

Literature and Science.

PASCAL'S METHOD WITH A DOUBTER.

I purpose to reproduce in modern phrase some of the considerations which Pascal suggests to a doubter. To compose an Apology was the projected work of his life, but he died prematurely in 1662, leaving it unfinished. Out of the fragments that he left behind his friends made up an excellent work, which they published in 1670, entitling it "Pensées de M. Pascal sur la religion et sur quelques autres sujets." However, it was not wholly the true Pascal. Cautious editors had suppressed those passages which stirred burning controversies or upset received notions. They had blurred sharp outlines, suppressed strong words, refrained from pressing trenchant arguments; nor was the arrangement of the work wholly what Pascal had designed.

In 1844 Pascal began to live a new life, when M. Faugère published with reverent care the complete "thoughts" from the original MS. "With what joy," said M. Vinet on his deathbed, "with what interest did we not assist at the restoration of the true Pascal!"

I have taken a certain liberty in arranging (after all, the *Pensées* are fragments and have to be arranged somehow), but otherwise I have translated literally what I find in the text as restored by the modern editors.

"Is your path overcast? It is not strange you should find difficulties in religion. Nay, God's plan is so. 'Thou art a God that hidest Thyself,' says the Prophet. God has provided in His Church sufficient tokens to guide those who seek for Truth sincerely, and yet has hidden them so as to be invisible to all but sincere seekers. Are you, then, really in earnest in this search? That is the main point. Take care not to be like those who look into a book of the Bible or have an afternoon's talk with a clergyman and then boast that they have sought for Truth amongst books and men and not found it. Remember the importance of this question. Death is near, inevitable, absolute. What is to come afterwards? Is it not important for you to find out what lies beyond the world of sense? Can nothing be discerned? How frail and fleeting are our pleasures here, how real and growing are our woes, how certain our end. Life is a comedy (you say); yes, but the last act is always tragic, however enjoyable the performance may have been. A sheaf of earth on the head, and we disappear for ever! I know not who has put me in this world, nor what I myself am, or am meant for. The awful silent spaces of the universe encircle me round, and I am stranded in a corner of it, without facilities to penetrate my destiny—all I certainly know is that I must soon die, and yet what is death? Shall I after death return to nothingness, or shall I fall into God's hands? And how is He disposed towards me? Have I not to fear His wrath? Oh, it is amazing to see reasonable beings treat these great questions with supreme indifference! They are keen after the slightest advantage, furious at the least affront, in despair over a trifling loss; but the great question of their eternal state finds them absolutely uninterested. O marvellous, inexplicable fascination that this world has over them, against all reason. Death will take from them in a moment all these things of sense they are so wrapped up in, and they are utterly indifferent as to what death is and what its results for them. Why, perhaps they think it good manners to seem indifferent; it is the fashion to be an agnostic. They have cast off the yoke of superstition, consider themselves their own masters, rejoice in being accountable to none. 'Is not our soul (they say) only a breath, a puff of smoke?' This they rejoice to proclaim, they are the apostles of this woful creed. What are the reasons they give for their conviction? Mostly so foolish or so inconclusive that it rather confirms faith to have such adversaries. 'Why,' said one day the listener to an atheistic discourse, 'if you go on talking thus you will make me a Christian'; and, indeed, he was right, for the arguments and the tone of the discourse were adapted to produce the very reverse of conviction. Ah, there are but two reasonable positions; the one is that of those who have found God and serve Him, the other that of those who seek Him with all their heart because they have not found Him. Beware, if you please, some of your leisure not unworthily on this great subject. If papers professing to be the deeds that gave you right to a fine property came in your way, you would not cast them aside as worthless till you had examined them very carefully, and here your all is at stake. A criminal waits in his cell, uncertain if his death sentence is passed; he has an hour to find out how things really stand with him, to lodge an appeal, press for a revocation. Oh no, he will occupy himself contentedly at cards, without troubling to ascertain. Can folly go further?

