that: And the immortal fulfilling of his Promises, universally published before the Event, makes one sensible "that he was Yesterday, is To-day, and "shall through all Ages exist."

If there is, next to the *Christian* Religion, a Society incessantly abused, and yet indestructible, it is the Religion and the Nation of the *Jews*. But the Preservation of this is not less a whit the Work of him who has immortalised *Christianity*, and preserved by the Side of his Church the antient Ar-

chives of the Records that manifest her, by preserving the Authenticity of the antient Scripture together with the Nation which has been intrusted with it. And finally what fully demonstrates the Divinity of that long and little probable Preservation amidst a World of Misery, is again the famous Prediction *J. C.* has made of the same.

Let all Manner of Establishment be refused to the *Jews*; let them be compelled to fly into other Regions or to lie concealed in our own; let them be allowed to shew themselves among us under Circumstances hardly supportable; let them afterwards be dispossessed, as they were in almost every Place, of the little Territory which had been granted them as a singular Favour; let them be detested; let them be crushed: *Still* they shall subsist. *David, Zechariah,* and *J. C.* have declared that the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* shall, one Day, bless the Envoy of the Lord, after having ranked him among the Outcast; and that they shall know him again whom they have nailed on the Cross.

Altho' it is Matter of great Amazement, to see a whole Nation perseveringly and for a long Series of Ages to consent to be miserable, when it is in their Power to cease to be so by renouncing a few Opinions; it is not solely the Duration of that People thus divided into Platoons, that intitles us to cry it up as a Miracle: Nor do we say that any contradicted Doctrine is on that very Account a heavenly one. We have seen, for instance, the *Gaures*⁹ which have had *Zoroaster* for their Master, who is thought to have lived under *Darius* the Son of *Hystaspes*^r, to subsist a long Time in *Persia*, and

⁹ Those who style themselves the Worshippers of an only God under the Emblem of Fire. This is the Opinion ascribed to them by *M. Hyde, De Relig. Persar.*

^r *Humphry Prideaux, History of the Jews.*

then fly into *India* for a Refuge, rather than to renounce their national Practices. They are found again under the *Mogul*; and it seems of Course that Men may be in a State of Humiliation, and yet subsist a long Time in it.

But although it is observable that the Persecutions excited against the *Gaures* have been transitory, and that they quietly enjoy in *India* a Liberty which is refused to no Religion; there is another Reason of Disparity, which will not allow their Preservation to be put upon a Parallel with that of the persecuted *Christians* or *Jews*. We shall not separate the two Characteristics of the Intentions of God upon a Nation, which are first its Preservation notwithstanding the most incessant and most persevering Persecutions, and then, its producing a distinct Prediction of the same.

It is neither Prosperity nor Calamity that constitute a Proof of the Intentions of God, but it is the Prosperity and the Calamity foretold and faithfully effected, that carry with them the Impression of the Divine Spirit. None but God can know the future Destiny of the *Christians*, the *Jews*, and the *Gaures*. None but God can say what will become of these Nations two thousand Years after the Prediction. But God told us nothing concerning the *Gaures*; nor did he disperse them among Mankind, there to make them become the Witnesses and Keepers of any important Truth: Whereas he foretold by *Daniel* and *Jesus Christ* the long Dispersion of the *Jews*; and by the Apostles as well as by the Mouth of their Master, the so improbable Perpetuity of the Evangelical Doctrine, notwithstanding Oppositions always new to be continued even to the End of the human Generations. They add to this Prophecy the Reunion of *Israel* to the *Christian Church* in the last Periods of the World:
And

And this is an Event not as yet exposed to our Eyes, because it is the last of all.

All these Events, which have from the Beginning of the *Christian* Church been a most glaring Proof of the Mission of *J. C.* and his Ministers, have in Process of Time acquired a new Degree of Illustration; the Extent and Strength of the Proof all along increasing with the Fidelity and Extent of the Execution. The Persecutions of the three first Centuries have, in effect, been succeeded by still more dangerous intestine Commotions, *viz.* by Disputes, Cabals, Avarice, and Ostentation. All Vices entered into the Church along with the Potentates and the Multitude of Nations. She had a Multitude of Members that covered her with Shame and Dishonour. Human Reason, always averse from or displeas'd with what keeps her in Fetters, successively and gradually attacked the Divinity of the Word, and all the Articles of the common and invariable Belief. Philosophy itself, amazed at the Evils she has caused, is so far unjust as to reproach *Christianity* with the same. The Church was exposed to the Barbarity of the Northern Nations, who seem'd to relieve one another purposely to keep her in perpetual Alarms. Nor had she less to suffer from the Ignorance of the middle Age, and from all the Passions that tore it to Pieces: She was, in short, to suffer incessantly, and yet to subsist for ever.

This Demonstration is chiefly for us. The Condition of the last Times of the Church acquires an Advantage over that of the first in this Respect. Or rather there is a just Compensation of Light by which all Ages are enabled to convince themselves of the Evangelical Revelation. The first Ages have seen the Works of the omnipotent Spirit: The following and the last are more and more sensible

sible that *J. C.* and his Envoys are the Center where the foregoing Prophecies meet and unite, and from which other Prophecies proceed which from Age to Age are effected. Thus the Spirit of Truth never did nor does cease to justify the Reality of the *Christian Mission* by his immediate Testimony.

We had promised to shew that this Mission was divine, in case the Spirit of God had justified it by the Proofs alledged by the Evangelists: But we have already done more than that. The Condition of our Promise is no longer uncertain, and the Facts prove to be real. We need not make any Attempt to prove the Divinity of the Scriptures; it is enough for us that they should be ancient Books published every where before the accomplishing of a Multitude of very improbable Events that happen to be foretold in them. This is the Badge of the Divine Spirit; and the Mission of which these Books declare the Perpetuity, is ever attended with its Proofs.

But all Men being not equally at Hand, either to have seen the wondrous Works, or to make the Comparison of the ancient Prophecies with the Events; these first Credentials formerly exhibited by the Envoys, and which may still be examined by clear-sighted Eyes, have been strengthened or replaced for us all by other innumerable Testimonies, more worthy to be credited than any Testimony Men can possibly bear to what they have seen; and which making, on this Account, but one and the same Testimony with the foregoing, “ rendered those who had believed the wondrous Works, not having seen them, as happy as those who had been Eye-Witnesses of them[†].”

[†] John xx. 29.

II.

The Testimony of Baptism.

I shall then from the Testimony of the Spirit pass on to that of Water, that is, to the Change brought about in those who at first received Baptism; because these two Testimonies come up to the same, as the second supposes the first, and ought to stand in lieu of it.

Altho' we have not seen the Letters Patent of the Erection of a special or of a supreme Court of Justice, we nevertheless are equally sure of it by the Attestations of those to whom the said Patents have been communicated: We are sure of it, by the Perseverance of the Republick in maintaining the said Tribunals, and by the Consent of the Provinces that bring their Causes before them. A Testimony may then be replaced by another, without any Danger of Illusion. Thus the Testimony born by the Father in Favour of his Son on the Day of his Transfiguration, and the Testimonies borne by the Holy Ghost in Favour of the Mission of the Evangelical Workers, have been replaced by the Eye-Witnesses of these Works, in Favour of those who believed without having seen them: And these are so far from incurring any Reproach for having believed, that their acquiescing in the Evangelical Preaching and Scriptures, upon the Foundation of the Testimony of the first *Christians*, was a Conduct infinitely agreeable to Reason; since they had for believing them Motives incomparably stronger than those that determine all the Transactions of Men, in the most important Affairs. We with the utmost Tranquillity make a Bill of Sale, in a full Persuasion that an Estate belongs to us; that the original Instrument of Acquisition is in our Hands; that the Minutes of it are in the Hands of such or
such

such a Notary-Publick ; that we have always leased it out without Disturbance ; although it would not be impossible (if any one had gone about to deceive us by Appearances skilfully procured beforehand) that the whole was nothing but Illusion. This Illusion becomes impossible in the Facts proposed to our Belief, in Proportion to the Concurrence of the three or four following Characteristicks :

1st, That the Objects and the Matters of Fact related to us, may not have been seen in the Dark in the Manner of Juggling, but in broad Day-light ; nor only once and transitorily, but in several Places, and in a durable and circumstantial Manner, that permits the Eye to make itself sure of what it sees.

2dly, That the Facts asserted be connected among themselves, so as that they may ascertain each other mutually, that the second may suppose the first, and that having seen the former may be tantamount to the having seen the latter.

3dly, That no Connivance can possibly have been between the Witnesses who attest these things, and the Persons who have not seen them.

4thly, That the Witnesses may give all the Securities that can possibly be desired, of their Exactness, and Impartiality.

These Characters stand in no need of being explained : They need but be applied. What the Gospel offers us is not an imaginary Opinion, hatched in one single Head, and ranged with Art : It is a Chain of well attested Facts. The Works of the Spirit of God that have been produced as Proofs of the Evangelical Legation, and published by the first *Christians*, were liable to no Manner of Illusion, whether they are considered in themselves, or with regard to the Dispositions of those who relate them.

Was it possible to be mistaken in Company with twelve or with five hundred others, in hearing the Voice of *J. C.* after his Resurrection, in touching his Scars, in seeing him act and eat in the middle of his Disciples?

Was it possible for the Churches to be mistaken on the Fact of the Resurrection, when they were forewarned thirty Years after that Event, that the major Part of the five hundred Brethren who had seen the Saviour raised from the Dead, were still living?

Those who had not seen the *Christ* raised from the Dead, might very well have been Witnesses of the Effusion of his Spirit. Those who had not seen the Miracles of *Peter*, had seen those of another Disciple. The last Facts stood in lieu of the first: And they all of them were Proofs either of the Truth of the Resurrection, or of the Divinity of the Evangelical Mission and Scripture. All these Things were inseparable: A single one proved, was the Proof of all the rest.

The Witnesses who had seen, touched, or heard them, shewed themselves every where without Concert, and without any Suspicion or Appearance of either Credulity or Imposture.

The Faithful of the second Century were convinced both by the Facts which they themselves had been Witnesses of, and by the Facts handed down and attested to them by the first Witnesses, who were the most respectable of all. *Greece* and *Italy*, and most probably the *Gauls* and *Spain*, had seen and heard *St. Paul*, or *St. Mark*, or *St. Clement*. The Inhabitants of *Lyons* added their own personal Knowledge to the Recital *Irenæus* made them of what he had seen and heard from the venerable *Polycarpus* his Master. The latter related to the Churches of *Ionia* the Conversations he had had with *St. John* the Evangelist, and with other Disci-

Disciples, concerning the Actions and Words of the Lord^t. These few Instances are sufficient to make us conceive ten thousand others, which were the same every where.

Those who attested that they had seen the Works of the Ministers of the Gospel, were in every Respect worthy of being listened to. They were full grown Men, who had knowingly chosen to turn *Christians*. The converted *Jews* had, according to the Directions given them by the Apostles, compared the Promises and the Prophecies with the Events". The *Gentiles* had seen an amazing Multitude of wondrous Works, which concurred to establish the same Mission.

No body is ignorant how little the Witnesses of these Marvels got by attesting them: And this Proof of their Uprightness has been too often insisted on, to need to be taken in hand any more. Instead, then, of shewing a-new how all the human Passions and Interests were combined to crush the first *Christians*; let us here fix our Attention upon what they experienced on the Part of their own Heart: And the Consideration of their inward Struggles will make us sensible that the Force of Truth alone had made them Martyrs to it.

The Force of the Testimony born by the first *Christians*.

Excepting a certain Class of Men, who have been early accustomed to hazardous Attempts by the Charms of Plunder, and in whom a long Practice of Crimes has extinguished all Sense of Conscience, and all Respect for the Laws; Men generally are strongly attached to the Religion in which they have been educated. Nor have they less Fondness for their Country, and the Interest of their Family. Neither is it easy to break the Knots that bind them to an Habitation, to an Estate, to certain Pleasures and Practices they have contracted

^t *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.*

["] 2 Peter i. 19.

a long Habit of. All these Ties together it is that stop short those to whom the Gospel is proposed, and that holds them back with more Strength as they all of them are agreeable Ties. How shall a Man resist a Wife in Tears, who strives to make him sensible of the unavoidable Disasters his Belief is going to bring down upon whatever is dear to him. Here we are to conceive at once a thousand equally dreadful Obstacles that must naturally render the Gospel abortive. I see no Man upon Earth that ought not to oppose it invincibly, if he listens to his own Interest only, or but barely to his Prejudices.

Come and preach the Gospel among the *Jews*: They are full of Veneration for their outward Practices, for the Law that distinguishes them from the other Nations, for the Family that does the Sacerdotal Functions, for the Country God has granted them the Property of. Their Temple is the Place which the Lord has chosen for his Abode. They will ever be the People of God. They are the Children of *Abraham* and *Isaac*, the beloved Posterity. Futurity is a most glorious Prospect to them. They expect a *Messiah* that shall load them with Honour, by subjugating all Nations to them. Let them now compare these Notions with the Evangelical Doctrine: The Gospel declares to them that the Law, the Temple, the Priesthood, and the Concession of the Land of *Canaan*, are nothing but Preparations; divine, indeed, but transitory; that served to rule and keep within Bounds the Nation Trustee of the Promises up to the Time of the Manifestation of the *Messiah*; that the latter is to be put to Death; that his Sacrifice shall for the future be the only one acceptable to God; that no other than this shall be celebrated; that the Temple is going to be suppressed,

The Prejudices of the *Jews*, utterly contrary to the Gospel.

pressed, and the Priesthood abolished as soon as that Work is compleated; that instead of being the Conqueror of all Nations, the *Messiah* is going to be their Doctor and their Saviour; that he is going to impart to them, through the Ministry of his Envoys; the Worship of the true God, and to make them the Children of *Abraham* through Faith; that the *Jews*, who thought themselves the People of God exclusively of all others, will no longer be his People; and that the Nation who have, according to the Words of the Prophets, given their own King Vinegar to drink, and nailed him to a Cross, are, according to the same Prophets, going to be driven out of their native Land to remain in a State of Slavery and Dispersion among all Nations.

What Impressions must a Declaration of this kind naturally have made on the *Jews*? They first will not examine, nor see, nor even so much as listen to any thing of what is either told or pointed out to them. Their Zeal, which is perverted by Self-Love, and grown a meer brutish Passion, turns into Exasperation; and instead of listening to Matters of Fact, and of considering the Connexion of the Events with the Prophecies; they purposely shut their Eyes and Ears; they begin by prosecuting and even by stoning to Death the Preachers.

It is plain here what Revolutions must have been made in the Heart of a *Jew*, to put him out of Conceit with his first Notions, and to make him espouse others so diametrically opposite to them. How strong a Testimony is, when it is born in Favour of the Truth of a Matter of Fact, by Hearts subdued amidst a World of such Prejudices. A *Paul*, a *Silas*, a *Barnabas*, converted in this Manner, are neither Fanaticks whose Imagination has been warmed by the Discourses of their Family, nor Independents who rebel against the Law of their Forefathers. They are prudent and Men per-

perfectly sedate, who compare Promises made them with the Effects they behold, and who, far from despising the Law of their Fathers, begin now to be sensible of its true Excellence, by receiving the real Advantages of which it was the Preparation and the Preliminary.

Hence the vast Care *St. Paul* takes in all his Letters directed to the Churches wherein there were a great many converted *Jews*, as, for instance, in the Epistles to the *Romans* and the *Galatians*, and much more of course in that directed to the *Hebrews*; to make them observe in the Law which they were acquainted with, an Œconomy and Design which neither he nor they had taken Notice of, and which were clearly set before their Eyes by the Events themselves.

Do you carry the Gospel to the Schismatics of *Samaria*? These have a Veneration for *Moses*, and the utmost Hatred for the *Jewish* Nation.

The Opposition of the *Samaritans* to the Gospel.

Therefore, they will never hear patiently that the Law of *Moses* is to be discarded; nor bear the Thought of receiving the fulfilling of the Promises, and the Declaration of Salvation from the *Jews*.

Is the Gospel proposed to the *Gentiles*? These drink Iniquity as they would drink Water. Not one Rule among them to keep them within

The Prejudices of the *Gentiles* against the Gospel.

Bounds. Their Pleasures, on the contrary, are authorized by the publick Religion, and consecrated like pleasing Actions to so many special Deities, who take care to reward them. The most powerful Nations are all of them strongly prepossessed with the Notion, that they must remain scrupulously faithful to the Gods who were the Authors of their Prosperity, and with the utmost Strictness stop every Avenue to any foreign Religion whatever.

The Disposition of the Philosophers.

Is the Gospel carried to the Schools of the Heathens? The Philosophers, notwithstanding their Divisions, agree all of them in one Point, *viz.* in deifying their own Reason, and in setting no Value on the Testimony of their Senses. What Reception will they give to a Doctrine whose principal Aim is to bring down the human Reason? How will they receive a Doctrine that consists wholly in Matters of fact, and which is no Production of their own sublime Thoughts? They will infallibly reject the Gospel, and prefer their own Decisions to the clearest Testimonies, which they will evade by styling the most uniform Attestations of all our Senses, illusory Means, very unfit to give Instruction to a philosophical Mind. Take Men of what Nation and of what Way of Life or Manner of thinking you please; you must, in proposing the Gospel to them, persuade them at once to new-model all their espoused Notions and frame to themselves new ones, and to renounce all that a long Habit and a general Applause, consecrated by Custom, seemed to render equally valuable and necessary. They must likewise be persuaded to embrace a Religion excessively grave, an unmerciful Rule, which, in order to remedy the Unruliness of our Senses, and the Pride of our Reason, begins by putting both our Reason and Senses in Fetters. And to complete the Difficulty, they must consent to receive Instructions of both Belief and Conduct from a Nation which they knew to be destitute of Philosophy, and which had brought upon themselves the most universal Contempt by the general Oddity of all their Ways.

But what is it the Emissaries of that Nation come to tell us? They declare to all Men in general that they must acknowledge for both their Saviour and Master a Man who said he was greater than all the Prophets, and of older Date than *Abraham*; who

said that *Abraham* had seen him by Way of Anticipation as one passing from Death to Life; that he was born in the Bosom of his Father before all Ages; that he is at once the Son of Man and the Son of God; who said that he is the Inheritor of all Things, the Wisdom come from above; who, in short, styled himself God; but who nevertheless lived among us in a mortal Body, and suffered Death at last. 'Tis true, he is declared to have been restored to Life again: But he does no longer appear; and the Blessings promised by him are remote and invisible.

How can any one pretend, that Men, on account of an Event altogether incredible, should with regard to the actual Disposition of all Minds, and barely upon the Word of a few illiterate Talkers, renounce their own Way of living, their Pleasures, and all the Delights of a sensual shewy Religion? Men will never put themselves in Shackles for the Purpose; nor are they jealous of any Thing so much as of the Independence of their own Reason: And let the Knowledge resulting from their own personal Inquiries be ever so small, I say, so excessively small; they with Difficulty fear what they are not able to conceive.

Such are however the Sacrifices every where made by those who turn *Christians*. Prejudices, Habits, Possessions, Opinions, free Sentiments, are what Men are daily seen trampling upon. Sure, very unaccountable Events must needs have happened, to bring on this Revolution all the World over; and the Irresistableness of the Motives that have equally prevailed with the *Jews*, the *Barbarians*, nay with the Philosophers themselves, must be deduced from the universal Change now wrought in them all. New Notions, new Hopes manifested unless by a total Change of Life.

Jesus Christ intimates to a Doctor of the Law who consulted him, what the Nature of that inward Renewal, which is to be wrought in all Hearts by the Gospel, is: And he compares that spiritual Operation to the Wind and Breath of the Air, “the
“ Sound of which is heard and the Shocks felt, al-
“ tho’ no one knows whence it comes nor whither
“ it goes^x.” It is not enough, says he, that Man be born again of Water (by making a publick Declaration of his being willing to lead a new Life through an outward Purification) “ he must more-
“ over be born of the Spirit;” he must change his Notions and Inclinations; the Spirit must make him a Man thoroughly new. Neither can any one see whence this Change is wrought in him, nor to what End or Hopes it will lead him. But the Efficacy of the Spirit he is influenced by, and the Conviction of the Blessings expected by the *Christian* Heart, break out in him by a Reform that takes in all his Actions and the whole Sum of his Life.

This admirable Life, which though preceded by a Heap of Licentiousness and Enormity, yet remained perseveringly the same after Baptism, was then the most unquestionable Proof of the Change which the Sight of the Miracles and the Grace of God had just wrought in them. Altho’ then, the human Reason was puzzled by the Objects of the Revelation, and the Blessings promised were invisible; God did Honour to the human Understanding, and had decreed that Man should become *Christian* by a wise Determination, striking him outwardly by Motives which nothing but Prejudices and Passions could possibly resist.

^x John iii. 8, &c.

III.

The Testimony of Blood.

I find I have beforehand made the Reader sensible of the whole Weight of the third Testimony, which is that of the Blood. For Man having nothing more at Heart than the Preservation of his Life, if he resigns it rather than to disown what he has seen, heard, and touched; this, for certain, is the strongest Evidence that can possibly be produced of a sensible Thing. This kind of Attestation is barely called MARTYRDOM, *the Testimony*. Martyrdom is in Reality *the Proof* by Way of Excellence; because if that is not allowed to be good in Point of Matters of fact, or of palpable Things depending on the common Testimony of our Senses, there are no longer any Evidences or Attestations which ought to be admitted. It is utterly impossible to ascertain any Thing. Letters Patent of Nobility, Charters, Titles of Acquisition, Letters Patent, Seals, taking of Possession, Promulgations of Laws, Authenticity, all these and other Means of being informed of what has been seen, said or regulated, become frivolous and of no Force at all. They are so many sensible Things which ought of Course to be no longer depended upon. There is therefore, no Certainty nor any just Security left for any Thing whatever. For, what can we then depend upon, if we ought not to receive the Testimony which a Multitude of wise and sedate Men, of all Ages, Conditions, Stations, and Countries, bear at different Times, in different Places, and without knowing one another, to Things they have seen or heard, without being ever shaken by Ignominy, by the hardest Usage, nor by the Loss of their very Lives. We have nothing comparable to that Testimony. There may have been Madmen

in the World: But Madness was never an epidemick Evil.

What Notion ought to be entertained of those who die to maintain an Opinion.

Nothing can be more injudicious and unhandsome than Peoples saying over and over concerning the Martyrs of *Christianity*, “ False Religions, boast of having their Martyrs.”

I know that one may die for the Sake of *Mahometism*, and of any other Opinion one has contracted a Fondness for: But dying for the Sake of a Thing we never saw nor heard of from sure Witnesses, is only attesting our own Persuasion, not the Thing itself.

The Man who dies rather than disown *Mahomet's* Voyage to Heaven, which no Mortal was ever a Witness to, testifies nothing but his own Prepossession in Favour of that famous *Arabian*. There is no *Mahometan* that ever pretended to have been an Eye-Witness of any Part of the Mission of the pretended Prophet. Did any one attend him on the Stair-case of Light? Has any body seen the great Cock, and exactly measured his Dimensions? Has any Man replaced the Want of the Mensuration of the Heavens made by *Mahomet* himself, by asserting that he had heard skilful Surveyors certify that Piece of Mensuration, and those Curiosities which are of so little Signification for the sanctifying of Souls? But this is insisting too much upon a Heap of ridiculous Matters. *Mahometism* and all the Revelations that have been made in the Dark, may very well have Confessors: But they have no Martyrs.

On the contrary, let an Event appear ever so incredible, there is a Possibility of demonstrating it by a truly juridical and convictive Testimony, whenever the Witnesses have been able to make use of their Eyes, of their Ears, and of all their Senses together;

gether; but chiefly when they have done it without any Connivance, and when other Witnesses have added to it Testimonies of the same Kind, even at the Peril of their own Lives.

Man cannot give a greater Proof of his Sincerity, or of his Persuasion. But as that Persuasion is nothing when we have neither seen the Facts nor learned them by the Testimony of those who saw them; that very Persuasion of having seen them when it is attested by the Loss of one's Life, is the strongest Proof possible of the Reality of the Facts that have been transacted under the Sun. Thus is Martyrdom the greatest Proof of *Christianity*, and the Equivalent of all Testimonies taken together.

Those who, from Motives which we shall not here inquire into, have tried to reduce the Witnesses of the Truth of the Gospel to a very small Number, have been compleatly refuted by the numberless Matters of Fact and by the respectable Authorities which *Dom. Thierry Ruinard* has collected in the famous Preface which is seen at the Head of the *True Acts of the Martyrs*. Now these Paradoxes are perfectly well refuted by an innumerable Multitude of contemporary Writers, and by a Croud of real Monuments, which although they are not written Records or particular Narrations of Facts, are nevertheless plain sincere Proofs of the barbarous Executions that were occasioned every where by the Profession of *Christianity*. The *Christians* were exposed to wild Beasts in all the Amphitheatres which every great Town was emulous of having, in Imitation of those of *Rome*. The Prisons, the Galleys, the Quarries, and the Mines were full of *Christians*. There are even many Facts that demonstrate that the general Abhorrence for *Christianity* had, notwithstanding the Humanity and Precautions of several moderate Emperors, degenerated every where into Fury, and occasioned the

the massacring of several Families at once. I shall produce but one Instance of this. We find again in the Burying-Grounds which were formerly without the Gates of our ancient Towns, Places which the Piety of the Faithful has always distinguished by the Name of the Burying-Grounds of the Martyrs. People who were digging there to make Foundations, have often found Monuments of Rushes, of Stone, or of Chalk, wherein some Skeletons have been found lying, with Nails driven into the Elbows and the Head, or with Iron Spits that were run through their Shoulders and come out again at their Breasts. Some of these Monuments proved big enough to contain at once several large Bodies and many small ones of unequal Sizes^y. They almost all of them bear the Marks of a like Cruelty. The Meaning of this is plain. The Children of Malefactors were never made to suffer the Punishment due to the Crimes of their Fathers: And an honourable Sepulture, which is refused to Villains, was visibly procured to these Families, by the same Spirit which inspired a Man with the Courage of asking from *Pilate* the Body of *Jesus*, and of depositing it with Distinction into a Vault which had not as yet been applied to that Use.

The Authors of the three first Centuries, and the three old Continents, are full, not indeed of dubious Vestiges, but of most expressive Monuments of the Constancy and Multitude of those who have freely given up their Blood, rather than to disown the Facts of which they were fully instructed. Learned Criticks^z have collected and urged the Proofs resulting from them, laying aside not only what was false but even what was barely uncertain.

^y See *Rom. subterr. Gallonius*, and *Prof. Histor. Metropol. Remens. Domini Marlot*.

^z *Adrian Baillet*, and the *Bollandists*.

This Proof, which is properly the Testimony of Testimonies, has gathered Strength and been multiplied with the Number of the *Christians* for three hundred Years together. The Work of our Salvation had already ceased to be local, by the Universality of the Predication: But, as all the Earth has heard the Preachers, and verified their Writings; all the Earth likewise has seen the Blood of the Witnesses flowing, and *J. C.* had beforehand given an invincible Force to that Testimony, by foretelling, against all Manner of Probability, that it should be born to him before the Tribunals of both *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

From all that precedes it is plain that one cannot reasonably doubt of the Co-existence of the Books of the *New Testament*, and of the Churches which have attested and handed them down to us in an uniform Manner. The Testimonies born by the Father to his Son and to his Deputies are equally certain, since they are mentioned in these Books, and at the same Time replaced in the Eyes of all the World, both by the Change of the Nations now converted, and by the unquestionable Death of a Croud of Witnesses.

An Objection.

Here follows the most specious Argument that ever was proposed to me to invalidate this Proof: It was urged by People who, notwithstanding their being very judicious and close Reasoners, yet hesitated on the Certainty of Revelation, considering the Habit we all contract of losing Sight of the clearest Proofs, when our Reason has a Glimple of Light, or only a few dark Things to oppose to them.

We by no Means deny, said these People, that the Gospel has a perfect Analogy and Proportion

with the Wants of Man, both towards humbling his presumptuous Reason by subjecting it to the Rule of Revelation; and towards inclining his Heart to practise all the Virtues which are necessary in Society, by offering to him the most prevailing Examples, and the most irresistible Motives. We shall always applaud *Christianity* in this Respect. We have no surer Friends than the *Christians*. We moreover confess, for the Glory of the Gospel, that when we compare it with the Doctrine of the most judicious Men, such as were *Socrates* and *Confucius*; the latter is cold and void of Incouragement, having nothing more towards inlivening our Hopes but a few Arguments that hit the Fancy of a small Number of reflecting People, but that are above the Capacity of the common Class of Men. Now, what can be the Merit of a Set of Morals which is only suited to the Philosophers, for People, each of whom thinks himself capable of making another yet more sublime than that? The Morals of *J. C.* is, on the contrary, intelligible even to the lowest of Men. It was impossible to conceive any thing more popular, than the Doctrine that shews us one from among ourselves already possessed of the Glory reserved for the others. But it is not enough that the Publication of that Work be noble and affecting: The Proofs of it must be at any Time forthcoming, and this seems not to be an easy Task now-a-Days.

If the Gospel was given barely as a History, or a Treatise of Philosophy, we should not wonder at seeing a Variety of Interpretations or Proofs more or less probable given of it. But the Gospel is proposed to us as an Alliance which God makes with Man. And truly it ought to be so for the Good of the Multitude, which are always puzzled by litigated Opinions, but which understand very well the Promises made to *Abraham*, and the Alliance offered

offered to all Mankind by his Descendant. Now, there is no Alliance without an Embassy; and that Embassy must needs be but one, as well as the Intention of him who sent it. How then shall we reconcile the indispensable Unity of the Mission with the Multiplicity of the Ministries which alter the Doctrine, which condemn one another reciprocally, and which nevertheless cry out with an equal Confidence saying: *Come to us: We are the Deputies?*

In short, although there should remain still among Men a Ministry with Characteristicks more plausible than those that are observed in the Authors of the new Sects; that Ministry would be under the Necessity of proving its Deputation in the same Manner as the Parliament of *Paris* proves its Royal Institution; either by its Letters Patent, or by replacing the Purport of these by its Archives and Privileges, and by the perpetual Attestations of every Thing round it. In this, the Parliament of *Paris* does not bear Testimony to itself; it only produces the Testimonies which were born at first, and which have never ceased since to be born in Favour of it. But, is it the same with the Evangelical Ministry? Can it now revive the Testimonies of the Works of the Spirit, and the human Testimonies born to the Evangelical Work? Had they in Reality been born; they now can amount to no more than a very ancient Tradition: They can no longer be discussed nor compared with what was sufficient of old to demonstrate either the Force or the Invalidity of them. The whole is so very remote from us, that it seems to be no more.

But if the Remoteness of Times and the Difficulty of clearing the Proofs of the Mission have destroyed the Certainty of it, the Bearers of the Alliance, let them be who they will, have no longer any Thing but *Hear-says*, whereon to support the
Prcro-

Prerogatives they pretend they are intitled to. They bear Testimony to themselves, instead of being preceded by a foregoing Testimony: And the Gospel being thus become an Affair of meer logical Dispute and Speculation, it has no longer any other Merit in our Eyes than the Singularity of the Chances that have favoured it. It will for the future fare like the Metempsychosis of *Pythagoras*, which was approved of among the *Bramines*; or with that intellectual Beauty of Virtue which *Socrates* and a few of his speculative Followers were enchanted with.

It is not enough, then, say they again, to produce the Proofs of the *Christian* Religion, as so many Writers have done. The Commonalty of Men do neither read nor understand these Discussions: Nor are those who think them most probable a whit the wiser for it. The main Point is wanting in them.

The *Christian* Religion being really said to be essentially the Alliance of God with Mankind, it is of that Alliance that Men are obliged to produce the Proof, which must be ever subsisting; and ever intelligible as well for the most Ignorant as the most Learned. A Commission really given and clearly perpetuated must be exhibited before their Eyes: For they cannot be certain of the true Articles of the Alliance in Question but by those who are commissioned to declare it; nor chiefly of the Reality of the Powers of the latter, but by Testimonies that may be verified at any Time: But if the Credentials, or the Testimonies equivalent to them are no longer subsisting, how can they be produced before us? We have not seen the Works of the Spirit that might have been Proofs of the Mission to us. We have not seen the Blood of the Witnesses flow, which was a Kind of Equivalent to the said Works. The Acts of their Martyrdom are lost,
and

and Legends commonly fabulous have been substituted to them. The Ministry remaining destitute of Proofs, how can the Gospel be reputed a real Alliance; have we not, on this Account, a just Motive to fear that the whole will degenerate into Illusion?

To answer this Difficulty, which is most pressing, and which supposes our own Division of Matters; we are indispensably bound to shew the Perpetuity of the Ministry which is Bearer of the Alliance, and the Perpetuity of the Testimonies which make both the Alliance and the Ministry good and sure to all the Generations of the World.

C H A P III.

The Perpetuity of the Testimonies born to the Evangelical Ministry.

THAT Multiplicity of Sects separated from the Body of the Church, which disaffects so many People to it, does only dishonour the Spirit of Singularity which is the Author of them, and is no Diminution at all of the Certainty of *Christianity*. For, does the Government of a State cease to be a sole recognisable Government, because there are seen in some of the Provinces Companies of Malecontents, which, although they have no Manner of Connexion with one another, yet have each of them their Standard, Denomination, and Method?

This Name CHRISTIAN, may be divided: *Marcio, Manes, and Arius* may style themselves *Christians*: But, it is as impossible to divide *Christianity* as it is to divide the Apostolate. There is but one God, one Mediator, one Covenant, one Faith, and one very well known Body of Embassadors that shall

shall continue the same through all Ages. Where the Apostolate is, there will *Christianity* be.

The Authors and Favourers of Schisms shew that they either know not or do not execute the Will of their Master, who never put contradictory Words in the Mouth of his Envoys, nor sent several Embassies instead of one. The schismatick Ministers must then have received no Powers, which renders their finest Talents of no Efficacy towards the Salvation of those that listen to them; or they must have lost with regard to us the Privilege of being listened to, by exercising a-part, and in a State of Independence, a Mission which ought at all Times to have been discharged *in solido*, and directed to the whole World at once.

Precautions
used by J. C.
to render his
Mission always
recognisable.

The two great Objects which our Saviour was taken up with on the Earth, are the Redemption of Mankind through his Blood; and the establishing of a Ministry that could, by never deviating from the Instructions and Form he gave it, be able to carry to all the Nations of the Earth the same Tenets along with the Proofs of that Mission: It was in order to prevent all the arbitrary Proceedings of the human Reason, and to settle for ever the Faithful, by the surest and the most familiar of Means, that J. C. has directed his Apostolate, that is, an indissoluble and ceaseless Body of Embassadors, to all Nations and Ages for ever.

His Intention being to form his Church of *Jews, Samaritans, Greeks, and Barbarians*; he did not begin by presenting a Book to them, because a Book may be suspicious to some of them, and unintelligible to, or variously understood by others. Nor did he think proper to send one single Preacher to them, because such Deputy could never have been present every where, and he might have made
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an ill Use of his Power, seeing himself exclusively charged with the whole Commission: But he directed to them a Body of Deputies, whom he enjoined to publish jointly, and to the very End of the World, the Things he had commissioned them to declare, either *viva voce*, or in Writing.

That Ministry, to which J. C. himself gave the Title of Embassy, *quos & Apostolos nominavit*^a, bars at once all the Attempts of the human Mind; it being, as well as all other Ministries, instituted by Way of Corporation or Company; which Institution is generally known to have no other Effect and no other Intention than the preventing or suppressing of all Innovations and personal Views. And as that Ministry is to be perpetual, its Proofs must likewise ever attend and render it recognisable. The Means for justifying the Perpetuity of the Ministry and of its Proofs is set before our Eyes. It spreads over all the human Society. Instances of it are found in every Nation, in every Province, nay, in every City. When we read in the History of France what King it was that rendered the Parliament of Paris sedentary, what his Intention was when he made that Establishment, for the Ease and Discharge of whom, upon what Obligations, and with what Attributions he made it, we become certain of the Truth of that History, by seeing the same Body maintained to this very Day with all the publick Marks of its Royal Institution. That History is itself no Proof: But it is proved by the subsequent and permanent Testimonies. We, likewise, find the Evangelical Mission in a History as ancient as the Church itself, and acknowledged by all the Societies that styled themselves *Christians* in the very first Century. We do not produce that History as a Proof of the Establishment of the Apostolical Ministry: Much less do we recur for that to

^a Luke vi. 13.

the Inspiration of the Books it is composed of. Independently from the Spirit that has directed the Writers of the said History, it cannot fail speaking the Truth concerning the sole and immortal Ministry, if that Establishment which it mentions is perpetuated through all Ages, always in its primitive Form; always attended with the Testimonies that render it recognisable, and which authorise none but that one. Let us begin by the Characteristicks that distinguish the Mission in the Recital of all the Evangelists. We shall afterwards see the Effects that justify it for ever in Society.

1st, *J. C.* on his leaving the World, directed nothing to Men in Writing: But he directed the Apostolate to them. Therefore the Church was formed before the Word of the Predication was written; nor was ever any Church formed by the reading of a Book, but by the preaching of the Deputies. *Faith cometh by hearing, and by the Word that has been preached^b.*

Had even the Preachers begun in the first Place by presenting a Treaty in Writing, yet they previously must have made their Person known, and have certified the Treaty by the Justification of their Mission. This is a Thing generally practised among the politest Nations, as well as among the *Barbarians*: Because they all of them will be sure of the Persons they treat with. The Apostolate is then prior to the Scripture.

2dly, When *J. C.* established the Ministry he did not speak to one single Minister, but to several Ministers at once. *Ite docete.* It is then a Body of Embassadors he sends, and that Body must be again found.

3dly, The Commission of the said Body takes in the whole Globe. *Docete omnes gentes.* Therefore, the Ministry is not local in its Totality. It is not
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^b Rom. x. 17.

ted to one single City, nor limited to one single Temple. It is universal.

4thly, Though dispersed every where, that Ministry is strictly bound to stick to one Doctrine, every Member of it is Bearer of the same Intentions, as all the Members of an Embassy or a Magistracy ought to be. They are not put in a Body, nor subjected to the Law of the Correspondences and of Subordination, for any other Purpose but to prevent Divisions and the Maggots of the Spirit of Singularity. *Docentes eos servare omnia quaecunque mandavi vobis.*

The Ministry shall then be both concordant and consistent: Or else there will be no Uniformity in the Commission, nor any Certainty in the Treaty; every one being at Liberty to interpret it as he pleases, if he does his Work apart, and without being accountable for it to his Company.

5thly, When J. C. established Pastors and Doctors, he promised them his Assistance at all Times even to the End of the World. *Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem sæculi.* It is then a permanent Legation, and an immortal Work. If the Legation does no longer subsist, this Work is wholly destitute of Reality: And if that Work is to last quite to the End of the World, it is perpetuated by an Embassy which must needs be but one from one End of the Earth to the other. According to the literal Interpretation of the Words of the Founder, here is a Company regularly established, that has for its Object the Salvation of Mankind through the Communication of the Doctrine and Merits of *Christ*; the whole Earth for its Province; all future Ages for its Duration; and for its principal Obligation, that of never saying any Thing more than what the primitive Legation has received from its Founder. But something more is evidently wanting here. The *Christian* Ministry

being a standing Body or Company established for ever, it ought, like others, to have those credential Instruments which authorise all permanent Companies, and which make them known for such even long after their Institution. The Means meant are two, *viz.* 1. The Authenticity of the Ministry and of its Proofs. 2. The Unity of the Ministers; I mean, that Subordination which causes them to be but one and the same Body.

