

ners as we are. All the estates there are measured, and all the families registered; and, whatsoever the emperor is to have by excise on goods, or tax upon persons, is publickly known; every body brings what is due from him, to the Mandarin or governors of the towns of the third rank, for there is no particular receiver appointed. Those, who neglect to bring in their dues, do not lose by confiscation, which would be to punish the innocent of that family with the guilty; but the persons so offending suffer imprisonment, and undergo the bastinado till they have made satisfaction.

These Mandarines of the lower rank give in an account of what they receive, to a general officer of the province, who accounts with the court of Peking, which looks after the publick exchequer. A great part of the revenue is disbursed up and down the provinces in pensions, salaries, soldiers pay, and publick buildings: what is over is carried to Peking, to maintain the emperor's court, and other expences in that town, where the emperor keeps in pay above an hundred and sixty thousand regular troops, to whom, as well as to the Mandarines, is given out every day meat, fish, rice, pease, and straw, according to every one's rank, besides their constant pay, which they regularly receive.

That, which comes from the southern provinces, is alone sufficient to answer this expence, this they bring by water in the emperor's vessels; yet they are so jealous lest the revenue should at any time fall short of the disbursements, that in Peking there are magazines of rice before-hand, sufficient for three years; which will keep a great while if it be well fanned and mixed, and altho' it looks not so well, nor tastes so pleasantly as new rice, yet it is much more wholesome and nourishing.

This numerous army about the emperor well looked after, duly paid, and strictly disciplined,

one would think, should awe all Asia; yet their idleness, and the small use they ever have occasion to make of their weapons, does contribute to weaken them as much as their natural effeminacy. The western Tartars do not value their numbers a straw, and frequently say in derision of them, that the neighing of a Tartary horse is enough to rout all the Chinese cavalry.

Yet, they take all possible care to have good soldiers, for they take no officers into the guards, till they have made trial of their stoutness, skill, and dexterity in military affairs. They are regularly examined, so that as learned men have their doctors to examine them, so these have also their professors.

These officers do regularly exercise their companies, they form them into squadrons, march them, teach them to divide their files, to march thro' narrow passages, shew them to give the onset, to rally at the sound of the cornet or trumpet; besides, they are very dexterous in managing their bow, or handling their scymitar: yet soon broke, and by the least thing in the world put into disorder. The occasion of this I apprehend to be, because in the education of their youth they never insil into them principles of honour and bravery, as we do as soon as ever they are big enough to know what weapons are. The Chinese are always talking to their children of gravity, policy, law, and government; they always set books and letters in their view, but never a sword into their hands: so that having spent their youthful days behind the counter, or at the bar, they know no other courage but that of defending obstinately an ill cause, and are listed into the soldiery on no other consideration, but that they hope there will be no occasion for fighting. The Chinese policy hinders hereby a great many domestick feuds and disturbances; but, at the same
time

time it does expose its subjects hereby to the insults of foreigners, which is ten times worse.

Thus, my lord, I have set before you a general scheme of the government of China, of which people have spoke such wonders, and which is indeed admirable for its antiquity, for the wisdom of its maxims, for the plainness and uniformity of its laws, for that exemplary virtue which it has produced in a long succession of emperors, for that regularity and order which it has kept the people in, in despite of civil or foreign wars; which, notwithstanding, like the rest of the things of this world, is subject to a great many inconveniences; to rebellions, which have depopulated whole provinces, to the injustice of some princes who have abused their power, to the avarice of Mandarines, who have often oppressed the people, to invasions from abroad, and treachery from home, to such a number of changes, as would have unhinged the very government and laws, if a more politick people, than are the Tartars, were near enough the empire to introduce their own method of government.

It would, my lord, be a piece of flattery to myself, to imagine, that I have by this tedious account added any thing to that immense store of knowledge which you have drawn from the best springs of antiquity, from the conversation of the most ingenious of the moderns, and from the management of the most momentous affairs, or (which is a greater fountain of understanding) from your own natural wit and ingenuity, which has made you (if I may use the expression) a native of all countries, and a philosopher of all ages.

But I am sure you will be glad to see, that the truest maxims of good policy are not altogether strangers in the East; and that, if China do not form so great ministers as you are, it forms great enough to understand your counsels, and to follow your

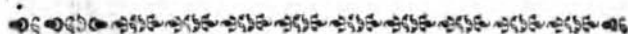
your steps, and improve themselves from the copy you set them, if they could but know you. I am, in the most profound manner,

My Lord,

Your Eminence's most obedient

and most humble Servant,

L. J.



L E T T E R X.