"Look at man's position; an atom lost in the infinite bosom of nature, where this earth itself is but a point, and yet science discerns another infinity beneath him. The telescope goes a little way (not far) into the infinity of greatness; the microscope a little way (not far) into the infinity of littleness. Man meanwhile hangs suspended between the two, able to discern a little way round him, but not to pierce the depth or height of being; he is but a link in a great chain which stretches on both sides far beyond his sight. Look at man's greatness and at his frailty; he is but a reed, yet 'un roseau pensant.' A vapour, a drop of water suffices to kill him; but he is more noble than nature, in that he is conscious of his end, while his brute adversary knows nothing. Man is capable of high efforts, of glorious excellences, and yet also of the vilest degradation; he has in himself no store of satisfaction, nay, he cannot endure to be without diversion—that is his most intimate necessity, to be taken out of himself—leave him unemployed, uninterested, thrown back on himself, and weariness, melancholy, disgust, and despair spring up in his heart. Look how vain is his knowledge—mostly conventional, or based on fancy; examine his most firmly rooted opinions, and see on how little ground they rest. On what notions has the destiny of empires turned? Had Cleopatra's nose been shorter, had a grain of sand not found its way into the bladder of Cromwell, the world would have been otherwise ordered. All that man loves is daily running away and will soon be gone; all that he knows is so little and so unsatisfactory. If he is created a little lower than God in his faculties and aims, he yet bears signs of a downfall—a confusion; some string has jarred in this fine instrument. See whether the Bible cannot give you the key of these contradictions. Does it not speak of an original glory of man and of a subsequent rebellion and corruption? Stole philosophers dwell

on the majesty of human nature; Epicureans recommend man to be content with pleasures of sense; but neither of these gives the whole solution. Is it not this: that man was made for God and for happiness, and yet has lost himself?"

"But," you reply, "I have really no capacity for metaphysical reasoning. These abstract facts of yours do not impress me. I find this world satisfactory enough—"

"For I and mine, thank somebody, are not in want of virtuous."

Why should not I go on contentedly and chance the unknown future? "What a poor, spiritless player you are," replies Pascal: "any gambler, with his wife about him, would stake in this game. Here the risk is small and the prize enormous. You would readily venture 1 on an even chance of gaining 3, and here is infinite bliss to be gained by a small stake." "What must I stake?" "Well, not much; offer your ways and doings to God. If religion turns out false, after all, you will have lost very little. Pleasures of vice, ambition, avarice, you will have missed; you must relinquish crooked ways—here is something to part with—but you will have got much better enjoyments, even here below. You will have proved a faithful friend, merciful, loving, righteous, hopeful, grateful—are these no small satisfactions? I do not think you stand to lose much, any way, by taking faith's side; and, if faith turn up trumps, the stake you realize is infinite. Why, as the game proceeds, you will acquire more and more certainty that you have staked wisely, and that yours is the winning side. Look at those before your day who have put down their money thus, imitate them, see how wisely they chose. Live as converted men do, train yourself in religion, clasp your hands to pray, kneel, obey God's law, study Scripture, and the blessed habit of faith will grow on you. I assure you, dear friend (and I pray earnestly that my words may touch your heart), it is well worth while to take this line and venture something—what can we gain in love or war, in commerce or speculation without making a venture? Here is a small venture to be risked, and an immeasurable return to be found." "But am I bound to stake at all; can I not remain a looker-on at the game?" "Ah, the conditions of life are so, you are bound to make a venture on one side or the other—the side of God and goodness, or of your own passions, and you must act without demonstrative certainty." "Ah (you say) I would soon have laid selfishness aside if I had got faith." "I reply, you would soon have got faith if you laid selfishness aside. The prudent course for you is to accustom your mind and will to the atmosphere of faith, and say, 'Inclina cor meum, Deus'—prayer does not affect us at all moments, but faith may become the abiding habit of our life." "I agree with you, then, so far, though I thought otherwise at first. I am willing to look at the proofs that you offer. I acknowledge that the subject is worth my attention, and that if religion does prove true, I shall have scored greatly by attending to it."