The Authentickness sets in the brightest Light the Testimonies born to the Legation: And the Unity or regular Subordination of the Members, who work each of them after their own Manner in the Name of a Company, and by Order of the Legislator who has authorised it, characterises the lawful Use of a Power which is ever the same, though exerted by different People at different Times, and in different Places. Those who are out of that Unity, either have received nothing, or make a wrong Use of every Thing. Nothing is arbitrary here: These Rules were made before our Time: They are previous to the very *Christian* Church, and the same every where. They are the Laws of Humanity: It is by means of these Laws that Men are sure of their Condition: And the Word has, by making himself Man, conformed the Establishment of his Church to the Means that notify all Sorts of Establishments. He took great Care not to submit his Alliance and Intentions to the Examination of the Philosophers, or to the Decision of the *Beaux Esprits*, which are as ignorant in that Respect as the rest of Men, and more dangerous still, because more conceited and more liable to immoderate selfish Views. But he presented his Alliance and the true Blessings to all Men by the Means which secures every Thing to them, that is, by a publick and well authorised Ministry.

If a Man attempts to make himself an Embassador, or to establish a Court of Justice, by associating to himself Collegues, and setting up inferior Judges; no Regard is paid to him or them; because every one knows whence he came: Or even because his Want of Testimony is a most certain Evidence that he has assumed that Power to himself, and has of course no real Authority which he can possibly communicate to any Body whatsoever.

On the other hand, let a lawful Member of the Senate of *Genoa*, or of any other publick Council, attempt to form a separate Tribunal, to regulate after a new Method the Affairs of a particular Vale or Borough, and pretend for that Purpose to render himself independent of the Body he parted with; his Undertaking is vain. The most ignorant Man will be sensible of the Insufficiency of it. Every one knows the Novelty of such dismembering. It goes by a Name different from that of *Genoa*, and it is neither acknowledged nor suffered: Or if it takes the Advantage of some Supports to maintain itself, it can neither destroy the Authority of the ancient Senate, nor transmit a lawful Power to others.

The Author of the first Attempt ascribes to himself what he has not received: The Author of the second makes a palpable Abuse of what he has. The first could not become a Judge but by being incorporated with the Company that has the Authority; and the other, though a Deputy, loses the Benefit of his Mission, because he does not exercise it in Conjunction with the other Deputies, and conformably to the Institution of the common Ministry. The Place and the Day where he began to exercise his Functions separately are known: And from that Day his Work ceased to be that of the Body from which he withdrew.

From a necessary Consequence of these universally received Rules, it is as easy for us all to know whether there is a Treaty of Alliance that reconciles us to God, as it is to know whether there is a Treaty of Peace between *France* and *Holland*. It requires no toilsome Research on our Part, to know where the Ministry that puts Man in Society with God, through *J. C.* is. It is publick: It is visible with all its Testimonies in the Church, that has manifestly extended its Faith to all Times and Places.

We need not shew at large and in a particular Manner that such and such a Society, as for instance, that of the *Ebionitæ*, that of the *Manichæi*, or of the *Arians*, are not the Church of *J. C.* because the Ministry that has assembled them is of new Introduction, and pretended, contrary to all Rule, to degrade the ancient Ministry that was immortal, to set themselves up in its Place. We need not shew that the Society of the *Coptæ* or that of the *Armenians* is not the Church of God; since the Ministry that governs them, though originally proceeding from the true Church, has broken with the Body of the universal Embassy, and condemns as an abolished Ministry one that continues to prosper through all Ages and from one End of the World to the other. The Catholick Church is that which causes the Word of Life to be carried *to every Creature*^e; and which shews the ancient and immortal Embassy, always recognisable by the Marks that have ever characterised all Embassies, I mean, by the Authenticity of the Testimonies it is attended with, and by the Unity that procures to the Operations of a Multiplicity of Ministers the Glory of becoming the Operations of the whole Body.

^e Mark xvi. 15.

I.

*The Authenticity of the Catholick Ministry;
and of the Catholick Church.*

It is perfectly synonymous to say that the Catholick Church, or the Catholick Ministry, shews itself at all Times and to all the Earth, with Testimonies of the utmost Clearness and Certainty. For, altho' the Church be very different from the Ministry; altho' the Faithful who compose the Church have received no Powers, and can of course communicate none to any Body; altho' the Ministry necessarily came to the Church from God who vouchsafed to contract an Alliance with her; it is nevertheless for her the Ministry is appointed, the Envoys and the Head of the Deputation are hers: *Omnia vestra sunt, sive Apollo, sive Cephas*^d. It is through this Ministry that she enjoys all her Titles. She is not sure of the Blessings that are acquired in her Bosom, and does not promise them with Confidence, but upon the Certainty she hath of the Sanctity of her Ministry. She acknowledges that *Christ* is the Author and Finisher of her Faith; that he is the sole Master from whom she had her Doctrine; that he is the Model of her Morals, and the Principle of her Justice: It is through him that she is holy and that Holiness is at all Times communicated to at least one Part of her Members. But, as there would be no Alliance for her, any more than for any Body else, if there were no Deputies; she is intitled to style herself the holy, the sole, the Catholick Church, if it is manifest that she has received the only Embassy that brings to Men the good News and the Blessings of the Alliance. By that Means, she has the inward Sanctity

^d 1 Cor. iii. 22.

which the Holy Spirit communicates to the Righteous, and which is not seen. She has at the same Time the outward and visible Sanctity which is the Advantage of the whole Body, and which all private Men, not excepting bad *Christians*, have their Share of, being publickly united to the Ministry that has the Powers. She knows and declares the Titles that distinguish her; because they are in her Bosom, and solely in her Bosom, it is that the constant Form of the primitive and irrevocable Mission is and can be found again. No body can be ignorant that the regular and constant Form of publick Establishments, is what preserves the Ground, and manifests the Powers of them, so long as they are not recalled. If that Form is suppressed the Society knows no longer what to fix upon. If, then, there is an immortal Apostolate, we must, by means of the outward Form of the Ministry that perpetuates the first Legation, again find the true Church which that Ministry came to form and serve. We must find again at the Side of that Ministry, the most sensible Perpetuity of the Proofs that have originally manifested the Mission, and established *Christianity*. To which we may add, that the several Progressions of that Perpetuity which is found again in the only Catholick Church, are the same as those of a Company of Judges, and of a supreme Court of Justice, which is known again long after its Establishment, without any Equivoque or Fear of Mistake. This kind of Tradition, or of Transmission; which requires no Books nor any Reading to be understood, is not only publick, but also infallible. It is connected with Elections, Admittances, and publick Acts, and with Buildings of which every Body knows the Use; in short, with so many conspiring and permanent Means, that nothing more certain can be found among Men.

The reading of the Letters of Institution is not repeated every Day: It was even never done but at the Beginning, and is no longer required. Five hundred, or five thousand Witnesses (for the one is as good as the other) have heard it read at first: Their Testimony is afterwards replaced by the Attestation of those whom they have informed of it; by the very Functions of the Ministers who begun the Establishment; by the publick Aggregation of those who succeed them and fill up the vacant Posts; by the Assent of the Nations who carry their Causes to that Tribunal; by the Distinction of the Houses and Bars, and of the Affairs within their respective Provinces; by the Variety of the Functions assigned to the several Members of which those Companies are composed; and by the Perpetuity of the Places, Customs, Robes, and Privileges annexed to their Office; the Concurrence of these Circumstances is equivalent to the daily Repetition of the Attestations of the Establishment: It stands in lieu of it.

The Powers granted by the Legislature in temporal Affairs, are not more visible than the Privileges and Mission of the Catholick Ministry: And as these temporal Powers are outwardly attested by durable Tokens, the Privileges of the Catholick Church are produced with the same Evidence, by the Preservation of her outward visible State, and by the publick open Testimonies born from Day to Day of her Ministry. Let us be particular in the Examination of this Comparison.

The five hundred Disciples who were so happy as to converse in *Galilee* with our Saviour raised from the Dead, and the eight thousand *Jews* who were converted by the first Predications of *St. Peter* supported by the wonderful Works of the Holy Ghost, were

The Perpetuity of the Testimonies of the Spirit that has formed the Catholick Church,

toget-

together with the Apostles the first Securities of the Mission of *Jesus Christ*. The other Faithful, who soon after increased the Church of *Jerusalem*, in Conjunction with those who attested throughout *Judæa* what they had seen and heard, were the next Witnesses of the Work of the *Messiah*, and of the Apostolical Powers. It is by them and from them the Authenticity had its Beginning. Five hundred or five thousand Witnesses of the Resurrection, eight thousand or eighty thousand Witnesses of the Descent of the Holy Ghost, are perfectly the same Thing as to following Ages; because they being all of them dead, their Testimony must needs have been replaced by those who heard them: Now, we are as sure of an Assent universally given to the uniform Deposition of five hundred Witnesses, as we are sure of the Testimony born in Favour of the Deposition of five thousand.

However, if People will insist that there is, even to us, a greater Certainty in the Attestations born by the Faithful of the first Age to the Recital of five thousand Witnesses of the Resurrection, rather than to that of five hundred; and to eighty thousand Witnesses of the wondrous Works of the Holy Ghost, than to eight thousand; I say that the Church has that Advantage, and even one greatly superior to it. She has declared and handed down by sure Means to all the following Ages, the Depositions, I will not say of some Hundreds or of some Thousands of Witnesses of the very first Mission; but of a real Cloud of unsuspected Witnesses.

I say they are unsuspected, because there can be no Illusion in what they have publickly seen, nor any Collusion in the Recital of People Strangers to one another. This is not a single Event attested by the Inhabitants of one particular Town; it is a Multitude of Events, which numberless Witnesses assert they have seen in different Countries, in very famous Cities, and during a long Series of Years:

And

And all the said Events suppose one and the same Power, and conduce to the same identical End. It is all one to have seen *Lazarus* come out of the Tomb after a Burial of four Days, or to have seen the Saviour raised from the Dead. Many have seen the wondrous Works and the first Gifts of the Spirit: Others have seen the Resurrections brought about at *Joppa* and *Troas*: Others have seen Miracles that were no less certain: Others have seen them almost all. Now attesting in Crouds the posterior Matters of Facts, is attesting the Resurrection and the Effusion of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, of which they are both the Effects and the Proofs. The first Witnesses are by this Means not only unsuspected, but they really prove to be innumerable. The Resurrection of our Saviour and the Evangelical Mission acquire by that Means an Illustration that spreads and is perpetuated on every Side.

The Church formed at *Jerusalem* never ceases to communicate its Testimonies and Proofs to the other dawning Churches, which return other no less affecting Testimonies to her. Every Thing opposes this Correspondence: But it goes on and is established with a Facility which is itself a Prodigy. Hatred does not hinder the *Samaritans* from receiving from the *Jews* the Salvation which they publish among them. Jealousy does not hinder the Church of *Jerusalem* from rejoicing at the News that the Holy Ghost which had manifested his Presence among them, had likewise communicated itself to the new *Christians* of *Samaria*. The Knowledge of the ill Opinion and Scorn which the *Israelites* were full of for idolatrous Nations, makes us sensible that nothing but the Force of Truth can have inclined the *Jews* and the *Samaritans* to become *Christians*, to give Glory to God for having imparted to the *Gentiles* the Gift of Repentance^e, to

^e Acts xi. 18.

lead them to Salvation ; whereas they expected before their Conversion, that the *Messiah* would never have any Thing to do with the other Nations but to crush and inflave them.

The *Greeks* of *Antioch*, though accustomed to a polite Language and to learned Discourses, are not shocked by the Simplicity of those who bring the wholesome News to them. Truth attended with its Characteristicks is enough for them. The Evidence of Matters of Fact does then prevail every where over national Aversions, over the Contempt every one had for the *Jews*, and over the Doctrine of the Cross, which seemed to be an Extravagance considered without its Proofs. They now are all of them no more than one People, one Soul, and one Name. Their Glory no longer consists in being Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* or *Antioch*. The Church is formed by this. Let Men be of what Place they will, they may be born in that City, and be named the Citizens of it ^f.

An Authenticity of this Kind is incomparably greater than the Appearance of our Saviour after his Resurrection in the Temple of *Jerusalem*, in Presence of twenty thousand Inhabitants would have been. This would have been but one single Fact: And Men, to elude the Consequence of that Occurrence, would alledge the Illusions of the Senses, Magick, Juggling, and Fascination. We should not by a vast deal be so much affected now-a-days by the Testimony born in the Age following the Account of that Apparition by the Children of the first Witnesses, as we are now by the Testimonies born without any Sort of Concert to the Apostolical Predication by those numerous Churches, against their own Prejudices and Inclinations, against their most capital Interests, and notwithstanding all their Quarrels. And that you may not entertain

: Psalm lxxxvii.

any

any Mistrust concerning the Book that relates some of those Facts that happened at *Lydda* and *Joppe*, at *Demas* and *Salamis*, at *Iconium* and *Troas*, at *Philippi* and *Thessalonica*, at *Corinth*, *Malta*, or *Rome*; it is in those very Places that Churches are immediately formed, which have been known and attested there by the Prophane themselves, which are still subsisting, and which have been Securities both for the Truth of the Facts and the Book that relates them being genuine. Thus are the Dutchy and the County of *Burgundy* extant justifying Proofs of the History which mentions the Establishment of the *Bourguignons* in those Quarters. Thus is also the Change of the Name *Gaul* into that of *France*, a Voucher of the History which incorporates the Kings of the *Franks* to the *Roman* Armies, and which shews us their Aggrandizement in the Decline of the *Roman* Empire.

When the Establishment of the Church is mentioned to a certain Class of Men, it seems as if you tell them a contrived Story, the Scene of which is laid wherever you please, for instance at *Thessalonica*, at *Corinth*, and at *Rome*, rather than at *Torneo* in *Lapland*: And that to reject it they need but say: We were not there.

The Church was formed in *Italy*, conformably to the Recital of *St. Luke*, under the first Successors of *Tiberius*; since, according to the Heathens themselves^b, her Children were burnt, after having been smeared and done over with Pitch, that they might serve instead of Lanthorns: An Illumination worthy the Gardens and Feasts of *Nero*. The Church was very numerous at that Time throughout *Asia Minor*, since a *Roman* Magistrate^b sent by *Trajan* into *Bitlynia*, was shocked at seeing such Multitudes of People carried to the Gallows, and at being obliged by Custom to send them thence: him-

^a *Juvenal.*

^b *Phinjan.*

self, without knowing any other Crime in them but their being denominated *Christians*.

The Church, which is now going to perpetuate itself, together with the Ministry from which she received every Thing, shall not cease for the future to attest the Works and Powers of it. All the new Acts, all the Establishments which are going to make that appear true in that Body every where dispersed, will now become, not indeed Monuments merely historical, and fit to give Exercise to the Learned, but popular Testimonies universally born to the Ministry, as visible and as immortal as that Ministry itself.

The first Link of that Chain of Testimonies which is fastened to the first *Christians*, and reaches as far as ourselves, is the publick Ordination. This was in Reality the very first Step of the Apostles after their coming from the Mount *Olivet*, when they were as yet quite full of the Rules the Lord had just given them before his Departure, and of the Promise he had made them of a Ministry that was to last throughout all Ages.

The first of the Apostlesⁱ stands up in the middle of the Church, which consisted at that Time of a hundred and twenty People: There he proposes the Election of a Man fully acquainted with the whole publick Life of the Saviour, beginning from the Baptism of *John* up to the Day of his Ascension, and capable of filling the Place which was become vacant in the Apostolick Body. The whole Church fell to Prayers, and *Matthias* received the Powers of the Apostolate. The Thing could not be more authentick, since the whole Church was present at it: And it is with the same Security that the Church has ever since that Time admitted and known the new Ministers, to whom the old ones communi-

ⁱ Acts i. 15.

cated the same Powers and Functions in order to perpetuate the Church herself.

We see from a great many other Particulars mentioned in the *Acts*; from the Rules which *St. Paul* prescribes to *Titus* and to *Timothy*; from the ancient Collection of the Constitutions which were most of them made at the Time of the Apostles; and from the Practice of the following Ages, that the Church has always made use of the Imposition of the Hands of her Clergy, together with the publick Fast and Prayers of the whole People, in order to render the Succession in the Ministry very publick and respectable. The People was always admitted at it; not indeed to give the new Envoys Powers which it had not received, but to obtain the Blessing of Heaven upon the Evangelical Work; to attest the Probity of those who are called to it; and to shew to the whole World the successive Line of those who are charged with the Alliance, and with the Communication of the true Blessings.

The publick Reception of the new Magistrates, is not a vain or empty Ceremony, but a new Attestation of the Powers of the Body into which they are introduced: There is no Possibility of mistaking in it: Nor was that Form of Institution put in use in the *Christian Church*, as well as in the Civil State, for any other Purpose but to prevent illegal Attempts, by notifying the true Ministry, without any more renewing the first Proofs of it. But, it follows from thence, that these Proofs are perpetuated; since they are thus perpetually replaced.

We see the Administration of the first Churches in the Hands of the Apostles, the Priests, and the Deacons. They watched together, and, according to the Degree of their respective Powers and Functions, over the common Good. *The^k Holy*

The Ministry known by the three Orders of the Hierarchy.

^k *Acts* xx. 28.

Ghost has made you Overseers to govern the Church of God, says the Apostle to the Priests of the Church of *Miletus*. But, this Word of Overseers visibly means here no more than the general Obligations of the Clergy, and the Watchfulness necessary to all the Orders: It is neither a Title nor a distinctive Appellation: It became such afterwards by the special Reserve that was naturally made of it to the first Order.

The Apostles and their Associates, such as *Matthias*, *Barnabas*, *Paul*, and *Silas*, went to every Place they were occasionally called to, and when Need required. They were wanted to found the Churches, to ordain the Clergy, to confirm the *Neophytes*, and to decide peremptorily all Questions upon Faith. But soon after, when those who composed the first Order were settled for good in the special Government of a Flock, they uniformly assumed and appropriated to themselves the modest Name of *Overseer*¹ (Bishop) which was at once their distinctive Appellation, and a Warning to them of the Pastoral Care of which they had the principal Portion. All the first Collegues and Successors of the Apostles were thus distinguished, but chiefly after they were become sedentary, by that Name of *Bishop*, such as were *Timothy* and *Onesimus* at *Ephesus*, *Titus* in *Crete*, *Mark* at *Alexandria*, *Evdodius* at *Antioch*, *Polycarp* at *Smirna*, *Lin* and *Clément* at *Rome*. This Distinction of the three Orders charged with the different Services necessary to the Churches, was never interrupted any where, and by being found again still shews us the primitive Hierarchy.

The Name of Pope or of Father, which has been common to all the Bishops, was afterwards reserved to him who fills the first See, and who perpetuates the Priority of *Cephas*, the necessary Center of the dispersed Apostolate. That Title is expres-

¹ Ἐπίσκοπος, Bishop.

five of the just Veneration of the Faithful for him, who being the first in the Episcopate, the Head of the Ministry and of the universal Church, has not only the peculiar Inspection of the Diocese of *Rome*, but imbraces the maintaining of the whole Body of Christianity within the Extent of his Functions and the Generality of his Jurisdiction.

The Ministry had appeared in the first Century with all the extraordinary Operations of the Spirit which authorized it: It exhibited new ones in the following: But as they were all of them become of the utmost Authenticity, it began to have the Necessity of not repeating them any longer. The Publickness of the foregoing Proofs was handed down together with the Ministry, from which it never separated at any Time. As it was sufficiently visible, by the Ordination and the invariable Distinction of the three Orders of Workmen, it was no less observable by the avowed and constantly repeated Acts of its different Branches of Power.

It is not with the Acts of a Corporation, as it is with a Monument half-worn-out, or with a Medal, that may be suspected of Falsity or the Interpretation of which may be disputed. The Acts of a Corporation are as permanent as itself, and want no Explication. They at all Times have two Effects, one the compleating of what the Corporation has been authorized to do, the other the perpetuating of its Authenticity, by ever setting it in open View. A long Inactivity would cause it to be forgotten; whereas the Reality of its Titles is ever felt by the Perpetuity of its Functions. Likewise, the several Acts of the Evangelical Ministry, and all the Practices or Establishments emanatory from that Power, have the twofold Effect of sanctifying the Souls, and of handing down to us the Attestations of a never dying Apostolate.

The Ministry
known by its
Acts.

It belongs to our Pastors and Divines to teach us the Excellence and the regular Application of the Means by which the Ministry communicates the Efficacy of the Alliance to the Faithful. What we are now considering in these Practices as ancient as the Church itself, is the Advantage they have, on account of their Visibility, of being Monuments equally indestructible and publicatory of the Apostolical Doctrine, and of the lawful Authority. For, it is easy to perceive that these Practices being significant, and as permanent as the Ministry which keeps to them without Interruption; they are a true Perpetuity of the Testimonies constantly born to the Tenets they express, to the Mission of J. C. and to the Powers of his Deputies, of which these Practices are the Exercise. It is in the self-same Manner that the Acts, the Statutes, and the very Ceremonial of a Body of Deputies or of Senators testify the Reality of their Powers and the Nature of their Jurisdiction.

A new Proof of the Perpetuity of the Mission derived from the Establishment of the Christian Solemnities.

Next to the Ordination which was to perpetuate the Ministry and its Functions, the first Apostolical Establishment was that of a Weekly Solemnity that was called *the Day of the Lord*, and of an annual Feast that was named *the Passover* or *the Resurrection*. The Celebration of those Days was an express and clear Acknowledgment of the Creation of all Things by an only God, of the Incarnation of the eternal Word, of the Death of the *Messiah* for our Salvation, and of his Resurrection as a Security for our Hopes. These Holy-Days have always been, by their Name, by the teaching of the Pastors, and by the meaning of the publick Prayer, the vulgar Catechism of the Evangelical Doctrine, and an ever-new exerting of all the Sentiments of Piety. But the same Solemnities

nities being perpetuated, they handed down from Week to Week, and from one Age to another, the Proofs of the wholesome Legation. They continued the Testimonies of it without any Interruption, because the Certainty of the Mission is inseparable from the Attestation both of the Events for which Glory is given to God in each Solemnity, and of the Function of presiding over the Congregations.

1st, We really cannot refuse to the Christian Feasts the Testimonies which result among other Nations from their own annual Festival Days, especially when these are moreover connected with well-known Monuments. First of all, there result from them the most clear Attestation and the most publick Authentickness of a Matter of Fact.

The College of the Priests of *Augustus*, and the Sacrifices they made to him on certain Days, being connected with the Acts and the several Monuments of that Prince, they attested in a very remarkable Manner that he had lived, and had been declared a God after his Death. These are the two Matters of Fact resulting from the Establishment of the *Augustan* College and of his Feasts: And that is all. None of the Pontiffs of the first Age, nor their Successors attested that *Augustus* had been seen among the Gods.

The *Ismaelites* of *Arabia* and *Africa*, of *Persia* and of several other Countries, could not conspire from the Beginning and in Despite of their Divisions, to solemnize the *Hegira* or the Flight of *Mahomet* leaving in haste *Mecca*, his Country, to go to *Medina*, without ascertaining in an undeniable Manner the Reality of that peculiar Matter of Fact.

Now, we claim nothing else in favour of Christianity. The Facts are real on both Sides, because they have been seen and testified every where without any Concert; or because of their being solemnly

remembered by one Nation after the Example of another, proceeds from the equal Conviction these Nations had of the Reality of the Fact, being all of them equally connected with the Source of that Knowledge.

But attesting that you have seen a Man fly his Country, and that you have had a full Conviction of his being arrived in and then settled in another Place, where he really has appeared in Arms on a great many Occasions, is not attesting that you have seen him come back from Heaven with the Characteristics of his Mission. It is not attesting that you have heard the Voice of God declaring him his Prophet. *Mahomet* pretended to be believed upon his own Word, and if he has not been able to prove his Embassy, he has not of course been able to perpetuate it. Those who shall come after him, may assert that he has seen every Thing in Heaven: But as the first have been Witnesses of nothing, those who succeed them, testify nothing besides the Existence, the Flight, and the Wars of *Mahomet* on one hand, and their empty Trust into his Apostolate on the other: Whereas attesting that you have seen the Saviour raised from the Dead, or that you have been an Eye-Witness of the Effusion of his Spirit, and of the wondrous Works by the Concurrence of which the Deputies have established the Belief of the Resurrection and the Church, is rendering the Gospel divine, and that upon good Grounds too. Attelling afterwards, as the Faithful who kept the same Solemnities in the second Century did, that they had conversed with the Institutors of those Feasts, heard their Confessions of Faith, known their Intentions, seen their wondrous Works; was handing down to the third Century and to the following, the Certificates of the Truth of the Facts, and the Privilege of publishing it. The Testimonies born at first to the Evangelical Facts, and to the

the Divinity of the Mission which is inseparable from it, are then most publicly perpetuated by the annual and the weekly solemnizing of the *Christian Festival Days*. They are in their Duration the exact Repetition of the same Testimonies. It is the same Certainty and the very same Authority.

If there were in the *East* and in *Europe* annual or weekly Solemnities of the Dictature of *Julius Cæsar*, instituted by *Augustus*, and always celebrated since, at least in the two Months that go by their Names; or if the *Germans*, the *Italians*, and the *French* had constantly renewed from Year to Year Tournaments and a general Feast-Day, in Memory of the Coronation of the Emperor *Charlemaign* in the Year 800; I suppose the human Mind would on that very Account think it a fine Proceeding to disbelieve at once the Dictature of *Julius Cæsar*; the Origin of the Names of the Months of *July* and *August*, and the Coronation of *Charlemaign*.

2dly, These Solemnities and the Ministry are inseparable. The Ministry nor the Office of presiding over the Festival Days were never left to the Disposal of the very first Citizen or Handicraftsman that shall take it into his Head to open his Door, and call the People together to solemnize them. The Pastor who publishes and presides over them, has always been chosen in the well known Line that perpetuates the Powers. Therefore those Holy Days, by preserving and handing down to us the Confession of the Facts, and by shewing us the Pastor, perpetuate the Proofs of his Ministry, as the regular Exercise of Judicature does perpetuate the Authentickness of the Power of the Judges.

The Church did more than barely preserving the first Confession of the Events essential to our Faith by the Words of *Noël*, or *God with us*, of *Resurrection*, of *Descent of the Pa-*

Testimonies
perpetuated by
the outward
Form of the
Sacraments.

raclete, of *Epiphany*, and other very significant Names she gives to her Holy-Days. The Church has, along with the Objects of her Jubilation and Belief, which are summarily expressed by these Names, transmitted to all future Ages, the Motives of her Persuasion and the Reality of the Legation of her Ministers, by Methods which give an infinite Weight to the foregoing Testimonies. She did not institute the Sacraments: But she regulated the Administration of them according to the Intention of *Jesus Christ*, so as to make them a new School, wherein the same Truths are repeated, and ever attended with their Proofs.

We know by all the historical Monuments, and by the Letter of *Pliny* to *Trajan*, that the *Christian* Church kept her Congregations on the Day of the Sun, “to sing Hymns to *Christ* as to a God, and “then to incite one another to Virtue and to an “Abhorrence of all Infidelity in the Commerce of “Life.” We know by the Writings of the first Apologists of the *Christian* Name, that the Church called her Children together on the Day of the Lord, which is the same that was called *the Day of the Sun*, to read to them the Writings of their first Ministers, to incite them to the Practice of what they had just heard, and to distribute to them the Gifts she had received from her Founder. That Ministry, those Lessons, that Distribution, and the Choice of that Day were never discontinued. This is the natural Reason that demonstrates to us that these Books, which are found the same every where, as well as the Ministry, the Assemblies, and the common Practices, are undoubtedly as ancient as the Church herself, and that they contain the true History of the Testimonies universally born by the first *Christians* to the Evangelical Legation. But, together with these Books, of which we shall soon endeavour to shew the Excellence, the Church pre-
sents

sents us with shorter and as intelligible, and very truly still more precious Books than these for the Faithful; for, if the sacred Books contain the wholesome Doctrine; the Sacraments which are the Books I mean, together with the Doctrine they express, contain the Grace and the Reality of the promised Blessings.

Let us, among these many Practices and commemorative Solemnities, fix upon that of the Passover. First; the Antiquity of it is the same as that of the Church, since there was a Division concerning the Choice of the Day between the *Gentiles* made *Christians* and the first Faithful among the *Jews*, who still observed the Practices of the Synagogue. The *Christian* Passover was attended with the Celebration of Baptism; with the Imposition of the Hands of the Bishop upon the new-baptised, to communicate the Gifts of the Holy Ghost to them; and finally with their first partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Although the Sacraments established by *J. C.* borrow their Force and their Validity from his Institution, we are to observe that the

The Prayers of the Church are the Exposition of her Faith.

Church does nevertheless ask the Effect of them by solemn Prayers, which thus prove to be an excellent Exposition of her Faith: Just as the Prayer *J. C.* has taught us, I mean, the Request all *Christians* make every Day for the Bread which is actually under their keeping, is an excellent Confession of their natural Indigence, and of the Freedom and Gratitude of the Gifts which Providence bestows upon them.

Thus it is that the Church did and still does confess the miserable Condition that precedes the *Christian* Baptism, by asking for the *Catechu-*

The Prayers of the Church for the *Catechumens*.

mens Deliverance from the Tyranny hitherto exerted upon them by the Spirits of Darkneſs.

Inſtructive Ce-
remonies. Faith, which was clearly unfolded in the ſet Forms of the Prayers of the Church, was no leſs clearly expoſed in her ſacred Ceremonies. Thus ſhe publiſhed the equal Power of the Three Perſons of the Holy Trinity, by conferring Juſtice and the Pardon of Sins, through an equal Invocation of all the Three; and by adding in a great many Places the treble Immersion to the treble Invocation.

The new *Chriſtians* were put into a State of Death under the Waters of Baptiſm. They came out of them in the State of new-born Men, that is, of Men who were made Partakers of a new Life^m. The outward Act itſelf was then a clear Profeſſion of dying to Sin, in order to live no longer but by the Life of him who being dead and raiſed from the Dead, is no longer liable to die. This outward Picture that raiſed in them a lively Senſe of the Death and Reſurrection of the Saviour, was then equally a publick Declaration of the common Belief of the Reſurrection, and a Promise to live wholly free from Sin.

The Reception of Baptiſm was by its Form the Summary of all the Inſtructions which had preceded it; and as all theſe Inſtructions were only the plain Conſequences of ſo many very publick Matters of Fact, Baptiſm was a Teſtimony born, not indeed to any ſystematical and ſuggeſted Opinions, but to ſo many Events eaſy to be juſtified.

The Church admitted into her Aſſemblies no Viſionaries, no Enthuſiaſts, nor any Philoſophers prepoſſeſſed in Favour of a Doctrines they had reaſoned themſelves into. She knew very well that all theſe Methods lead us through Uncertainty to Confuſion and Errors. She carefully brought Reaſon back

Gal. iii. i. Rom. vi. 3 and 4. Hebr. vi. 4, 5, 6.

to the excellent Method that does settle its Notions at all Times, and which God has pitched upon to manifest himself to Mankind without any Equivoque whatsoever. The Method I mean is the Testimonial Proof, and the perfect Authenticity of Matters of Fact. We daily see the wise Man, in Spite of his Prejudices, give his Assent to what has been seen and attested by disinterested Eye-Witnesses. The Church did not admit her *Catechumens* to Baptism till after a long Preparation, the least Degree or previous necessary Step of which was, that the *Catechumens* should make a careful Inquiry into the Evangelical Facts, and be Securities to themselves as well as others, that they had seen the first Miracles, or some others equivalent to them, or that the first and the following had been assured to them by unexceptionable Witnesses. There was nothing that the Church was more afraid of than of a light rash Belief, and a staggering Confession. She chose to number fewer Children, rather than be obliged to lament their Falls.

The *Neophytes* themselves knew that their Admission to Baptism was *ipso facto* the Condemnation of *Judaism*, and of the Conduct of the Heathens. That first Step led them to Outrages and Insults, to the Loss of their Substance, and to Martyrdom. The Danger hanging over the Witness laid him under the Necessity of being for ever upon the Watch, and of adding Prudence to the other Merits of his Testimony.

The Confirmation which followed Baptism, attested at once the first Effusion of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the visible Continuance of those Gifts which had just formed

The Confirmation, a Testimony born to the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.

so many Churches, among which the Memory of them was as yet fresh.

The

The Eucharist,
an immortal
Publication of
the Evangelical
Mission.

The new Convert was at last admitted to the Lord's Supper, and by that Action, which was the principal Object of his Desires, as well as the great Motive of the preparatory Proofs, he clearly attested all the Evangelical Events. He truly became the Publisher of the Work of our Salvation, and perpetuated the Predication of it from Age to Age, even to the coming of the Son of God.

Baptism was a most lively Picture of the new Life of Christ raised from the Dead, and of the inward new Birth of the Catechumen. It was the Abjuration of his past Life, and a Transition to the opposite Conduct. But that Sacrament was not repeated; whereas the Eucharistic Repast being the Participation of the Holy Victim, and becoming the usual Nourishment of the Christian; he incessantly found in it the Warning of his Vocation, and the most powerful or even the most terrible Motives, for keeping himself in the utmost Purity. Thus was the Eucharist appointed to shew every day and for ever the Ministry, which has a Title to distribute it; thus it was appointed to repeat the Doctrine of which it is the Publication, and to encourage all Virtues, by being the most powerful Incitement to them. This was perpetuating Christianity in its Integrity, and without any Variation. And really Variations have no Access to Corporations that have their set Forms regulated, and their Functions known to a whole Kingdom. By much more the several Parts of the Catholic Church, which are so disunited in point of Interest, and so much dispersed all over the Globe, have faithfully transmitted to us the Testimonies and the Confession of the first Christians, by continuing to meet together with the same Ministry at their Head, and by constantly annexing the same Ideas to its Functions. They are again
found

found the same in those very Societies of which Providence has most anciently permitted the Separation from the Body of the Catholic Church. The Founder has visibly annexed Certainty to the Means of Transmission he has chosen in the Establishment of the Eucharist.

Let us see what it is which all these ancient Societies unanimously give Glory to our Saviour in that important Action for. Let us see what Present he makes us in it, and what Truths are at all Times attested by those who receive that precious Gift.

The Eucharistic Repast did not consist only in the ancient Offering of a few of the Productions of the Earth, to give Thanks to God for the Creation of Beings, and of the Means by which they are preserved. Such was the Eucharist of Man in his State of Innocence. That Homage so justly prescribed to the first Man, was continued after his Fall, and is still perpetuated, as well as the Presents which Providence never ceases to impart to him from one Year to another. All Nations have added to it what they had heard from *Adam* and *Abel* through *Noah*, I mean, the Effusion of the Blood of the Beasts, which they substituted to their own, and which was, not indeed the Expiation, but the Confession of their Sins.

The Eucharistic Repast of the Christians being at last the partaking of the Victim of the Eternal Covenant of the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World; it was still the Host of *Abel*, and the Eucharist of the Sinner; but it was that of the Sinner reconciled to God's Justice; it was at once the greatest of Gifts, and the Action of the Christian intimately united to the propitiatory Sacrifice.

As that Repast was the grandest Object of Religion, and the most important to the Faithful, let us not borrow from our own Reason, but rather
from

from the Accounts of the first Witnesses, the Notions we are to entertain of it.

Receiving what the Church distributed in that Repast, was no longer feeding upon a common Bread and a common Drink. St. *Justin*, the Apologist of Christianity, who says it, as well as St. *Ignatius* of *Antioch*, and St. *Irenæus* of *Lyons*, his Contemporaries, adds, as well as they, that it was receiving the Body and Blood itself of *Jesus Christ*. “The Church was very sure,” according to the energetic Expression of the holy Martyr, “that the Omnipotence of the Divine Word, which had manifested itself in the Incarnation, by assuming a human Body, was the same which exerted itself in the Eucharist, by feeding us with his Flesh.”

This Confession, which is of the Beginning of the second Century, is perfectly agreeable to the Trials that were required of the Faithful: And it is the Nature of the Doctrine that was the Foundation of the Strictness of the Ecclesiastic Rules.

Let us for a moment substract that Confession of the first Century: Let us reduce the Eucharistic Bread and Wine to a bare Sign, to a Symbol instituted according to modern Notions, to put us in mind of him who was broken, and who shed his own Blood for our sake. That Sign will be a Memorial of Institution. We may in seeing and receiving it excite in ourselves a Sense of Gratitude. But, that Action requires no great Trials, it occasions no rigid Rules, and draws no dreadful Consequences along with it. We may see a beautiful Emblem or even an elegant Picture of the Death of *Jesus Christ* without running the risque of being more criminal, for want of a foregoing Trial. We should be still more affected by reading the Particulars of the Death of our Saviour, or by a pathetic Discourse upon his Sufferings. The greatest Sinners may without any Danger be advised to use the Symbol,

the Reading, and the Predication abovementioned : Such an Advice may prove needless to them, but far from being hurtful ; it may reclaim them in the very middle of their Disorders, and there is no Man to whom it ought not to be granted. But, it is not so with the Eucharist ; the Eucharist is not barely a Picture. The Words made use of by *St. Paul* to regulate both the Preparation to, and the partaking of it fill all Christian Hearts with Terror.

However, if it has been the good Will and Pleasure of the Founder to require the Trial and the reasonable Assurance of a good Conduct towards receiving that Symbol ; in that case the Necessity of these holy Dispositions will result from the express Will and the positive Command of the Legislator, not from the Nature itself of the Gift he is pleased to honour us with : Now, it is from the Nature itself of the Gift received by the Faithful, and from the *Change wrought in the Eucharist through the Omnipotence of the Word* of God, that their Terrors, and the Apprehensions the Church was under for them, did proceed.

To convince ourselves of it, we need but resume the Confession which we have from the first Christians ; according to which the Omnipotence of the Divine Word exerts itself in giving us his Body, as much as it did when he was pleased to assume that Body to himself. The natural Consequences which we are necessitated to draw from it are these :

First, “ Since that Bread is but one, we being many, are no longer but one Body ; for we are all Partakers of that one Bread.”

Hence the tender Charity which ought to unite us all : Hence the Equality that places us at one and the same Table, as being the Children of one and the same Father : ° Hence the Incompatibility of the

° 1 Cor. x. 17.

° 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21.

Distinctions of Rank in the Eucharistic Assembly, with the Charity and Equality that are inseparable from the Lord's Table.

“ Let us cast our Eyes upon the *Israelites*, and
 “ even upon the Sacrifices of the Gentiles. Were
 “ not those which eat of the Victim Partakers of
 “ the Sacrifice ? ” It is thus that we partake of that
 of *Jesus Christ* ; which could not be true, if what
 we receive was not what has been offered for an Ex-
 piation.

The Eucharist is by that means the Association to the new and eternal Covenant. It is the Gift of Heaven ; it is the Gift of Gifts. But altho' the Reception of it ought to transport the Christian Heart with Joy, and fill him with Gratitude ; yet there is a just Apprehension inseparably annexed to the very Excellence of the Gift he receives. That Action fills the whole Church with Terror, as well as each Christian in particular. The Anxiety of the Church for her Children must of course have produced Regulations, and prescribed Trials, Delays, and Refusals. The Result of the Terrors of the Faithful must have been a strict Self-examination ; they must have judged themselves before they received their own Judge ; because coming to the Lord's Table unworthily, and without doing so sacred an Action with all the Dispositions required by the Church, “ P is making one's self guilty of the
 “ Prophanation of his Body and Blood.”

This want of Trial and of Change of Conduct is a Disposition like the Indifference of the Man who should find in it only common Bread, and “ not
 “ discern the Lord's Body there : But not discern-
 “ ing the Lord's Body where the Almighty has been
 “ pleased to put it, *as in the Incarnation*, is cer-

P 1 Cor. xi. 27.

9 Ibid.

“ tainly

“ tainly eating and drinking one’s own Sentence
“ and Damnation.”