"But, after all, a reasonable man must have reasons to give. This staking on a chance, being religious on habit, blindly following characters that I admire—all this is not enough." "Certainly not (says Pascal), nor do I dream for a moment of persuading you thus. I desire your reasonable assent; I offer you proofs worthy of study. All I wanted was to show you that your own interest is considerably involved in the inquiry. Again, in weighing reasons, remember that the heart has a logic of its own, not less true and imperious than that which the intellect yields."

"I return to the problem of our destiny, and ask what philosophy has to say concerning it—almost nothing worth attending to, its lights are so contradictory and so partial. Philosophy ignores the real facts of our nature. Either it puffs up humanity in a most unreal way or leaves it gressling in despair; nor have the world's religions much to obtain our attention (indeed, in Pascal's day the study of comparative religions was little known). They are greatly deficient both in proof and in moral influence. True religion must surely bid man love his Maker, must account for the facts of human nature, must offer a remedy for sin, must supply a rule of life, must bring a tradition from ancient days. When I look through the world's history I am struck by the phenomenon of the Jewish nation and literature. I notice their extraordinary tenacity through long ages; the high and deep thoughts which their Prophets and Psalmists had; their tradition of man's fall and corruption; their forward look towards a spiritual law, a moral deliverance, an extension of true religion throughout the world. In their very history I see spiritual truths shadowed forth, their forward glance has a marvellous penetration. No doubt they are burdened with material ceremonies, tangible rewards, predictions of earthly victories; but is there not something deeper which animates the whole dispensation, and gives it meaning? It is hard to reconcile the two points of view; but I cannot think that such hopes and thoughts as Jewish seers had were meant to end in carnal victories. Could the looked-for reward be only the land flowing with milk and honey? Could the chanted victories be wrought for the mere overthrow of Philistines or Assyrians? Could the Divine kingdom be only a material throne where the king's favourites sit on his right hand and on his left? Oh no; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is more than the author of nature, more than the rewarder of His servants with an earthly Canaan. The God of old-time believers is a God of love and consolation—a God Who fills the hearts of His chosen, teaches them their nothingness and His mercy, makes them desire to possess Him for ever."

"But can we find this glorious God? The Old Testament reveals Him, yet in figure and shadow. The Old Testament does not do away with the barrier of our sins which kept us from reaching Him, does not supply the key to its own perplexities. The Old Testament religion is written in a cipher which those days could not interpret."

"No, but the Gospel reveals One Who has the key of David, Who 'openeth and no man shutteth'; without Him the knowledge of God and of our own nature is alike full of confusion; but He gives light that shows us both God and ourselves. Saints of old time looked earnestly for a Deliverer to come. They made guesses about Him. They sketched Him out in seemingly contradictory characters. As time grew on, they looked more and more closely for Him. When He came He fulfilled all these varying and seemingly inconsistent predictions. I think that these predictions of the Gospel, so varied, so continuous, so serious, are well worth looking into. The whole Jewish economy has a forward

look; was not meant to end in itself; is but a link in man's spiritual progress; pointed to something further."

"On this all-important subject you see I don't employ arguments from final causes. I do not undertake to point out to you evidences of design or benevolence in the conduct of nature. Not that I despise such topics, which have their place in Scripture and are therefore to be respected. Believers may suitably edify themselves with such studies; for believers 'the heavens declare the glory of God'; but faith is not commenced by that means. 'No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.' Nor do I dwell on metaphysical or abstract proofs of God's existence; those impress but a few minds, and those but temporarily. Divine Wisdom would touch your heart rather than convince your understanding; perfect clearness does not suit the mortal condition, but is there not a tempered radiance in the Gospel? The Christian religion recognises man's first created glory, and yet adapts itself to his present woful state. When I speak of proof and investigation I know well that many minds have not the leisure or capacity for study. Such may believe, and believe well, though they have no power to analyse their faith or defend it by argument. God offers them evidence suitable to their condition; but He does indeed require a reasonable service, a free choice—you may find faith's paths hard to traverse at first, but that is the fault of the darkness in which you lived before, rather than of the light which is just beginning to shine in your heart."

In considering the history of the Jews as leading up to the Christian revelation, Pascal must acknowledge that he has never heard of Biblical criticism, and is indeed far from erudite, though his Port Royal friends did their best to keep up with the learning of those days. Pascal, when he has secured your attention, is content to present the ordinary topics of Christian apologetics, and is utterly lacking in Oriental learning. If he lived now he would have to revise this part of his method in the light of modern science; but the substance of his remarks has not lost its force. It is still true that the Jewish religion has lofty doctrines about the Creator, a holy law, a marvellous tenacity, a strange mixture of carnal ceremonies and spiritual promises, an onward look towards the evangelisation of the world. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is still our God. "In the Old Testament guesses abound (says Pascal), riddles, figures, things suited to the hardness of man's hearts, and yet the deepest precept of all is, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.' Were there not under the old dispensation two sorts of believers? The one rested on temporal promises, expected victories over earthly foes, were content with Moses' law; and yet there were elect souls who had farther longings, higher thoughts." It is impossible, Pascal urges, to regard the Old Testament as wholly carnal; there are many passages which cannot be explained thus—that key will not open all the locks—when once the Christian meaning has been applied, no other will wholly suffice. Some souls, no doubt, were content with—

"The payment of God's perfect law."

They were satisfied with—

"Gold and gems, a dazzling mass."

Yet there were others—

"Who sought behind the veil to see."

The Prophets (Pascal loves to dwell on the Prophets) are a body of witnesses, they pass no sacred hopes; they point out a righteous One to come; they tell of a perfect religion, a universal message—they have strange coincidences with what Jesus did and suffered—to them, the sacrifice, the Covenant, the ark, the cleansings, the victories of old times seem insignificant, in comparison of what is to come. Biblical critics of to-day would perhaps think that Pascal is right in finding in the Prophets the centre and crown of the Old Testament religion. They do not indeed dwell (as he too much does) on minute coincidences. But they allow an abiding relation between the marvellous seers of the eighth or ninth centuries B.C. and the message which Christ Jesus brought.

But Pascal will not keep you long in the study of Jewish types and predictions—though that is dear to him—he begins to contemplate the Gospel itself. He says, "I bid you look at the three kinds of greatness—the first is material greatness, the enclosure of rank, wealth, or power—carnal eyes can discern that. A second kind of greatness is that of the intellect. Genius has its empire, its glory, its victory, its renown, though invisible to carnal sense. Mind flashes on mind. Mind wins victories over matter. Jesus and His saints are pre-eminent in a third order of greatness—not theirs to reign, or to demonstrate; but theirs is humility, holiness, love, compassion. They are terrible to powers of evil; theirs is indeed a great pomp and prodigious magnificence to the illumined sight. Behold the radiance of this glory, which neither matter nor intellect can equal. This glory is hidden from the world, but true hearts appreciate it. Christ speaks of heavenly things as one Who is at home in them, with perfect clearness and yet simplicity. His soul is heroic, yet humbled with trouble and agony when He wills. If He is God manifest among men, He is a God Whom we can trust, we draw near to Him without pride, we submit to Him without abasement."

"Look closer (says Pascal), nay, listen attentively, and you will hear His voice still speaking. He addresses the heart. He says: 'Be comforted; thou wouldst not be seeking Me hadst thou not found Me.' He says: 'Follow My rules; see how well I have guarded those who committed themselves to My care.' He says: 'I thought on thee in My agony, I shed such and such drops of blood for thee. Am I not present still by My word in Scripture, by My Spirit in the Church, by My power in priests, by My abiding prayer in all the faithful? Physicians will not cure thee, for thou must die at last; but I have remedies which give immortality.' He says: 'Bear the chains of thy bodily condition for awhile; it is the soul that I set free first. Conversion rests with Me: fear not, but trust and pray.' This (you will say) is utter mysticism; but to the seeker after truth the voice of Christ is a real voice which comes out of the darkness and powerfully attracts the heart."

Pascal ends his remarks thus: "Do not think the Gospel appeals wholly to feelings; it brought with it miracles as tokens of God's power at work. Truth has not its home here below; it wanders undiscerned; but miracles manifest it, as with a flash of light." "But (you say) are not miracles part of the legendary baggage of all nations and religions?" "Nay (I reply) the profusion of false miracles shows that this proof has been largely

Literature and Science.