The Eucharist is by that means, and from a necessary Consequence of what it contains, *the grandest Work* of the Christian Ministry, the chief Object of the Discipline of the Church, a Matter of Terror to Sinners, as well as of Gratitude to just Men, the Motive of a perpetual Vigilance, the Spring of a good Conduct, the Thanksgiving for all Blessings, the Confession of all the Mysteries: and (to sum up all in one word) *it is the Perpetuity of the Christian Predication*^r. All Christians become in that Sense, by receiving the Eucharist, the everlasting Preachers of Christ, for every time they receive it, “ ‘ they by this Action publish the Work of the
“ Lord, and the Expectation of his last Coming.”

These Words, *‘ memores erunt nominis tui*, signify not a bare Remembrance, but the public Confession of the Name of God, and the honourable Office of making him known to all the Earth: Likewise these Words, *in mei memoriam facietis*, do not signify only, You shall remember me: but, Whenever you receive my Body that was broken for you, you shall publish my Sacrifice. Your Action shall be the preaching up of my Death, of my Resurrection and of your Hopes^v. All these Consequences which are drawn from the Doctrine of the Eucharist, even by the simplest of Men, necessarily make it the most expressive Confession of the Evangelical Truths, and the most prevailing Incitement to Virtue. What a vast Difference there is between a cold Emblem, or a transitory Remembrance of the Death of our Saviour, that leaves Man still in the utmost Indifference, and a Memorial that gives us the very

^r *In memoriam mei facietis.*

^l 1 Cor. xi. 26.

^u Psal. xlv.

^v *Mortem Domini annuntiabitis donec veniat.*

Blessing it publishes, and keeps all those who partake of it for ever in a salutary Awe, by the Consideration of their own Unworthiness, without being able to calm their Apprehensions otherwise than by the Agreeableness of their Life with their Confession.

But this Commentary of the Doctrine of the holy Martyrs, *Justin, Ignatius, and Irenæus*, is not my own. It is an Explication more ancient than they, and as extensive as the Church itself, it being that of *St. Paul*. It was not peculiar to the Church of *Corinth*, which declared that she had received it from him, as he himself had received it from the Lord. The other Churches have found that Doctrine and the Faith of the *Corinthians*, agreeable to that which had been published among them. *St. Justin, St. Ambrose, St. Cyril*, and the ^xCatholic Church would none of them have had Recourse in that Mystery to the Operation of the Omnipotence of God, to find no more in it than a Representation, or an Advice. There is no need of any Omnipotence, to establish a bare Sign: and the Reason of the Faithful, in her Obedience to Faith, was never offended to hear it required of God, as all the ancient *Greek and Latin* Liturgies do; *that the Bread and Wine may become the Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ*: The Reason the Faithful never reproached the Catholic Church with illuding her, nor with demolishing in her Tenet the Truth of the Testimony of our Senses, which perceive a Sign and receive a Reality different from it, because our Senses can never be imposed upon when we are forewarned. Now, *Jesus Christ* had forewarned us that he would give us his own Flesh to eat, and associate us to his Sacrifice. He repeats it in the Words of the Institution. *St. Paul* says it again after him. All the

^x *Hierosol. Cateches. 4.*

Doctors and the whole Church have forewarned us of it. The Eucharist of the Catholic Church does then fill us with Respect, with Gratitude, and with a wholesome Terror, without in the least imposing upon us. This, on the contrary, is an Œconomy visibly adapted to our human Condition; and the same Witnesses of the primitive Faith who have testified to us the Action of the Omnipotence of God in the Eucharist, have been no less mindful of extolling the tender Charity that communicated to us the Flesh and Blood of the Victim of Victims, under the invariable Veil of a common Food.

The sublime Truths are not a Tradition of a few popular Reports that vary from Mouth to Mouth, or of scholastic Opinions left to the Judgment of private Men. It is a general Faith which no particular Church can strike at without being reclaimed by all the others; it is an authentic Faith, which cannot be unknown to any body, as it is connected with the most distinguished Notions of the Ministry; with Solemnities whose Return is invariable; to Duties and Rules that take in all Conditions of Men, not leaving one of them ignorant in that Respect. A philosophical Dissertation of the ninth Century, mouldering in the Corner of a dusty Library, shall not be allowed to come and represent to the Church that she deceives her Children by exaggerating the Presents she makes them. Nor shall the eleventh or the sixteenth Century teach us what we are to think of it. We are actually repeating the same Work and the same Confession which our Fathers have received, together with the sacred Books, from the Successors of the Apostles, and which have been certified to them, as well as the Books, by the unanimous Testimonies of all the Churches. We celebrate that solemn Passover, and repeat that wholesome Repast in Temples seven hundred, a thousand, and twelve hundred Years old; in Cor-

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porations

porations that claim fifteen and sixteen hundred Years of Antiquity. It is always the same Altars, the same Utensils, the same Liturgy, the same Dignities, a Work and a Meaning that are not liable to any Alteration: And as there are no Practices upon the Earth, more universal or more solemn, than those that have transmitted down to us those three essential Parts of our Congregations, the Eucharist, the Public Reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the Ministry that presides over the one and the other; so there is no Certainty that can be carried to a higher degree than that of the indivisible Perpetuity of the Eucharist, of the Holy Scripture, and of the Ministry.

Among all the outward Parts of Christianity, we have hitherto made use of none but the Solemnity of the Passover; and in our mention of this we have chosen to insist only on the Reception which the Church gave to her new Children: But if one single Part of the Ritual of the Christian Solemnities contained so much Light and Sentiments, even before the Pastor had begun to give Instructions himself; what will then be of the whole Bulk of the other Feasts, of the Ceremonies and Lessons that were peculiar to them; of the Prayers which all the Faithful took a Share in, at least by this Acclamation *Amen*; in short, of the innumerable Helps that were found in the Ministry and throughout the Liturgy?

I shall no longer say, What an Authentickness! but I shall say, What an Infallibility, what a vast Extent of Instructions! I see thousands of Christian Congregations: but I see but one School: It is the same Catechism every where. This is the Book of all Conditions and Ages of Men. It was read and understood in the tenth Century, as well as in the fourteenth and in ours.

The Learned who are used to collect the several Instructions afforded by Books, know the Merit of
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the latter, and with great Reason set a Value upon them. But that Esteem may sometimes be attended with Injustice and Heedlessness, when they are not sufficiently sensible of the oftentimes superior Merit of the other Helps through which God hands Truth down to us. We look out for the Testimonies of Faith in *Tertullian*, in *Origen*, in *Eujebius*, in *Theodoret*, and in those who came after them: It is a Method never to be neglected, and most singularly recommended in the Catholick Church: But we sometimes shall find in those Books, along with the Exposition of the Catholick Faith, an Explanation that favours of Philosophy, and of the Inquiries of Reason; because it frequently happens that the more Reason is cultivated, the less it will renounce its own Thoughts, modestly to keep to the Simplicity of Revelation. Discussions become necessary in that Case, we must needs discern what is the common Faith of the Church, from the Thoughts of the Philosophers, and from human Methods. The Church makes her Profit of the Helps that may be borrowed from the Conformity of the Testimonies of all Ages: But she still distinguishes the Doctor from the Witness, and is no way a Sufferer by his Imperfections, having Means of the utmost Certainty and infinitely exact to know the Doctrine that has been revealed, and to clear it when Need shall require. These sure and ever present Means are the most distinct Objects of her Solemnities, of her Practices, and of her universal Prayers. She finds the Rule and the Proof of her Doctrine in the most publick Conformity of the Belief of so many particular Churches, which are always able to testify what Tenets and Scriptures they have received from the Beginning.

Those who are desirous to have a perfect Knowledge of the Prerogatives and Customs of the Parliament of *England*, or of the Catholick Church,

have Recourse to the Books that have mentioned them in the Course of the several Ages. They are at Liberty to make some new ones themselves. But these great Establishments never wanted any Books to form themselves, no more than to exert or evidence their Privileges. They are anterior to Books: They eclipse by their bright glaring Authenticity the trifling Objections that may be borrowed from such or such a Writer against Maxims universally acknowledged. The Parliament does not, any more than the Church, depend on the Histories or Dissertations that may be written upon them. Books cannot increase their Privileges by being exactly true, nor impair them in the least by false or imperfect Expositions. The Faithful may be indebted to Books for some Instructions and Helps: But good Books and sound Theology owe every Thing to the Church, and to her immortal Predication.

Let us trace the Effects that have been the natural Result of the first Constitution of the Church. One self-same Ministry formed the Church every where at first, and every where gave her the same Doctrine, the same Hierarchy, the same Solemnities, the same Practices. Whence it follows that

The outward
Worship is not
only a School,
but also Ar-
chives.

the outward Worship is not only a perpetual Instruction, but a Treasure of immortal Testimonies, and Archives of incorruptible Instruments that settle and determine the Faith of all Ages. The Means for knowing every Truth in the Catholick Church, to which every Truth has been trusted at first, are unalterable. The Pastors neither wait for, nor dare to publish a new Revelation to instruct the Faithful. No body would so much as listen to them. The Revelation of every Truth was made by the first Predication. The Successors of the Apostles did but repeat what
they

they had from the Apostles, who had it from *Jesus Christ*. The Acts of the latter and the former have been incessantly diversified, but there has always been the same Intentions and the same Truths. Those who come after them are under the Necessity of making their Instructions conformable to the Instruments deposited in the Archives, and to the universal Language. When the Pastors suffered themselves to be circumvented in the Time of *Arianism*, by ambiguous set Forms wherein nothing was distinctly expressed, the common Predication, as well as their own, brought again into the brightest Light the Tenet which had been suffered in some Places to be darkened.

If the Pastors happened to hold their Peace, as they did in the Ages of Ignorance; the very Stones and all the Utensils of the publick Service would speak aloud in their Stead. Should any one of them have said: *J. C. is not God like his Father*; the Form of Baptism would have been shewed him, wherein he is called upon as well as the Father. If a Pastor durst to say: *Unite yourself in Thought to him who was sacrificed; but the Bread which you have offered on this Table, is still the same Bread; the Eucharist is not the Victim*; one would say to him now, what the first Ages would have replied, as well as ours: *We have a Sacrifice: We have an Altar: And the Altar was made for the Victim.*

This would furnish the Matter of a very useful Article, but too extensive to find a Place here. One might shew in it, what every body is able to perceive, although we treat not the Subject in a particular Manner, that all is coherent in the Formation, as well as in the Propagation of the Church; that the Body of the outward Practices has, by perpetuating the Testimonies of the Apostolical Intentions, rendered the Faith of the Church sensible to every Mind, and necessarily invariable: Because

the Ministry and the Practices being of mutual Help to each other, and amounting to the same Truths when what was believed at first and every where is religiously kept to; the Instruction and the Practices would, on the contrary, condemn each other reciprocally upon the least Innovation, or the minutest Alteration. The Minister may flammer; but the Depositum is free from Passion and from Hesitation.

The Perpetuity of the Testimony of the Water.

The Apostolical Establishments are not only the daily Repetition of the Credentials that have originally authorized the Ministry; they are not only the publick and immortal Confession of the Incarnation, of the Resurrection, of the Gifts of the *Paraclete* granted to the Church according to the Saviour's Promise, and of all the Wonders through which the Holy Ghost has proved to Mankind the Reality of the good News, and the Truth of his Embassy; we also find again in them the Testimony of the Water, or the Proof resulting from the miraculous Conversion of the *Jews*, the Idolaters, and the Barbarians. The very Perpetuity of the Church is the Perpetuity of that Testimony.

We are not amused with fine Stories, or with Narrations become uncertain by the Remoteness of Times, when we are told, that the *Jews*, the *Samaritans*, and the *Gentiles*, did, in spite of the strongest Prepossessions, in spite of the Seduction of Custom, and notwithstanding the Loss of their Tranquillity and of their very Lives, submit to the Gospel; from a plain Result of the Conviction wrought in them by the Events of which they were Witnesses. Three hundred Years of Perseverance in the Profession of that Faith, concurring with three hundred Years of an unmerciful Hatred against those who embraced it, there resulted from the whole a Testimony that proved more prevailing
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under *Dioclesian*, than it had been under *Nero*. The Voice of it is still heard very loudly; it being much more manifest that this so very strong Testimony is what rendered *Greece, Italy, Gaul, and Spain* Christian Countries, than it is that the *Greeks, the Italians, the Gauls, and the Spaniards* have with more or less Reserve acquired the Freedom of the City of *Rome*. No body is in doubt concerning the Truth of that Privilege of our Ancestors, altho' it be nothing at present: Much less can one hesitate upon the Reality of that surprising Conversion, of which our own Christianity is both the Result and the standing Proof to this Day.

We are not amused with dubious Narrations, when we are told that there are two Religions that have got Profelytes every where; *viz.* Mahometism and Christianity; but that the former prospered only among the numerous Tribes of *Ismael*, and among a few other Nations that were united with them by vast Interests; that Mahometism has altered nothing in the Practices of the *Ismaelites*, having introduced no other Novelty among them but that of securing Independence and Protection to them; or of crushing those that refused their Assent to it: Whereas the other *Barbarians* have one after another willingly abjured the Instructions they had received from their Fathers, to imbrace the *Christian* Religion, and consequently the Laws of Humanity.

I own that the Conversions of posterior Times have not in the same Degree the Merit of the Testimony born by the *Christians* of the first Centuries, who had every Thing against them. But there are no Countries where Baptism and the *Christian* Ministry have not been introduced. Truth is then attested all over the World and at all Times, both because the last Conversions are, as well as the first, thwarted by all the Oppositions of Nature and

Custom, and because J. C. and the Apostles have prophesied the Propagation of Christianity to the Extremities and through all the Ages of the World.

Let us not forget observing here, that the Truth of the Evangelical Events, which is so eminently attested every where, being the Foundation of every solid Conversion, the Perpetuity of Faith is the Continuation of a well grounded Obedience.

But altho' the first Testimonies be all of them attended and connected with immortal Solemnities, with lasting Monuments, and standing Effects, it is just here to urge another Means of Illustration which God's Providence has moreover granted to his Church, We are now going to see breaking out of the fourth Century a new Light, that casts a Splendor upon all the Ages of Christianity, and spread upon the very last Days all the Brightness of the Proofs that have prevailed on the Minds of the first *Christians*.

A Reply to
the Objection
drawn from the
Favour granted
by *Constantine*
to Christianity.

People have sometimes tried, not indeed to demolish, that being a perfect Impossibility, but to cast a Vail of Darkness over the foregoing Proofs, by alledging the Liberty restored to the *Christians* in the fourth Century, through the Politicks of *Constantine*. This, say they, is what has pulled down Idolatry, and spread Christianity so as to take from us all Pretence of finding any Thing supernatural in those two Events.

It is some Pity, indeed, that this Objection should come a little too late for its Honour. Christianity has already lasted full three hundred Years, though opposed by the strongest Obstacles the whole World could possibly afford: For the same three hundred Years together Idolatry has been staggered by the Attacks of the weakest Opponents that ever were: This Event, incredible as it is, was nevertheless
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prophefied. Chriftianity had then flood its Trials before *Constantine*; and the total Decay of Idolatry, far from being derogatory, does rather add a new Force to thofe Proofs, fince among fo many Events which had been foretold and effected, that one was ftill wanting to complete the whole.

Whoever thinks to give a fpecious Colour to this Objection, muft needs refolve to act with double Dealing. All is Politicks on the Part of *Constantine*. He did not perfecute the Idolaters: And, at the fame Time that he favoured Chriftianity, contented himfelf with rendering Idolatry ridiculous. This was the right Way to go about it. People pretend that this is fully fufficient, and the moft natural Way to ruin Idolatry, and bring Chriftianity into vogue: But, if they keep to this Rule, and will not change their Way of arguing, what muft they conclude will happen under *Julian*? He has all Power under his Thumb, as well as *Constantine*: But Learning and Dexterity are joined moreover to his Quality of Emperor. His Love of fublime Knowledge has taken him off Chriftianity, that brings Man back to a Senfe of the Limits of his Reason, and brings his Pride fo far down as to force him to believe, not indeed what he conceives, but barely what is attested to him. *Julian* has taken it into his Head, that the fublime Conceptions and the ftrange Austerities of *Eunapius*, of *Porphyry*, and of a Set of Philofophers about him, will let him into all occult Sciences, and unite him in an intimate Manner to the Gods. He is now become fystematically idolatrous, and is but the more ardent in order to eftablifh what he fancies he understands: He even attacks the Chriftian Religion with the Weapons it has fupplied him with, always preferving the high Sentiments and the Esteem of Virtue which his Education had infpired him with. He takes great Care not to have

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Recourse to open Force: But after having deprived the *Christians* of their Temples, their Books, and their Schools, he employs his own Eloquence and that of the greatest Masters, to spiritualize as much as he possibly can the Worship of the Gods, by attacking on all Occasions the *Christian* Religion on the Side that seems to be disadvantageous. The Extravagance of the Cross, in short, becomes the Subject of the universal Ridicule. Sure Christianity is going to fall: It will never bear up against this new kind of Persecution?

But the Hand of God, who promised to maintain it to the End of the World, notwithstanding the Combination of all human Powers bent upon its Destruction, causes these very Attacks to turn wholly to its Advantage. The Efforts of the Emperor will prove abortive. His Favour, which encourages the Madness of the Philosophers, will, by exposing it to the brightest Light, at last sink them into an Abyss of Ridicule, which they never will be able to get out of. Their great Misfortune consists in their having written, and thereby set their pitiful Visions to View.

Poor Philosophy! why didst thou cease to lurk in thy ancient Shelter *Darkness*? The Obscurity of thy Mysteries caused them to be revered at the Distance that rendered them unintelligible. But thy Partisans have betrayed thee, they have undeceived the Publick, by exposing thy Pretensions and Proofs in Writing.

These Men, greedy of the Marvellous, had, in their Rambles, collected here and there a few Remains of the Truths which had been revealed to the whole of Mankind from the Beginning, and carried to an Excess the most ancient Practices of Sobriety. They had added to them the Dreams of all the idolatrous Priests, and their own mad Notions. Thus was an *Apollonius*, and many other wander-

wandering Philosophers, seen hunting from *Cadix* to *Babylon* after the warmest Disputes, after the most pretending-conceited Interpreters of the Position of the Stars and of the Course of the planetary Influences, after the most learned Instructions of Magick, but chiefly after the noble Atchievements of Theurgy and Necromancy. They roved from Den to Den and from Cave to Cave. They at last arrived at seeing some Spectre or other, some nocturnal Illusion prepared by either an Impostor, or by the Father of Falshood. The whole Doctrine of *Plato* upon the Gods and the Genii, became unquestionable at the Sight of these pretended Wonders. And who could, with any Reason, hesitate upon the Existence and sublime Faculties of these Intelligences. *Socrates* himself, the wise *Socrates*, had a Genius perfectly at his Command. A certain Diet, a certain Fasting, or certain Sacrifices, were sufficient to please this, or to get rid of that. There was no doubt of arriving at Extasies, and of readily catching at every Truth.

All this emphatical Learning fell into Dust with *Julian*: And Christianity maintained itself. That Prince had listened to Philosophy, and he ascribed to this a Knowledge and Sentiments which were intirely owing to his *Christian* Education. This Kind of Ingratitude is no Rarity. People made him the same Promises, as are now-a-days made to those who suffer themselves to be infatuated with the Deepness of Man's Sagacity. See how far Reason left to herself can go, said they to him: Yours was made on purpose to catch at the most sublime Truths. He, accordingly, shook off the Yoke of Faith, which confined him to a Set of practical Truths, without indulging his Vanity with any Thing it could feed upon: And looking in himself for his own Wisdom, he went from Delirium to Delirium, because whosoever does not follow the only
Teacher,

Teacher, whom God has given us, is walking in Darknefs.

The fourth Century; the Light of the Church.

The total Discredit of *Julian's* Visions and of all this extravagant Erudition, is the least of the many Advantages obtained by Christianity in that Century. The Church acquired, together with her Liberty, all the Facilities of urging her Proofs and making them good to the Eyes of all the World, and of rendering them more durable than Marble and brazen Monuments. The Church, before, for three hundred Years together, had much ado to keep to herself the Property of a few Buildings. They were commonly seized upon and applied to other Uses, or pulled down almost as soon as built. Whoever entered her Congregations found there a greater Appearance of a Senate than of a Temple. Her Altar was a Table: Her Sacrifice shewed not the least Appearance of any Bloodshed: Her Ministers were obscure: There was nothing intelligible in her Solemnities: And the Church was hardly known otherwise than by her Sufferings.

She at last got out of the Sepulchres and of the several Shelters where she concealed her Solemnities, and where she encouraged her Children and incited them to Perseverance, by shewing to them the Urns that contained the Blood and the Ashes of her Witnesses. She forgot nothing of what was dear to her. Her Founders, Teachers, and Martyrs; their Instructions, Letters, and Sufferings, the Acts of their Ministry and of their Confession; all, in short, was present to her: All was collected and written: The Memory of these Objects, renewed from one Year to another in her Solemnities, was from Day to Day recollected in the Conversations of her Children. When she was at last enabled, not only to celebrate her Festival-Days, but also to
publish

publish and preach up her Faith and Belief every where; instead of busying herself about confuting Idolatry and Philosophy, as it was reasonable and very customary to do before; the Church exposed her whole Doctrine to the brightest Light. She shewed every where her ancient Hierarchy, the Succession of her Bishops, her ancient Institutions, and the Confession of the Truths that were inseparably annexed to her Practices. Thus were the Archives of *Christianity* opened in the fourth Century. The Acts that composed them were most of them as familiar to the general Class of *Christians*, as they were to those who instructed others. The Apostolical Utensils and Establishments, though multiplied as much as the Churches, were found the same every where. The Belief of the Churches of *Asia*, compared with that of the Churches of *Africa* and *Europe*, proved to be no Way different from it. Whenever it was found inconsistent with the Metaphysics of *Origen*, of *Eusebius* of *Cæsarea*, or of some other celebrated Man; the Church indeed profited by what good Things they had said; but all their Thoughts upon Angels and Resurrection, upon the Generation of the Word, and upon other Points that were not found to agree with the common Faith of the Churches, were proscribed like foreign and pernicious Doctrines. This so very plain Rule of never saying any Thing but what had always been said, being faithfully observed at *Nice* by the Witnesses of that Belief, who had met there from all Parts of the World, transmitted to the following Ages the Christianity of the first, along with the Proof of its Purity. 'Tis true, each *Christian* Age teaches to the following what it learned of the foregoing: But it was in a most special Manner that the fourth Century became the Publication and

‡ See *Lactantius*, *Arnobius*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, &c.

the Repetition of the Christianity of the three first Ages.

Very warm Disputes took Place in this: But they are by their Nature the Glory of the Church and our own Security. Some pleaded in Favour of their own Thoughts, or of the Doctrine of a celebrated Master: Which has always been, and will ever be, the Foible of the human Mind. The others pleaded for what had been preached and received; for what was every where believed and attested either by the publick Prayers and by the common Predication; or by the permanent Practices, and by the other Instruments of the Faith of the Apostles; which has always been, and will for ever be the Preservation of the Church.

This unshaken Stedfastness of the Fathers of that Age, in clearly and uniformly asserting, not indeed what had been thought by *Origen*, *Philo*, or *Plato*; but what was professed by the Pastors and *Christians* of the foregoing Age, who were at the very Source of all Truth, is attended with another Characteristick of Uprightness, which is proper to their Age, and which makes it, with regard to us, the most respectable and the most luminous of Times next to that of our Saviour.

The Church had suddenly passed from a long and cruel Oppression to the most complete Liberty. That critical Moment was little fit to give Birth to any Innovation. The major Part of the Prelates and Priests had for a long while been leading a wandering Life always attended with Dangers. A great many of those who survived the Persecution, wore the Scars and Marks of a generous Confession, or were emaciated by the hard Labours of the Mines and Quarries. Such Men as these knew the full Price of their Faith, and were incapable of publishing or of indulging any bold or frivolous Systems when Liberty was restored. We find them

them of the utmost Simplicity and Uprightness. They are most scrupulously nice as to the Language of Faith: They openly declare against all those who pretend to make the Thoughts of the Scholastic go hand in hand with the Philosophy of our Saviour: And the same Uniformity they require in the Belief, they also require in the Conduct: They insist in every Thing upon the same Integrity.

“How ill does it become you,” said *Potamon*, Bishop of *Heracleopolis*, to *Eusebius* of *Cæsarea*, who notwithstanding his more than dubious Doctrine on the Divinity of the Word, was sitting at *Tyre* in the Council assembled against the great *Athanasius*, “how ill it becomes you, said he to him, to sit here in Quality of a Judge! “and how is it possible to bear that an *Athanasius* “should be accused, appear standing in this Place, “and expect his Judgment from such a Man as “you? I know you thoroughly: We have been “once together in Fetters in the Time of the Persecution. I have lost this Eye for the Sake of “Truth: But pray, what Loss have you had? “What Martyrdom was you made to suffer? There “remains upon you no Sign of your Confession: “Speak: What other Means did you find to have “the Prison opened to you, but that of promising “that you would sacrifice? It is perhaps but too “true that you was as good as your Word.” *Eusebius* could not stand against this Reproach, and left the Council, under the Pretence of going to assist at the Dedication of the new Church of *Jerusalem*.

How good a Title have Men to be listened to, when they have given such Proofs of Constancy and Sincerity! the major Part of those who illustrated the Faith of the Church at that Time, either by their Writings, or by their Attestations carried

² *Epiphanius in hæres. Melchior.*

to the general Council, or by other Services, were so many Confessors. Some of them were learned, Many of them kept to the Simplicity of the *Christian* Doctrine. They with Candour repeated what they had been taught by their Predecessors. The Church was their School, and her Scriptures and Liturgy their Library. These are the Men who perpetuated Christianity, and who annexed the Testimonies of it to publick Solemnities, to Buildings and Instruments that are as durable as all future Ages. These are the Masters who have taught a Set of others, such as *Hilarius, Jerom, Ambrose, Austin, Chrysofomus, Leo*, and all the Doctors of the first Order. The Church had thus far shewed herself by her Miracles, by the truly prodigious Sanctity of the most perverse Men who were become her Children, and by the Sufferings of her Martyrs. But her Beauty was disgraced in the Eyes of Mankind by the Ignominy she underwent, and a vain Philosophy still prevailed in the World. It is the fourth Century that set the Church in a Situation that shewed her to Advantage. The Cross was every where set up, and it is chiefly from this so very luminous Age, and from the next after it, that we have received the first Collections of Memoirs for the Ecclesiastical History, the celebrated Liturgies, the Collects of our Holy-Days, the Instructions of all kinds, the restoring of the Basilicks, the Dedications, and the whole Form of the outward Worship; in short the compleat Model of all that was to be believed and practised after the Institution of the Apostolical Men.

The Perpetuity
of the Testimo-
ny of the
Blood.

They crowned this Work, so very important to us, by the Perpetuity of the Testimony which included all the others in general, and stood in lieu of them all. They every where rebuilt the Edifices and Altars consecrated to God, under the
Name

Name of *the Witnesses*, or under the Name of *Memories of such or such a Martyr*. The Congregations of the Faithful were called together there, and these solemn Meetings which had never been frequented before but with Uneasiness and much Circumspection, were then every where resorted to with vast Concourse. This Testimony, which was of Concern to all *Christian Hearts*, on whom it made the liveliest Impressions, began, as well as all the foregoing Truths, to be attended with Festival-Days, which are now going to make it ever-present to all future Ages. *Instead, then, of framing now-a-days to ourselves Institutions and Notions of Christianity that may intitle us to blame, even in the first Ages, whatever shall not tally with those new-coined Notions: The whole Sum of our Wisdom consists only in observing the Testimonies of the three first Centuries, and in borrowing our Ideas from the Splendor of the fourth, carefully to conform our Belief to it afterwards.*

It was not a Custom peculiar to the *Christians*, to bury the Dead in an honourable Manner, to celebrate anniversary Solemnities at the Tombs of Persons of great Consideration; to sing Hymns there, or to make the Encomium of the Deceased, and in a Procession to go down into the subterranean *Cryptæ* with a Taper or a Lamp in one's Hand. We see from the Historians and the Poets, and from the Inscriptions still extant with us, that the Anniversaries and all the Honours paid to the Dead are as ancient as the World. We may read in the *Thebais* of *Statius* the Solemnities celebrated on the Tomb of *Archemorus*; in the fifth Book of the *Æneid*, the Anniversary of *Anchises*; and in the *Old Testament* the annual Honours paid to the Daughter of *Jephtha*, to the Patriarchs, and to the Prophets immediately and long after their Death. The Scripture blames neither the Monuments, nor

the funeral Solemnities, nor the Encomiums made of the Dead; but the detestable Custom of sacrificing to them, of raising up and conjuring Spirits, and of pretending to ask them Questions concerning Futurity, by familiarly sitting with them around the Blood of the Funeral Victims, which they were thought to be very greedy of.

The Scripture mentions this Practice in the Book of *Leviticus*^a, in *Ezekiel*^b and in a great many other Places. The *Odysses* afford us a particular Account of it which is agreeable most of any to that of *Ezekiel*, in the Sacrifice which *Ulysses* makes to the Shade of *Tiresias*. It is a most horrid Abuse of an ancient and very innocent Practice, and it was at the same Time a speaking Proof of the ancient and universal Persuasion Mankind was in of the Immortality of the Soul. The Poets will constitute a Proof on that Head; as their Fictions are Suppositions and Imitations of what was customary.

The Monuments of the Martyrs; an infallible Means of Perpetuity.

What was peculiar to the *Christians* in this Respect, and which could not be customary any where else, was the Practice of putting, on the Day of the Anniversary of a Martyr, the Eucharistical Table and the Body of the Lord upon the Remains which had been rescued of the Body of his Witness; or to lay those Remains fixt under an Altar. Thus did the Church set by the Eucharist, not indeed a second Object of Adoration, but the most moving Proof, either of the Reality of the Blessings which the Faithful came to reap there, or of the holiness of the Ministry which imparted the same to them.

The Word *Relicks* already introduced by the Custom established in a great many Places of putting Bodies upon the Funeral Pile, and of preserving the Ashes of it in the Family, became still

^a Levit. xix. 26. Hebr. ^b Ezek. xliii. 25.

more common in the *Christian* Solemnities, in which they put under the Altar nothing but the shapeless Remains of a half-consumed Body, of a Body torn to Pieces by the Barbarity of the Torturers or of wild Beasts.

Let us always and with the utmost Care avoid borrowing any Thing whatsoever from our own Thoughts to attribute it to the Church; and let us know the Intentions of the first *Christians* in this Practice, from the Accounts of the most respectable Teachers that the fourth Century did ever produce; since the first Benefit of the Liberty then granted to the Church was, that of openly celebrating the Solemnities of the Lord, and the Anniversaries of his Witnesses. But we find there at the same Time the Proof of their punctilious Nicety, on the Article of the Uniformity. They forewarn Men not to do any Thing but what was done in the Times of Constraint, and make bitter Complaints on the Novelty of grand Repasts, which were, since the Time of the Infranchisement of the Church, become common at the said Tombs. This Abuse and their Complaints serve jointly to ascertain the most ancient Authenticity of those Festival-Days, the Perseverance of the Testimonies, the Uniformity of the Doctrine, and the Opposition of the Ministry to the very Shadow of Innovation.

St. *Ambrose*, in the Discourse he directs to the Church of *Milan*, to congratulate her for having found again the Bodies of her two Martyrs *Gervis* and *Protese*, informs us at the very same Time of the ancient Custom observed by the Church of erecting her Altars upon the Ashes of the Martyrs, and of the immense Difference she put between the Worship paid to *J. C.* and the honourable Mention made of his Saints. “ Let us, says he, ho-
“ nour the Triumph of *J. C.* by bringing to him
“ those Victims in the very Place where he him-

“ self is a Victim. But it belongs to him who
 “ died for all, to be upon the Altar ; whereas those
 “ who have been redeemed by his Death, are under
 “ the Altar.”

St. *Austin* mentions this Custom with the same Spirit and Exactness. “ The *Christians*, says he^c,
 “ frequent the *Memories*^d of the Martyrs, and ho-
 “ nour them with holy Solemnities, to incite them-
 “ selves to imitate their Perseverance ; to be asso-
 “ ciated to their Merits ; to be helped by their
 “ Prayers ; with this Reserve however that we set
 “ up no Altars to the Martyrs, but only to the God
 “ of Martyrs, even in the Temples that go by their
 “ Names. For, who is the Priest that ever said,
 “ celebrating at the Altar on *the Place where the*
 “ *Bodies of the Saints are resting : It is to you, Pe-*
 “ *ter or Paul, or it is to you, Cyprian, that we make*
 “ *this Oblation.* But, what is offered, is offered to
 “ God, who has crowned his Witnessess ; and it is
 “ offered to him in the Memories of those whom
 “ he has crowned : We honour the Martyrs with
 “ that Worship of Love and Association, with
 “ which we even honour the holy Men of God
 “ who are still living ; with this Difference that
 “ our Sentiments for those who have born Testi-
 “ mony to the Faith, are more lively, because the
 “ Martyrs have no longer any Fall to apprehend
 “ after the Combats in which they have been vic-
 “ torious. But, we honour and teach Men to honour
 “ God alone with that Worship which the *Greeks*
 “ call *λατρεία*. It is to his Worship alone that the
 “ Oblation of the Sacrifice does belong. Hence
 “ the Name of Idolaters given to those who offer
 “ the Sacrifice to the Idols. We are very far from
 “ so doing : We even offer none, nor do we teach

^c *Lib. xx. Contr. Faust. cap 21.*

^d That Name was given to the Buildings as well as to the Festival-Days.

“ Men to offer any to any Martyrs, or to any holy
“ Soul, or to any Angel.”

St. *Austin*, after having thus clearly explained what it is the Church proposes to do in the antient Solemnities of her Martyrs, complains of the Abuses which an immoderate Jubilation had introduced into them, and which the Church saw and supported with great Impatience, till she was able to put a Stop to them. This Exposition of the Belief of the Fathers of the fourth Century is that of the actual Catholick Faith; so that whosoever rejects this, must needs reject likewise the Doctrine of the Fathers of the fourth Century. But, their Doctrine is only the Propagation of that of the three foregoing Ages: And it is by so much less suspicious, as its being connected with Customs and Solemnities of a most universal Authenticity, argues the Impossibility of its having ever been invented by any Doctor of the fourth Century. It is a most solemn Testification of the Practices of the Church, which had been every where very prevailing and very comforting Instructions to the primitive *Christians* amidst their Sufferings.

We easily conceive the ardent Love with which the *Christians*, who had lost the dearest Objects of their Affection under the four Predecessors of *Constantine*, were prompted to immortalize the last Testimonies, and to associate them to the foregoing. Thus does the fourth Century prove to be the connective Bond of the Faith of the primitive *Christians* and ours. For our Belief being found again in every Page of the Works of the Writers of that Century, who did but publish upon the House-tops what Men had hitherto been compelled only to whisper; it follows that the Catholick Church has at all Times the same Belief, the same Solemnities, and the same Testimonies.

This being once proved, it becomes very unnecessary here to accumulate the Attestations given of the Antiquity of the Memories by *St. Cyprian*, by *Tertullian*, by the Acts of the Martyrdom of *Ignatius*, and others of the same Antiquity; by the Letter of the Church of *Smyrna*, to that of *Pontus*; and by so many Monuments found in the History of *Eusebius* and elsewhere.

The Form of our Churches, a Means for perpetuating the Testimonies.

It was but natural that the Monuments of this Practice should be found every where. And really it was of the Apostolical Times, and made Part of the Form that was given to the *Christian* Congregations from the Beginning. That Form consisted, in the very first Century, of four or five principal Parts, which were never parted, a Chair of a distinguished Form, and placed behind the Altar, but at some Distance from it, and at the Extremity of the Building that terminated the Prospect; this was the Seat of the Bishop: By him on the right and left, were other Seats for the Priests: In the middle of the Congregation an Altar, upon which the Eucharist was celebrated: Under the Altar one or more Urns wherein what had been collected or recovered of the Blood, of the Ashes, or of the other Spoils of the Martyrs was religiously kept: Finally one or more Chandeliers to support the Tapers or Lamps that served to light the Ministers and the Faithful. This Form is found again in the Church of *St. Peter* at *Rome*, in many ancient Cathedrals, in some abbatical Churches and others; and that in Proportion as the Decorators have taken Antiquity for their Rule. *St. John*, in his Revelation, sees the Celestial Glory according to Notions conformable to the Order of the *Christian* Congregations: A Throne at the Bottom: Seats for four and twenty Priests on both Sides of him who is sitting on the Throne:

Throne: An Altar on which the Lamb is like unto a *slaughtered Victim*^c: Under the Altar the Martyrs cloathed in white Garments: And finally several Chandeliers to light the Altar and the Congregation.

The Benefit as well as the Intention of this Apostolical Establishment was to render the Memory of the Martyrs always present and dear to Posterity, and to certify their Confession to all Ages, by the highest Authenticity that can possibly be conceived. By this Means the Faithful never did partake of the Memorial of the Death, the Resurrection and the Ascension of our Saviour, without having before their Eyes the strongest Testimony of it that Men were able to give; *viz.* that of dying for the maintaining of what they had either seen themselves, or heard on every Side from the Mouth of other Eye-Witnesses.

The Benefit of this Practice.

These Monuments, of themselves very affecting, became moreover very famous by the vast Concourse of those who resorted to them. They were in a Multitude of Places converted into large Basilicks, or even into very populous Towns, that took their Names from them: And it is because the Blood of the Martyrs was shed every where, that this Testimony is become universal. Men solemnize no where the Havocks of *Alexander* in *Asia*, or those of the *Scipio's* in *Africa*. And really what Concern could Mankind take in them? But where is it that the Expeditions undertaken by *Peter* and *Paul*, to win Souls to *Jesus Christ*, have not been celebrated these sixteen hundred Years? Do we know any more amiable Conquerors than these? Are there any more useful? Do we know, besides, any Conquests better ascertained than theirs? Is there any Continent, Kingdom or Island, where the Monu-

^c *Tanquam occisum.*

ments of the Passage of some one of these Ministers of Peace are not shewn, and where Men do not publickly say, that it is through them our Fathers have known Truth and are entered into the Paths of true Happiness?

We, indeed, do not make that Happiness depend upon the Pomp of the Ceremonies, neither from the Loftiness of the Buildings. But, it is by the Permission of God, that those who go and pay a Visit to the most magnificent Temple that ever was built on the Earth in his Honour, can with Confidence say: Here is the Seat and the Tomb of the first of the Evangelical Deputies. The *Vatican* where he came to finish his Career, is at the same Time the Memorial of another Hero who made the Conquest of the *Gentiles*. What a Testimony the common Mausoleum of those two Conquerors built on the Ruins of Idolatry, is this!

The other Cathedrals shew every where under their Altar or by the Side of it, the Monuments of their first Evangelists. Those illustrious Witnesses have been told to wait for the restoring of the Body which they have generously put off: But, they have, like the Bones of *Joseph*, never ceased to declare to the Church of God both her Vocation and Hopes. Death did not put a Stop to their Predication. Those Urns every where preserved, those Vials full of Blood, those broken Remnants that escaped the Jaws of wild Beasts, those Bones blackened by the Fire, the Kisses of the *Christians*, their magnificent Presents that have converted the Memories of the Witnesses into so many immortal Monuments, and have in a great many Places added to them an Episcopal See; all, in short, is a Language spoken here. After so many Ages, we again find the Solemnities of the first Legates, their Tombs, their Work, and their Successors. This Mass of publick and conspiring Mon-

Monuments, is peculiar to the Catholick Church. Stones, Brass Monuments and Books, the Concurrency of which is so generally depended upon for the ascertaining of the Events of prophane History, are, though found here by Thousands, nevertheless the least Vouchers of the Glory of the Martyrs. The Church has procured to them, by her Festival-Days, a vastly superior Reputation. There is then a Perpetuity, and the Proofs of the Catholick Ministry are at all Times found at its Side.

As we have seen the Monuments of the Promises dispersed all over the Earth, so we now see the Testimonies of the fulfilling of them, and the Proofs of the Covenant as universally spreading over the Globe. But, although the Concert of so many united Voices be of an invincible Force; each of these Monuments taken apart still carries with it the Celebrity of a Testimony as durable as all future Ages.

As the first Effect of the Liberty of the fourth Century had been the magnificent rebuilding of the Memories of the Martyrs, which the Persecution had pulled down or prophaned; the same Buildings being in Process of Time destroyed by their own Antiquity; the middle Age renewed them, and communicated all the same Testimonies to us by new Dedications, and by Removals which testify from Year to Year, not indeed the Inventions of the ninth or of the eleventh Century; but the restoring of the Solemnities and Buildings which had been before. What Precaution is it that was necessary and that was not taken, to certify the Events, and to continue the Chain of the Testimonies?

The Acts and Monuments of the middle Age, repeat and ascertain those of the first.

Certainty most sincerely springs from Disorder itself. It breaks out of the very Excesses and Tumults that are inseparable from a vast Concourse of People.

The Disorders
laid to the
Charge of the
Catholick
Church, are
Proofs of the
Truth of her
Monuments and
of her Ministry.

People. It is found again in the very Indiscretion of the legendary Writers of the middle Age. Not having every where the Acts of the Martyrs collected according to the Practice of a great many Places, and communicated by the Notaries^f themselves, many thought fit to embellish the ancient Tradition by broaching Falsities, in order to supply on those solemn Days the Encomiums that were customary; and they occasioned the holy Regulations of the Church, and the sound Criticks of discerning Men. False Coin is distinguished and rejected without any Prejudice of the true, which it supposes.

The Certainty of Truth is found again in the Debates of Nations for those Monuments of their first Preachers, and in the very Indecency with which they sometimes snatched them from one another.

This Veneration for the Tombs of the Martyrs now converted and become the Altars of the Lord, caused either the same Sepulchre, or an honourable Place by the Side of the Altar to be very early granted to those who, although they had not spilt their Blood, had nevertheless edified the Church by an eminent Piety and by incessant Services. The same Veneration for all those Vessels of Election, cured Men of the Horror they had before for dead Bodies: And the Habit of reserving that Distinction for Virtue caused the common of *Christians* to wish for Burying-Places in the Churches, that were perhaps too easily granted to them. But this

^f The Registers were called Notaries, because they, by means of abbreviated Notes, wrote in Courts of Justice the Questions asked by the Judges, and the Answers of those who were impeached; and they did it in so expeditious a Manner, that the Hand went as fast as the Tongue.

Abuse, if it be one, nor the others, even the most real, do not in the least invalidate the Chain of the Perpetuity; and the Catholick Ministry proves to be Apostolical by the Preservation of all its Testimonies: They are inseparable from its Succession, Solemnities, Establishments and Buildings, from its publick and uniform Exercise, from its annual Congregations, and from the Monuments of all the most eminent Virtues which Christianity has given Birth to from one Age to another. It is an indivisible Totality.

But there is a Sort of Acts that constitutes the greatest Publickness of the Companies of Judges, or others, and which it is very necessary to observe separately. It is the perpetual and principal Exercise of their Functions. Their ancient Acts are preserved in Writing. The actual Exercise is the Continuation of them. There results from them a Totality which plainly declares the same Powers and the first Intention. Nothing sets a Parliament in View of its whole District better than that Chain of Statutes and Bills that decide all occurring Cases, that determine beforehand the Cases parallel to them, and that are alledged by the People as the Rule of their Polity and their Possessions.

Nobody ever took it into his Head to disturb Nations in their Certainty of having Treaties of Commerce and Courts of Justice, that regulate their Operations. No Man ever bethought himself of finding in their Persuasion a vicious Circle, that should consist first in shewing the Establishment and District of a Company of Judges by the Acts that have constantly been passed by them; and then to prove the Authority of their Acts by their Establishment, and by the Powers they have received from the legislative Power. The Reason why these two Proceedings are respectively good, without invalidating each other, is, that the Establishment of the Court

Court of Justice, and the exerting of their Power, are both of them ever attended with the whole Body of the Society which took Notice of the one and the other, and which was a Security to us that the one is a Consequence of the other by their acquiescing to either of them. It becomes perfectly indifferent in that Case, towards proving the Authority and the Nature of the District of a Court of Justice, to have Recourse to the Letters Patent of their Establishment, or to judge of the Contents of the said Letters by the Acts that have issued, and are still issuing from their Authority; because the Publick has a sufficient Authority, nay a natural Infallibility towards warranting to us the Reality of the Establishment, and of the Right they of Course have of exerting their Power.

It is the same with the Privilege which the Catholick Ministry is in Possession of, to teach, clear, and determine every Truth. Logicians accuse us of attributing to that Ministry a Power which it is impossible for us to justify: Because we sometimes prove the Authority of the Apostolate and of the immortal Ministry by the Words of the Scriptures issued from it, and by the Possession it has from Age to Age been in to preach up and define Truth, and sometimes prove the Authority of the Scriptures and of the Acts afterwards issued from the Catholick Ministry, by the Certainty of the Apostolical Mission.

This Proceeding might appear irregular to us, were not both the Excellence of the Apostolate and the Excellence of its Acts equally demonstrated to us by an infallible Means; which is the Attestation and the Acquiescence of a Society truly immense dispersed all over the Earth, incapable of Collusion, as well as of any Mistake about the Object of her Attestation. Such is the Catholick Church: She has seen, touched, and attested the Works of the
Aposto-

Apostolate all over the Globe: She has likewise attested and warranted the Reality of the Writings that came from the Apostolical Men. She has informed us of the Prerogatives of the Ministry that has succeeded the Apostles, by receiving its Predication and Rules, the Decisions of its Councils, its Professions of Faith, the Prayers contained in its Liturgy, in short, the Writings of the private Doctors themselves, in Proportion to the Analogy which the Ministry found they had with the foregoing Predication. All these Acts collected, attested, and daily made use of by an immortal Society, constitute a Depositum every whit as authentick and indefeasible as the very Society itself.

We, with due Gratitude honour the sound Criticks and the Erudition that clears Doubts, and rectifies Mistakes. But, there is an Authenticity much superior to Erudition. The most learned History of our Magistracy, and of our Treaties of Peace, is not what insures to us our Possessions, Limits and Privileges. We are indebted for these to the Reality of the Ministry that has regulated them; and that Reality is warranted to us, not indeed by the Pen of the Historians, but by the most publick and most persevering Testimony of the Society that took Notice of it.

We need not here shew in a particular Manner what a Facility the Simplicity of these Means, and the Consort of all these successive Acts of the Ministry together with the uniform Language of the universal Practices, gives to the Pastors towards forming their Predication; nor what Helps the Faithful find in them, towards being invariably informed of the Faith of the foregoing Ages, even in Times of Heresies, Schisms, Persecutions, Ignorance and Scandals. What we are here indispensably obliged to shew, is the perfect Certainty we enjoy in the Catholick Church of having the true
Ministry

Ministry and the Depositum of the Faith regularly preserved among us.

Now, this twofold Advantage can no more be refused to the Catholick Church, than we can contest in *France* the Reality of her Parliaments, or with *Venice* the Knowledge of her Senate and its Acts.

The Reason why a large Society cannot commit any Mistakes concerning the Establishment of a supreme Court of Justice is, that the Fact is of the utmost Publickness, and was applauded by the whole Body of Society as a very advantageous Establishment. That Knowledge once got, is perpetuated in the same Society: The first Proofs of the Authority granted to the Judges are no longer repeated. Their Succession, their Judgments, their Statutes and actual Functions, shew what they are. Only, if any one of them should exceed his Powers, or if they all of them should attempt to regulate Things without their Province, as for instance military Operations; the Society without breaking with them would restrain them within their own Bounds.

As there never was any Publication comparable to that of the Evangelical Embassy, the Voice of the Embassadors having been heard, and the Proofs of their Mission been conveyed every where, there never was likewise any more affecting nor more constant Assent than that which was given to the *Christian* Ministry by the universal Church, since it is in the middle of the Duration of the Proofs that set the Truth of the Apostolate in a bright Light, that that Church was formed of *Jews, Samaritans, Greeks, Romans, Africans, Asiatics, and Europeans*, notwithstanding the Learning and Politeness of some, and the Barbarity of some others, notwithstanding the reciprocal Disdain and Prejudices, notwithstanding most dreadful Oppositions, and in Spight of very affecting Concerns, that were and still are more conducive to their Separation than to their Reunion.

Reunion. As this Conviction in a Multitude of Men so divided, so innumerable, and yet so steadfastly persevering in one and the same Faith, can, in Point of publick Events and of Matters of Fact naturally depending on the Testimony of our Senses, be no other but the Effect of the most palpable and most convictive Proofs; the bare Perseverance of that immense Society in their Attachment to the Evangelical Ministry dispenses the latter with repeating its Proofs. The Society itself perpetuates the Testimonies of the Establishment, and the Authenticity of the Prerogatives of the Ministry.

Whence it happens first, that as the Magistrate administers Justice without needing to prove his Power, the Catholick Pastor administers the Word and the Sacraments without giving himself any Trouble about proving the Right he has so to do. His Society, the Buildings, the Monuments, the Work he is perpetuating, all, in short, speak in Favour of him. Uneasiness and Struggles are becoming to none but such whom their Novelty and the Rashness of their Separation is reproached by all the Universe.

It is true that several Accidents have destroyed a great many famous Churches, and that Schism has detached many Societies from the ancient Body of the Catholick Church. But their Testimony is not destroyed for all that. The Testimony born by the Church of *Egypt* to the Disciple *Mark*, of having been the first Bishop of her Capital, and of having written an Evangelical History, is still subsisting. All Histories have handed that Testimony down to us, and it is as certain as that which was born by the Churches of *Asia* to the Apostle *St. John*, of having resided at *Ephesus*, of having been exiled to *Pathmos*, and of having written the Gospel and the Apocalyps that go by his Name. The Testimony born to *St. Paul* by the Inhabitants of
Thessa-

Thessalonica and *Corinth*, of having directed to them the four Letters that go by his Name and theirs, was never darkened by the least Cloud, no more than that by which the *Romans* have ascertained to us the Letter that concerns them. All these Churches mutually communicated their Treasures to each other: They have seen again their Founders and Masters, since the Reception of the Regulations and Writings which had been directed to them. They died in the middle of them, giving them all their Blood for the last Proof of the Truth of their Mission.

Under the Warranty of so many Churches which had been Eye-Witnesses of the Reality of the Apostolical Miracles, Writings, and Establishments, the Ministry, in the following Ages, needed but shew itself with the Depositum of its Acts, and with the Body of its universal Practices, a twofold Means of rendering its Predication for ever invariable.

Under the Warranty of so many Churches that constitute but one, it is equally sure either to listen to the Ministry in order to know the Meaning of the Scriptures and of the primitive Institutions, or to borrow from the Scriptures and from the Depositum of the other Acts of the Ministry, the Knowledge of the lawful Authority of the Pastors, and of the exact Extent of it.

Such is the Advantage of the Man who is a Member of a large Society, as, for instance, of the *French* Nation, that he is sure of his own Condition, without being obliged to make long Researches; and that when he is pleased to make them, it is of little Signification whether he begins by examining into his own Titles, or by making himself sure of the Notaries Office wherein they are deposited, or of the Parliament that has decided them. All his Steps lead him to Certainty, and the Nation shortens the whole Inquiry in Favour of him.

him. Whence it happens moreover, that if a seditious Man should attack the Prerogatives of the Parliament, that Body would condemn and punish him, without fearing any Reproach of having judged in their own Cause.

The Attempt of striking at the Privileges of the Ministry does not invalidate them: The Society taking Care to vindicate them.

The Republick applauds this Conduct, and testifies the Powers which that supreme Court has received to maintain good Order every where. Such is the Tranquillity enjoyed by the Subject in a civilized well-ordered Country: Such is the Security of the Catholick: Nay, it is even much superior.

To expose this Truth in another Manner, let us analyze both the Church and the Faith: Let us consider the Church only in its Exterior. Let us consider the Faith of the private *Christian*, as nothing but the Proceeding of the human Mind; laying aside the Operation of the Divine Spirit, which abides in the midst of his Church, which forms a faithful Heart, and perfects the Condition of the one and the other.

The Faith of the Catholick humanly understood, is the Persuasion of having a Share in the eternal Alliance through the Ministry, which, as he is told, has ever declared and published it from and by the Order of God, wherever it has been possible for it to gain Admittance.

That Faith would be but a slight Credulity, if the Ministry was not warranted: But the Predication of the Catholick Clergy prevailing over the Mind by the greatest Authority that ever was on the Earth, and by the greatest Security that Man can possibly wish for, our acquiescing in it cannot but be a most prudent Conduct in that Case, and our dissenting from it must always be inexcusable.

The Ministers of Kings obtain from them Powers towards making an Establishment: But the private Man who is willing to take a Share in it, is not sure of any Thing otherwise than by the publick and constant Testimony which the Body of Society bears to that Commission. The Apostolate which styled itself immortal and universal, is worthy of our Submission, if divine: But how shall we make ourselves sure of the fulfilling that Condition? In order to convince ourselves of it, it is just that that Ministry should have made its Proofs originally, and that a Society worthy to be believed should never cease to perpetuate the same for us. This is the very Case we are in. Nor does it shew itself any where in a more advantageous Light. We receive the Catholick Ministry under the Warranty of an immense Society dispersed all over the World; of a Society originally an Eye-Witness of the same Events and Proofs in its Dispersion, and equally incapable of Illusion and Collusion in this Respect; bearing Testimony to the same Truths and Matters of Fact against its own capital Interest, and for ever rendering that Testimony of a most unaccountable Authenticity; first by full three hundred Years of Sufferings, and finally by a Crowd of indestructible Monuments exposed on all Parts even to our Eyes.

All these Articles have been proved above. The combined Multitude and glaring Evidence of these Proofs are not to be found any where in a Degree comparable to what we see in the Catholick Church. She always went by that Name, because those she is composed of have every where and at all Times but one and the same Predication and outward Worship. They did not begin by meeting and uniting together, in order to bear Testimony to what they had seen and learned: But the Uniformity of the Testimony they have born to the Apostolical Ministry

nistry in their Dispersion, is what has brought them together into a Body of Society. The History of Mankind, more than the common Means of Security, affords us nothing that comes up to the Authority of that Testimony born by the first *Christians*; and it is because they were sensible of the Benefit that did and would accrue from it to their own Children, to the other Nations as yet sunk in Errors, and to all future Generations, that they have carefully annexed their Testimony, their Creed, and all the successive Acts of the Ministry, to Means of Notoriety and Preservation which nothing could possibly destroy, or even obscure.

Nothing more luminous or more sure than this Rule of the Catholick Faith: “ Never to practise
“ or say any Thing but what is preached up every
“ where, or what is found in the Acts of the uni-
“ versal Predication.” *Quod semper, quod ubique.*

Nothing more sensible nor more efficacious than the Means of Uniformity among the Catholicks. Their Solemnities, their Liturgy, the Memories of the Witnesses, the whole Exterior of their Worship; this is the ancient and immortal Exposition of the Catholick Faith, with its ever-visible Proofs. What will it then be, when the written Testimonies are superadded to it?

Let him, who dares, come and attack one single Article of the universal Belief or of the universal Practices. Does *Arius* presume to open his Mouth against the Divinity of the Word which has taken our Flesh, and which is our *Emmanuel*, God with us? Is *Vigilantius* bold enough to blame the Church for honourably placing under the Table of her Sacrifice the Ashes of her Witnesses? The whole is beforehand refuted. The bare Dissonance, the Novelty is sufficient to confound all the Sects. The Catholick Church sees them start up on her Right and Left, and successively sink into their own Nothingness

thingness again. She alone subsists and teaches with Authority, because she never shews herself otherwise than attended with an immortal and divine Ministry, of which she has perpetuated the Proofs and all the Acts.

This is not here a Tradition of a Character like that of the *Chinese* or the *Egyptian* History. This is not a Report like that which ascribes to *Joby* and *Mercury* the Honour of having invented and communicated to their People most important Secrets which the World is as yet hunting after. These are none of your old *Hear-says* which assume a Variety of Forms as they pass from Mouth to Mouth and from one Country or Day to another. All is a Predication in the Catholick Church, and she herself is not able to change any Thing in a Belief connected to Means of Authenticity as durable as those that characterize the human Establishments; with this Difference, however, that the Buildings and Acts that shew us the Parliament of *England*, are only in that Island, whereas the several Practices and the whole outward Worship of the Catholick Religion are perpetuated without End and perfectly the same every where.

The Condition of the Catholick Church is then very far from proving inferior to that of the Republicks that certify and even appropriate to themselves the Acts of their Magistrates, so as that the Publick may give their Assent to them with Security. In the Catholick Church, it is, exactly speaking, the Ministry alone that preaches, that offers the Sacrifice, that meets together in Council, that makes Statutes and defines Truths, that teaches and ingenders Children to *Jesus Christ*. But the Catholick Church, which knows that the Ministry was instituted for her Benefit, and for the Edification of the whole Body, appropriates the Acts of it to herself without any Injustice, by submitting and conform-

conforming her Conduct to them. The Doctrine she receives she calls it her Doctrine. The Sacrifice offered in the middle of her and for her Sake, she calls it her Sacrifice. She renews in her Solemnities the Publication of her Scriptures, of her Symbols, and of her whole Belief: She applies the whole to the Use of all her Children, and dreads nothing so much as to see her Treasures remain unprofitable for want of being known. Where could we find a more perfect Authenticity, and a more uninterrupted Celebrity? As, then, the Authority and Operations of the Magistracy, always attested by the same Exterior and always maintained by the Republick, to which the whole is familiar and usual, are neither an obscure Tradition, nor an uncertain Establishment; so does the Catholick find as perfect a Security in the Warranty of the universal Church, which cannot appropriate to herself and perpetuate the Acts of the ancient Ministry, without being truly for us *the Column of Truth*.

Let us look out for another Means of Truth and Security, if any one can be found. Let us consider that which was at several Times recurred to by positive Men, who being offended to see Faults in the Ministers of the Church, or shocked at the Notion of being bound to believe Mysteries superior to their Apprehension, thought it proper to make themselves independent. Many of them, in this View, tried to demolish the Ministry which they looked upon as the Bane of Society: This was attempted by the *Donatists*: Others tried to extirpate the common Doctrine, which appeared to them a Gangrene: 'Tis what the *Arians* strove to do. They all of them have had their Imitators.

Let us suppose that the last of them have succeeded in pulling down the Episcopal Seats every where; in exterminating the Clergy, in dissipating all the *Christian* Congregations, and in bringing to

nought all the Acts of the Ministry, the sacred Books excepted. As the Thing was attempted, it may be asked, Whether, in Case of a compleat Success in the Attempt, it would not have been possible to introduce among Men a purer Christianity.

Laying aside the excessive Absurdity of a Supposition, according to which the Ministry proves to be abandoned by *J. C.* contrary to his Promise, and Men undertake to do something finer than what *J. C.* himself has done; I answer point blank to the Supposition of the total Abolition of the Christian Ministry, That there is in that Case no Christianity left upon the Earth, and that it will be impossible to revive it there; the Proof of which is very plain.

Although the universal Church has perpetuated her Ministry and her Depositum by Methods of Preservation as sensible as those of human Societies, there is nevertheless an essential Difference between them. The Testimony publickly and perpetually born by Men who succeed one another, is the same in both the Church and the State. This is the exact outward Resemblance. But the Powers to which the Testimony is born, are very different. The Powers of civil Ministers come from Men: The Apostolical Mission comes from God. Ill-affected Men may attempt to demolish the Buildings and the Acts of the Senate of *Venice*, or of the *Indian Company*. But the Republick and the Crown are invulnerable. The Republick might procure to itself another Senate, if all the Senators had been slaughtered, and the King create another *Indian Company*, if some Mutineers had put all the Members of it to the Sword; but, if the Ministry is destroyed in the Church, all is lost as to her. It was said of her that she baptized, that she sacrificed, that she made Statutes, and gave Instructions; because the Ministry that has received the Propriety of the Powers, does exert them for her Sake. But,

if the Man who sees because he has Eyes, comes to lose them, he shall be for ever in Darkness. Who will give him his Eyes again? God alone can construct an Eye: God alone can revive the Eye for the Service of Man. God is likewise the only one that can give Powers to his Envoys, and through them vivify the Body of the Church. But in the supposed Abolition of the Ministry of Salvation, the Source of the wholesome Gifts is drained from the Church: She can no longer bring forth any Children to *Christ*: She is no longer any Thing but the Skeleton of a Body formerly living.

The sacred Books, you say, have been rescued from the universal Demolition: The Evangelical Text is still in our Hands intire. But, what do you intend to do with it? Bring that Book near your Skeleton of a Church, and try to bring her to Life again with it. Your Efforts towards it are all vain. The Evangelical Scripture is one of the first Acts of the Ministry: But that Act has remained void of Utility ever since the Ministry that put it in Force and Vigour was destroyed: It is, indeed, the finest Part of the Predication: But there is no longer any Predication left, since all the Envoys are now exterminated.

It is again from the most universally admitted Ideas, that we are going to borrow the true Notion of the Esteem which is due to the Holy Scripture, to the most ancient Act that was left us in Writing by the Ministry.

Generally speaking, all Scriptures, both sacred and civil, are of themselves void of Activity and Authenticity. I say they are void of Activity. A Book cannot come to us: Some body must put it into our Hands. The Treaty of *Munster*, or any other, did not take the least Step to come to us: And what passes for a Treaty of Peace, of Limits, or of Commerce, would not be so, or would

remain of no Effect, if no body was commissioned to produce it.

The Activity of an Instrument becomes afterwards the same as that of the Depository of it. If this is no more than a Notary and a Keeper of Records, the Act remains in his House, and is as sedentary as he himself is. The Notary must be applied to, to have that Act. But, if the Depository is an Embassador, or, what is still more, if it is a Company, a permanent Body that shews itself to all the Publick, and is commissioned to inform others of the Contents of those Acts, to repeat the Publication of them, to facilitate to all Men the Means of inquiring into them, without ever remaining at rest; in that Case, although we can and ought to apply to that Body to be informed, yet the chief Merit and the true Activity of the Acts of that Kind, does not only consist in instructing whoever is seeking after the Light; it chiefly consists in being beforehand with us, and in leaving no body in a State of Unconcern. Such is the immortal Activity of the Scriptures in the Catholick Church. Her Ministry carries and publishes them every where, and is the only one that does it. Every where from Solemnity to Solemnity and from Day to Day, it publishes by a clear audible Signal, the Moment at which it renews the same Publication by Parts. Every where in our Churches the first Object that offers to the Eyes of the Assistants is the Pulpit that separates the People from the Clergy, and from which the Publication of the Apostolical Scripture is directed to the Faithful; nor are Infidels excluded from the hearing of it.

That Lecture, the Exhortation of the Pastor, and the offering of the Sacrifice, are the Ground of all Liturgies, and of what was practised in the *Christian* Congregations of the first Century⁸. The

⁸ See the Apology of St. *Justin*.

Asssemblage of these three Parts is found again in the Catholick Solemnities of the four Continents. It is then among the Catholicks that the Scripture is living, it is through them that it is universally published.

As a Scripture is of itself a dead Instrument, void of Activity, it is likewise of itself void of Authenticity. It is not then enough that a kind of Life should be given it by the Hand that brings it, or by the Mouth that reads it to us. We know not notwithstanding whence it came, nor through what Hands it has passed. The Scripture as well as the Bearer of it, must be warranted, before it is received and acknowledged as Truth.

The Authenticity of the Evangelical Scripture.

There is no Man but knows that a Letter, a Testament, a Sentence, a Patent, and a Treaty had need, towards its being admitted, that one should know the Hand-writing, the Notary, the Tribunal, the Seal, the Embassador. But when afterwards these Pieces have been verified, when they have been acknowledged by the Publick, and chiefly by a very numerous Society, that becomes both the Witness and the Warranty of them; from that Moment the Act never appears any more without the perfect Authenticity of its full Force: And it becomes an eternal Source of sure Instructions.

The Society preserves at the same Time the other Instruments both written and unwritten, the Monuments, the Practices, and all the Particulars relating both to the Reality and the clearing of the Object of that Writing.

But what compleats the Security of the Acts preserved in Writing; what constitutes in Favour of them an experimental Evidence, which is never resisted but through Stubbornness and Infatuation; is, when the Body or Ministry from which those Acts have issued, does still subsist, and countenances them.

them. We are sensible of the Difference which is between the Collection of the Common Laws of *France*, or of the Statutes of our supreme Courts of Justice (the Inforcement of which is entrusted to permanent and standing Companies) and the Laws of *Athens* and *Lacedæmon*, which are no longer found any where but in Books. That these are the Laws of *Lycurgus* or of *Solon*, may be made a Question, because no Senate is now commissioned to preserve the Text of them: No Court of Justice is avowedly established and authorised to explain or make the Application of them. They are no longer of any Force.

Therefore all the Laws, Treaties, Acts, and Writings, both civil and sacred, fall to the Ground for want of Vigour, when they are separated from the Depositories which have been charged with the keeping of them, and are duly authorised to put them in Force.

But, as the human Laws deserve all the Respect due to the legislative Power, when they are presented and countenanced by the publick Ministry charged to make the Application of them; much more shall we receive as divine the Scriptures which we style holy, when we hear them published and interpreted by the Ministry authentickly charged with that twofold Commission.

If a Quaker, or a professed *Arian*, should offer and pretend to explain the Holy Scripture to us; that Word, we would say to him, is void of Authority in your Mouth: 'Tis true, the Text of it came from the Apostles; and the Apostolic Succession continues to publish it: But since the Time you broke with that Senate, you are no longer known for having any Function; you are no longer a Teacher of the Word; and written or underwritten, it is in your Mouth nothing but the Word of a Man, who gives it what Turn he pleases. It

is the Sense not the Letter of that Text which constitutes the Merit of it. But the ancient and universal Ministry notoriously charged with publishing that Text and with transmitting the Meaning of it to us, is at one and the same Time assisted and directed in its Interpretation by the Wisdom of the publick Depositum and of the universal Predication.

That Text may have been copied with Variations. It may have been well or ill translated. But these Imperfections give no Alarm to the Catholick Church: They are compensated in it by correlative Instruments which are found numberless in the Depositum. They are fully rectified there by the Ministry which had published all Truths before the Publication of the Evangelical Scriptures, and which has lost neither its Privileges nor its Knowledge since that Publication.

Lay the Body of the *French* Laws by a Man who can read: You will not make a Tribunal by that. But let a King or a Republick authorise a standing Ministry to publish, interpret, and execute the Laws, then, indeed, the Validity of the Laws and of all the Acts passed in Consequence of them is known, because the Ministry authorised by the State is known.

The Holy Scripture has not, then, the only Advantage of preventing us by the Activity of the Ministry that publishes it among us: It has moreover the twofold Merit of an Authenticity made good to it by the Embassy which the Catholick Church reverences, and of a Sense which every Thing contributes to determine. The publick and conspiring Helps that secure the Condition of the private Man and of the Subject, are the Correspondence of the Acts of all Kinds, the several Correspondences of the Ministry that speaks the same Language every where, and the Acquiescence and Assent of the Body of Society, who knows at all
Times

Times the Power of its Ministry. The very same Helps secure the Condition of the Catholick. Such is on both Sides the Progress of our Security. We become sure of the Acts by the Ministry: And we have the Authenticity of the Ministry in the Acknowledgment and Assent of Society.

Altho' the Promises of *J. C.* so perseveringly fulfilled to our very Days, constitute a Testimony superior to all others; let us go on with considering how much Certainty there is in the human Means offered to us by the Catholick Church put upon a Level with any other Society.

This Acknowledgment of one single Ministry which must needs be applied to, is as clear and as constant in the civil State, as the publick Establishments and the Revenues which are annexed to it. The same Acknowledgment is as ancient and as persevering in the Catholick Church, as the Episcopal Sees, as the Temples we meet together in, and as the Revenues which have most anciently been annexed to them, for the maintaining of the same Ministry, and of the same Work.

The Outside is the same, says the Metaphysician, but, what is it that can hinder the Spirit and the Doctrine from being altered? The Scripture in that Case must needs be recurred to.

The Alteration meant may happen in the Societies that have demolished the Ministry: They have at the same Time demolished the Exterior and the Acts that were troublesome to them, but which settle our Condition. All is downright Intellect, and pure Metaphysicks among them, and the Scripture there takes the Turn of the Mind of him who has it in Hand: It is in vain one has Recourse to it. But Faith and the Sense of the Scriptures are invariable in the Catholick Church. The Reality of this Perseverance of the publick Ministry in the sound Predication, is the Fruit of the celebrated Promise:

Promise: And one of the most perfect Means of Credibility that can possibly make us sensible of our Advantage, lies in the Stability of the publick Depositem. There are, therefore, two immortal Predications, *viz.* one mute, the other audible: They maintain, they enlighten, they justify each other reciprocally.

We are presently sensible, upon this Principle, of the vast Judiciousness of that saying which we now repeat after a great Man: "I would not give Credit to the Evangelical Scripture, if I was not determined to it by the Authority of the Church."

As we have distinguished in Faith what proceeds from God when he influences a Mind, from the Conviction of the Man who believes upon sure Testimonies the Things he has not seen with his own Eyes; we lay aside here the spiritual Authority which the Church receives from the Chief who sanctifies her, and who fills the Hearts of his own Children with an indelible Security. We are only considering at present that Infallibility naturally inseparable from a large Society, when it bears Testimony to publick Matters of Fact. Churches as well as States perpetuate the Testimonies by perpetuating themselves. This Method, which is equally sure and compendious, and which Man was inured to, is that which God has chosen clearly to shew him the Embassy of the great Alliance. Society, which is most credible in Point of Matters of Fact, has without any Uncertainty transmitted to us both that Embassy and its Acts, the most ancient of which is the Scripture of the *New Testament*.

That Book does not only procure to us the Happiness of hearing those who have been immediately enlightened by the Spirit of God: It is moreover singularly advantageous to us, by informing us of what we are

The Scripture of the *New Testament* submits us to the Ministry.

not to expect from

from it, and by regulating the Measure of the Reverence due to it.

Why, is it then possible to carry to any Excess the Respect we have for the Scripture of the new Covenant? That Word wants, indeed, a speedy Explanation, and here it offers.

The Scripture without the Ministry is a dead Letter : And altho' it be of itself an admirable Philosophy, a Philosophy truly divine, it cannot however be looked upon as an Instrument sufficient to produce the Effects of the Alliance. It cannot even be proved to contain the whole Doctrine necessary to Salvation.

The Proof of this is found in Nature, and in the Character of every one of the Pieces that compose the Collection of that Scripture. They are different Parts of the Apostolical Predication put in Writing. But the Predication and the Ministry did fructify before. The Church was already formed. Therefore, it is not the Scripture that forms the Church. It is necessary, towards forming the Church through all Ages, that the Evangelical Scripture, and the whole subsequent Depositum, should be attended and supported by a Ministry previous to them. Three or four Matters of Fact may evidence the Case ; and they are found in the Events that have been the Occasion of the several Parts of the *New Testament*.

The exact Notice which St. *Luke* had taken of the whole publick Conversation and Life of *J. C.* by assiduously frequenting the Apostles Company, was the Occasion of his writing an Evangelical Narration more particular than the Histories which had been collected by several private Persons. The Blasphemies of those who denied, some the Reality of the Body of *J. C.* and others the Divinity of the Word, were the Occasion that prompted St. *John* to write an Evangelical History, wherein he insists
much

much upon those two Points, and upon the last Discourses of our Saviour to recommend to his Disciples a stedfast Perseverance in the Unity of Doctrine.

The *Acts of the Apostles* are the second Part of the Gospel of St. *Luke*, and they contain, not indeed the Actions or Discourses of *J. C.* but the Establishment of his Church.

The Dispute which arose at *Rome* between the *Jews* and the *Gentiles* converted to the Gospel concerning the Preference which some of them thought themselves well intitled to over the others in the new Alliance, was both the Occasion and the Subject-Matter of the Epistle to the *Romans* which reduces them all to an equal Need of the Grace of our Saviour.

The Questions started by the *Corinthians*, and the Disorders which had crept into their Church, gave Birth to the two Epistles directed to them by St. *Paul*.

The Attempt made by several *Jewish* Doctors to oblige the *Gentiles*, though baptized as well as themselves, to admit of the Customs of the Law of *Moses*, was the Occasion of the Epistle to the Churches of *Galatia*.

The well grounded, though not well reasoned, Veneration which the dispersed *Hebrews* preserved for the Sacrifices and other Rites of the Law, is what engaged St. *Paul* to instruct them (without naming himself) upon the Excellence of the eternal Priesthood of *J. C.* and upon the Unity of his Sacrifice, that suppressed the others by fulfilling all the Promises.

From this short Exposition it is plain, that the Pieces that compose the *New Testament* have been inspired as well as the Writers from whom we had them. They are so many different Acts of the first Predication. Reading and hearing the Publication
of

of them, is hearing the very Words of the Apostles and of their Instructor. But that high Notion which we have of the Scriptures, and which is grounded upon our Knowledge of Things, does not lead us to the Neglect of the other Means of Salvation, to confine us intirely to this. That so just and so necessary Veneration has then its Bounds.

It is plain that these different Acts of the first Predication have in the very Beginning been Instructions merely local and upon particular Subjects. We cannot conclude from it that those several Writings are, either each of them apart, or all of them collectively the whole Predication, the whole Treaty that was delivered into the Hands of the Ministry. The Apostles had received their Instructions before, and the Word has been fruitful before it was written. But altho' it were real, that the Evangelical Scriptures contain the Seed of every Truth, as they doubtless do, they have not equally well unfolded every Truth. The Interpretation of them is not given up to the Spirit of Singularity, but it is trusted to the Ministry which has been appointed Depository of both the Text and the Meaning of it. They themselves inform us in the most express Terms, "That Faith is by hearing, that the hearing is grounded upon the Predication, as the Predication proceeds from the Deputies;" that consequently the Embassy must be received; that the Ministry has received every Truth from the Spirit, and has communicated it to the Church, and that the Church which shews us for ever the true Ministry, is therefore *the Pillar and Ground of the Truth*^b.

Whence it follows that the Reverence so justly due to the Doctrine of the *New Testament* never intitled any body to reject the Ministry, any more than to reject the Church; it will on the contrary

^b 1 Tim. ch. iii. 15.

always make it our principal Obligation to receive all the Tenets she teaches us in an unanimous Manner; because knowing every Truth, she teaches it to us for ever; because she can at any Time define it when it has been obscured; and the Consent of all the Churches upon any Doctrine cannot but be the Expression of a Truth revealed to the Apostles to make one Part of the Depositum.

Although then, J. C. has not been willing that Faith should ever be indolent and lazy, since he forewarns his Disciples to ask, to search, to knock at the Door, to take proper Cautions against Dangers and against bad Teachers, to increase in the Science of Salvation, and to know Truth in order to be able to profess it; we cannot but admire the so very plain, so publick, and so indivisible Means, that form and confirm Faith in the Catholick Church.

It is there we find every Thing, just as the Subject finds all the Supports he stands in need of in the Concurrence of the Laws and the Authority which jointly maintain the whole Body of the Republick, and the Condition of every private Man.

Imagine now to yourself a private Man, and then another, and after their Example a third, who should say each of them apart; “ Do not
“ mention to me any more the publick Ministry.
“ The Magistrates have lost all their Prerogatives:
“ They deserve nothing but our Contempt, and I
“ have done with them. Ought Justice to have
“ been administered in this Manner? I shall admi-
“ nister it myself, and will do it well too. Let
“ me but do it: I have a good Copy of the Laws.
“ I shall apply them right, and will interpret them
“ according to sound Reason, which is in the last
“ Analysis the supreme Judge of all; and which
“ must of Course pronounce upon every Thing.
“ 'Tis true, others will perhaps put upon them a

“ Construction different from mine : But, ’tis no
 “ Matter : People will chuse. They shall apply to
 “ him whom they think judges best, and the State
 “ shall be reformed.”

Surely this cannot be the Reformation of the State : It is rather the Confusion and the Subversion of it : Nay, better : The private Man never rules any Thing in the Church, any more than in the State. The Laws themselves and the written Statutes effect nothing ; it is the Ministry that governs private Men ; that makes the Application of the Laws ; that, in short, produces solid and lasting Effects.

But, is it not introducing into the Society a Power that may prove exorbitant there, and occasion Troubles among Men, by appearing to be unlimited ?

A necessary
 Conduct in the
 Abuse of the
 two Powers.

There is, on the contrary, nothing more limited or less arbitrary than the Ecclesiastical Power. The Ministers of the Catholick Church are Bearers of the Word and of the Sacraments : But, they have nevertheless no Authority over the Nations (which belongs to Sovereigns only) nor over the Faith which belongs only to him who is the Author of it.

The Mediator of the new and eternal Covenant did from the Beginning clearly inform the Deputies of his Intentions, and ordered them to communicate the same to all Nations, without altering any Thing in them, without adding to them any Thing of their own : *Docentes eos servare omnia quaecumque mandavi vobis.*

The Rule pre-
 scribed by J. C.

The Rule prescribed to the first Envoys was, faithfully to consult their Instructions before they directed any Words to their Audience, *Omnia quaecumque mandavi*

mandavi vobis. The Rule of their Successors in the Ministry which was to last as long as the World, was to keep the Depositum which had been trusted to them, *Depositum custodi.*

The Rule of
St. Paul.

The Episcopal Body had no other Rule in the following Ages. Let nothing be altered: *Nil innovetur.*

The Rule of
Pope St. Ste-
phens.

“ Let us neither publish nor practice any Thing
“ but what was handed down to us: *Nisi quod tra-*
“ *ditum est.*”

“ What the holy Fathers have
“ taught us, said one in the fourth
“ Century, we declare it to those
“ whom we are appointed to instruct.” The Ad-
vertisement of *Vincent of Lerins* is but a perpetual
Application of that Maxim, to the most celebrated
Questions of Faith.

The Rule of
St. Basil.

All Ages have repeated and followed the same Rule: Nay, it is even impossible for any Man to transgress it with Impunity, because that Law is not only recorded in Books: It is a living Statute: It speaks and is intelligible to all, it not being different from the never failing Conformity which is in the universal Predication. If it is altered in one Place, it loudly cries and vindicates itself in ten thousand others. Besides, it is for ever before us, and is as publick as the most publick Work that ever was. The Offices of the Church are not celebrated within Doors. What are those Homilies, those Collects, and those Liturgies which our Prelates cause to be reprinted and translated with so much Zeal and Edification? What do they contain together with the Gospel but the Writings, the Prayers, the Models, in short the Faith of the first *Christians*? When the Clergy shall have a Mind to change and disguise the Faith of the first Ages, they must needs begin by suppressing the publick

Prayer, and the Signal that publishes the Beginning of it.

If Ministers of the Church have sometimes transgressed their Bounds, which are as well known as the Gospel, and have presumed to do Things that went beyond their Powers, or clashed with the Prudence of their Ministry; what must the Conduct of the Faithful have been in that Case?

The Party to be taken, and which was taken in Reality in all the Places where the Rules of the Gospel and the Examples of the first *Christians* are followed; was to behave with Regard to the Incroachments of the Clergy upon the Temporal, as true *Christians* behave with Princes who incroach upon Religion. These two Evils cannot be cured by Rebellion or Schism. The true Catholick remains subject to *Constantius*; but without renouncing the Faith of *Nice*: And he remains united to *Sixtus Quintus*; but without refusing to acknowledge the unalienable Rights of the House of *Bourbon*. He fulfills all Justice, and reconciles all Duties. There, and only there, lies the true Patience and the wisest Toleration, that strikes neither at the Integrity of the Depositum, nor at the Authority, whether temporal or spiritual.