PASCAL'S METHOD WITH A DOUBTER.

I purpose to reproduce in modern phrase some of the considerations which Pascal suggests to a doubter. To compose an Apology was the projected work of his life, but he died prematurely in 1662, leaving it unfinished. Out of the fragments that he left behind his friends made up an excellent work, which they published in 1670, entitling it "*Pensées de M. Pascal sur la religion et sur quelques autres sujets*." However, it was not wholly the true Pascal. Cautious editors had suppressed those passages which stirred burning controversies or upset received notions. They had blurred sharp outlines, suppressed strong words, refrained from pressing trenchant arguments; nor was the arrangement of the work wholly what Pascal had designed.

In 1844 Pascal began to live a new life, when M. Fauguet published with reverent care the complete "thoughts" from the original MS. "With what joy," said M. Vinet on his deathbed, "with what interest did we not assist at the restoration of the true Pascal!"

I have taken a certain liberty in arranging (after all, the *Pensées* are fragments and have to be arranged somehow), but otherwise I have translated literally what I find in the text as restored by the modern editors.

"Is your path overcast? It is not strange you should find difficulties in religion. Nay, God's plan is so, 'Thou art a God That hidest Thyself,' says the Prophet. God has provided in His Church sufficient tokens to guide those who seek for Truth sincerely, and yet has hidden them so as to be invisible to all but sincere seekers. Are you, then, really in earnest in this search? That is the main point. Take care not to be like those who look into a book of the Bible or have an afternoon's talk with a clergyman and then boast that they have sought for Truth amongst books and men and not found it. Remember the importance of this question. Death is near, inevitable, absolute. What is to come afterwards? Is it not important for you to find out what lies beyond the world of sense? Can nothing be discerned? How frail and fleeting are our pleasures here, how real and growing are our woes, how certain our end. Life is a comedy (you say); yes, but the last act is always tragic, however enjoyable the performance may have been. A shovelful of earth on the head, and we disappear for ever! I know not who has put me in this world, nor what I myself am, or am meant for. The awful silent spaces of the universe encircle me round, and I am stranded in a corner of it, without faculties to penetrate my destiny—all I certainly know is that I must soon die, and yet what is death? Shall I after death return to nothingness, or shall I fall into God's hands? And how is He disposed towards me? Have I not to fear His wrath? Oh, it is amazing to see reasonable beings treat these great questions with supreme indifference! They are keen after the slightest advantage, furious at the least affront, in despair over a trifling loss; but the great question of their eternal state finds them absolutely uninterested. O marvellous, inexplicable fascination that this world has over them, against all reason. Death will take from them in a moment all these things of sense: they are so wrapped up in, and they are utterly indifferent as to what death is and what its results for them. Why, perhaps they think it good manners to seem indifferent; it is the fashion to be an agnostic. They have cast off the yoke of superstition, consider themselves their own masters, rejoice in being accountable to none. 'Is not our soul (they say) only a breath, a puff of smoke?' This they rejoice to proclaim, they are the apostles of this woful creed. What are the reasons they give for their conviction? Mostly so foolish or so inconclusive that it rather confirms faith to have such adversaries. 'Why,' said one day the listener to an atheistic discourse, 'if you go on talking thus you will make me a Christian'; and, indeed, he was right, for the arguments and the tone of the discourse were adapted to produce the very reverse of nominalism. Ah, there are but two reasonable positions; the one is that of those who have found God and serve Him, the other that of those who seek Him with all their heart because they have not found Him. Bestow, if you please, some of your leisure not unworthily on this great subject. If papers professing to be the deeds that gave you right to a fine property came in your way, you would not cast them aside as worthless till you had examined them very carefully, and here your all is at stake. A criminal waits in his cell, uncertain if his death sentence is passed; he has an hour to find out how things really stand with him, to lodge an appeal, press for a revocation. Oh no, he will occupy himself contentedly at cards, without troubling to ascertain. Can folly go further?"