Whoever is downright and honest in his Proceeding, some will say, cannot but acknowledge that the Scandals are compensated in the Catholick Church by the Prediction which the Lord himself has made of them, and by that Multitude of crying Voices that speak the same Language in it to the End of all Ages, and never cease to publish in it the same Faith and the same Regulations. But if the Acts that have been left us in Writing by apostolical Men, if their Establishments and all the Testimonies of the first Ages have been perpetuated together with the Ministry in the View of a Multitude of ever-subsisting Nations; will not that so
well

well averred Ministry be as apostolical at *Corinth* as at *Rome*? Fly, if you will from all those Churches of new Institution, whose Architects understand one another as little as did the Builders of *Babel*; but is not the Ministry which prevents us without any Interruption with its Faith, its Altars, and its Monuments; and with the immortal Acknowledgment of its Churches; as worthy to be listened to in the *Eastern* Congregations as in the *Latin* Church?

This was true as long as the *Eastern* Churches, and the *Latin* Church were but one Body. But the Ministry of *Corinth* and that of *Alexandria* are no longer the Catholick Ministry, since they no longer make Part of the Legation which by Right and in Fact carries the Evangelical Word to all the Universe, still preserving the first Form which has always served to shew her Powers.

These Societies and their Ministries went off from each other, and from the first See, which being the common Bond before, was also the Mark of the Unity of the whole. It is not enough that they should preserve a Ministry originally Apostolical. It is wilfully vitiated and withdrawn from the Rule of the Embassy, it being exercised apart, and unconnected with the most known Body of the Embassadors. These Societies are, by that Means, again fallen into the Uncertainty of Philosophy, and into the Disorders of the Spirit of Singularity. This leads us to the Principle of the Unity, which is the second Quality essential in a Ministry to make it lawful and recognizable.

II.

*The Unity of the Catholick Ministry,
and of the Catholick Church.*

THE eternal Wisdom, at the same Time that it submits our Reason to the Belief of her Myſteries, leaves it the whole Merit of a juſt Acquieſcence, and adds to it the Eaſe annexed to Certainty: For, in order to enable us to diſcern without any Miſtake the Deputies ſhe has commiſſioned to treat with us in her Name, ſhe cauſed their Powers to be recognized by the two equally ſure and plain Means, which evidence all the authorized Companies, and which diſtinguiſh without any Diſcuſſion the permanent Legations from the irregular and uſurped Powers. One of the two Means intended is the Publickneſs of the actual Exerciſe of the Miniſtry, and the Publickneſs of the Acts of the foregoing Administration; this is what we have juſt ſeen: The other is the Unity of the Body, though diſperſed in different Places.

Again, it is in the moſt common Proceedings of Society that the right Notion of Unity is to be found. A Child is capable of apprehending it, and it ſpares all Sorts of Reſearches to the Learned, whom the Multitude of his Views expoſes to very frequent Miſtakes. It is for this Reason that Chriſtianity which is for all, was regulated upon the Footing of all viſible Eſtabliſhments, which are diſtinguiſhed at firſt Sight.

The common
Notion of U-
nity.

In the Diſtrict of a ſupreme Court which is a perpetual Legation, the Apparitor has his peculiar Power: The Judge Delegate exerts another: The Attorney General and his Subſtitutes have their Functions:

Functions: The inferior Tribunals and the several Courts, have their own respective Provinces. But all these Actions, though exerted by different People, and at different Times, yet amount to Unity. Each Court is characterized and known by the Concert of its Members under the Chief who presides over the whole. Each Tribunal has its own. The first President is at the Head of the first and of all the other Courts. He is the Head of the whole Body. Every Part of that Body has a known Correspondence with the rest: So that the peculiar Operations of one of the Parts being done both in the Name and by the Consent of the whole, they of Course go by the Name, and in Reality are the Acts of the Body, just as the Actions of the Eye, the Foot, and the Hand, are the Actions of the whole Man.

Such is the Unity which *J. C.* has introduced into the Ministry, which cannot but communicate the same to the universal Church, of which it is the outward sanctifying Principle, the necessary Agent, and the visible Bond.

The Aim of the Mission of our Saviour, and of the Evangelical Work is, “not only to procure
“the Salvation promised to the *Jewish* Nation,
“but also to gather together in one the other
“Children of God, notwithstanding their being
“scattered* all over the Earth;” and of these different Churches to form but one single Church, in which the true Worshippers united to one Head, shall for ever pay the Father the Worship he requires of them, which consists in worshipping him in their Heart and in Truth. The divine Word vouchsafed to become one among them, to call them his Brethren, and to make but one Body with them. The Incarnation and the Apostolate have

* John xi. 51, 52.

no other Aim but the forming of that Body. *in ædificationem corporis Christi*¹.

Those, who from Age to Age are notwithstanding their Imperfections admitted into that Body of Worshipers, profess to be but one among themselves, as they are willing to be but one with their Chief and with the Father, through Charity. Though dispersed every where, they are bound to unite by their inward Sentiments, to believe the same Truths, to expect the same Blessings, and to imply in their Prayers, in their Services, and in their tender Affection, the whole Body of the Fraternity.

This Communion of the Faithful which is pointed out to us^m as the Token by which all Men shall ever know the Disciples of the Lord, has of course been always characterized as to the Outside by recognizable Ties, always guided, promoted, and supported by the outward Union of many Families with one Pastor of the second Order, of many Parishes with one Bishop, of many Pastors of the first Order, and of many national Churches with the first See, with the Head of the apostolical Ministry.

The Love of Order and Peace does not suffice in Society to establish Peace and Order there. Men must have Laws, Treaties for the Division of Possessions, a Ministry, a Promulgation, a Magistracy, a settled Polity. Nor does the Love of Concord any more suffice to make *Christians*: But it was towards effecting, regulating, and shewing that Union that *J. C.* has instituted a Ministryⁿ and an Association no less well known than the Reception itself of that Ministry^o.

Those who part from it, bear from the very Day of their Rupture the Characteristicks of that Spirit of Singularity which leaps beyond the Rule, and

¹ Ephes. iv. 12.

^m John xiii. 35.

ⁿ Ephes. iv. 12.

^o Luke ix. 16.

to which nothing has been promised. “ Were ye
“ but one or two Disciples, says the Saviour;
“ meet together in my Name, and I shall be in
“ the middle of ye.” Does he after this give all
those small Societies of *Christians* flocking in diffe-
rent Places, over to the Uncertainty of their own
Thoughts, and to the Independence which is inse-
parable from such Lonesomeness? Not so, indeed:
It is rather in order to prevent a Variation of Con-
duct and a Multiplicity of Doctrines which is the
Result of Independence, that he gave Mankind a
Ministry consisting of different Orders of Pastors,
of Evangelists, and of subordinate Ministers, work-
ing in Concert and in one and the same Spirit, to-
wards forming one and the same Body, and one and
the same Heart: *Unum Corpus & unus Spiritus*^p.

Uniting in one Faith and in one Spirit^q Men dis-
persed all over the Earth and in different Ages, is
the End of the Incarnation. Nothing is less con-
sistent with this Intention than Preachers by them-
selves, and without Subordination: Nothing more
conducive to it than the Concordance of the Ac-
tions of a Company the different Orders of which
work in Conjunction towards compleating the same
Work. *Per omnem juncturam subministrationis.*

That Unity of one single Ministry spreading in
many Places, is, according to human Notions,
the most visible Mark of Society, of which it is
the Connexion and the Mobile.

But are we sure that this is in Reality the Con-
stitution of the Church, and that the Church is one
through the Unity of her Faith wrought by the
Unity of her Ministry? Let us not ascribe any In-
tentions to *J. C.* but let us learn the Intentions he
has had, from the Discourses and from the Esta-
blishments which all the Churches have received
from the Apostles, and handed down to us. The

^p Ephes. iv. 4.

^q Ibid 11, 12, 13.

Saviour, in explaining his own Intentions to his Envoys, had charged them in an express Manner, “to teach and cause all the Things he had commanded them to be observed^r.” He had added to this Explanation the Promise of sending to them the Spirit, who should let them into the Meaning of all he had heretofore taught them and teach them every Truth^s. What the Deputies are now going to say, do, or establish for ever after this Assurance, shall have been inspired by J. C. Let us begin with their Discourses.

St. Paul is so wholly taken up with the Communication of all Spiritual Helps which J. C. has made to depend on Unity, that there is no Simile which he does not employ to inculcate this important Truth. He sets the Uncertainty of the Philosophers, given up each of them apart to their own respective Thoughts, in an Opposition to the Happiness of the Faithful, who are no longer tossed about by all the Winds of human Doctrines, but who are guided and settled in the Unity of the same Faith through a Variety of Ministries subordinate to each other purposely to promote in Concert the Perfection of the same Work.

He even goes so far as to compare the whole Church with the Body of Man^v; and the Functions of the Ministry which communicate the Divine Instructions and Gifts to the Body of the universal Church, with the Correspondences of the adminicular and subordinate Vessels, which jointly distribute Life and Health to the human Body notwithstanding their Dispersion and the Multiplicity of their Operations. Any Member which is separated from the Body, or from the nutritive Vessels, has no longer in him the vivifying Action and Influence.

^r Matth. xxviii. 20.

^s John xiv. 26.

^v Ephes. iv. 14.

^w Ibid viii. 16. and Colos. ii. 19.

It is from this Comparison, which is familiar to the holy Apostle, that he derives the Advices which are most necessary to the Faithful to keep them in the strictest Union with their Pastors; and most wholesome to the Pastors themselves, towards hindering, for instance, the Eye too proud of its noble Function from telling the Foot, I stand in no Need of you.

That Unity is not a Figure of Rhetorick, or an ingenious Picture of the Benefits of Union. It is the essential Form *J. C.* had given to his Church, that it might be perpetuated, and easy to be distinguished to the very Period of the World. Let us now judge of it by the Apostolical Acts and Establishments.

If it was enough for each Church towards being instructed and guided in the Paths of Salvation, to chuse a Minister for herself, without having received any Thing from any other Church, the Ministers, in that

The Apostolate is but one, and through it all the Churches are likewise but one.

Case, would not be subordinate to each other, nor the Churches constitute one and the same Body. What Unity could there be among different Ministers that do not form a Corporation? There can of course be no vacant Place nor any necessary Aggregation in a Company that does not exist: Having no Unity among themselves, those Ministers shall not be able to introduce any into the Societies which they are conducting. The Spirit, the Principles and the Names of them shall be different. This can never be the Church of *Jesus Christ*. The immortal Church is but one, through the most visible Unity of her Ministry, and through the Profession she makes in receiving it, of being united to all those who receive the same.

That Ministry wholly included within *Jerusalem*, was but one at first: When increased and dispersed
after-

afterwards it was but one still. It is because the Apostolate is one Body, that the Place which happens to be vacant in it, is filled up by a Disciple which is not only chosen, but also *publicly aggregated*^z.

There were in the Beginning together with the apostolical College, two other Colleges subordinate to it, *viz.* that of the Priests, and that of the Deacons. But the same Object and the same Spirit unites them all. And although their Services have different Degrees of Excellence; although their Functions be not the same, yet none of them has his Action apart: All is operated jointly, and there is but one Hierarchy: Whence it follows that there is also but one Church.

The Unanimity of the Ministry; a Proof of the Unity.

The common Treasure of the Churches is the self-same Faith. This cannot be struck at in any one Church, but the Rectors of all the others, and the whole Ministry take the Alarm, and flock together for the general Assistance. Are they at a Stand and divided at *Antioch* upon an important Question? The Apostles interrupt^y their several Functions, in order to take Cognizance of it, and restore the Tranquillity of that Church: They come to a general Meeting. *Convenerunt Apostoli.*

The first Order honours and consults the second, *convenerunt Apostoli & Seniores videre de verbo hoc.* According to the Letter of the *Greek Text*; “the Apostles and the Priests met together to discuss that Point: And after they had long conferred together upon it, *Peter* arose and pronounced his Judgment.” *Barnabas* and *Paul* joined theirs to it. *James* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, their Meeting Place, closed the Session with giving his Vote, *Et ego judico.*

^z *Annumeratus est cum undecim.* Act. i. 26.

^y Acts xv. 2.

The Plurality of all these Judgments, combined towards making but one, in order to settle the Church in the Belief of the self-same Tenet, does perfectly characterise the Unity of the Ministry which governs her.

The Form of the Unity in all Corporations.

That Church, which had, in a very short Time, spread out of *Judæa*, and even beyond the Limits of the *Roman* Empire; did not therefore change its Form: The Hierarchy is found again the same, and the three subordinate Ministries are again seen every where: They perform the same Functions at all Times: And altho' the Ministers are multiplied, yet all their different Services constitute but one and the same Work. They mutually inform each other of every Thing. They blame whatever appears to them reprehensible in the Administration of their Collegues: They confirm what is good by giving their Assent to it: And the Unanimity continues to manifest the Unity.

The Apostolical College increases together with the Wants of the Church: *Barnabas*, *Silas*, and others are aggregated to it. But, it is that very Association which continues to evidence the essential and indivisible Unity of the Apostolate. There is no Need of a Cooptation where no Corporation, nor any Kind of Company is existing.

The Aggregation to the Apostolical College, a Proof of the Unity.

Paul moved and informed by the Spirit of God, publishes the Gospel in *Arabia* and *Asia*; without having conferred about it with any Man. Sometime after, being willing to render his Doctrine not indeed more certain; it being authorized by the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, but more beneficial to all, by the Visibility of its perfect Agreeable-

The Conduct of St. Paul supposes the Law of the Unity.

² Galat. i. 11. 13. and 17.

ness to the whole Ministry; he went to visit *Peter*^a, and then, by an express Command of God, the whole apostolical College^b, “from which he received the Testimonies of the Unity of his Work with theirs^c,” and the special Province of his Predication. *Dextras dederunt mihi & Barnabæ Societatis.*

The Correspondence between the apostolical Co-operators is spreading with the Church, nor can it be more publick. If then the Member among them which had received^d nothing from Men, and had his Doctrine immediately from *J. C.* is, by a special Revelation, forewarned not to do his Work apart, and “would be afraid, as he himself declares “it, to run in vain,” or to have rendered his Labour fruitless, for want of having acknowledged and honoured the apostolical Fraternity by a remarkable Unanimity; is it, thenceforward, in the Power of any Man living, to separate his own Work from that of the Sacerdotal Body? It is plain that the Tranquillity of the Church is the Result of Unanimity, as Unanimity is the Result of the Observation of the Rule: Now, the Rule is known to all human Societies, and it openly appears in the Progress of the Evangelical Ministry. Those who exercise it are from Day to Day multiplied, in Proportion to the Number of the Faithful. But, as there is but one Alliance, and one and the same Faith, which is to sanctify them all, there is still and ever will be but one Apostolate. Two Embassies independent of each other would constitute a Monster, or be a Source of Confusion: Therefore, altho’ the Mission was daily increased from one Continent to another, yet the Unity subsisted still: It really took in all the Earth.

^a Galat. i. 18. and ii. 2.

^b *secundum Revelationem.*

^c Ibid ii. 7, 8. and 9.

^d Galat. i. 1.

The Successors of the Apostles continued to hold the first Rank, to ordain the different Ministers appointed to perpetuate the three Orders; to confirm the new Converts; to assemble when Need required; to judge the Doctrine peremptorily, and to make all proper Regulations in their synodal Meetings: In short to exert jointly the Fulness of their Power. Altho' they had each of them apart the Inspection of a Church, they nevertheless worked in common for all the Churches, by communicating to them the very same Professions of Faith; by generalizing the Decisions established in peculiar Assemblies conformably to the Analogy of the common Predication; and in short by meeting all of them in common from every Part of the World, whenever the Thing became possible and necessary.

The Church set at Liberty in the fourth Century had already exposed her Doctrine, her Solemnities, and all her ancient Customs to broad Day-Light. The Disputes created by Philosophy upon the fundamental Point of the Christian Religion, completely shewed the primitive and essential Form of the Church, by illustrating her Government and her Unity by an Œcumenical Council. That Unity which had always been and was for ever to be the visible Rule of every Mind, and the most distinct Characteristick of the true Mission; appeared in its greatest Lustre at *Nice*. The first Council of *Jerusalem* held by the Apostles themselves, had been the Model of it, and the first Benefit of the Liberty of the Church was the confounding of a capital Error, by opposing to the Philosophy of *Arrius* the ancient and universal Belief, the Testimonies of the Deputies of all the Churches, the apostolical Scriptures, the ancient Professions of Faith, the Common Prayers, and finally the most regular Decision of the first Order, pronouncing with an Authority that was both di-

vinely

vinely and naturally infallible. It was divinely so, since it is with the Apostles, and consequently with their Successors repeating their own Words, that *J. C.* has promised to remain even to the End of the World: It was naturally so too, as all other Corporations are, which cannot be ignorant of their own Laws, especially when they legally consult their own Possession, and the publick Records, wherein those Laws are written and deposited.

The Unity always visible, notwithstanding the Dispersion of the Bishops.

But, the Catholick Church whose Unity is rendered visible by the Reunion of the Presidents of the peculiar Churches with their Doctors in a general Council, loses none of its Prerogatives, nor any Part of its Visibility by being dispersed. She needs not every Day to decide Cases: But she daily wants to shew her Unity, that no Mistake may be made in the Choice of a Church. Therefore the Mark of that Unity ought to subsist for ever.

The Primacy of the See of *St. Peter.*

The Place which was the first in the very Time of the Apostles, is still so to this very Day: Those who fill it have the Precedency and the Pre-eminence in the Councils: And have it also in the Church dispersed. As *St. Peter* had the Precedency among the Apostles, being named *the first*, acting, speaking, and voting the first at *Jerusalem*, at *Antioch*, and at *Rome*, where he ended his Apostolate by the Martyrdom which was foretold to him by *Jesus Christ*; his Successors in that See had likewise the same Rank among the Bishops, and in the whole Church. The See of *Peter*, both in his Life-time and after his Death, was always looked upon as the common Center of the Evangelical Predication. Those who had no Manner of Relation and Correspondence with that Center,

ter, were always looked upon as working without Unity as well as without Rule.

That Primacy of the Successor of *Peter*, is neither a frivolous Honour nor an arrogant Domineering, that degrades his Collegues, or demolishes their Authority. It is a Precedency that sets them off: It is a Bond which associates their Functions to the universal Work, and which proves the Validity of them. It is a Form not merely decent, but truly necessary. That Form was known every where else in the human Societies. And it

was instituted by *J. C.* as well as the Apostolate. He that has made Choice of an Embassy to instruct all Nations for ever, has taken Care to distinguish it from all the Legations which Adventurers might be pleased to assume to themselves. He made of all the Envoys but one single Body. All the Members of that Body have a Chief, and by that Union the whole Body, the Chief and the Members are for ever recognizable. The Clergy, the Sees, and the Bishops are dispersed all over the World: But the Episcopate is but one. All the Sees are but one See; and as we have but one Master, even *J. C.* there is also on the Earth but one Christian School, *viz.* the Catholick Church.

The Primacy
is of Divine
Institution.

Nothing more visible, and indeed nothing more necessary, than the Unity of the Embassadors: Of Course, nothing more visible, or less liable to be mistaken, than that Society which has received the Alliance with the true Embassy infallibly recognizable by her Unity. The Church rendered truly single by the Unity of the Episcopate, was represented as such by all the most respectable among the Holy Fathers, such as *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Athanasius*, the Fathers of *Nicaea*, *Austin*, *Optatus*, and so many others, whose Testimonies are not by a great deal so much the Expression of

their own peculiar Thoughts, as the common Confession of the Churches, and the Reality of their indissoluble Union with the Apostolical See.

It is that unvariable and most sensible Unity of the Ministry, which, by rendering the Church of God as visible, as to the Exterior, as a Town situated at Top of a high Mountain, inwardly works the most desirable Effects in it.

1st, That Unity secures the Condition of the private *Christian*, whom the Necessity of his daily Labour dispenses with deep Researches.

2d, The same Unity inlightens and directs the Choice of the private *Christian*, who is willing to be instructed and able to defend the Cause of the Church.

3d, It works the Infallibility of the common Predication. Where the Unity of the Embassy does reside, there the Uniformity of Language and the Effect of the Treaty is certainly to be found.

4thly, That Unity, far from exempting the Ministers of the Word from making an exact Study of the Christian Doctrine, does, on the contrary most strictly bind them to do it.

The three first Articles have already been cleared: Nor is the fourth less evident than the rest. The

The Unity of the Ministry renders the Faith single, and infallible.

Unity of the Ministry lays on the Ministers the Obligation of an assiduous Study, because the Unity of the Embassy being appointed to introduce the same Faith and the same Hopes every where, all the Embassadors must of Necessity have received the same Instructions, and publish the same Treaty. Now, they have but two Means to bring this about: They must either learn the whole by Means of a new Revelation, which God has neither promised any where, nor granted to any Body; or borrow their Instructions from the Depositum, according to *St. Paul's* Direction

rection and to the universal Practice of all permanent Legations. They are then obliged, in order to have but one Language conformably to their being but one Body, to model their Knowledge upon the Acts of the Depositum which their Predecessors in the Legation have handed down to them. But the Advantage of the Catholick Ministers is such, that their very Functions are Instructions to them, that the Liturgy is an excellent Theology for them, and that they can never pray much, without beginning to be much the wiser for it.

Consequently, the Conformity of their Instructions, necessarily borrowed from the Archives of the Embassy, the Solidity of the Work which they are perfecting in common, and the Inspection of the whole Body over the Work of each Co-operator, secure an invariable Doctrine to the Church.

This Infallibility, naturally worthy of our Confidence, is rendered truly divine, and much illustrated by the Promise which J. C. made to the Embassy, of preserving it quite to the End of the World. The Promise is answered by the Event: The uninterrupted Mission is still heard in the remotest Climates, and publishes nothing there, without justifying it by the Acts of the ancient Predication.

But; is the Condition of the true Catholick as advantageous as it is pretended to be? Cannot his Pastor; or any other Pastor, make a wrong Use of his Ministry more or less? Among the Pastors, even of the very first Rank, did not *Peter* himself prove to be reprehensible? Was not Pope *Victor* accused by the Bishops of the *West* of too much Rigidity or of Imprudence? Do we not reckon a great many Falls and Errors in the Popes *Liberius*, *Honorius*, and *John XXII*? What Conduct was that of *Alexander VI*? If the Leaders are blind, they will lead other blind Men into the same Precipice:

Or if the People are under the Necessity of reforming their own Pastors, what does it avail them to be governed?

This Objection, which has already been turned a thousand different Ways, falls most heavily upon the Schismatical Societies: It betrays their Uncertainty and their excessive Misery. But, it is so very far from disgracing the Catholick Church, that it rather sets off her Advantages: It shews her Treasures which are easy to be acquired, easy to be restored when lost; common to all, and ever abundant and indestructible.

The Faults of the Pastors would be deplorable in the Catholick Church, if they became the Faults of the Church itself. But the Perpetuity and the Unity of her Predication sufficiently remedy every Evil. In the Societies which have chosen new Teachers and assumed new Denominations to themselves, the Error of the Master becomes that of his Society. Three modern Churches now co-existing, necessarily reproach the Uncertainty of their respective Ways to each other, by their very Variety: And as they insist upon the Privilege of reforming themselves, they often rectify one false Doctrine, by another which is not a whit more certain.

The Error of the Man listened to out of Unity, is necessarily contagious, and the Truth he teaches is a perishable Treasure in his Hands. Unity alone remedies all Sorts of Errors: And it not only teaches but even warrants every Truth, because the Unity is visible, and renders the Powers, the Alliance, and every Truth as visible as it is itself. St. *Cyprian* fell into an Error concerning Rebaptization: But by taking great Care not to break the sacerdotal Unity; and by making it the Rule of his Faith, to keep to the Decision and Unanimity of the Body of the Successors of the Apostles; he himself shewed us the Remedy of his Mistake. His Attachment
to

to Unity put a Stop to the Consequences of his Fault, which was thus covered by a very great Charity. Precipitation, the Frailties inseparable from the human Thoughts, and Error itself may shew themselves in Unity: But they are the Faults of such and such private Person: They never will become those of the Church, because Unity rectifies the Things that are wrong; because it sufficiently confutes all Errors, and ever preserves and publishes every Truth.

This Infallibility which has been secured to the Catholick Church, and to her alone, is the Fruits of her Unity, and the Unity of that Body is the Result of the Unity of its Ministry. When several Provinces, which had formerly no other Tie with each other but that of being reciprocally Neighbours, come to be submitted to one and the same Magistracy, and to the same Laws, they together constitute a District, The Unity of their Magistracy, and the perpetual Application which is made to them of the same Laws, do not only communicate Unity to them, but also the sure Knowledge of their common Condition, and of the Processes to be recurred to towards being maintained in the same. Time more and more strengthens both these Ties and their Certainty. There is nothing but Disorders and Affliction to be expected for any Family that shall pretend to withdraw itself from the Unity of that Government.

That Unity of the human Ministries, which is so very fit to remove all Uncertainty, is visibly what our Saviour had in View in the Promises he made to *St. Peter*. Let us now judge by the Execution of the full Meaning of them.

Immediately after the Effusion of the Spirit which was to shew the Effects of the Work of *J. C.* and to comfort the Disciples for the Depar-

The Execution of the Promises made to *St. Peter*.

ture of their Master, *Peter* begins publickly to perform the Commission of teaching in the Name of the Lord and to declare who *J. C.* is. He makes Use of his Power of binding and loosing. He grants Baptism to penitent Hearts, and refuses the Remission of Sins to false or dubious Conversions. He makes use of the Keys which *J. C.* had promised to give him as the future Reward of his excellent Confession: *Tibi dabo claves Regni.* The Saviour had, at the very Moment of that Promise, forbidden him and the other Disciples to tell any body that he was *Jesus the Messiah*^c. The Prohibition is removed at last. The Moment of exercising the Ministry is now come: And both through that Power and through the Word of Truth, *Peter* forms and founds the Church; he confers on her the Effects of the Infallibility and Indefeasibility which had been promised for her Sake to the Apostolate: *Portæ inferi non prævalebunt adversus eam.*

Peter is restored after his Fall. He is confirmed: And through the Prayers of the supreme Mediator he is now unshaken in his Faith: *Rogavi ut non deficeret Fides tua.* It is then that all his Functions and all his Qualities are made to appear. He is *Peter*, and the Foundation of the Edifice wherein God shall for ever be honoured by a pure Faith and by a great Sanctity of Manners.

But this Apostolate that founds and forms the Church is common to him with other Envoys, since he is *the first of all*^d. “Receive ye the Holy Ghost, said *Jesus* unto them in common. Whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto them^e.” They, through these common Powers, and through their common Legation, form the Church in Conjunction with *Peter*. Their Apostolate is not divided. *Peter* is the Foundation and they are the Foundation: *Fundamentum Apostolorum.*

^c Math. xvi. 20.

^d Math. x. 2.

^e John xz.

In the Revelation made to St. *John*, the Names of the Apostles are written upon so many Stones, which are the Foundation of the Holy City, and which constitute but one Edifice of which *J. C.* is the common Support: *Ipsa summo angulari lapide Christo Jesu.*

There are then two important Truths which the Church has never separated: One, that the Ministry which forms and governs her, shall, to the very last Days, be under the Protection of him who delegated it, so that the Body of the Envoys shall always preach up Truth: *Go ye, says he, teach; and be assured that I am with you even to the End of the World:* The other, that all the Envoys collectively taken shall make but one with the first of all, and that the first of all being, by Way of Excellence, the Stone, the first Stone of the Foundation, any Edifice that has no Connexion with that Stone is out of the Foundation, out of the Unity, out of the Structure of the Church: Whereas the Edifice built upon that Support shall be the Church of *Jesus Christ*, and shall receive from it that Unmoveableness which is to render all the Attacks of Hell abortive.

If the Promises of the Saviour concerning the Unmoveableness and the Visibility which the true Church shall borrow from the very outward Form of her Ministry, wanted any Explanation; pray where would it be reasonable to look out for the Interpretation of them? By what Prerogative shall the last Ages be more able to understand the Words of the Saviour than the foregoing? It is both prudent and necessary to look out for the Interpretation of them, no where but in the Execution itself of the Promises. The true, the great Explanation of the Words of our Saviour concerning his Church, will, doubtless, be found in the Form of the Church of the first Ages, in the constant Language of the ancient Doctors of all the Continents of the World, and

chiefly of the Doctors of the fourth Century, who coming together with the whole Church out of the Oppression and Darkness in which it had been obliged to remain, began to shew to the Faithful, to the Schismaticks and to the whole Universe, the Unity of their Society, notwithstanding its being dispersed every where, notwithstanding its being submitted to several Pastors who were together but one and the same Ministry through their Communion both with each other, and with the Successor of *Peter*. Such is their Principle and their Language.

The natural Effect of this outward Form is no Way obscure. The Saviour, by invisibly protecting his Legation, hides his own Operation under the Veil of the common Proceedings of human Prudence. Those publick Bonds, that remarkable Communion of all the Pastors with each other and with a known Chief, are what renders the sacerdotal Body sensibly like unto all the Bodies instituted by Legislators. There results a twofold Effect from it, *viz.* to render that Government visible to all, and to perpetuate for ever the Execution of the Intentions of the Legislator.

Unity alone produces the Sameness of the Practices, of the Language, and of the Depositum. Take away the outward Unity, and the Perpetuity and Unanimity shall be no more.

It then, there happens to be a Division of the Opinions concerning any Point, as, doubtless, there will be; all, in that Case, shall be cleared according to the Testimonies of the Doctrine which each of the Churches has received and ever professed. Every Thing shall, when Need requires, be regulated and defined, by the concurring of the Chief and of the first Pastors in the Exposition of the same Tenets.

Moderation is
requisite in the
Faithful.

However intitled the Faithful may
be to Love at their Heart and to
practice

practice the Truths which are exposed in the Depositum they have no Authority to condemn those who contradict them. The Order of Teaching was given to the pastoral Body, to which alone it belongs to come out in Time with its Definition of those Truths.

If our Saviour has not at first unfolded and said every Thing to his Apostles concerning these Rules, at the Time when they made him, upon the Primacy and upon the Necessity Men would be under of acting in Conjunction with them, Questions that betrayed their inward Pride; it is because he had reserved to the Holy Ghost, which he was to send down upon them, the Office of curing them of their Fondness for Distinctions, and of their Jealousy with Regard to personal Prerogatives; of teaching them in Time the Form of the Government of his Church; and of revealing every necessary Truth to them. He himself taught them that Form by Word of Mouth in all the Conversations he had with them ever since his Resurrection. He enabled them to understand every Truth, and made them sensible of the whole Weight and Extent of it, by the Communication of his Spirit. What they have practiced does then proceed from God: There, indeed, shall we find our Rule, not in the Thoughts of any Man whatsoever.

Therefore, the Interpretation of the whole Gospel and the whole of Futurity must needs be found in the Conduct of the Apostles. Two Strokes of it, which we shall here pitch upon, imply the Totality of it.

Hymenæus and *Philetas*, too much used to the Disputes of the *Greek* Schools, and loth to admit as revealed Truths Things which they could not conceive, took it into their Head to dogmatize in the Church of *Corinth*, upon the Resurrection

The Conduct of the Apostles, a Model to all Futurity.

urrection of Bodies, and to deny the Possibility of it. The *Christians*, full of Indignation, informed *St. Paul*, their first Teacher, of it. He confuted the Notions of these Logick-choppers, and confirmed the Faith of those whom they had shaken. Anon, the general Insurrection of the Faithful, who had been completely informed of that capital Truth, even before these Disputes, and the most express Confession made of it by all the Churches, who solemnized the Resurrection of the Saviour every Year, stopt the Mouth of those Philosophers at *Corinth*, and discredited their Learning wherever they had the Audacity to oppose their Arguments to Revelation. The Scandal was at an end. Every Man felt the Necessity of subjecting his Understanding to an Obedience to Faith: And there was no Council called upon it, because the Ministry had the unanimous Consent of all Minds concerning the Doctrine. They already had what would have been the Result of the Council.

It was not the same Thing as to another Truth which, though very important and very well known, had nevertheless been obscured by a great Variety of Opinions in some of the Churches. The well-grounded Respect which was generally preserved for the Law of *Moses*, and the inconsiderate Zeal with which several among the converted *Hebrews* pretended to subject the *Gentiles* to the Practices of that Law, threw many of the Faithful and even whole Churches into great Perplexities.

St. Peter after he was returned from *Cornelius* the Centurion, had already informed the Church both of the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the *Gentiles* as well as upon the baptized *Jews*, and of the express Prohibition God had made him never any more to repute as impure those whom his Grace had sanctified.

Even

Even before that Time, the holy Forerunner of *J. C.* and *Stephen* the first Martyr, had clearly taught the End of the Law of *Moses*, and the Cessation of the Sacrifices, which were to be replaced with the only Sacrifice of *J. C.*

The Doctrine of *St. Paul* was most publick and most positive on that Point. Truth was known: It made Part of the universal Predication. But it was thwarted by the selfish private Views of several Ministers of the Word, who had Parts, Credit, and an eager Desire of making themselves important Men. As Jealousy was the Mobile of their Conduct, not the Love of Truth; they made it their Study to extenuate the Services of *St. Paul*, and of the true Evangelical Workers; and moreover to put on a Level, by Arguments sophistically digested the preparatory Law with the Law of the Gospel: So that some of the Faithful among the *Gentiles* thought themselves bound to profess both Laws at the same Time.

A general Meeting of the whole Body of the Envoys was then granted to the Exigency of the Churches, and to the Necessity of putting a Stop to the Commotions which that Quarrel had occasioned among them. The whole was debated by the unanimous Testimonies of what the Holy Ghost had wrought and declared every where, both concerning the Adoption of the *Gentiles*, and the Cessation of the Effects of the Law from the Days of *John Baptist*.

The principal Fruits of the Discussion was not to teach the Church a new Doctrine, since the Church defined at that Time the Truth she had preached up before it was contested, but to reunite the several Judgments on that Head, and to render more sensible the Unanimity which was already most real: After which the Doctrine concerning which the Hesitation of some had for a while been supported,

supported, being now put in a new Light and defined in a positive Manner, it acquired the Privilege of submitting every Mind.

Such is now going to be for ever the Authority of the Church, whether dispersed or represented in a Council by her Deputies. All her Proceedings emanate from and again center in Unity. Her Methods and Ways are now for ever known: Her Form is fixt; nor shall any Alteration be made in it.

That Form which is the Interpretation of the Intentions of *J. C.* shall for ever be the Bulwark of the Church. The Primacy, far from eclipsing, does rather suppose the other Powers. The Church is served by the Concurrence of all the Testimonies, by the Exertion of all the Prerogatives, and by the use of a just Liberty: But all these Operations become but one, because the Primacy constitutes the Bond and shews the Unity of them.

Here is, however, immediately after the Death of the Apostles, a Novelty which seems to be a Decay in the Church, and which gives Room for

a well-grounded Mistrust. The Apostles were able to teach with Security, and to decide with Authority, because they most authentically had the Spirit of God. But when the Successors in their Functions shall after their Example be willing to give Decisions, will they be able

to do it with the same Security? They are expressly ordered to keep the Depositum of Faith. *Depositum custodi.* They, at that rate are obliged, and promise to consult the Depositum for ever. It is from thence they shall for the future borrow their Predication: It is there they shall, when Need requires, find the Decision of any well known Doctrine that shall have been obscured by Disputes.

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Can it not be said that there is in this Respect a very great Decay in the Ministry, since the foregoing Ministers could borrow their Knowledge from the immediate Revelation of the Spirit of God: Whereas those who are to come after, expect no such Inspiration? They are to declare nothing but what shall have been believed ever and every where. *Quod semper, quod ubique.* Their Condition does then prove to be much inferior to that of the first Ministry, and ours is of Course less advantageous than that of the first *Christians*.

But, there is no Disadvantage nor any real Change in that. It is, on the contrary, a sure, common, and efficacious Means of perpetuating the Intentions of the Legislator without any Equivocation or Ambiguity. As there is an only Lord, who has once notified his Intentions to his Embassy, there will never be but one Treaty, and one and the same Doctrine for all and every where. Those who compose the Embassy teach in Conjunction and mutually enlighten each other *in solido*. Arbitrary Doctrines can never start up, but all the rest cry out upon them: And as the Embassy together with its Acts, is to last as long as the World itself; the Faith is but one at all Times.

If the Condition of the Catholick Church is happy, it is not only because the same Tenets cannot be unanimously received by so many Nations that compose it, without being apostolical, and without having been handed down in an uniform Manner; but also because the Ministers of the Catholick Legation having still the same Functions, the same Posts, the same Chief, the same Universality, and the same Unity; we are sure, by receiving that Ministry, of receiving the Apostolate which was to last for ever.

One may, by Accusations either affected or foreign to the Subject, render the Catholick Church odious,

odious, by insinuating that she shall, whenever she pleases, be able to make Errors pass into Articles of Faith. But, such an Inconvenience is to be feared only in the Societies that chuse their own Teacher, and that listen to one Man. As for us, it is the Ministry of all Ages that we listen to. What comes only from the Schools, not from the publick Depositum, we pass upon it the Judgment of either Esteem or Toleration which the Church herself has passed on the same. We make it not the Rule of our Belief, and we leave it there for what it can be worth. But the Doctrine that saves us all is positive and preached up every where as well as our common Faith; nor shall one single Jot of it be ever retrenched.

When a Truth has not as yet been decided by a special Judgment, it is, however, already known, since it could not possibly have been defined, had it not been already in the publick Depositum where the Church takes all the Doctrines she preaches. The Publication of our present Time cannot then with Impunity be different from that of Yesterday, and the Decisions that shall perhaps be made in a hundred Years to come, are Truths already declared in the sacred Books, and in the Monuments of the first Ages, altho' they have not been the Object of a special Definition. The Bishop of *Samojate*, a Priest of *Alexandria*, an Archdeacon of *Angiers*, may put forth new Doctrines. But the whole Ministry is watching *in solido* to put a Stop to their Attempts. The Falshoods advanced by one Minister, are confuted by another. Were they to hold their Tongue for a while, the Depositum would still speak in their Stead. On the contrary, what one of them says that is good, the others acknowledge and praise its Conformity to the universal Predication: And when we read the Exposition of Faith by the Bishop of *Meaux*, it is not *Bossuet* we listen to:

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We listen to the whole Ministry that has found again in that Book the Doctrine of all Ages. It is through the very Form itself which our Saviour has given to the Apostolate, that Truth is utterly unexterminable in the Catholick Church, and the same Form makes it impossible ever to raise in that Church Errors into Articles of Faith.

Doubtless the Spirit of Singularity may cause very great Evils even in the Catholick Church: But we are guarded against its Attempts, nor can it hinder the Indefectibility of the Church, nor the Indefectibility of the Predication which sanctifies the Church.

Does any Man dare to add any
Thing to, or retrench any Thing Error.
from the Depositum? That is *Error* indeed. But that Error, though hateful in Proportion to the Share of Instruction which was bestowed on the Asserter of it, does not at first receive the Qualifications it may deserve. It is even an Obligation to support the said Asserter with as much Patience as the Church itself does, so long as she defers condemning that erroneous Opinion. It does not go by the Name of Heresy till after the Condemnation. Thus Rebaptization was an Error in *St. Cyprian, Firmilian*, and their Followers: But since the Definition of *Nice*, it is an Heresy. Heresy.

Does any Man dare to strike at Schism.
the Unity of the Ministry, either
directly, by withdrawing himself from the ancient Catholick Hierarchy pretendedly fallen into Ruins; or by assuming to himself a new extraordinary Mission, under Pretence of reviving the Church; or in short by exercising in a State of Independence, and without Subordination a Ministry regularly acquired in its Origin? This, truly, is Schism, which is still worse than Error. This, most exactly speaking, demolishes the Effects of the Alliance, by ru-
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ining that Charity which is the very Life of Christianity, and it is at once the Consequence of the Error which is obstinately asserted, and the Occasion of the new Mistakes that may be brought on by Independence.

We say to the *Partisans* of the first and second Separation: Where is, pray, the Revocation of the ancient Embassy? Where is the Probability of its Extinction, after the Promises made to it by *J. C.* of being with it to the very End of the World? And were it possible that *J. C.* had, contrary to his express Promise, abandoned his ancient Embassy to leave it destitute of Support; pray, where are the Marks of yours? Who are you, thus to reprove the foregoing Ministry, and to install yourself in its Stead? Nay, were even your Complaints just, do they take from that Ministry its Mission? Do they attribute the same to you? Why do you pretend to be listened to preferably to *Elbion, Menes, Arrius, Donatus*, and so many others, who, as well as you, assume the Quality of Envoys to themselves? You reprove them, and they reprove you. You do Justice to each other reciprocally, and so do we to you all without any Hesitation, because you are equally destitute of Titles.

Ye come, all of ye, with the Holy Scripture in your Hand. You will not admit of any other Rule, you say: But, far from intitling you to any Thing, it rather covers you with Ignominy. The Treaty of Alliance has, according to the Scripture, been trusted to an immortal Embassy, which must be listened to: And we know the different Dates of your pretended Missions. That Scripture facilitates the Knowledge and the Meditation of the principal Articles of the Treaty: But it cannot be said to be the whole Treaty: The Supplement of it is then in the Ministry, who published the Intentions of the Legislator before they wrote; and who continue to
make

make the verbal Declaration of the whole Treaty, after the Collection of the apostolical Writings, as they did before they were collected.

But, altho' it were true that the Scripture of the *New Testament* contains the whole Treaty, is your having a Copy of it sufficient to intitle you to style yourselves Embassadors?

Nothing but Confusion can result from this Multiplicity of Embassies: And as you have, each of you, no Title that can cause you to be credited, so you have each of you no Rule that can settle you. Ye all take the Scripture for your Rule: But it is no longer such for any of you since the Meaning of it is under the Government of your own Conceptions, instead of being (as the Scripture is in the Catholick Unity) under the Interpretation of the Ministry which is the Bearer of it, and under the Explanation of the univerial Depositum: A Depositum of the utmost Authenticity; a Depositum in short, that settles the Interpretation and masters the Embassadors as much as it helps them. All Things help each other in the Catholick Church: It is the reverse among you.

You are so very far from being justly intitled to the Quality of Envoys, which no Man can give to himself; that you cannot even with Reason flatter yourselves with being the Children of the Church^h. For if the Church that has ingendered you was the true Church, you ought not to have left her. If the true Church was somewhere else, as, for instance, in *Abyssinia*, or in *Greece*; why did you not unite with it? And if the Church was really destroyed, pray, who has ingendered you to *Jesus Christ*? You have lost every Thing as to your own Parts, and have misled your Disciples, by teaching out of Unity.

^h *Verron, Bossuet, Nicole.*

As for those who think they have preserved the apostolical Ministry, but who have dismembered it from the Totality; who have reprov'd the rest, and centered the Church in their own peculiar Society; I shall tell them: You have an apparent Succession in the Ministry: But, you have lost the Benefit of it, by exercising it at your Pleasure, and by withdrawing yourself from the common Law of all the foregoing Legations, which consists in being united to the Chief, and in working under the Inspection of the whole Body of the Embassy. This was necessarily but one, in order either to publish the same Truths and the same Alliance to all Mankind, or to render the Church of God recognizable by distinguishing her from irregular Societies, by the visible Unity of the universal Priesthood. You have done whatever could render Faith dubious, and the Choice of a Church uncertain. You have eternized Hatreds and Troubles, by multiplying Churches. Upon what Ground can your different Cantons have respectively appropriated the Legation to themselves each of them apart? Can one single Part detached from the Body of the Embassy become the Totality of that Embassy? How shall we be certain, after such a Rupture, of the Integrity of your Commission, and of the Preservation of the Depositum in your Hands? Breaking with the sacerdotal Body, you have no longer any Securities that can answer for the Goodness of your Work. If Errors have crept amongst you, what faithful Light have you found to extricate yourselves out of them? And if you have had Falls, who is it that took Care to take you up?

The Communion of Saints lost as to Schismatics.

Do not you see that a private Church is deficient with Regard to itself, and that there is none that does not declare that she believes the Communion of Saints? But it is in vain you say this

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as well as the rest; if you deprive yourself of that Communion and of its Effects, if you break the outward Knot that communicates them. These holy Societies now every where spread, will in vain send their Testimonies or their Deputies to procure Instructions, Regulations and Sanctions to private *Christians*, and to the whole Body of the Church. These precious Effects of the Communion of Saints are lost for you. Any Church that ascribes Independence to herself, by destroying the Ties of that Communion notwithstanding its being universally revered, introduces a Form of a Church that has not been established by apostolical Men. She loses her own Authority, and refuses to reap the Benefit of the Authority preserved by others, in remaining inseparable from them.

You had, you say, Grievances which required your Separation from the See of *Rome* and from the Western Churches. They made themselves unworthy of remaining any longer in the Communion of your Churches, by continuing, in spite of your Complaints, to insert into the Creed that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father, to celebrate the Eucharist with unleavened Bread; and to interrupt the singing of *Allelujab* during *Lent*.

Were your Reproaches better grounded and of greater Weight, your Separation would be neither more prudent nor more legal. Ye that shared the Catholick Ministry with the Western Pastors, and were but one with us, you had in your Hands, as well as we, the Scriptures, the universal Predication, the Maxims of the Holy Doctors, and the whole Depositum which contains, together with the Principles of all good, the regular Reform of all Abuses, a Forewarning of the future Scandals, and the Means of guarding against them. Among these Means you never found that of Rupture.

You found there, on the contrary, that the Deputies themselves would run in vain, if they pretended to exercise their Legation, independent from the Body of the Apostolate¹.

All the World has condemned the *Donatists*, who centered the Church among themselves. All the World has applauded this Maxim of St. *Austin*, that there can never be any just Cause for making a separate Church by breaking with the others.

If you could with Reason shake Hands with the *Christians* of the *West*, it was only in Case the universal Church had convicted them of some false Doctrines, and had authentically excommunicated them upon the obstinate Refusal of renouncing such and such an Error. But the Thing cannot have happened, and it implies a Contradiction in the very Words. How is it possible that one half of the Church and the common Chief of the whole excommunicate their own selves, or may be excommunicated by the other half? Had the Scandals and the Errors been real, this was the Case of supporting one another in Peace. The only legal Resolution to be taken was modestly to help Truth to get the better every where, and without any Animosity to wait for the Decision of your pretended Grievances.

Nothing is remedied by Impatience, and were it even true that all our Churches were full of Tares, yet we were with you the common Crop of the Lord. We were all in the same Field. Now, he had in express Words forbidden his Harvest-men to pluck up at once the Tares before the Harvest, and to throw them into the Fire. There was a Necessity, in the Supposition of its being generally mixt with the good Corn, to suffer its remaining with it, for Fear of plucking up the good Corn, by pretending to extirpate the over luxuriant Tares.

¹ Galat. ii. 2.

Such a Reform could never be aught but downright Havock.

It is not by this enormous Disobedience alone that you are convicted of being bad Harvest-Men; you are no less convicted of it by the very small Compass within which you exercise your Ministry. The Catholick Church alone is ever remembering that her Ministry has no Bounds, and it is every where seen, because it was appointed for all the World. Its Predication and Zeal are as extensive as its many Obligations: And its Predication is illustrated by Martyrdom to the very last Days^k.

We hear your bitter Complaints about its Activity. Our Missionaries, you say, insinuate themselves into all your States, and into your Families. Its Ardour and Uneasiness shocks you, and you restrain it by severe Laws.

But judge with more Equity of the Fervency of their Predication, and of the Indifference of yours. You acknowledge by your very Complaints that the Catholick Ministry direct their Predication to all Mankind: And is not this their Vocation? They never cease to rescue Men out of Infidelity, or to recall them from a criminal Schism to Unity. This is a Work to which the Catholick Princes and Nations contribute with much Generosity. They entertain at *Rome*, at *Lisbon*, and at *Paris*, ecclesiastical Nurseries, purposely to introduce or restore Faith in as many Places as possible: And such is the Intention of a great Part of the truly edifying Supplies, which are sent from all Catholick States to the Clergy of *Rome*. Whereas you both Instigators and Favourers of schismatical Communion, center your Solitude within the small Compass of the Crew that condemns the whole Universe in

^k See the Discourse of *Benedict XIV.* on the Martyrdom of the Bishop of *Mauricastre*, who was beheaded in *China*, May the 26th, 1747.

Concert with you. Contented with being listened to in *Abyssinia*, in *Greece*, in such or such Island or Corner of the World, you remain silent with Regard to the rest of the Globe, and you confess your own Insufficiency by your Taciturnity.

When we direct these Words to the schismatical Societies, we do not pretend to intimate that the celebrated Churches of *Ephesus*, of *Corinth*, and of *Thessalonica*, or the *Armenian* and *Moscovite* Societies, and others, which are so little solicitous about procuring the Propagation of their Faith, and the Salvation of others, be absolutely destitute of Righteousness and Life.

Many Eastern Societies openly declare against that Separation. The Schism is so far from being absolute all over the *East*, that several private People join with us as much as possible: Whole Monasteries and larger Societies profess to be one with us. We find some more or less considerable in *Macedonia* on Mount *Athos*, in *Syria* on Mount *Libanus*, in *Armenia* in a great many Parishes, and in other Places. The Societies that have made a Schism after having received the ancient Ministry in a regular Manner, have the apostolical Ordination, so that the Church does not ordain their Ministers anew when they come to Unity again. They have the Succession, if not of the lawful Powers, at least of the Episcopal Sees. They have the Reality of the Sacraments, and the Perpetuity of the Depositum more or less pure, because, it was not easy, even among them, to alter what is handed down in national Societies, by the common Predication of the Pastors united among themselves, and subordinate to a Patriarch, which, together with the Liturgy, is a means of great Publickness and Security.

It is the Imitation in little of the Ties and Constitution of the universal Church. Many Neophytes receive in those Societies Baptism, the Creed of the
Symbol,

Symbol, and several Prayers which are common to us. They receive the Sacraments, and a Beginning of spiritual Life. We know not what their Desires are, nor how far they may wish for the Reunion of the Churches. We all know that they have more than once required it by Deputations, which ill-minded Princes have rendered abortive. It does not belong to me to dare to pronounce what would or what would not suffice, to render their Ignorance excusable or unexcusable, nor in what Measure the schismatick Nations partake of the Animosity of the Rupture, and what Share they have in the Odium that separates their Pastors from us. Our first Disposition, when we think of the separate Churches, is to be moved with Compassion for the dismal Fate of our Brethren, and to wish that there could possibly be in their Favour Exceptions to the Rigour of the Law that has annexed Holiness to the Unity of the Church, and to the only Ministry that constitutes the Society of the Saints.

But this merely human Compassion ought to yield to the adorable Views of the supreme Wisdom, which has established the inviolable Law of the Unity in his Church, according to the common Profession, *Credo unam Ecclesiam*; for no other Purpose but to render the true Church and the true Ministry for ever recognizable by sensible Ties, and by a Character that could be distinguished by all Men. All, then, we can do is, to pity those schismatick Churches not only for the Dangers, but also for the Disasters necessarily annexed to and resulting from their Separation.

Providence, which permitted the Insinuations of Philosophy among the Pastors, and the Separations which Jealousy and a frantick Fondness for singular Opinions have so much multiplied, has first prevented the Scandal of them by foretelling the

same¹. She has moreover made them turn to a most real Advantage, by procuring to her Church convincing Attestations of the Antiquity of her Doctrines, as well as of the Integrity of her Depositum. These Attestations, though not necessary to the Children of the Church, yet serve to stop the Mouth of her Gainsayers.

The Form of her Institution did certainly prevent the Alteration of her Ministry and of her Faith by efficacious and durable Precautions: But nothing hindered her from being liable to Calumnies or Accusations of Change: And behold, here are Societies separated from us for eight, eleven, and twelve hundred Years together, and divided among themselves, which testify, by their common Belief (the same as our own in every Point, that which divides them excepted) the Integrity and Apostolicity of the latter^m.

We have moreover against all these Churches, and for ourselves, the unanimous Confession which they formerly made of the Apostolicity of our Hierarchy, as well as of our Faith. When they all of them were but one and the same Body with us, they acknowledged by a general Deputation at *Nice*, and by the Regulations of that Assembly, the Unity of the Church, the Primacy of *St. Peter*, that of his Successors in the *Roman See*, in short the Form of Government which had already lasted three Ages, and of which we still are faithful Observers.

¹ 2. Tim. iv. 3, &c.

^m See the Testimonies of the common Belief of the Eastern Societies, mentioned by Mr. *De Nointel* Ambassador at the Port.

The Author remembers to have seen in the Year 1717. the *Czar Peter* make a most profound Bow, and kneel down, before the main Altar of a Catholick Church: A speaking Action, and a publick Testimony of the Persuasion of that intelligent Prince.

The Bishops of the several Parts of the Christian World, assembled in the Neighbourhood of the new Imperial City, might, it seems, have done a Thing very agreeable, both to the Emperor and the Clergy of *Constantinople*, had they been willing to transfer thither the first apostolical See, with which the whole Episcopate and all the Churches had kept and did keep a constant Communion. The Politicians of that Time said to each other at *Nice*: We have now the fairest Opportunity to illustrate for ever the Clergy of *Constantinople* with the Primacy. The Unity of the Catholick Church, nor its Visibility, which is the necessary Effect of the Unity, will not be wronged by this Transposition. We may now chuse to do what might be the Result of an unavoidable Necessity: Barbarous Nations may make themselves Masters of *Rome*, and extinguish Christianity there. Idolatry, which *Rome* is still full of, may be uppermost again, and for ever shut it against the *Christians*. An Earthquake may destroy *Rome*, as this very City of *Nice* was destroyed on the Day of our Saviour's Death; or even swallow up *Rome*, as the famous City of *Herculannum* was under the Emperor *Titus*: Christianity is tied neither to *Jerusalem*, nor to the Mount of *Samaria*, nor to the seven Mountains of *Rome*. The Catholick Church may lose a Town or a Province: But it can lose neither the apostolical See nor the Primacy, which shews to all the World one single Clergy, composed of all the Clergies, and one single Church composed of all the Churches: *Rome* is going to sink into Obscurity: And that eminent See transferred to the first City, to the new *Rome*, would be but the more what it was before, that is in a happy Situation to be seen, and to entertain all the Correspondences. Are not the Fathers of the Council Masters of bringing this about, and does not sound Politicks advise them so to do?

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The Bishops of that venerable Assembly were of quite another Opinion: They thought the Thing neither useful, nor just, nor left to their Discretion. They knew that the primitive Order of the Hierarchy was the Work of the Spirit which had constituted the Church, and that Pre-eminence, without which there would be no Subordination nor any Unity, could not, doubtless, be destroyed by the decaying Condition of the Buildings, nor by the Invasion of any ill minded Power: However, they did not displace that principal See, they let it remain united to the same City which had been illustrated by the Predication and the Blood of the first of the Apostles, and afterwards by the long Succession of so many Doctors, almost all of them Martyrs as he himself had been. They would not separate the first See from the greatest Testimony there was upon Earth, and knew of no Illustration that could be preferred to that: The Fathers of *Nicaea* did not suffer themselves to be prevailed upon by the Obstinacy of the major Part of the Senate and of the *Roman* People, who, by persisting in their Idolatry and in their Hatred to Christianity, rendered themselves unworthy of having among them the Chief and the Center of the Christian Ministry. They did not in the least alter that Disposition, which reached back to the very Birth of the Church. It would have been exposing to Darkness the Succession of the Chiefs of the sacerdotal Order, the Line and the Authority of which had served for three hundred Years together, to reprove all irregular Societies, by the bare Knowledge of that Center of Unity which they rejected.

The Council of *Nice* gave nothing to *Rome*: It only respected what she had received, and caused it to be respected for ever. *Antioch* and *Alexandria* were next in Rank: But nothing was against *Constantinople's* being raised above those two Sees.

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Why then was it not so with that of *Rome*? The Council shewed that the Primacy of the See of St. *Peter* had another Foundation than the transitory Pre-eminence of the City where it was placed. The Fathers were sensible that they would cast a Veil of Darknes upon the Prerogatives of that See, by introducing it into the new Capital of the Empire, and that for the future it would seem that there was no longer a first City where there would no longer be a first See.

It was no Secret in the Church, as well as in the civil Society, that the Institution of a perpetual Chief was inseparable from a perpetual Company: Whence it followed that as the Saviour had instituted the apostolical College, immortalizing it by a regular Succession; he had likewise instituted the Chief of it, and that this Primacy, always necessary to the Body, was, as well as the Body, to be perpetuated by the Succession. The Fathers of the Council did but the better perpetuate this essential Order, by the Care they took not to displace the Line of that Succession, and by maintaining *Rome* in the Possession of the Privilege of it.

The Church can lose neither her Government, nor the Primacy which is the Bond of her Apostolate. But, altho' she may come to lose *Rome*, yet does she not look with an indifferent Eye upon the City where that See, so much respected by all Ages does reside. Here, as well as in any Thing besides, the Outside testifies and maintains Truth, by its invariable Uniformity. The Preservation of the Privilege granted to *Rome*, has always shewed and maintained the primitive Order, the Order that was necessary, the most eminent Dignity, the Center of the Ministry and of all the Churches.

The Œcumenical Council did then leave to all following Ages the Model of Conduct and the Rule which was to settle them. What rash Hand shall

shall dare now to touch Bounds so sacred as these? What Mortal can, for the future leave *Rome*, and entertain any Hopes of finding any where else that principal See, and the Primacy which is necessary to maintain the Unity? What Clergy, what private Man ought we now to adhere to, that shall in his Edifice reject that fundamental Stone, with which all the other Stones of the Foundation are cemented?

People will infallibly cry out that those who filled that See, have not on many Occasions shewed the Modesty and the Regularity of *St. Peter*, no more than that of a great many of his Successors.

A vain empty Objection this, that shall remain unanswered. What Illusions, what Extremities did not Men run into in the false Method of attributing to the Church human Faults and personal Pretensions, notwithstanding the noble Promises that rendered her indefectible?

If ever there came into the human Mind an unreasonable Idea, and yet insnaring by its secret Correspondence with Self-Love, it is, indeed, the Liberty which one private Man, then a second, and then many others, took of reforming the Church, at a Time when she had her Government; and of regulating the Articles of the Faith, although there had been, already for fifteen hundred Years together, an immortal Apostolate which never ceased to publish that Faith on the one Hand, and indestructible Archives that justified the Predication on the other.

Human Societies take great Care not to abandon the Legislation and the publick Order to the Views of private People. *J. C.* had done more than barely establishing the common Order in his Church, by the Institution of a well authorized, single, and successive Body of Ministers. To this Means, naturally productive of the Indefeclibility of Order, and
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of the infallible Notification of the Intentions of the Legislator, he had added the Promise of never forsaking them, and of hindering Error from prevailing in the Church. "Be sure, said he to them, that I shall be with you even to the End of the World." And behold, here are Men who tell J. C. to his Face: You are no longer with your Envoys: And it is we that are going to teach Mankind your Intentions.

The Principle of the Reformation has generally been expressed in these Words: *If they do not reform our Churches, we are both intitled and obliged to reform them ourselves: Now, the same Powers are necessary to reform the Church as to establish it. Therefore, we have the discerning of Doctrines, the Power of the Keys, and the Apostolate.*

It is not very necessary here to have Recourse to the Event, towards judging of the full Value of such a Principle: Let us however follow the Rule which J. C. gave us towards distinguishing bad Masters. They are to be known at last by their Fruits. If any Thing then is capable of bringing back to Unity those who have shared in the enormous Consequences of this horrid Principle, it is this Consideration, that the Reason why Men have erred so much in their going out of Unity is, because there is as little Rule to be found in leaving Unity as there is Authority. Christianity in that Case is in a Condition much inferior to that of human Societies: It is no longer any Thing but a contentious Philosophy: Whereas human Societies have a standing Order and an immortal Ministry, which frees private Men from Uneasiness.

The Scandals which are found in Unity have been foretold. It is necessary that there should be some to exercise the Righteous: But it is no less necessary to remain in Unity notwithstanding the Scandals. They are useful to render Truth more
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authentick, and good Manners more precious: They are then compensated by great Benefits, and made amends for by the innumerable Resources and Supports which are found in Unity, and never any where else. The Scandals are then at no Time a Title for any one to leave Unity. Grudges and Satyrs give us no Right to do it. Where Unity and Patience are, there the Spirit of *J. C.* does reside: Whereas the Spirit of Man and the Principle of all Confusion abide where Independence hath its Reign together with the Rejection of the Ministry that has been authorized for ever.

Instead of busying ourselves any longer with the deplorable Rhapsody of these contradictory Reforms, which are neither the Christian Mission nor the Christian Alliance, being void of Succession and Unity; let us fix our Eyes upon the Perseverance of so many great Kingdoms in the Communion of the Martyrs, of the Founders of our Churches, and of the Line of their Successors. Let us call to our Remembrance the Model of a constant and remarkable Moderation: I mean, that of the *French* Clergy, and of our Kings in the Discussion of the most earnest Interests with the Court of *Rome*. Were they ever seen one Instant in Suspense concerning their sticking to or parting with the Holy See? They never put any Difference between renouncing the Catholick Unity and renouncing the Christian Church.

People may repeat again and again that our Kings have had more Matters of Complaint than a great many others: But I say that they have better than any others shewed us that there never can be any Matter of Separation.

There are Rules established, and they have followed them, by rejecting Decretals that were void of Authority, and others that were notoriously supposititious; by recurring on all Occasions to the
 Doctrine

Doctrine of the Gospel, to the Canons of the holy Councils, to the Examples of the first *Christians* and of the holy Men of all Ages, and to old Usages and Possession: They have by these Means mitigated and oftentimes put an End to great Evils. Thus they have, in Company with their Clergy, maintained the Integrity of the Prerogatives of the Episcopate, the Independence of their Crown, and the ancient Rule that procures the Tranquillity of the Churches and the Security of the Kingdoms. But they have not fulfilled one Duty by the infringing of another: And as they have kept a regular Liberty, they never struck in the least at the Authority of the first See, any more than at the Ties of the Churches.

But then the Respect we have for our Kings, is attended with a most lively Sense of Gratitude. They have taught us how we are to behave in the Vindication of a lawful Privilege, and they have preserved for us true Christianity, by preserving Unity.

All those Sects which have pulled the Christian Society to Pieces with an Intention to make it perfect, soon found out that the one was very ardent about demolishing what the other was solicitous to establish. They were sensible that there was no Necessity of a Mission for a Work every Part of which is destructive of the rest: And from a Consciousness of their equal Want of Authority, very few of them had the Confidence to ascribe respectively to themselves either a special Mission, or Salvation in an exclusive Manner. They had no Courage but against the Catholick Church, because the same impatient Disposition had armed them all against her Rule of Faith, which they stiled Tyranny. But they were daunted and abashed on considering one another. They saw themselves equally destitute of Conformity

The Origin of the System of Toleration.

mity and Rule. The Confessions were inconsistent and the Excommunications reciprocal.

We go a very wrong Way about making ourselves listened to, said several among the Defenders of the pretended Reforms. Our mutual Excommunications are publick Reproaches by which we charge each other with destroying an essential Part of Faith. But, can we be the Reformers of the Church and the Destroyers of her Faith at one and the same Time? If we are so tottering or so divided in our Doctrine, with what Probability shall we be able to style ourselves deputed, for the rectifying the Belief of Mankind? Our Quarrels belie our Pretensions: And being ignorant of our own Instructions, is having received none at all. Let us then talk in a less idle Tone: Let us not mention extraordinary Missions any more; let us keep to a more prudent Method, and give a more modest Turn to the Principle that gave Birth to our Churches. That Method consists in leaving every one at Liberty to examine the Doctrine, that he may reform himself, in making a final Choice in Favour of the Church where he shall find the purest Doctrine, and the best Way of teaching. From this Principle of our Reform there is hardly one Step to that of an universal Toleration, if it is not even the same Thing. For granting another Man the Liberty of discerning and of chusing a Doctrine, is at least granting him the Liberty of professing it; or else, it is granting him nothing at all. Can we afterwards excommunicate him, without pronouncing that he demolishes Faith; and is not thus pronouncing domineering? Our Conduct is not consistent with our Principle; this is conducive to Moderation, whereas our Conduct is Grudging and Haughtiness all over. Our Divisions are not recompensed by any outward Decorum, nor by any Rule that brings us together again.

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The Conduct of the Catholick Church is more of a Piece. She has her Opinions, which she does not mention among the Faithful, and which none but her Schools exercise themselves upon: But, she has a Rule that prevents Divisions, and settles both the Conduct and the Faith of every *Christian*. The Object of the universal Belief appears every where with Dignity and Uniformity: When the Bell rings for the Sermon or for the publick Prayers at *Marseilles*, at *Quebec*, or at *Ponticheri*; the faithful Catholicks of all those Continents know, as well as the Pastor himself, what Doctrine or Truth is to be proposed to them. It is every where the same Language and the same Mission. There is a Form of Doctrine universally known, which renders the Pastor and his Congregation equally regular.

The Pastor renews and perpetuates the Publication of one Part of the common Doctrine. He infers from it Things that will create Sentiments, and promote good Manners. His Talents may be fit to instruct and make an Impression on the Mind: But what principally persuades it is the Knowledge of the Reality of his Mission. The People are convinced that Words of Truth are on the Lips of the Pastor, because he does not appear before them without the publick Characteristicks of the Apostolical Mission; and on the other Hand, the same Rule that prevents the Mistakes of the Pastor, by subjecting him to the Study of the Depositum, is at once the Security of the Faithful. These will no more ask for the Proofs of the Doctrines, of the Gospel, or of the Ministry, than they would ask for the Proofs of the Acquisition of their Patrimony, or of the Establishment of their Magistracy: That Proof would be easily made: But, what need we prove Things that are not contested? Where is the Necessity, they say, to make in Words a Demonstration which is ever subsisting, and which speaks

to every Eye? There is a publick Possession. There is a Perpetuity of Acts and of Succession? In short, there is a Rule, which consists in being sure of the Intentions of a Legislator, and of the effecting of his Laws, when those to whom he has intrusted the Dispensation of them are not recalled. It must be owned that this Confidence becomes extremely well the Ministry that shews a Succession of seventeen hundred Years; and that professes to say nothing of its own, but barely to hand down the Things it has received.

As for ourselves, who follow our own natural Conceptions rather than any Authority, and who make our own Reason the Standard of Revelation, we claim no other Title to be listened to but what Logick can procure us: And we strive to replace by the Force of our Syllogisms, the Authority which we are sensible is wanting in our Ministry. By that Means, our Sermons become downright Controversies on Account of the incessant Discussion of the *pro* and *con*: So that our Doctrines are as various as our Thoughts.

We have no Manner of Curb. The Theologers of our Time, those who lived before us, the Fathers of the first Ages, the Congregations of the Churches, the universal set Forms of Prayers, all, in short, is unable to subdue us; because one single Head, we say, will sometimes see better than all the rest.

This Maxim, which submits every Thing to our Judgment, is of its Nature, and when alone, conducive to Divisions equally undeterminable and indecent: But, that Liberty will become beneficial, when we shall have added to it a Rule fit to establish Peace among us. The Necessity of it has been felt long since.

The Disadvantage we have in Point of Knowledge and Judgment, we may make that up by a bound-

boundless Condescension for those who think otherwise than ourselves: This Mansuetude flows naturally from the Liberty we allow to every Man of examining and chusing. Let us make it a Duty to ourselves; let it be a Maxim of Conduct that shall characterize us; let us tolerate what it is not in our Power to condemn; and as we have no other Privilege but that of reforming ourselves according to the Dictates of our own Conscience, let us above all Things avoid branding the Sentiments of others, or excommunicating their Persons.

'Tis true, we shall not make one and the same Body, by an Uniformity of Doctrines agreed upon: But we shall in Recompense shew that Kind of Disposition which is most necessary to come to an Association, and which consists in not espousing our own Sentiments with Eagerness. The Name of *Tolerators* which we shall assume, will be the Token of a peaceable Disposition among us, and will ever distinguish us outwardly by a Moderation fit to cause us to be loved.

Without troubling any Body in the Choice of his Opinions, we need but take the Resolution, not to pretend that ours are necessary. This will be a sure Means of bringing all the reformed Churches to an universal Concord. It will be allowed to believe that *J. C.* is present upon the Altar, and allowed not to believe it: Allowed to acknowledge him present in the Sacrament, and yet not to adore him in it: Allowed by many more, to think him present and to adore him there.

Every one was at Liberty to believe him to be God and co-eternal with the Father; or at Liberty to think him God only by a Denomination of *Æconomy*. It was in every Body's Choice to acknowledge his Divinity, his Satisfaction, and all his Mysteries as true and revealed, without think-

ing all Minds obliged to bring their Reason down to the Belief of the same Truths.

In short, Salvation was denied to none of those who styled themselves *Christians*. Is not such a Conduct a very natural Result of the Christian Charity: Is not a Method so evidently free from the low Motives of Self-Love, naturally productive of Unity?

The Effects of this System.

This Invention, which the Instructor of Christianity had not made Use of, has, however, made an Impression upon a great many Minds, by an outward Appearance of Generosity, and by its very great Conveniency. A general Toleration seems at first Sight very fit to abate Animosities. It inclines the belligerant Sects, if not to a Concord of Sentiments, at least to a Cessation of all Hostilities. If it is an Error, it is but the more dangerous for it, as it carries the Face of Moderation and Urbanity.

The Progress of the System of a general Toleration.

But let us say a Word of its Progress before we come to make the Analysis of it. The Societies which pretend to be reformed are now tolerating Societies. The major Part of those who have chosen to come to a Separation from the Catholick Church, or who persist in it with their Families, hate no longer any other but that Church: And as it is from her that they have received what good they have, and their Fathers had found Life in her Bosom, they would tolerate her as well as the rest, if she was not intolerating. That Disposition of hers is her Crime. They cannot speak of her in cool Blood, because, she in their Opinion carries the Defence of Faith with too high a Hand. But they behave honourably with the Multitude of the Sects, though ever so divided or subdivided, because they experience the like Condescension from them.

They very commonly imbrace within the Generality of their Patience (I had like to say of their Esteem) the *Socinians* themselves, to whom *J. C.* is God only in a figurative Manner. Many of them find nothing essentially bad in Mahometism, by which *J. C.* is honoured with a Reserve still greater. But, what's more amazing, is their being seen in good Understanding with Deists, to whom the Christian Covenant is an Imposture, and who honour the Philosophy of *Jesus Christ* only up to and exclusive of the Cross.

This twofold Disposition first of Hatred for the Catholick Church, and then of Indulgence for all the Sects that have left her, is most particularly remarkable in the Choice of the Quotations that decorate the Writings of the pretended reformed *Christians*. They, on the one Hand, carefully avoid quoting the holy Fathers, and chiefly the Fathers of the fourth and fifth Centuries: Or, if they quote them, it is only to criticise upon them. It is their fixt Resolution never to inspire their Readers with an indiscreet Reverence for Writings in which the actual Faith of the Catholick Church is set forth in every Page. They, on the other hand quote, and with Complaisance compile the Writings of *Pope*, of *Bayle*, and of *Montagne*; whose Religion does not incommode them, and for the Principles of whom they are not afraid to give a Relish to their Readers. I would not swear that Toleration has not made Converts in the very Catholick Church. For who could resist a System which restores Reason to all her Prerogatives, and which seems to reconcile all Parties?

I own I would be a Tolerator if I was not a *Christian*. Nay, I would even be a *Christian* and a Tolerator too, if Christianity was destitute of Rule, if a Man was to become a *Christian*

The Nature of Toleration. It destroys what *J. C.* has established.

as he becomes a Philosopher, and if the Author of our Faith had not, in order to settle it, established a Legislation regularly authorized according to the Forms that were in use every where, which leaves no Room for any Discussion. But the System of Toleration has one Defect: It really subverts what *J. C.* has established.

Our Saviour regulates and captivates the human Understanding by Faith. The System of Toleration makes Faith depend intirely on Man's Reason. *J. C.* establishes Faith by means of an immortal Ministry, which we cannot reject without rejecting the Saviour himself. The Tolerator lives without the Ministry, and without the outward Worship. Nay, more: He allows you the Alternative of either doing without the Ministry, or of chusing one according to your own Fancy. *J. C.* had freed the Nations from the Errors of the human Mind, by bringing them to the distinct Profession of the same Truths, by the universal Predication of the same Faith, and by the Publication of a Doctrine which was to be followed not to be discussed. Instead of giving his Divinity and Incarnation, his Resurrection and Mediation over to Cavils and Disputes, he contented himself with producing and perpetuating the Testimonies, which are to secure to us the Apostolate and the Predication quite to the End of the World. Thus does Faith lead our Reason by Methods suitable to her Condition, and shelter her from the ill Consequences of her own Frailty. The Reform and the System of Toleration, on the contrary, sink Reason again into her ancient Uncertainty, by trusting her again to her own Conduct. She had been as well without any Revelation at all.

The Intention of *J. C.* after he had for ever settled the Unity of the Faith by the Unity of the Ministry, was that Men should be ready and think them-

themselves obliged loudly to confess that Faith, even at the Hazard of losing their Livesⁿ. The System of Toleration lays no Obligation upon Men: It does not blame their being ignorant of any Truths: Much less does it require an uniform Profession of all Truths. It never exposes itself to any Dangers, and judges every one to be Orthodox, in Proportion as he knows how to keep his Sentiments to himself, or how to shew them with an Air of Unconcern. The Views of the Tolerators are not then the Views of J. C.

But, cannot this Disadvantage be compensated by the high Reputation and the Multitude of those who espouse that Party? They are oftentimes Men of very great Parts.

The greatest Genius's would soon become the Laughing-Stock of all the World, if they pretended to reform or to interpret after their own Fancy the Treaties of *Ryswick* and *Munster*, even leaving to every

The human Understanding is nothing when set in Opposition to Revelation.

Body else the Liberty of understanding them the old Way; or if they reprov'd the Parliament, and chose purposely for themselves a small separate Magistracy, still leaving to others the Liberty of applying to the old Tribunal.

The most celebrated Men are guilty of a still greater Ridicule, when they take upon themselves, to frame for us a Christian Religion more rational than the foregoing; without, however, striking at the Liberty of any Body, and kindly approving of all the different Christianities both present and to come.

Are those Institutions, Concessions, and Transactions, upon a Treaty of which the legislative Power has visibly reserved the Tenor and the Pro-

ⁿ *Qui me confessus fuerit coram hominibus, confitebor & ego eum coram patre.*

mulgation to itself, any how to the Honour of the human Understanding? They are nearly as serious and as important as the Theology of St. *Evremond*, who pronounces somewhere, with more Gravity than is generally inspired by good Champaign, that the Vigour of the Episcopal Government shall be reserved for Monarchies, and the Modesty of the Presbyterian Government for Democratical Countries.

Is then Christianity a new-found Land, given over to the first Occupier, and where every new Comer is at Liberty to settle in what Manner he pleases? Nothing betrays more completely the excessive Shallowness of those who set up for sublime Genius's, than their pretending to be listened to, when it is notorious that God himself speaks to us, and to come and offer us their own Systems, whilst the supreme Legislator is directing his to us by a regular Publication.

Shallowness is not the only Defect of their Conduct. They style themselves *Christians*, and thereby profess to receive the Law and the Word of God, but in their Quality of sublime Reasoners, they claim to themselves the Liberty of determining the Meaning of it Which is downright Derision.

Of two Things *one*. If there is no Ministry, there is no Christianity, and it is a Meanness to stile one's self a *Christian*. But, if the Ministry and its Testimonies have been perpetuated, we, of course, know the Intentions of the Legislator, since the Ministry is appointed purposely to inform us of them. What is then, in good Truth, that Liberty of interpreting the Gospel by the Help of Reason? What is that Protestation by which the Tolerators, wresting the Sense of the Revelation into their own, declare that they leave every Body else at Liberty to make a like Interpretation; what is it, I say, if not a most intelligible Acknowledgment

ment of a common Infidelity? It is a Convention dictated by downright Self-Interest, between People who have nothing in common but their Contempt of the Rule, and who are circumspect in their Expressions out of a Regard for themselves. It is a Sort of good Countenance which they put on to disguise their own disconcerted Thoughts, and to cloak the Pity with which they look upon one another.

General Toleration, which we have just seen so full of Weakness and Disguise, is guilty of a further Injustice, by assuming to itself the Colour and the Name of the Christian Toleration, which is a very amiable and very necessary Virtue; but which the Toleration meant demolishes by a most substantial Cruelty.

The Toleration meant is not the Christian Toleration.

We shall not mention here the Politicks of Princes, who extend or restrain the Liberty of professing different Religions in their respective Dominions. The Business is to regulate our own Conduct and Sentiments with Regard to those who have withdrawn from the Congregations of the Catholick Church. Would not there be a real Merit in tolerating them all, and even in thinking that they may without any Uneasiness remain in the Road which they have chosen, and which they look upon as good? Why should we pretend to make them uneasy concerning their Condition? Sure we would not deprive them of their Fortunes. But is not the Liberty of their Thoughts as precious an Advantage to them? We ought to leave them at rest, by professing as well as they an universal Toleration. Does not the Christian Mansuetude which is kind to all lead us to that Principle?

The Christian Gentleness and the Christian Toleration are equally grounded on Charity: But Charity exerts itself many different Ways, and discharges

charges Duties, which vary according to Places and Persons. We owe the Christian Mansuetude to all Men, in what Condition or of what Religion soever they may be: But we owe them not the Christian Toleration indiscriminately. The one is not the other: And it is of the utmost Consequence to borrow from the Gospel the right Notions we are to have on that Head. Let us begin by the Christian

The Christian
Lenity. Lenity. One of the Aims of the ancient Law and of the *Jewish*

Severity was to preserve single and by itself the Nation depository of the Promises, notwithstanding its Averseness to true Righteousness: It was to preserve it from Idolatry and from mixing with the *Gentiles* by Alliances that would have rendered the Posterity of *Isaac*, and the Line of *Juda* impossible to be known again. Hence the Expulsions, the Exheredations, the strict keeping of the Registers, the rigorous Punishments inflicted on the Transgressors of the Law, but chiefly on the *Israelites* convicted of Idolatry.

Those who exclaim against the Severity of these Chastisements, consider neither the deep-rooted Ingratitude of that refractory Nation, nor the Wisdom of the means which preserved efficaciously the Depositum of the Promises, and hindered it from being dissipated, as well as the Nation itself, notwithstanding its unconquerable Propensity to the Excesses and Superstitions of the Heathens.

The World saw the final Chastisement of their obstinate Wickedness in the Destruction of the ten Tribes who persisted in their Infidelity; and the Wisdom of the Views according to which the whole was managed for the special Preservation of the Tribe of *Juda*, which had the Promises.

Let us moreover remember that in the Institution of the Republick of the *Hebrews*, the Govern-
ment

ment of it was a real Theocracy°. The portable Ark was not barely the Place where the Laws of the Nation were deposited: But by the Posture of Adorers which had been given to the two Symbols which were on the two Sides of the Propitiatory that covered the Ark, it was the Throne of the great King, the Throne of the invisible Being who received the Homage of his People, and declared to them his Intentions from that Throne. The *Hebrews* had for four hundred Years together no other King but God himself: And an Act of Idolatry was a true Rebellion, that destroyed publick Order, that gave Room of Course for a just Severity, and caused an Idolater to be used as a professed Enemy. The Zeal of *Phineas* was applauded, and seemed even to arm every private Man against those who were publickly Idolaters.