"Look at man's position; an atom lost in the infinite bosom of nature, where this earth itself is but a point, and yet science discerns another infinity beneath him. The telescope goes a little way (not far) into the infinity of greatness; the microscope a little way (not far) into the infinity of littleness. Man meanwhile hangs suspended between the two, able to discern a little way round him, but not to pierce the depth or height of being; he is but a link in a great chain which stretches on both sides far beyond his sight. Look at man's greatness and at his frailty; he is but a reed, yet 'an ocean peasant.' A vapour, a drop of water suffices to kill him; but he is more noble than nature, in that he is conscious of his end, while his brute adversary knows nothing. Man is capable of high efforts, of glorious excellences, and yet also of the vilest degradation; he has in himself no store of satisfaction, may be content to endure to be without diversion—that is his most intimate necessity, to be taken out of himself—leave him unemployed, uninterested, thrown back on himself, and weariness, melancholy, disgust, and despair spring up in his heart. Look how vain is his knowledge—mostly conventional, or based on fancy; examine his most firmly rooted opinions, and see on how little ground they rest. On what nothingness has the destiny of empires turned? Had Cleopatra's nose been shorter, had a grain of sand not found its way into the bladder of Cromwell, the world would have been otherwise ordered. All that man loves is daily running away and will soon be gone; all that he knows is so little and so unsatisfactory. If he is created a little lower than God in his faculties and aims, he yet bears signs of a downfall—a confusion; some string has jarred in this fine instrument. See whether the Bible cannot give you the key of these contradictions. Does it not speak of an original glory of man and of a subsequent rebellion and corruption? Stoic philosophers dwell

on the majesty of human nature; Epicureans recommend man to be content with pleasures of sense; but neither of these gives the whole solution. Is it not this: that man was made for God and for happiness, and yet has lost himself?"

"But," you reply, "I have really no capacity for metaphysical reasoning. These abstract facts of yours do not impress me. I find this world satisfactory enough—"

"For I and mine, thank somebody, Are not in want of victual."

Why should not I go on contentedly and chance the unknown future?" "What a poor, spiritless player you are," replies Pascal; "any gambler, with his wits about him, would stake in this game. Here the risk is small and the prize enormous. You would readily venture I on an even chance of gaining 3, and here is infinite bliss to be gained by a small stake." "What must I stake?" "Well, not much; offer your ways and doings to God. If religion turns out false, after all, you will have lost very little. Pleasures of vice, ambition, avarice, you will have missed; you must relinquish crooked ways—here is something to part with!—but you will have got much better enjoyments, even here below. You will have proved a faithful friend, merciful, loving, righteous, hopeful, grateful—are these no small satisfactions? I do not think you stand to lose much, any way, by taking faith's side; and, if faith turn up trumps, the stake you realize is infinite. Why, as the game proceeds, you will acquire more and more certainty that you have staked wisely, and that yours is the winning side. Look at those before your day who have put down their money thus, imitate them, see how wisely they chose. Live as converted men do, train yourself in religion, clasp your hands to pray, kneel, obey God's law, study Scripture, and the blessed habit of faith will grow on you. I assure you, dear friend (and I pray earnestly that my words may touch your heart), it is well worth while to take this line and venture something—what can we gain in love or war, in commerce or speculation without making a venture? Here is a small venture to be risked, and an immeasurable return to be found." "But am I bound to stake at all; can I not remain a looker-on at the game?" "Ah, the conditions of life are so, you are bound to make a venture on one side or the other—the side of God and goodness, or of your own passions, and you must act without demonstrative certainty." "Ah (you say) I would soon have laid selfishness aside if I had got faith." "I reply, you would soon have got faith if you laid selfishness aside. The prudent course for you is to accustom your mind and will to the atmosphere of faith, and say, 'Indiana corn means, Deus'—proofs do not affect us at all moments, but faith may become the abiding habit of our life." "I agree with you, then, so far, though I thought otherwise at first. I am willing to look at the proofs that you offer. I acknowledge that the subject is worth my attention, and that if religion does prove true, I shall have scored greatly by attending to it."