But that Separation of the *Jews* from the rest of Mankind, and that Manner of punishing with Death the Violation of the Law, are no longer the Spirit of Christianity, which renders Men true Adorers of God out of a Love for their Duty, not from the Apprehension of an ill Treatment. The *Christians* are obliged to live with all Men^p; and although they were surrounded with Wolves, their Meekness must be invincible: They profess in an express Manner to love all Men, even their own Enemies. That Spirit is the Life and the main Object of the new Covenant. No body kills those he loves, no more than those he is obliged to love.

It is without deviating from the Principle of this unalterable Benevolence, and without refusing to contribute to the common Support of Society, that they prudently avoid the Commerce of those of their Brethren whose Manners are scandalous, or whose Company is hurtful. The Activity of their Services is not at all interrupted by this Circum-

^p The Government of God. ^p 1 Cor. v. 10.

spection: And that inexhaustible Philanthropy which renders them respectable to their very Enemies, is their constant Companion when they are to live with Brethren or with Superiors whose Conduct is unjust or irregular. Doing good Offices is not always in their Power. But, they would be no longer *Christians* save barely by Name, they would be turned Pharisees or false Zealots, if their Zeal was of the murdering Kind.

Mankind saw come down upon *J. C.* the Symbol of that Spirit of the new Covenant, at the very Moment he was making the Introduction of it; that is, at the Predication of his Forerunner. From the Days of *John Baptist*, the Prophecies and the Law are fulfilled, since the Saviour who had been promised, is the Author of Grace and Truth: He brought to Mankind, not indeed the Spirit of Terror, which, when by itself, establishes only an outward Uprightness; but the Spirit of Charity, which establishes Lenity, Benevolence, Peace, in short, the Kingdom of God in all Hearts. No other Violence shall be ordered us for the future, but that which we shall offer to ourselves towards snatching away the true Blessings. Whatever come afterwards either in the Instructions of our Saviour, or in the Example of his Disciples, incessantly inculcates to the *Christian* never to run into any Violence at the Sight of the greatest Scandals; never to call down Thunder and Lightning even upon those[¶] who thwart the Work of *J. C.* and chiefly never to draw the Sword for the Defence of the Faith against the publick Ministry[†], or against the Government; but to repute indissoluble and inviolable the Oaths that shall tie the *Christians* either to *Tiberius*, though a Heathen, or to *Nero*, though a Persecutor, or to *Julian*, though an Apostate.

[¶] Luke ix. 54, and following.

[†] John xviii. 11.

A false Religion, or Irreligion itself cannot become a Title to any private Man whom it vexes, to make an Attempt upon the Life of his Equal, much less upon the Life of his Superior. When the first *Christians* saw themselves prosecuted by unjust and inhuman Laws, their Resources were Prayers, Patience, and Flight; never Schism, Rebellion, or Daggers.

But that Meekness which suffers itself to be ill used rather than to ill use any Body; that Meekness which has rendered Christianity truly great in the Eyes of the whole Earth, and which must needs render the true *Christians* amiable to all those that are about them, does not imply in it an Obligation of thinking that every Man may be saved in his own Sect, and of overlooking the Rule of Truth towards preserving Peace.

Every Thing must be sacrificed to Peace, except Truth, and the Rule by which we are made sure of Truth. But the Rule of Truth and of the Christian Covenant, which is and has ever been justified by the wise Practice of all Societies, consists in acknowledging the Legislation by the Consideration of the Powers granted to the Deputies, and in making one's self sure of the Reality of the Alliance by the Perpetuity of one and the same Ministry. The Apostolate would have been needless without this Rule, which is the only one fit to maintain Certainty in a Corporation; and the publishing of the Incarnation would have been a superfluous Attempt without the Apostolate, since it would be needless to publish what could not be certified.

It seems, however, say the Partisans of Toleration, that St. *Paul* has spoken on that Subject according to Notions very different from those of the Catholicks. He will not have us take it ill that every Man should be wedded to his own Opinion: This is already a great Liberty granted to us; it is a positive Injunction of the Law of Condescension:

But

But the Apostle goes much further. He requires but one Thing as being absolutely necessary on the Part of those who teach, *viz.* that they should all of them suppose the Incarnation of the Divine Word, or at least the Mediation of the Saviour *J. C.* This is the Foundation which every one is to build upon. Next to which, he desires, that instead of Straw, of Wood, and of weak and combustible Materials, Men should add none but good ones to the Fabrick begun. He owns that God will scrutinize and distinguish all that the Ministers of the Word shall have taught; that the whole weak Part of their Ministry shall be lost and utterly destroyed. But it will not be the same with the Authors of those Opinions. Their Person shall be saved, *Salvabitur.* And if God bears with them so far as even to save them, does not his Divine Conduct become the Rule of ours? We are then respectively bound to observe the Law of a perfect Toleration towards one another.

The Christian
Toleration.

I own that *St. Paul* is here prescribing the Law of the Christian Toleration: But towards whom does he intend it should be observed? Sure it is towards those who have a Reverence for Unity, not towards those who destroy it by rejecting the Ministry and by multiplying Sects. He speaks of those who were Teachers in the Church of *Corinth*, and who were already adding to the Predication of the Gospel a few Opinions or Explanations foreign to it. He owns to them that God, at the same Time that he shall sift the Imperfections of their Administration, will perhaps have Mercy on their Persons, and grant them Salvation, because they have neither left the Church nor reprov'd his Ministry. But he terrifies all the Workmen who are either negligent or wedded to their own Thoughts, by not letting them be ignorant that both the Work
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and the Workman shall be put to the Test, and go through a Trial as dreadful as that of Fire. Bad Materials, such as Wood or Stubble imployed instead of solid Stones, shall be tried and consumed: The Workman himself, far from receiving any Reward for his Labour, will be in the greatest Danger of an utter Destruction. The Intention, the interested Views, the Principle of Self-Love, the Want of Charity, all will be judged and rated. And if he gets safe, it will be no otherwise than as one who goes through a Fire.

St. Paul is so very far from authorizing those Builders of independent Churches, wherein every one is a Rule to himself, that he even strikes with Terror those who work in Unity, by strongly inculcating the Necessity of working in Concert on one and the same Foundation, and to one and the same Building, and by warmly insisting upon the Choice of the most solid Materials, and upon the Conformity of the second Work with the foregoing, any other Fabrick being sure of being reprov'd and destroyed.

The Apostle fulminates in the same Place, and with an equal Indignation against the over-fond Zeal with which some of the Disciples gave the Preference to certain Teachers, and against the false Wisdom with which the latter began to intermix human Notions with the Doctrine revealed. That Philosophy alarmed him, and the Partialities of the Faithful, as well as the various Opinions, appeared to him Avenues to a Schism. He brings every Thing back to Unity, and through Unity to Union.

Far then from abandoning the Edifice to a Multiplicity of Architects and to the Discretion of the Workmen, as Tolerators do, he severely calls them back to the Law of one single Architecture. “ If
“ any

“ any one, says he, destroys the Temple of God; him will God destroy.”

Doubtless, we owe to all those of our Brethren who have withdrawn from our Congregations, or who persist in the Schism of their Fathers, the Meekness and Benevolence which we do not refuse to the very Infidels, to the *Jews*, and to the greatest Sinners. But altho' we ill use neither the Infidels, nor the *Jews*, nor the bad *Christians*; altho' we value, even in the most complete Schism, the great Accomplishments, the Uprightness, and above all the Reverence which many Scismaticks still preserve for the first Councils; yet do we not for all that tolerate the Subversion of the Rule: And can there be any greater Subversion of it than to admit the Predication of an immortal Apostolate, without thinking every Mind obliged to submit to it? Is there any Subversion of Order like that which abandons the Revelation to the Discretion of private Men, and which reproves the ancient Ministry; whose well known Appointment is to bring all Minds back to one and the same Faith^f; *in unitatem fidei*? No body would allow in an Edifice the Liberty of building upon two different Models, nor in a Legation the Liberty of publishing two or more contradictory Treaties.

The Christian Meekness is observed both towards those who are with us in the Church, and towards those who went away from us: It admits of no Exception. But the Christian Toleration, which is authorized by *St. Paul*, and enjoined by the Spirit of God, cannot in Reason be exerted upon any but those who are in the Communion of the Apostolical Ministry. It does not produce Unity: But it preserves and supposes it.

As Meekness is the Practice of the Benevolence which the *Christian* has for Mankind, so is Tole-

^f Ephes. iv. 13.

ration the Practice of the Moderation with which we are bound to support the Defects of the Fraternity. We hope for the Salvation of the Preachers and the Faithful, who make but one and the same Body, who have a Reverence for Unity, for the common Ministry, and for the universal Predication. But, altho' they be in the same Path where we all of us walk together, they nevertheless are Men full of Infirmities, who may have wrong Scruples, and are liable to Ignorance, and even to erroneous Opinions. We may be more or less alarmed at the Notion of the Consequences of their Faults: But we still are at Peace with all those whom the Church admits to her Communion.

She has the Power of condemning all Errors, and of crushing any Variation of Opinions in the Doctrine of both Faith and Morals. But we are not Judges of her Motives, no more than of her Delays. Her Patience is the Model and the Measure of ours: And it is a most charitable Prudence in her to be contented with shewing for a while the Depositum of every Truth to those who fall into Mistakes, in order to bring them back to the Uniformity of the ancient Doctrine, without condemning them directly in a publick Manner. And for our Part, we private *Christians* should be equally imprudent and destitute of Authority to pretend to go faster and further than herself in such a Case.

These are the Foundations of the true and necessary Toleration: It is essentially composed of the two Virtues of which the Church is an Example to us: I mean of a great Patience, and of the utmost Prudence. But what Patience, what Circumspection can we shew to those who will no longer be among us? Nay, would there be any Prudence in cherishing the Security of those who being out of the Center of Unity, walk at Random under the Conduct

of their own Spirit, rejecting the Publication of the Ministry which *J. C.* has directed to all the Nations and Ages of the World, is rejecting him himself: And not following *J. C.* is walking in Darkneſs.

Toleration is the Virtue of thoſe who walk together in the luminous Path which has been known at all Times. They mutually bear with their Defects and their ſmall Errors, becauſe they ſtill remain all of them in the right Way. But, the Toleration meant is an Illuſion full of Inhumanity; ſince inſtead of alarming thoſe who cannot but go aſtray by taking various Roads, it rather cheriſhes their Security, by making them believe that all Roads are good, and equally conducive to Salvation.

The moſt ſagacious Minds, and thoſe that have been beſt cultivated by a conſtant Uſe of Precautions generally taken among Men; may, laying aſide the innumerable Helps which they find in Books, and in the other Monuments, eaſily perceive that the great Certainty of the Work of our Salvation, has by a ſingular Providence been made to depend upon infallible Means. Thoſe Means are the Perpetuity of an ever viſible Apoſtolate, and the outward Form of the ancient Government, which ſerves in the Church as well as in any other Society, to ſhew where the true and genuine Authority does reſide, and which reproves without any Equivocation all thoſe who ſwerve from that Center in order to ſet up a ſeparate Government. As the right Uſe of our Reason farther does not conſiſt in ſtriking at the Reality of authentick Eſtabliſhments by affected Doubts, but rather in acquieſcing to and making uſe of them; it was in Conſequence of the greateſt Abufe of the human Reason, only that People have dared to aſſert that the Church was no more, after it had been declared that no Power whatever ſhould prevail over her. Nor is it any leſs Abufe of the human Reason to
have

have thought that one might listen to different Ministries, or even do without any Ministry at all; whilst our Saviour had deputed one for all Places and Times, and none but that one; and had rendered the Unity of it ever recognizable by the Subordination, by the Aggregation and the Succession.

But, is this Visibility, which the Catholick Church borrows from her Ministry, a Truth equally accessible to Men of the narrowest Capacity, to those uncultivated Minds, which constitute the Multitude?





T H E

Evangelical Demonstration.

C H A P. IV.

Levelled to the Capacity of the Multitude.

MEN of great Parts may consider the Christian Religion according to its different Faces, and from them borrow Demonstrations of it, one whereof shall make a greater Impression on some Minds, and another be more affecting for others. They, by that Means, serve both Christianity and their Neighbours. But, altho' our Gratitude for their Labour ought to be very great; yet we may be excessive, by rating it above its real Price. Let us carefully avoid losing Sight of this important Principle, that *the Proofs of Christianity are not the Communication of the Covenant*, and that according to common Order, the Learned and the Ignorant, the Little and the Great, can neither of them

them have a Share in the revealed Blessings, any otherwise than through the Ministry-Bearer of the Treaty and of the Sacraments: Because Christianity is not only a Doctrine that can be taught in Books; but also an Alliance which ought to be received from the Mouth and Hands of those whom God has appointed as Depositories of it.

This Œconomy keeps all Minds upon a perfect Level. None of them shall, in the Order of Revelation, be his own Light to himself: None of them shall pretend to be the Light of others. They all of them shall borrow Truth and the Blessings of the Covenant from Means established to communicate the same: And whoever shall dare to lead others in the Paths of Salvation, must have received his Orders and exhibit his Mission. If his Mission is arbitrary, he leads astray instead of guiding, because whosoever cannot justify his Legation, has no legal Treaty to offer.

This first Rule of the Truth and Solidity of which every Man is sensible in Proportion to the Soundness of his Judgment, has this other Advantage, that it can be made palpable to and levelled to the Capacity of the lowest People. Let us try to shew the Reader, how easy it is for the simplest Men, who take for their Rules the Customs universally admitted in Society, to know with great Evidence the Powers and the Perpetuity of the Body of Envoys who reconcile us^a to God. Besides this first Maxim, which consists in judging of a Legation by the Testimonies born to the Deputies, the Society has a second Rule equally intelligible to the Ignorant and the Learned, *viz. that the Deputy of a known Corporation, conveys as much Certainty into the Affairs he transacts, as if the whole Body had transported themselves and was upon the Spot.*

^a 1 Cor. v. 20.

The Order of God's Providence has evidently been to bring the Demonstration of his Gospel within the Reach of all Men, by making it depend on usual Means, and from the outside itself of Religion: But is there no Reason for us to apprehend that this Proof will decline with the said Outside.

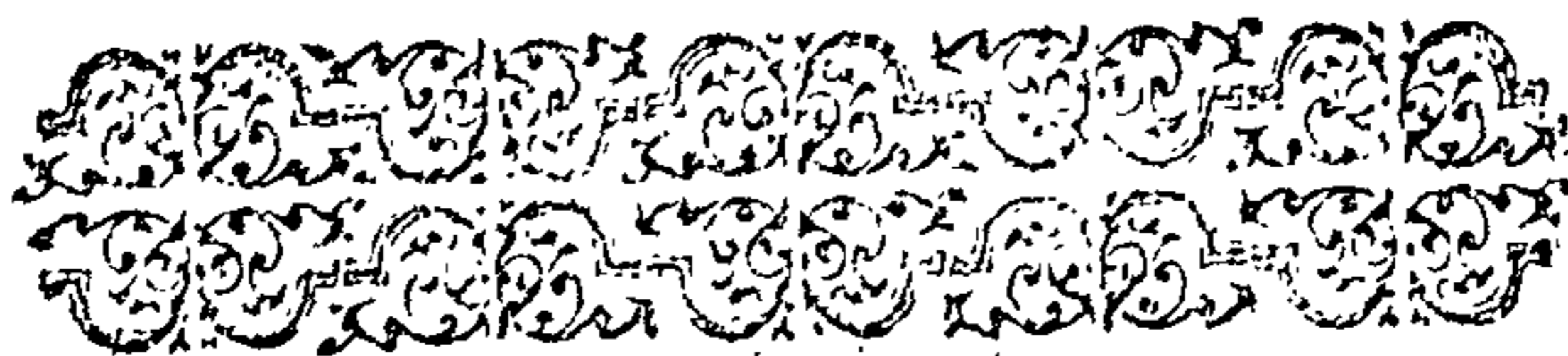
We are used to see the outward Worship carried on with an Air of Grandeur. The Magnificence of the Temples, the Eloquence of the Preachers, a numerous and learned Clergy, the respectful Countenance of the Christian Congregations, all, in short make very affecting Impressions upon us. But, let us divest Religion of this majestick Outside, let us, if you will reduce it to the utmost Simplicity it is capable of. Let us go and consider it in the poorest Places. We are under the Necessity of examining how the Proofs of it are administered there. Let us not be ashamed of the Outside and Motives which are sufficient in God's Council to bring to Sanctification the Souls that are dear to him.

Books are here quite out of the Question, because we are now to consider People who, at the most, can read their Prayers. But, they, as well as we, listen to the Word of God; since *Faith*, which is for them as well as for ourselves, is *communicated to them by Predication*. Let us then shew here that the Prerogatives of the Ministry which they listen to are as well known to them as the human Establishments of which they are best informed.

A Catholick Priest appears in a Country Parish consisting of several Hamlets: He has now called the Inhabitants of them together, in order to be installed into the Government of that Church, which is indeed of no Note, and wherein every Thing bespeaks its Remoteness from all Towns. He directs his Discourse to those whom his Bishop intrusted to his Care, and his Intention is to convince them that his Mission is as much conducive
to

to their Salvation, and as secure to them, as if they immediately received the first Envoys, and even J. C. himself.

This being our actual Subject Matter, the latter Part of which is to shew us, what our Clergyman is now going to prove to his good Parishioners, *viz.* that the smallest People may be as clearly informed of the Reality of the Ministry that brings Salvation to them, as the Inhabitants of the most wealthy Towns; let us get into the Crowd of the Auditors of this Man, who pretends to be sent and deputed to them in a special Manner. Let us see how he shall be able to persuade them that their Condition is preferable to that of the schismatical Societies. Will he attempt to instruct them by Quotations of Books? But them they understand very little; they know neither the Merit nor the Authority of them. Shall he have Recourse to a Chain of Arguments? But they are not within the Reach of such uncultivated Minds. Shall then the Sum of his Discourse be historical? But his Recital will not carry its Proofs with it. I see this Man alone. He has nothing that he can make them touch and see. Not a Witness about him, no Securities, no Monuments. I am indeed, concerned for the Flock whose Pastor is so totally destitute of Support and Authority. But, on the other hand, the more disadvantageous the Case he appears to be in is, the more interesting his Discourse becomes for us. Let us listen to him and see whether the Catholick Religion will supply him with Testimonies within the Capacity of the most ignorant Men, by which they ought in Reason to be persuaded.



A

DISCOURSE

OF A

Country Parson,

Delivered on the Day of his Induction,

GENTLEMEN,

NOTHING more easy than to tell you: *I am the Embassador of J. C. sent to you.* Many a Man has come with the same Words in his Mouth: But they were rejected: And if many should come to you in the same Manner, you would not indiscretely receive him. Why then do you receive me now without any Opposition as your Pastor, as the Envoy of God, who is intitled to lead you into the Ways of Salvation?

You know the Reasons of it. But, it will be much to your Advantage if I here remind you of them in a certain Order, in order to make you
sensible

sensible of the Happiness of your Condition. For, if you are sure of having among you one of God's Envoys, purposely deputed to you, you are sure of having a Share in the Alliance that procures the true Blessings: And as the Security of your actual State and Condition is the most comfortable Thought that you can possibly have in your Troubles, it is likewise the greatest Treasure you can possibly leave to your Children.

You even stand in real Need of hearing the true Advantages of the Catholick Church in which you was born by the Grace of God, now and then mentioned among you. There are but too often ill Tongues equally Enemies to your Tranquillity and to all good, that seem to undertake to throw you into Discouragement. What have you, say those Vipers, that can raise you above the other Christian Societies? Nay, is there even the least Certainty any where with Regard to the future Life? The Parson that comes to you in your lonesome Habitations is most commonly destitute of Parts and Zeal, and you remain uninstructed: Or if, in short, he fulfills all the Obligations of his Station; still he is but a Man. Where did he get all the Things he tells you? You are *Christians* upon his Word: But can he not be mistaken as well as another Man? The Catholick and the Mahometan are equally uncertain.

No, Brethren, your Faith is not uncertain. Your Hopes are not grounded upon the Promises of a Man. The Pastor who is publishing among you the News of Salvation, and the Rewards that have been assigned and promised to Piety, does not come to you unable to justify his Titles. It is not his Learning that can warrant you the Truth of what he is now declaring among ye, as it is not his Ignorance that shall render your Condition uncertain: It is his Mission that saves you, and you are
sure

sure that his Mission is from God. He has the Marks of it in whatever is about him now, and in whatever your Eyes have seen in other Places. He makes Part of the Embassy which J. C. has sent to Mankind. You have your Share of the Alliance through this Pastor now deputed for your Parish: Through him you are truly united to those who sent him to you, and through them you are truly united to God himself, from whom they have received their Powers, and the Alliance which they bring to you. A great many People think that those Things are very remote from their Senses. They, however, are most effectually in your very Eyes and under your Hands.

'Tis true, the Blessings declared unto you are not as yet visible. God has created Blessings of different Kinds. He created Corn, Gold, and Pearls: But he appointed no body to make the Distribution of Corn, of Gold, or of Pearls, among all those who should be willing to receive any. Manual Work may obtain them: They are frequently snatched away by Cupidity. God diverts us from setting our Hearts upon them, because those Blessings are transitory: And he informs us of his having appointed for us other Blessings of a more perfect Nature.

It is of these durable Blessings that he has established the most authentick Publication and the surest Acquisition. These Blessings are offered to all by an Embassy now dispersed from one End of the Earth to the other, and equally recognizable by both small and great. But, the Marks of that Commission are perhaps too spiritual, you will say; no: They, on the contrary, are perfectly sensible: They are every whit as familiar to you as the most ordinary Transactions of your Life.

I shall suppose that a foreign Prince, a *German* Elector for instance; or if you will a rich Merchant
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in *London*, sets an extraordinary Value on the Wine that grows on your Hillocks; or upon the Saffron that grows on your Plains, or in short upon the Oil you fetch out of your Olives. You hear that this wealthy Man has a Mind to ingage you by the Assistance of a Factor yearly to keep in Reserve for him the best Part of your Products. That Factor comes and promises you a Price always superior to any that shall be offered you by others.

If his Money is not ready, you will desire him to give you Securities; and as soon as you are convinced both of the good Circumstances of this Foreigner, and of the Reality of the Commission and the Securities; you will readily be inclined to make up his Provision in Preference to any other. You will be glad of a sure and durable Vend for your Commodities.

But, if there was no kind of Attestation of the Deputation of the Factor; if instead of one there came two or three at a Time, that should respectively attribute the Commission to themselves, and pretend to be served without Money or Securities; you would be no Way disposed to listen to such Adventurers as these, much less to trust them with your Merchandise.

You begin now to be sensible how you can reason very well, and take all proper Cautions concerning such absent People as are willing to correspond with you.

Let us chuse Affinities still dearer to you. 'Tis likely none of you ever saw the King. Many of your Operations are nevertheless relating to him. You rejoice at his good Successes, which you look upon as your own. You pray for him: You are exact in paying the Taxes, and punctual in obeying his Commands. You have a Respect for whatever bears the Marks of his Power: You have a
Regard

Regard for the King's Assessor, for the Bailiff, the Intendant, or the first President.

Pray, why do the Inhabitants of *Normandy* in their Law-Suits appeal to the Parliament of *Rouen*, not to that of *Paris*? And why do those of the Province of *Foret* or of *Berry* carry their Causes to *Paris* not to *Grenoble*? None of them saw the Letters Patent for the Establishment of the Tribunals of *Rouen*, of *Grenoble*, and of *Paris*: They nevertheless distinguish their several Districts without any Mistake, and never looked upon their respective Powers as being any how questionable. These Powers are not seen. The Will of our Kings who have established and maintained those Corporations is not seen neither: But the Letters of their Establishment have been seen; and instead of them, their Succession, their Buildings, their Acts, and the Attestations of the Province were seen afterwards: These are visible Things: Those that are seen stand to you in lieu of those that are not: And as they are liable to no Mistake, they constitute your Security.

Nay, more. We every Day see your Activity and your Transactions connected with Events now very remote from you, and with Men who died a great many Years, and perhaps many Ages ago: You execute their Intentions upon good Grounds; and would go to Law with any one that should refuse to do the same.

If any one will dispute an Estate belonging to your Family, or your Right of Pasture, or your Commoning in the Royal Forest, do you not directly call to Remembrance the Names of the Authors and Preservers of your Titles? You know the Notary who keeps the Minutes of them: The King's Arms which are over his Door, are a sufficient Security to you that he may be trusted with any Acts whatever. You have Recourse, when
Need

Need requires it, to the Rolls, where the Copy of the Transaction passed between your ancient Lords and the Inhabitants of this Place is registered. You are not ignorant, that it was *Charles the Wise*, or *St. Lewis*, that secured to your Lords their just Possession, and made at the same Time a Reserve in Favour of your Commonalty.

You are then most really connected with Men whom you see but seldom: You have even Affinities with others whom you never will see; and you know what Sort of Ties there is between you and such Benefactors of yours who died several hundred Years ago.

You never complain of those Means of ordering your Affairs. They are known to you: They are very convenient, and very fit to make you easy. Now, these so very plain Means are the very same which God has made use of to inform you of your Salvation, and to facilitate the Acquisition of it to you. They are of the same authentick Nature. They are even more levelled to your Capacity: They are more numerous, more vigorous, more affecting, and more sure of Success.

The Acts registered in the Rolls of a Court of Justice, and the Instruments that compose the Secretaryship of an Embassy, run a great many Risks. Water, Fire, Thieves, Worms, and Dust may make very great Havocks among them. If the Papers of the *Dutch* Embassy happen to be destroyed, the *Swedish* Ambassador cannot replace them. If the Archives of *Flanders* had been pillaged or burnt, *Provence* or *Languedoc* could not restore them by sending thither Copies of their own Records.

Besides, those who are charged with keeping those Acts, are doing an Office not over and above busy. They content themselves with keeping the
Collection

Inconveniences attending the Acts which are the Foundation of our Affairs.

Collection of them in Order, and out of Harm's Way, and then to shew them when they are required: But, they inform no Body of the Contents of them, nor of the Concern they may have in them; and altho' it is a wise Discretion in them to be silent on that Head, yet are there not a thousand Things in those Acts, which we sometimes are very unhappy not to have been acquainted with?

Finally, it has happened many a Time, that Acts seemingly in due Form, have proved either false or falsified. These are the Inconveniencies which attend our Registers and Titles, and our several Means of Preservation.

No Inconveniencies to be met with in the Means of our Salvation.

It is not the same with the Affair of your Salvation: You always find it attended with all the Conveniencies and Securities resulting from the Precautions which Men take with one another. But the Dangers you may run in worldly Affairs, are never met with in the Means appointed to secure your Salvation. If you have any Thing to fear, it is from your own self: Your Danger lies in your Frowardness and want of Good-Will. The Bearers and the Acts of the Covenant which God has made with you, can neither fail you, nor tell you any Untruth.

The Acts of the Covenant are every where.

First, the Instruments of the Inheritance reserved for you, are dispersed all over the World; they are so authentick and so numerous, that they can never be lost or fall into Oblivion. You will hear the same Gospel published every where. You will find every where the same Symbols, the same Prayers, the same Sacraments, the same Solemnities, the same Lessons, the same Hopes. These are your Titles, which can never be mislaid: It is the universal Church that has them in Trust.

Besides,

Besides, the Articles of the Covenant, and all the Acts relating to them, have not been trusted to any mute Keepers, charged with no other Commission but that of preserving them. The Affair of your Salvation has, on the contrary, been recommended to Messengers whose principal Obligation is to inform you of it, and whose Functions are for ever declaring the same, although they should not speak themselves. Their Ministry is ever speaking and active. The Places where they call you together, the common Prayers, and the Ceremonies which they preside over, cannot let any body be ignorant of the Truth. Besides, the Principal among them watch over the Work of the Subaltern: And these, though acting within less Compass, are of an Eagerness that will not neglect the least Thing: They go and carry the Light of the Gospel, and win Hearts to J. C. into the most savage Abodes.

The Trustees or Depositories of the Acts can never alter them, nor let them sink into Oblivion, or keep them concealed.

There they publish the blessed News, and the Ways of Salvation in the Infancy, in the principal Occurrences of Life, and in Times of Sickness. Most particularly, what would become of the Reason of your Children without the Care of the Pastor? It would be brutish, froward, and untractable. It would be no Reason at all.

On the contrary, you find them teachable, ready to serve you, and indowed with new Degrees of Understanding, in Proportion as your Family and your Servants learn the Law of God, the Articles of our Faith, the Prayers of the Church, the Sermon of J. C. on the Mountain, his other Discourses, and the finest Strokes of the Conduct of his Saints. Young Children become sometimes your Light. They seem for a while to amuse you by their reading and singing, and become our Curates at last?

They

They instruct you; and what they have been taught by their Pastor is a Curb that keeps the Eye; the Hand, and every Desire within Bounds. It is at the same Time a constant Incouragement of any good whatsoever.

These Helps are not transitory, nor are they all what the Church will afford you. The Festival Days of the Lord, which are proclaimed by the Ministry, are so many Instructions repeated from Year to Year, and from Week to Week, that will not leave any where the least Room for Forgetfulness or Indifference. Each Solemnity calls together the Poor as well as the Rich. Those who think it not proper to answer this Invitation, have at least heard the Signal of it: They have already understood the Meaning of that Signal; and if any unruly Hearts happen to take an Aversion to our Assemblies, it is merely because they know them to be Instructions of Virtue.

But, what we have just seen, though of itself excellent, yet is not sufficient. The Christian Pastors introduce Meekness and Benevolence among Men, by preaching up good Manners, and by all the Motives of the Christian Hopes; and that is a great Good indeed: But much more than this is still requisite. They must moreover be Bearers of an Alliance truly Divine and Holy: They must needs be deputed, and you be convinced of that Deputation. What they are publishing is indeed magnificent; but is it certain in its Origin, and can your own Pastor shew you that he has been charged by the Body of the old Embassy with a special Commission that directs him to you in particular?

If so, receiving your Pastor, will be the same Thing to you as if you received the Heads of the Embassy; the same as if you listened to the Apostles and to J. C. himself. If so, you will no longer take it ill that those who are most eminent in
Learn-

Learning, who have the finest Talents and the brightest Parts, should hold the first Ranks in the Body of the Embassadors, and exert their Functions in the most populous Cities. Thus far every Thing is right: And if a Deputy has been detached from that Body, and invested with proper Powers to come to you in your Solitude, to make you Partakers of the Christian Alliance, your Condition is thereby the same as that of the most distinguished and best taught Parishes.

By that Means your Salvation is not dependent on the good or bad Qualities of the Pastor, but on the Reality of his Mission. Do but begin by examining whence he comes, and of what Body he actually makes a Part. We shall see afterwards if those who detached him from their own Body, are themselves the wholesome and only Embassy.

Hitherto, my Brethren, I have had with you no other Ties but those which unite the Catholick Hearts dispersed all over the World. But Men, of whose Merit and Rank you respect, have on this Day shewed and regularly presented to you your

The Practices of the Catholick Church are the Proofs of the Perpetuity of the wholesome Embassy.

new Pastor, that he might be put in Possession of this Church. That Ceremony does not barely aim at making him enjoy that small Income which is to be his Subsistence. This Reception is intended for your own Sake. This publick Act, by installing the new Deputy, makes the Junction of his Work with that of his Predecessors. It establishes him in the Exercise of the same Mission. I have touched the several Instruments of the publick Ministry one after another. I have acknowledged the sacred Books, the Common Prayers, the Ritual of the Sacraments and of the Festival Days, the Practices and Creed of the Cathedral of this Diocese, and the Practices and Creed of all the Catholick

Diocefes. I have, in presenting to you the Marks of my Mission, bound myself to perpetuate the same Worship and the same Faith of which my Bishop, his Clergy and his People make a common and immortal Profession with you.

On your Part, by receiving the new Deputy, you renew the Ties that connect you with the Bishop from whom you have received him. But, you cannot be united with your Prelate, without being likewise united through him to the whole Clergy of *France* from which he received his Ordination. Through the Church of *France* of which you make a Part, you are united to all the Catholick Churches now dispersed in all and every Part of the World: You are, together with all these Clergies and Churches, united to the first of all Pastors, to him I mean who is the common Bond of all Churches, and whose See exhibits both the Primacy, and the Succession of the apostolical Ministry. You are in Unity, and you know very well what that Unity is.

Let four Men come to you, and each of them tell you that he is Judge-Delegate appointed to judge with Assistants the Debates of your Commonalty, and let all these four Men reprove each other reciprocally. You will desire them to exhibit their Commission; you will receive that of the four which shall produce his Commission sealed with the Seal of the Parliament: The other three may talk as long as they please, and tell you: *There is no more Parliament: It is a Corporation destitute of Rule: Their House is a Building ready to fall into Ruins: Your Commonalty needs but authorize me, and I shall decide your Cases with the utmost Equity:* You will let them run on.

None but inconsiderate People can listen to such Discourses. The only secure Way is to receive the Man who has the regular Powers, and who is acknowledged

known by the publick Magistrate. Of the four he is the only one whose Acts shall subsist, and have their Effect.

It is an easy Matter for you, at once to distinguish all those who have separated themselves from the Catholick Church, and who would fain submit you to another Ministry, either in assuming that Mission to themselves, or in receiving it from you. They have no Powers of their own, nor have you any to give them.

You know very well that it does not belong to you to institute your own Judges and your Magistrates. Nor does it belong to any private Men, nor even to the King of *France* himself, to create Plenipotentiaries intitled to come and treat with us from the Emperor or from the King of *Prussia*. If this Proceeding appears to you extravagant in the regulating of temporal Affairs between absent People; much more will you refuse to receive the Word of Life, the Sacraments, the Christian Covenant, from any other but those who produce the recognizable Marks of a single and self-same Mission proceeding from God. I say of a single Mission: For how is it possible to think that there may be four Missions or more, when it is certain that there cannot even be two?

You confess by your Words the Unity of that Ministry dispersed all over the World: And you moreover confess it by your Conduct, when in your Travels you avoid assisting at the Congregations which reject the Catholick Ministry and which keep by themselves. You would think yourselves separated from the Church, if you had been sitting in those Congregations. You look upon them as so many Branches cut off the Tree, which are grown dry because they have no longer any Communication with the Sap.

These Societies know their own Schism, which makes them uneasy. They talk of nothing else; and think they will make themselves easy concerning their Separations, by attributing several degrading Things to us. It is not the same with you: You need not make Apologies for your persevering in the ancient Unity. For which Reason it seldom happens in the Catholick Church that your Pastors mention to you the Doctrine and Conduct of those who have parted with the Church. It is their Business to know why they have engaged in so many different Roads. Those who follow the Path that has always been trodden, are not at a Loss how to justify their Choice: Nor is any Exhortation necessary to persuade them to persevere in the same. How comfortable it is for you to be in the Road that has led your Fathers to Salvation, to be in that Society dispersed all over the Universe, in which no Man ever ceased to say; “ I believe in
 “ the Holy Universal Church. I believe the Church
 “ which is but One, Holy, Catholick, and Apo-
 “ stolical.”

The true Church and your Church are the same, since yours takes in the whole World, having all over the Earth but one and the same Clergy, the same Center of Reunion, the same Chief who is the common Bond of all the different Members of that immense Body, and an ever-visible Mark of a Unity which is interrupted by no Traverses of Sea whatever, nor by any Diversity of Languages, nor by the longest Periods of Time.

The true Church and your Church are again the same by an uninterrupted Duration, since yours has, over and above the foregoing Advantages, that of going up quite to the first Successors of the Apostles, to *Jesus Christ*, and to God himself, the Author of the good Tidings.

Every

Every Thing does in Reality contribute to convince you that the Catholick Pastor who never ceased to work in order to the Building of your Church, are the Successors of the Apostles, that J. C. who has sent the Apostles is the Heir of every Thing, and that you are called to be his Coheirs.

Do not fancy that I am going to invite you to peruse Books, and to make any difficult Inquiries. You stand in no need of any Study or Books, to know the Unity or Correspondence of the Bailiwicks about you with the Parliament, and to know that the Parliament now extant is the same that kept Sessions in the Years foregoing; and the very same that was established by our Kings. You need not use any Books or Efforts, to distinguish the Jurisdictions, and the Judges in whom the real Authority does reside.

If false Judges, or false Notaries have sometimes imposed on the publick or on private People, they did it by counterfeiting some of the usual Forms of Law. But those false Acts, those illegal Attempts, are soon contradicted, because the Authors of them are not known. They have not been aggregated with the antient Corporation that has the Powers. They are not acknowledged by the other Persons actually in Office: They enjoy not the Use of the same Places and Processes. Every Thing is against them.

Was not all this Outside prescribed in order to prevent Illusions and Mistakes? It is then that very Outside that proves your Security. Thus have spiritual and invisible Things been rendered visible and certain, to manifest among you both the Intentions of the Kings of the Earth and the Will of God; and to make you equally sure of the Blessings of this Life, and of those of the other.

You directly and distinctly perceive whatever swerves from this notorious Outside. Any Man that should counterfeit the Acts of the Magistracy,

would immediately be thought by you a Forger or an Impostor: You would repute any other Man no better, who should expostulate and cavil against the Forms of the Law, the Magistracy established, and the publick Authority: Because if there were any Complaints to be made against the Judges, it does not belong to a private Man to turn them out of their Places, and set himself up in their Stead. This Rule may be easily applied to the Ministry of the universal Church. No Part of it is liable to be reformed by this or that Man: And the whole Outside of the Catholick Church ought to make upon you Impressions still more affecting, and a thousand Times fitter than any civil Establishments to procure you the Ease resulting from a prudent Behaviour notwithstanding your being destitute of Books and Learning.

Pray, tell me, if Nations that have not the same Language, the same Customs, nor the same Concerns, and that are three or four hundred, or a thousand, or even many thousands of Leagues distant from each other, can possibly have acted in Concert and understood one another so as to have the same Faith, the same Sacraments, and the same Government. A Set of Men must needs then have spread among them formerly, and have given these Nations the same Doctrine, and the same Way of thinking as they had themselves. And in Reality, the Ministry of these Preachers has not ceased at any Time to be present to the Minds of all the Churches which they have reunited. These Churches call them the Apostles, that is, the Deputies by Way of Excellence. They all of them have continued to solemnize their Festivals and Labours, to bear Testimony to the Writings which they had received from them, and to read the same in their Congregations weekly.

But,

But, before I come to shew you that these Men have been authorized by God himself to make those Establishments which are now found again every where; make yourselves still surer of the common Origin of all your Churches, by recalling, not indeed what you have read, but what you may have seen.

Begin by comparing this Parochial Church with the neighbouring Parishes, and all these Churches with those that are most remote from them. Call to your Remembrance the most common Objects which are seen in yours, and in all those you have any Knowledge of. The very first Object which offers in the Outside of a Catholick Parish-Church, is the Steeple and the Cross. That Cross which is erected on the most eminent Part of the Building, is an Abridgment of your Faith. It is the most publick Profession of expecting Salvation from nothing but the Sacrifice of *J. C.*

The Signal of Prayer which is frequently heard in the Steeple, is at once the Convocation of the whole Family to give Glory to the common Father, and the Confession of the continual Need we all of us have of the Grace of our Saviour. The Publications and Signs which the Catholick Church gives of her Faith, are the very same in the Outsides of her Buildings, wherever she is at Liberty to go on with her ancient Customs: You will find a like Uniformity within. Step into your parochial Churches: Enter into old Abbies, into the first Church of the Diocese, or into other Cathedrals: You will find in them all the same Objects and the same Instruments, here in small, and elsewhere with more Apparatus and Grandeur.

You will see most commonly under the Steeples and the Portico's ancient Sculptures that represent Kings, Lords of Manors, beneficent Princes, old Bishops recognizable by their Cap and by their Pa-

floral Staff, the uniform Tokens of their Authority, and of a Government which is the same every where. Many of these Sculptures and Steeples go quite up to the first Ages of our Monarchy, and will prove their being eleven or twelve hundred Years old. They shew you there the Monuments of our first Kings near the Tombs where the Saints of the first Ages did lie. And notwithstanding the rebuilding of some of these old Edifices, the Year of their several Dedications is known: The Memory of them is celebrated, and it is plain from the general Resemblance of all these Buildings, that they were only Imitations of the foregoing Temples, which were ready to fall on Account of their very great Antiquity, and that touched the very first Ages of Christianity.

The like Resemblance and the Marks of the same Faith are seen in all the Parts which they are composed of. The whole Catholick Church is clearly expressed by all the Instruments that serve for the Functions of the same Ministry, and for the Administration of the same Sacraments. You are sensible of the Intention of them, of which you have been frequently informed as well as of the Names of the Festival-Days. These Instruments and Names remind you of the Life of *Jesus Christ*, of his Mysteries and Doctrine, and of his Death, Resurrection, and Mediation.

Coming out of the Temples, where the whole Religion is thus delineated before your Eyes, even without the Help of any Books or Pictures, you meet with a final Instruction in the Place appointed for the Sepulture of your Families: I mean the Churchyard; it is the Dorter: This, you say, is the Place where our Fathers went to rest. Their Bodies are motionless here; but their Souls are living: They wait, in God, for the great Day of their

their Reunion to a glorious Body perfectly free from its former Defects and Frailties.

Thus are all the Practices of the Catholick Church, together with the painted Figures, a Book always open for you, whose Language is the same in *Portugal*, in *Hungary*, in *Germany*, in *Poland*, in *America*, and every where.

There is a like Resemblance in the three Orders of the Ministry. No body says in the Catholick Monarchies: We have need to keep to the Episcopall Government, because there is more Vigour and Dignity in it: No body says in the Catholick Republicks: Let us suppress the Government of the Bishops, and preserve that of the Priests, because the latter is more modest. No body consults in the Catholick Church about ordering what has been regulated seventeen hundred Years ago. The high Esteem entertained in all the Churches for the Evangelical Ministry, has every where inclined the People and the Lords to found perpetual Alms for the maintaining of the same Buildings and of the same Work. Every Thing is still subsisting, and found again. So that whatever you see in the Catholick Church plainly shews you the same Origin, the same Faith, and the same Spirit.

Such is the first Predication that has instructed you in your Infancy. It was understood by the Fathers of your Fathers, and by those who lived before them. This Predication has preceded mine, nor shall I be able to tell you any Thing besides what you have already heard.

You are sensible now that it is not upon the Word of a Man that you are *Christians*. This universal Predication of the whole Outside of the Church, is to you an Instruction independent of my own and a Law to me. I may encourage good Sentiments and good Manners by my Exhortations, and by laying every Truth and every Mystery before your
Eyes.

Eyes. But it will never be in my Power to retrench or alter any Thing in what has been taught you by the bare Outside of our Churches.

Were I bold enough to tell you that the Resurrection of the Dead is neither conceivable nor possible, and to forget publishing to you the Solemnity of the Holy Day of *Easter*; you would infallibly tell me that I am inconsistent with myself; since I have bound myself to you to perpetuate the Practices of the Catholick Church in this Parish, and consequently to solemnize among you the very first of her Festivals; even the Resurrection of our Saviour.

If I dared in my Instructions, to dispense with the Obligation of loving God, and of that of employing your whole Being towards making yourselves agreeable to him, I should be immediately refuted by the first of the Commandments you have learned. I should be refuted by the Voice of the little Child who comes to the Door of this Choir, and with a loud Voice publishes these Words:
 “Hearken thou, O my People: I am the Lord
 “thy God, who have brought thee out of the
 “House of Bondage. Thou shalt have no other
 “Gods before me. Thou shalt love the Lord
 “thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul,
 “and with all thy Might.”

It will be the same as to all the rest. I shall instruct you: But every Thing instructs me myself. My Words have been regulated before I was with you, and my Successors shall direct the very same to your Grand-children.

The Truths which I had found expressed in the universal Service of the Church, I have found them again painted or ingraved on the Walls and on the Instruments of the Divine Service. Whatever I am to teach or observe to you, I have already found it in the Collects or Common Prayers which we re-
 cite

cite every Sunday with all the Churches, and which the holy Councils have ordered us to explain to you, in order to raise pious Sentiments in your Hearts, and leave in your Minds powerful Motives of behaving like *Christians*.

More methodical Discourses may be heard in great Cities; but nothing is taught there that can, better than the Gospel and the Office of the Church, give Man an upright Heart, and inspire him with a Love for Virtue.

Let us insist in a more particular Manner upon the Publication of the Gospel, because it makes your Condition perfectly equal to that of the *Christians* that are best taught, and because it is published nowhere in the Catholick Church without being attended with the Proofs of its Divinity.

The Apostles, after having converted the first Faithful among Nations unknown to each other; left among them Men purposely chosen to continue the same Predication after them. It hath been never interrupted since that Time, and the Word of Life which formed the Church at first, does still continue to edify it: But altho' every necessary Truth was found and repeated in this general Predication which publishes Christianity and makes Converts to it; the first *Christians* collected with great Care all that had been written by the Evangelists and by the holy Apostles. The Churches which had received, and which shewed these Writings, are most of them still extant. They notified to the others that they had received such and such Instructions concerning their respective Exigencies. As the Apostles were still alive, and went about paying Visits to the Churches which had received their Writings, they could not possibly mistake them. Reading these Letters was hearing the Apostles themselves: Wherefore all the Churches took a special Care to collect all that was undeniably theirs,

theirs, and made publick Lectures of it. Hence came the Custom which is now found again every where, of reading Part of the Epistles and of the Gospels in the Congregation of the Faithful, that this Lecture surely proceeding from the apostolical Men, might for ever serve as an Instruction to all the Faithful, but also as a Rule for the Predication of the Pastors: So that they were never allowed to swerve from it, nor able to do it with Impunity.

When Doctors too much addicted to the vain Reasonings of the human Mind were bold enough to assert that *Jesus Christ* had the Resemblance of God, but that he was no more than a most excellent Creature, all the Churches opposed their common Belief to this Blasphemy. Their Deputies assembled by the Care of the Emperor *Constantine*, confuted this empty Philosophy by two Means equally simple and secure. One was the Predication of their Churches, wherein *J. C.* was called God, and honoured, worshipped, and invoked as much as the Father. The other was the Light of the apostolical Scriptures which were read every where. They found in those Scriptures, that the Apostle *Thomas* had called *Jesus Christ* his Lord and his God. St. *John* the Evangelist had taught them that the Wisdom, the Word which was made Man, and which had made the World, was before all created Things; that the Word was in God, and that it was God: So that the Belief which you recite every *Sunday*, was formed of the Word preached in all the Churches, and of the same Word preserved in the apostolical Writings.

By this Means, the Churches dispersed over the Face of the Earth, have always had an infallible Means of knowing a contested Truth: It consisted in bringing together what was and had been believed and published on that Head in every Church. This is the apostolical Tradition, which acquired
an

an invincible Force by its Conformity with the apostolical Writings.

Consider now the Simplicity of the Means which were made use of towards preserving that Scripture by which our Predication was to be rendered for ever regular and invariable.

It was in order to procure this great Good, and to render that Divine Scripture familiar to the Pastors, that the Christian Congregations have always begun and still begin the Divine Service by the reading of them. The Proof of this is found through the whole Extent of the Catholick Society. It will never open to you any eminent Church, but you will find in it one or more Pulpits purposely erected to make with an audible Voice and looking towards the Assembly, the Publication of the apostolical Epistles, and of Part of the Gospel. It is chiefly in the most ancient Churches that they have most faithfully preserved the Pulpit from which the Publication inseparable from the Congregations of the first Ages, was to be made.

This Part of the Christian Solemnities seemed to be as necessary as the Reception itself of the Sacraments of the Church, because it is in the Publication of the Word that the Seed and Growth of the Faith does reside. Hence was the Solemnity of that Publication introduced every where.

Those among you who travel have sometimes seen it performed in the first Church of the Episcopal City, or elsewhere. I shall give a Description of it to others who never saw it: And from one single Ceremony you will judge of the Usefulness of all the rest.

The Deacon leaves the Clergy that surround the Altar; and taking a Book of a distinguished Form among those that are of Service, he asks the President of the Assembly

The Dignity
and Usefulness
of our Ceremo-
nies.

for

for his Mission, that is for the Command of declaring the Word of Life to the People. A Request this truly instructive to you! A majestick Ceremony wherein you have in little the Character of the Vigilance of the Pastors over the Depositum of the Faith! The Pastor or officiating Priest having given the Deacon the Permission of publishing the Evangelical Word; he reminds him of the Intention of the Church and of the Body of the Pastors of whom he becomes the Deputy. Which is as much as if the officiating Minister said to him from the whole Body of the Pastors: “The Church does
 “not trust her Predication to any but a sure and
 “well chosen Man. Serve her worthily and faithfully; go: And when you open your Mouth to
 “declare the Words of the Alliance to both the
 “Faithful and Infidels, may your Heart be full
 “of the Spirit of God: May your Predication
 “fill every Heart with Joy, and fill your whole
 “Audience with an ardent Love for Virtue.”

The Deacon steps towards the Pulpit, preceded by a numerous Retinue. He carries the Book elevated, and the whole Body of the Assistants most profoundly bow as he passes.

This Book does not receive the Marks of the Respect of the Living only: It is all over covered with the Presents of those who lived before us. Queens have taken from their Head-Attire the Rubies and Diamonds we see it sparkling with. This March is published without by the Musick of the Steeple. The warlike Musick joins it in the greatest Ceremonies. Thus are Treaties of Peace proclaimed, and the Congregation of the Faithful informed that what is brought to them is the *wholesome News*.

The Instant the Deacon opens the Book, the whole Congregation stand up and listen to his Words with a religious Silence.

When

When the Publication of the Gospel is made, and the Words of it explained either by the Deacon or by any other, the President of the Assembly, the whole Clergy, and a few Lay-men who represent the Body of the People, kiss the Book one after another. They applaud what has been read, saying: “I believe it in my Heart, and profess it by Word of Mouth.”

What does this Ceremonial and those Expressions of Reverence relate to? Were each *Christian* allowed to express the several Affections of his Heart in the publick Prayer; and to make his Thoughts understood by so many Words, our Assemblies would degenerate into a most horrid Confusion: The Church goes more prudently about it. Far from smothering the Sentiments of Piety, she rather excites them as much as she can. She is even desirous to see them break out. But she does it orderly and with Dignity.

The Intention
of our Ceremo-
nies.

She speaks but little herself, and gives us much more Things to understand than she daily expresses. She puts us in Mind of and makes us meditate upon a great many Truths by the several Parts of her outward Worship, each whereof has a clear Meaning, and a sensible Relation to our Faith.

She likewise asks no more of each *Christian* than a plain Token and a Gesture expressive of his Confession. Where is the Man that does not understand what it is the Faithful mean by the Kiss of Peace which precedes the Communion? Where is the Man that does not hear aloud the Declaration they make of their Trust in the only Sacrifice of our Saviour, by barely prostrating themselves before a Cross? Is it not with the same Intention that they express the Idea of the Cross, by the Motion of the Hand that represents it? We speak every now and then, even when we hold our Peace:

And

And as we salute with our Mouth, so we do with our Hat and Hand.

The *Hebrews* were never blamed for having adorned the Ark of the Covenant with golden Plates. Were they ever accused of any Superstition on Account of their constant Custom of praying with their Face turned towards the Place where the Ark was, in what Country soever they might be: This Gesture reminded them of their Obligations, by filling their Thoughts with the Notion of the Ark and of the Book of the Law it contained. Likewise our Ceremonies are not productive of Sanctity, but they are by Turns both the Warning and the Expression of the Sentiments that sanctify us. The Catholicks direct their Veneration neither to the Gold nor to the Jewels that cover the Cross or the Book of the Gospel. They know very well that the Contents of that Book are more precious than all the Treasures of the Earth.

Before, then, your Pastors have given you any Instruction, the outward Worship of the Catholick Church, has already taught you the principal Truths in a most uniform Manner. What the Books say, the Ceremonial repeats it a hundred different Ways, and the more the whole is repeated, the more the Meaning of it is settled. No Man whatever can make any Alteration in it, but every *Christian* cries out, and opposes the ancient Predication to the modern one.

But this so judicious ceremonial, does not only give you useful Instructions; it affords you besides every where many repeated Proofs of the Truth of your Profession. These Books of the Epistles, of the Acts of the Apostles, and of the Gospels, have at all Times been very neatly written, and preserved with the utmost Care in the ancient Libraries, and in the Treasure of the largest Churches. They are frequently written in a Character older than the
Church

Church itself where they are made use of. Nevertheless, in what Country soever this Scripture may be found, or in what Language it may be put, it is still the very same Book. We find it again in Societies that have most anciently left the universal Church to govern themselves their own Way, and that have dared to renounce that Form of Union of which their Fathers professed the Necessity, and by Means of which the Disciples of J. C. had made of all the Pastors but one single Body of Pastors, and of all the Flocks but one and the same Flock.

That Flock with its Pastors is perpetuated to the very End of the World. You are sure of being Part of that ancient Flock. You have the Proof of it in the Succession and Unity of your Pastors, who never ceased to come to you with the same Scripture, with the same Sacraments, the same Utensils, the same Symbols, and the same Practices. Your Pastor lends you his Ministry, and the Predication you listen to is really that of the Apostles. But is their Word really that of J. C. and of God himself? I am still to shew you here, that whosoever listens to the Apostles and to J. C. listens to the Father who sent J. C. and the Apostles. The Proof of this is before your Eyes.

Three hundred Years of Persecution served to bear the most unanimous and the most extraordinary Testimony to the Wonders of J. C. and to the Works of his Disciples and of their Successors. God was bearing Testimony to his Son by Miracles exposed before the Eyes of all the World, and by Events as notoriously foretold as they were faithfully executed. Men have attested the whole, even by the Loss of their Liberty, of their Country, and of their very Life. But, has Time rendered that Testimony uncertain with Regard to you? And can

The Mission of J. C. is divine, and the Proof of it is sensible in the Catholick Church.

your Religion, which is grounded upon this Testimony of God, become now uncertain?

No, sure: The Testimony which God has born to his Envoys, and the Testimonies which the first Ages have born to the Gospel, are neither of them lost to you: They are as yet extant: They are before your Eyes, and the Catholick Church preserves them for your Sake.

Had you lived in the first Times of Christianity, doubtless you might yourselves have been Eye-Witnesses, or have been informed by others, of several Matters of Fact capable of converting you, or of confirming your Faith. But, the Constraint of those Times, and the obscure lurking Life of the *Christians*, would have kept the major Part of the Events concealed from you. You had perhaps avoided the making yourselves sure of them, in order not to run the Risk of becoming *Christians*. Whereas the Confession and the generous Death of all those Witnesses are now freely exposed before the Eyes of all the World. It is a Body of Testimonies every where found, and that can be neither destroyed, nor obliterated. Men did then for you, and in order to preserve the Gospel and its Proofs, what was never done for the Preservation of any History, nor to perpetuate the Remembrance of any Man, however famous he may have been.

The Memories of the Martyrs are the standing Proof of the Divinity of the Christian Religion.

The Faithful who saw the holy Apostles, then their Disciples, and then Martyrs of all Conditions, Ages, and Countries, fall Victims to Christianity, collected their Blood and the Fragments of their Bodies with great Respect, and then laid the Table of the Lord upon the very Spot of Ground where they had buried them. They celebrated the holy Mysteries there once a Year at least; and sometimes met there together in the dead of Night, to
shew

shew the Death of the Lord and that of the Witnesses of Truth. They gave Glory to God, for the Efficacy he gave to the Evangelical Word, and by that Solemnity they attested to all future Ages, the Steadfastness and Conviction of the Witnesses.

The Faithful erected no Altars to the Martyrs: You know very well they did not: But the Tomb of a Confessor of *Christ* appeared to them the Altar that must needs be most agreeable to him, as it was really the fittest to inviven their Faith. They continued to meet there from Year to Year on the Day of the Departure of the Martyrs. Whenever they had the Liberty, they built for the same Purpose a Chapel or a Meeting-room upon the Tomb itself, or somewhere else when they could not do otherwise. A Handkerchief dyed with the Blood of the Martyrs, or a Bone secretly snatched from their vigilant Torturers, became a comforting Memorial for the Faithful. In the subterranean Streets where they had Liberty to bury their Dead like the common People, they sometimes widened the Vaults of their Martyrs in the Form of Halls. All those Places, and the Festival-Days solemnized in them, assumed every where the celebrated Name of *Memories of the Martyrs*.

The Bishop appointed the Feast of our Saviour at the Tomb of such a Man or such a Woman Martyr. The Faithful passed one Part of the Night there in Prayers, in order to edify each other by eminent Examples: Or they lay concealed in those Places to avoid Persecution. These Memories and nocturnal Congregations were multiplied with the Barbarity of the Persecutors; they served to make Truth known every where, and to hand it down to all future Ages.

We know not by a great deal all the Names of those illustrious Confessors, because the Persecutors took sometimes the Precaution of suppressing the

juridical Acts of their Death, and hindered them from being communicated to the *Christians*, who read them in their Assemblies. But, as the Blood of the Martyrs was spilt every where, so it became every where the Seed of new *Christians*. Thus did Christianity spread and perpetuate itself all over the World together with its Proofs.

The Faithful of the great City of *Antioch* met together at the Tomb of their Pastor *Ignatius*; those of *Smyrna* assembled near the Ashes of the venerable *Polycarp*, who had often heard Narrations of the Works of the Lord from the Mouth of *St. John* himself and of the other Disciples. They met in the Suburbs of *Rome* upon the Tombs of *Peter* and *Paul*, of *Clement*, *Sextus*, and *Laurence*, and of a Multitude of other Martyrs of all Ages and Conditions. The most illustrious City had the most numerous Testimonies.

Nothing more celebrated than the Memories of *Cyprian* at *Carthage*, of *Gervase* and *Protasius* at *Milan*, of *Potinus*, *Blandina*, *Irenæus*, and of so many others, at *Vienna* and *Lyons*: We every where continue to meet together by the Founders of our Churches; there is nothing upon the Face of the Earth so universal, and so singularly illustrated as that Testimony: And all that is now practised in the Catholick Church, is the Continuation and the compleatest Perpetuity of it.

The whole Outside is a Proof of the Martyrdom, as Martyrdom is a Proof of the Works of the Holy Spirit.

The Altar has in a great many Places the Form of a Tomb. Wherever the plainest Antiquity is faithfully copied, the Body of that Altar is covered before with a Curtain, or with an Ornament that does still preserve the Form of a Curtain. It was drawn on the Festival-Day, to put in open View the Urn of the holy Martyr, which

which was placed under the Altar, and which is still found there.

This Custom, so very fit to encourage the Faithful and make them stedfast on the Approach of Persecution, and to awaken the Piety of Mankind through all Ages, has introduced another Practice; *viz.* that of never erecting any Altars without placing under them the Relicks of a holy Martyr, or of some Personage distinguished by an eminent Virtue. When the Altar was erected, and had served for the Assemblies of the Faithful, the Bodies of those who were honoured as the Vessels of the holy Spirit, were no longer put under the Altar, which was already filled. They were put in the Neighbourhood and by the Side of it, or at the Bottom of the Absis that terminated the Building. They, though dead, came to publish their Trust in him who will raise them from the Dead. Thus is the humble *Genevieve* placed behind the Altar. It is also the Situation of the Prelate who baptized *Clovis* and the *French*. The major Part of the Founders of all Churches, are likewise found again by that Table where they broke the Bread of Life: And most of the distinguished Names of each Diocese crown the Altar, and draw the Eyes of every one at the Extremity of ancient Cathedrals.

Again, we see round these Altars and Tombs the Lamps and Tapers that served to light the nightly Congregations of the first *Christians*.

The Origin of the Lamps and Tapers in the Catholick Churches.

When you come into our Courts of Justice, you find Dresses, Proceedings, Manners of bowing, and Ways of speaking that call you back to the remote Times when these Establishments were made: Likewise, when we come into the Cathedral Churches of *Paris, Lyons, Milan, Rome,* and of all our Churches in general, it seems, when we consider the Ways and Manners of our present

Times, that we are entering from this into a new World. We, in reality, see there the Habits, and hear the Language of those whose Ashes are deposited under the Altar. The Forms of their Prayers, the Instruments of their Liturgy, the Remains and Marks of their Tortures, together with the publick Building where they were at first shewed to the Faithful, and fixed to a Place for their constant Edification, all was jointly handed down to us. None of these Things were separated from the rest: And the Truth which they attested so loudly, you are sensible that they testify it in the last Days as they did in the first.

Go on considering with some small Attention the Character of the major Part of our Ceremonies; they all of them will continue to intimate to you, that the Church was in a Manner born, or that she made her first Progress in the very Tombs of the Martyrs, and that whatever strikes your Eyes now is a Monument of the Truth.

It was by frequenting the Memories of the Witnesses, that the outward Worship of the Church assumed a settled Form. It was there she found her Riches, by uniting to him who is the Chief both of the Faithful who are dead, and of those who are living. There she confirmed the Faith of her Children, by laying before them great Examples, in order to render them invincible. She shewed them the Marks of their Confession, and the powerful Help of the Communion of Saints, whose Death could not interrupt their Charity, nor put a Stop to their incessant Prayers.

The Church has together with their Ashes and their Festival Days, handed down to Posterity the Testimony they have born to the Events they had seen by the Effusion of their Blood. The Testimony born to J. C by the Holy Ghost, has then been for ever perpetuated by the Testimony of Men,
and

and that so generous and so universal Testimony has every where been preserved by the outward Worship of the Church.

The most famous Men in History and in the Conduct of temporal Affairs, are with Regard to you as though they never had been at all. Were I to speak to you of the Thoughts of *Plato* and *Confucius*, or of the Victories of *Annibal* and *Tamerlane*, you really know not what those People are, nor are you any great Losers by it. But you rejoice on the Birth-Day of the holy Fore-runner of *J. C.* You leave off working, purposely to come here and sing the Victories of the Deacon *Stephen*, of the holy Apostles, and of those who have confessed, amidst a World of Tortures, the Wonders of the apostolical Predication. This is the whole Sum of the Learning of our Countries, and it is in good Truth the only one you stand in need of, since it constitutes the Security of your Condition.

The further you travel in the Catholick Countries, the more Monuments you find of the first Predication, and of the stedfast Courage of the Witnesses. Those who travel not, find them again sufficiently in the Ceremonies of the Church, which are the same both in Town and Country.

As the ancient Church celebrated the major Part of her Festival-Days at the Tomb of some Martyr, the Parishes went thither in a Procession upon the Appointment given them by the Bishop. This Appointment of the general Meeting to such and such Memory, has fixt the Names of the Buildings, which went thus each of them by the Name of a Saint, although none but God is adored in them; and that March of the Parishes thus called together, is found again in the Procession that does still precede the celebrating of the Eucharist. The Necessity of distinguishing the different Flocks in

The Processions.

The Banners.

those Places which were in Time become of very great Resort, introduced the Use of the Banners which are still carried at the Head of your Processions.

The Litanies. The reciting and singing of the Litanies was an easy Office for the long Walk towards the Tombs, which were always situated without the Cities. The Custom of them which came from the East, has preserved among us the first Words of the *Greek* Form of Prayer^a, which is as you well know, a repeated Invocation of the Divine Help, and the begging of the Prayers of the holy Men of God.

The Church knows how beneficial it is to the Faithful to understand her Prayers. She makes you understand them as well as the Gospel, explaining them to you by printed Translations and by the Mouth of her Pastors, whom she strictly charges with this important Obligation in her Councils. She exhorts you all to increase in Point of religious Knowledge, and readily helps you to it: But she is not ready to change her Language and alter her Customs at the very first Clamour of some censorious Person, nor even at the very first Appearance of some Good that might result from her Change. That Good would be an easier Way of instructing the Faithful; but she replaces it by an Equivalent: It is the perpetual Employment of her Pastors to instruct them; and the Advantage of speaking the Language of the Vulgar, would destroy another Good which she is not willing to deprive you of.

Your greatest Advantage consists in being sure that your Church is holy and apostolical. The very great Good which the Church aims at, is to convince you that your Faith was not hatched in the Brain of some new pretended Doctor, but that you

^a The Litany begins by the *Greek* Words *Κύριε ἐλέησον*, that is, *Lord have Mercy upon us.*

have your Share in the Alliance that was promised and brought down upon the Earth. Now, it is that great Blessing, it is that desirable Security which the Catholick Church procures you, by the Stability and Uniformity of her Practices.

By thus handing down to you the Language of the first *Christians*, their Habits, their Monuments, their Festival-Days, their Prayers, and all their Customs, the Church has preserved for you the whole Antiquity, the whole Depositum, the Belief and the Testimonies.

It did not suffice that the Proofs of the Catholick Faith should be in Books where the Learned might find them. Popular Proofs were necessary: And you have just seen them: The Church has preserved them for you in the whole Outside of her Worship: They not only convince the Little; they also enlighten the Learned. Such is the inestimable Benefit of the Perseverance of the Catholick Church in all her Uses. Her Practices are constantly the same. Whenever she was remiss in Point of the Rigidity or Uniformity of certain Regulations, it was always in urgent Cases, and through a prudent Indulgence: But her Doctrines, her Instructions, and her Spirit are invariable. If the outward Worship of the Catholick Church does never change, you are sensible that the Faith expressed by that Worship, and publicly professed by so many Nations is still less liable to be altered. You have then the Advantage of being in the Unity of the Churches, of having the Succession of the apostolical Pastors, and of having through them a Communication with God, who made them the Bearers of his Alliance with Men.

These Advantages recognizable throughout the Catholick Church, and in this small Parish as well as in the largest, are to you the most precious of all Blessings, and the Matter of a most lively Gratitude.

itude. 'Tis true, it is not this outward Worship that saves you; but it testifies the Certainty of the Means towards working out your Salvation.

The Pastor who was deputed to serve you to that Purpose, does neither baptize nor remit Sins in his own Name. The Martyrs who lie under the Altar, did not die for you. *Jesus Christ* is your only Saviour: And if you die without having any Relation of Love to him, the outward Advantages which you enjoy in the Catholick Church will be lost to you. But, those Bonds by which you are sensibly united to the Faithful of all Ages, are of themselves infinitely precious. They are the Characteristicks of the true Church.

The other Societies who have broken these Bonds, are no longer intitled to be listened to. It would be vastly imprudent to listen to Pastors who have received no Commission that concerns you, and it is a most judicious Conduct in you, to receive those who come to you with the ever subsisting Proofs of a Mission which was never to be repealed.

Will you now complain, Brethren, of having been left in a Corner, and of being without any Knowledge or Certainty of any Thing whatever? You most really know, or you may without any Study know all that is necessary. It offers to your Eyes from all Parts, and of its own Accord, even before I open my Mouth to acquit the Obligations of my Ministry. You find, in whatever surrounds you, Truth constantly attended with Certainty, and that Certainty is more luminous than that of any human Establishments or of temporal Alliances.

You are neither more despicable nor in Reality more despised for passing the greatest Part of your Life in Solitude. Besides the Consideration of Mankind is of little Signification to you: You are dear to God: What else should you care for? You are sure of never being dispossessed of your Title of Citi-

Citizens of the heavenly City, nor are you foreign to the Alliance. You are, on the contrary, Fellow-Citizens to the Saints, and the Children of the House of God. You are sure of making a Part of the Edifice that has been built, not indeed upon the crazy Foundation of the Spirit of Singularity; but upon the Foundation of the Prophets and the Apostles, because you make but one Body with their Successors. In Consequence of which you are sure of resting upon the Head Corner Stone, which is *Jesus Christ*.





T H E
 C O N C L U S I O N
 O F T H E
 T R E A T I S E O N M A N.

IT is plain from the foregoing Discourse, as well as from all that precedes, that God left nothing to the Determination of the Spirit of Singularity, concerning Salvation, and the Means of obtaining it. In the Kind of Association which he has vouchsafed to contract with us, and which all Men have been invited to enter into, it has been his Will, that the Certainty of the Government and of the Blessings offered to Faith, should as well as the Certainty of the Order established in any other Society, be grounded upon sensible and ever-subsisting Proofs levelled to the Capacity of all Men. He did not trust that Article to the Superiority of Man's Learning. Human Talents may serve for the publishing of our Salvation, and for the Propagation of Faith; but they shall not make the Examination of it.

Our Learning in Point of Sciences as well as in Matters of Fact, is never useful but in Proportion
 as

as it keeps within the Rule, and that Rule is universally known. *We borrow from our own Arguments the Things which God has submitted to the Tribunal of our Reason, and levelled to our Capacity: But the Things which depend on the Will of others, on the Intention of Legislators, and chiefly on that of the Supreme Legislator; we learn them by Witnesses; we are informed of them by Deputies, and by a Ministry appointed to let us know them.*

And really, “What Man knoweth the Things that are in Man, save the Spirit of Man which is in him?” Or he to whom he shall have entrusted his Thoughts? “Even so the Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God;” or he to whom God shall reveal his Intentions.

This Principle is equally simple and agreeable to common Sense, nor is the Application of it to the Question in Hand less plain and intelligible to all. The Monuments of the several Preparations of the Gospel cover our Globe, and the whole of Mankind is regularly informed, or at least forewarned of the Commission of the Ministry that declares the wholesome News to us: There is no Room left us for consulting upon the Conduct that suits us. The Share which the human Reason can and ought to take in the Alliance brought to us, consists in seeing the luminous Proofs that surround the Ministry, and in entering into the Treaty, not in submitting it to her own Judgment.

We are no longer to proceed here as we do in Geometry, in the Mechanicks, and in the polite Arts: There is no Room left for examining, deciding, or reforming: We have no longer a Tribunal.

We all of us have experienced the Darknes of our Reason, and the Narrowness of the Bounds that have been set to her. It is her Happiness to have wherewith to make up her own Weakness, and to

find an infallible Rule of Instruction, concerning what does not depend on her own Will, but on a foreign Decree. It is then her greatest Happiness to be bound to follow the same Rule towards learning the revealed Doctrines; instead of pretending to discern them by her own Sagacity, and to ascribe the Verification of them to herself. The Apostolate gets the Start of and is beforehand with our Reason, by daily teaching her the Intentions of God in the usual Form of all Legislations, merely to spare her needless Efforts, and new Mistakes.

If then there ever came out of the Mouth and Heart of Men Words utterly destitute of common Sense, it is indeed the following^b: “ Any Tenet
 “ that has not been approved, verified, and regi-
 “ stered as it were by the Supreme Parliament of
 “ Reason and of Man’s natural Penetration, can-
 “ not have any but a staggering Authority, an
 “ Authority as brittle as Glass.”

This Maxim is common to the Reformers and the Unbelievers. They all of them, and their Disciples as well as themselves, set up for so many supreme Judges. They all have a peremptory Tribunal upon the Bench of which they sit one after another, in order to deliberate in due Form, whether they shall (Reason being heard) tolerate or suppress the Apostolate of J. C. and pronounce an Approbation or a Rejection of the Gospel.

When we walk in the Light of the Testimonies of Faith, and conform our Sentiments to the Word of Life which is regularly published among us: We honour God by a judicious Confidence. Nothing more agreeable to Reason than to rely intirely upon His Conduct and Plan, which is to exercise and try us through Faith, in the Expectation of the full Manifestation! But, when coming out of our own Littleness we openly take in hand the Revival of the

^b *Bayle, Comment. Philosoph.*

Christian Faith, or the Suppression of the Catholick Ministry; we look more conceited and more ridiculous, than a Set of petty insignificant Judges who should presume to compile a Code of Laws of their own hatching, and turn out the ancient Magistracy.

Another Means of disgracing ourselves to a still greater Degree, would be to quit the Splendor of the Testimonies which enlighten us on all Sides, in order to follow the *Ignis fatuus* and Sparks of *Pope*, *Bayle*, and *Montagne*. These cavilling Talkers own that they themselves know not whither they lead us: And we nevertheless take them for our Guides. But no; we are not looking out for Guides; we are only flying from the Light: We delight in the Liberty of By-ways, and we think ourselves intitled to do it because we happen to be in the same Road with Men of Wit. But what has their Wit to do here? It is quite out of its Sphere in this Place. Are they any how intitled to speak of what they know not? Does the Incarnation become impossible, because it proves to be beyond their Reach? Or is the Light of the Sun put out, because they cannot catch at the Structure of that Star, nor follow Light Step by Step? Can their Blindness make us clear-sighted? And when we are disconcerted by their Doubts, so as to know no longer where we are, is it not the highest Pitch of Imprudence to allow them to tell us: *Step boldly on, you have nothing to fear?*

We impoverish ourselves both within and without the Church, in Proportion as we put our Trust in the Thoughts of a *Bel esprit*, and espouse the Views of the Man who dazzles the Eyes of others by a certain Brilliancy of Wit, and by the Boldness of his Systems. No Man is estimable or worthy to be listened to in Point of publick Treaties and of revealed Doctrines, but in Proportion as he forbears borrowing his Light from himself. Let us then,

then, as well as he, borrow it from the Archives of Faith, from the preaching of the Pastors, and from the whole outward Worship; a Predication as permanent as the Episcopal Sees, as intelligible as the Practices of the Ministers, and as compleatly justified as their Succession; a Predication, in short, as perfectly single as that single Body of Churches which never ceased to be united among themselves, in order to hear it conjointly.

Nothing was ever so strongly inculcated by J. C. as the Concert of his Disciples, and the Stability of Unity: That Point is the Drift of all his Exhortations and Establishments, because it is in Unity he has made all our Supports and our Security to reside. The holy Apostles, who were his Confidants and his Interpreters, never blamed any thing so much as personal Views, and the Interpretations of the Spirit of Singularity^c. They have inveighed against and preached down that Spirit, as being the Principle of Errors^d and Schisms^e. They have judged it dangerous even in those who, at the same Time that they received and preached the Gospel, altered it by the Mixture of an empty Philosophy.

That Spirit did, from the Beginning^f of the Church, introduce Partialities among the Faithful, and flattered some of the Ministers of the Word, by the Satisfaction of seeing their own Method and Thoughts applauded. St. Paul went quickly about smothering these first Seeds of Division. “ There
 “ are among you Jealousies and Contentions, says
 “ he to the Faithful of *Corinth*: One says, I am
 “ of *Paul*. The other, I am of *Apollos*. But who
 “ is *Paul*, that you should say I am of *Paul*? And
 “ who is *Apollos*, to intitle you to say, I adhere to
 “ his Sentiments?”

THE END

^c 2 Pet. i. 16.

^d Coloss. ii. 3.

^e Jud. xix.

^f 1 Cor. iii.

Thus

Thus doth the Apostle pitch upon the most respected Names in the Church^r, in order not to indicate those who were become the Objects of an indiscreet Predilection: By that means he acquires, and at the same time mitigates, the Title of reprov- ing all these human Prepossessions in Favour of Per- sons, Methods, or Opinions. No Spirit of Singula- rity whatever shall make the Happiness of Christi- ans. There is but one beneficial Language and one profitable Conduct; which consist in being the Property of him who has acquired us; and to stick to him, not indeed through such or such a one, but through the common Predication of the Ministry, which he directs to all; which have received all, and which deliver all things into our hands.

Far then from being partial in Favour of any Man whatsoever, we shall not make our Salvation depend on one of the Means chosen by God himself, by a general Exclusion of the others. It is the whole Sum of these Means that constitute our Trea- sure. It is neither *Paul*, nor even all the sacred Writers put together, that make our only Rule, since the Predication of the Ministry that was pre- vious to these sacred Writings, has never been inter- rupted. Properly speaking, it is neither the Doc- trine of *Apollos*, nor that of the Fathers that avails us. It is neither *Cephas* nor his Successors that work Righteousness within us. They are all of them, ac- cording to the several Degrees of their different Di- stricts, the Architects of that sole Edifice which is precious to God. All their Writings, all their Works, all their Ministries, both exercised and handed down, all their personal Endowments are *in Solido* become our common Blessings and Property.

What secures our Condition is (as well as in civil Corporations) the most public and most indissolu- ble Concurrence of all these Means, which are ever

a reciprocal Help to, and mutually justify each other in the Eyes of the whole Universe: We find them wholly, and all at once, united in the Catholick Church, in the Communion of Saints, in Unity.

It is this immortal Communion of Saints, become sensible, in order to settle us, always visible in the common Ties of the Churches, and utterly lost with regard to the Breakers of those Ties; it is this Unity that embraces and shews us all our Advantages, by giving us as our Property the Apostolical Predication, which it immortalizes by Ordination, the Scriptures, which it has made us sure of by a daily Publication of them from the very first Century, the Testimonies of the Churches whom it conjoins notwithstanding their Dispersion; and the Primacy by means of which it shews the Body of the Church and unites all her Members so long as the World shall last. It is Unity, in short, that delivers into our Hands the Alliance, together with the Proofs that notify it, and with all the Benefits resulting from it: Not one of them is lost, because Unity collects them all.

The Instructions of *Apollos* have not been for the Church of *Corinth* only, nor those of *Cyprian* for the single Church of *Carthage*, nor those of *Bossuet* for the particular Church of *Meaux*. The Preachers of *J. C.* and the Chief of the Predication belong to Unity. Unity has discerned all, it has acquired and perpetuated all. It is then through that Unity that every Thing belongs to us in common: *Omnia vestra sunt, sive Paulus, sive Apollo, sive Cephas.*

When we are out of that Unity, every Thing slips from our Hands, or what we still preserve is of no Profit.

Christianity out of the Communion of Saints is no longer any but the Religion of this or that Man. It is a Shadow of Wisdom: It is a presumption
void

void of Reality: It is the Introduction of a new Way, and a Condemnation of that which God had chosen for ever.

When within Unity, we on the contrary, stick zealously to no Man nor even to any School in particular, because we have a much better ^h Foundation than that. All is ours: We have the whole Church for our School, and have him for our Master who has established the immortal Transmission of his Intentions, which have been once notified to a College of Ministers. No Establishment can be more simple, more sure, or more humane. That College has increased along with the Exigencies of the Church: It subsists, and through it the Church is one for ever.

In that sole Temple of the Lord, will ever be found, together with transitory Imperfections that have been prophesied, the Word of Life, a Sanctity and a Stability that have also been foretold.

It is in that Unity then, that Piety makes her Profit, and a durable Profit too, of “ the World
“ and of Life, of Scandals and Trials, of Diseases,
“ and of Death itself. It is there that Piety is
“ taught how to use transitory Things, and how to
“ make her Property of Salvation hereafter:” *Sive mundus, sive vita, sive mors, sive presentia, sive futura, omnia vestra sunt.*

Ye all who are intimately sensible how insufficient the most celebrated Names are, you are no less apprehensive of the Solidity of the Advantages of Unity: Poor any where else, you here become Inheritors of all. Unity imparts to you both the foregoing and the actual Instructions, together with the Benefits of all the Spiritual Powers. By your tender Attachment to the Unity of the Ministry and of the Depositum, you make the Acquisition of whatever the Church possesses. “ You no longer

^h 1 Cor. iii. 12.

“ make

“ make your Glory to reside in Menⁱ.” Their Arguments did not make them the Confidents of the Most High, nor the Dispensers of the true Blessings. With Regard to Salvation, neither they nor you can find in yourselves any Thing but the want of being assisted : But in that Unity, the Source of every Certainty and Truth, “ All is truly yours, “ as you yourselves are Christ’s, and Christ is “ God’s.” *Omnia enim vestra sunt: Vos autem Christi, Christus autem Dei.*

i Ibid.

F I N I S.

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