"But, after all, a reasonable man must have reasons to give. This staking on a chance, being religious on habit, blindly following characters that I admire—all this is not enough." "Certainly not (says Pascal), nor do I dream for a moment of persuading you thus. I desire your reasonable admission; I offer you proofs worthy of study. All I wanted was to show you that your own interest is considerably involved in the inquiry. Again, in weighing reasons, remember that the heart has a logic of its own, not less true and imperious than that which the intellect wields."

"I return to the problem of our destiny, and ask what philosophy has to say concerning it—almost nothing worth attending to, its lights are so contradictory and so partial. Philosophy ignores the real facts of our nature. Either it puffs up humanity in a most unreal way or leaves it grovelling in despair; nor have the world's religions much to obtain our attention (indeed, in Pascal's day the study of comparative religions was little known). They are greatly deficient both in proof and in moral influence. True religion must surely bid man love his Maker, must account for the facts of human nature, must offer a remedy for sin, must supply a rule of life, must bring a tradition from ancient days. When I look through the world's history I am struck by the phenomenon of the Jewish nation and literature. I notice their extraordinary tenacity through long ages; the high and deep thoughts which their Prophets and Psalmists had; their tradition of man's fall and corruption; their forward look towards a spiritual law, a moral deliverance, an extension of true religion throughout the world. In their very history I see spiritual truths shadowed forth, their forward glance has a marvellous penetration. No doubt they are hardened with material ceremonies, tangible rewards, predictions of earthly victories; but is there not something deeper which animates the whole dispensation, and gives it meaning? It is hard to reconcile the two points of view; but I cannot think that such hopes and thoughts as Jewish seers had were meant to end in carnal victories. Could the looked-for reward be only the land flowing with milk and honey? Could the coveted victories be wrought for the mere overthrow of Philistines or Assyrians? Could the Divine kingdom be only a material throne where the king's favourites sit on his right hand and on his left? Oh no; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is more than the author of nature, more than the rewarder of His servants with an earthly Canaan. The God of old-time believers is a God of love and consolation—a God Who fills the hearts of His chosen, teaches them their nothingness and His mercy, makes them desire to possess Him for ever."

"But can we find this glorious God? The Old Testament reveals Him, yet in figure and shadow. The Old Testament does not do away with the barrier of our sins which kept us from reaching Him, does not supply the key to its own perplexities. The Old Testament religion is written in a cipher which these days could not interpret."

"No, but the Gospel reveals One Who has the key of David, Who 'openeth and no man shutteth,' without Him the knowledge of God and of our own nature is alike full of confusion; but He gives light that shows us both God and ourselves. Saints of old time looked earnestly for a Deliverer to come. They made guesses about Him. They stretched Him out in seemingly contradictory characters. As time grew on, they looked more and more closely for Him. When He came He fulfilled all these varying and seemingly inconsistent predictions. I think that these predictions of the Gospel, so varied, so continuous, so serious, are well worth looking into. The whole Jewish economy has a forward

look; was not meant to end in itself; is but a link in man's spiritual progress; pointed to someone further."

"On this all-important subject you see I don't employ arguments from final causes. I do not undertake to point out to you evidences of design or benevolence in the conduct of nature. Not that I despise such topics, which have their place in Scripture and are therefore to be respected. Believers may suitably edify themselves with such studies; for believers 'the heavens declare the glory of God'; but faith is not commenced by that means. 'No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.' Nor do I dwell on metaphysical or abstract proofs of God's existence; these impress but a few minds, and those but temporarily. Divine Wisdom would touch your heart rather than convince your understanding; perfect clearness does not suit with mortal condition, but is there not a tempered radiance in the Gospel? The Christian religion recognises man's first created glory, and yet adapts itself to his present woful state. When I speak of proof and investigation I know well that many minds have not the leisure or capacity for study. Such may believe, and believe well, though they have no power to analyse their faith or defend it by argument. God offers them evidences suitable to their condition; but He does indeed require a reasonable service, a free choice—you may find faith's paths hard to traverse at first, but that is the fault of the darkness in which you lived before, rather than of the light which is just beginning to shine in your heart."

In considering the history of the Jews as leading up to the Christian revelation, Pascal must acknowledge that he has never heard of Biblical criticism, and is indeed far from erudite, though his Port Royal friends did their best to keep up with the learning of those days. Pascal, when he has secured your attention, is content to present the ordinary topics of Christian apologetics, and is utterly lacking in Oriental learning. If he lived now he would have to revise this part of his method in the light of modern science; but the substance of his remarks has not lost its force. It is still true that the Jewish religion has lofty doctrines about the Creator, a holy law, a marvellous tenacity, a strange mixture of carnal ceremonies and spiritual promises, an onward look towards the evangelisation of the world. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is still our God. "In the Old Testament guesses abound (says Pascal), riddles, figures, things suited to the hardness of man's hearts, and yet the deepest precept of all is, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.' Were there not under the old dispensation two sorts of believers? The one rested on temporal promises, expected victories over earthly foes, were content with Moses' law; and yet there were stout souls who had further longings, higher thoughts." It is impossible, Pascal urges, to regard the Old Testament as wholly carnal; there are many passages which cannot be explained thus—that key will not open all the locks—when once the Christian meaning has been applied, no other will wholly suffice. Some souls, no doubt, were content with—

"The payment of God's perfect law."

They were satisfied with—

"Gold and gems, a dazzling mass."

Yet there were others—

"Who sought behind the veil to see."

The Prophets (Pascal loves to dwell on the Prophets) are a body of witnesses, they pass on sacred hopes; they point out a righteous One to come; they tell of a perfect religion, a universal message—they have strange coincidences with what Jesus did and suffered—in them, the sacrifice, the Covenant, the ark, the cleanings, the victories of old times seem insufficient, in comparison of what is to come. Biblical critics of to-day would perhaps think that Pascal is right in finding in the Prophets the centre and crown of the Old Testament religion. They do not indeed dwell (as he too much does) on minute coincidences. But they allow an abiding relation between the marvellous seers of the eighth or ninth centuries B.C. and the message which Christ Jesus brought.

But Pascal will not keep you long in the study of Jewish types and predictions—though that is dear to him—he begins to contemplate the Gospel itself. He says, "I bid you look at the three kinds of greatness—the first is material greatness, the eminence of rank, wealth, or power—carnal eyes can discern that. A second kind of greatness is that of the intellect. Genius has its empire, its glory, its victory, its renown, though invisible to carnal sense. Mind flashes on mind. Mind wins victories over matter. Jesus and His saints are pre-eminent in a third order of greatness—not theirs to reign, or to demonstrate; but theirs is humility, hollow, love, compassion. They are terrible to powers of evil; theirs is indeed a great pomp and prodigious magnificence to the illumined sight. Behold the radiance of this glory, which neither matter nor intellect can equal. This glory is hidden from the world, but true hearts appreciate it. Christ speaks of heavenly things as one Who is at home in them, with perfect clearness and yet simplicity. His soul is heroic, yet humbled with trouble and agony when He wills. If He is God manifest among men, He is a God Whom we can trust, we draw near to Him without pride, we submit to Him without abasement."

"Look closer (says Pascal), nay, listen attentively, and you will hear His voice still speaking. He addresses the heart. He says: 'Be comforted; thou wouldst not be seeking Me hast thou not found Me.' He says: 'Follow My rules; see how well I have guarded those who committed themselves to My care.' He says: 'I thought on thee in My agony, I shed such and such drops of blood for thee. Am I not present still by My word in Scripture, by My Spirit in the Church, by My power in priests, by My abiding prayer in all the faithful? Physicians will not cure thee, for thou must die at last; but I have remedies which give immortality.' He says: 'Bear the chains of thy bodily condition for awhile; it is the soul that I set free first. Conversion rests with Me; fear not, but trust and pray.' This (you will say) is utter mysticism; but to the seeker after truth the voice of Christ is a real voice which comes out of the darkness and powerfully attracts the heart."

Pascal ends his remarks thus: "Do not think the Gospel appeals wholly to feelings; it brought with it miracles as tokens of God's power at work. Truth has not its home here below; it wanders undiscerned; but miracles manifest it, as with a flash of light." "But (you say) are not miracles part of the legendary baggage of all nations and religions?" "Nay (I reply) the profusion of false miracles shows that this proof has been largely