To my Lord Cardinal de Bouillon.

Concerning the Ancient and Modern Religion of China.

My Lord,

I Do not at all wonder that your highness is pleased to hear relations of China. It belongs only to great princes to be thoroughly acquainted with all that concerns the several kingdoms of the world, and to make a true judgment of the power and grandeur of empires. God, who has sent such men into the world to govern it, has given them a more than ordinary ability and knowledge to perform it; so that, my lord, if I take upon me the liberty to acquaint your lordship with what repeated voyages for the space of several years have given me to know in this affair, it is not so much to instruct you in it, as to beg your highness's judgment of it.

I may say this still with more truth when I have the honour to write to you of religion. This

is more particularly your concern; and I may say, that if your quality, your ingenuity, and your incomparable learning have made you above all men our judge; your eminent dignity in the church obliges us, in sacred concerns, to hear and consult your highness as our oracle.

'Tis on this prospect, my lord, that I now present to you these memoirs with some reflections, which the customs of the Chinese and the reading of their books have suggested to me concerning their religion, being of this mind, that, after so many different opinions and long disputes which have for a whole age divided the most learned missionaries, there is no better way of coming to decision, than to obtain your highness's judgment therein.

Religion has always had a great share in establishing the greatest kingdoms, which could never support themselves, were not the people's minds and hearts tied together by the outward worship of some deity; for people are naturally superstitious, and rather follow the guidance of faith than reason. It was therefore for this reason that the ancient lawgivers always made use of the knowledge of the true God, or of the false maxims of idolatry, to bring the barbarous nations under the yoke of their government.

China, happier in its foundation than any other nation under the sun, drew in the chief of the holy maxims of their ancient religion from the fountain head. The children of Noah, who were scattered all over the eastern parts of Asia, and, in all probability, founded this empire, being themselves in the time of the deluge witnesses of the omnipotence of their Creator, transmitted the knowledge of him, and instilled the fear of him into all their descendants; the foot-steps, which we find in their histories, will not let us doubt the truth of this.

Fohi, the first emperor of China, carefully bred up seven sorts of creatures, which he used to sacrifice to the supreme Spirit of heaven and earth. For this reason some called him Paohi, that is, Oblation; a name, which the greatest saints of the old and new testament would have been proud to have, and which was reserved for him alone, who made himself an oblation both for saints and sinners.

Hoamti, the third emperor, built a temple to the sovereign Lord of heaven; and altho' Judea had the honour of consecrating to him one more rich and magnificent, hallowed even by the presence of our Creator, and the prayers of our Redeemer, it is no small glory to China, to have sacrificed to their Creator in the most ancient temple of the world.

Tçouen hio, the fifth emperor, thought afterwards, that one place was too narrow to contain the services paid to the Lord of the universe. He therefore instituted priests or ecclesiastical Mandarines in several provinces, to preside over the sacrifices. He gave them strict command to observe that divine service was performed with all humility and respect, and that all the religious ceremonies were strictly observed.

Tiho, his successor, took as much care of religion as he had done. Histories relate, that the empress his wife, being barren, begged children of God during the sacrifice with such fervour and earnestness, that she conceived in a few days, and some time after was brought to bed of a son, who was famous for that forty emperors successively reigned of his family.

Yao and Chan, the two princes who succeeded him, are so famous for their piety and for the wisdom of their governments, that it is very likely that religion was still more flourishing during their reigns.

It is also very probable, that the three succeeding families did preserve the knowledge of God, for about 2000 years, during the reigns of 80 emperors; since the learnedest among the Chinese maintain, that, before the superstitions introduced with the god To into China, there were no idols or statues seen. This is certain, that, during all that space of time, the observation of the emperor Yao's maxims was recommended to the princes, of which the most essential and principal was concerning the worship of the sovereign Lord of the world; and altho' some emperors have been so wicked as to reject them so far, as even to threaten Heaven itself, and foolishly challenge it to fight, they have been nevertheless looked upon as monsters; and other emperors about that time have discovered by their actions a good sense of religion.

You vam, the first of the third line, did himself, according to ancient custom, offer sacrifices, and his brother who bore him a passionate love, and thought his life still necessary for the good of the kingdom, seeing him one day in danger of dying, prostrated himself before the Divine Majesty to beg his recovery. *It is you, O Lord,* said he, *who hast given him to his people; he is our father, he is our master. If we fall into any disorder, who can set us to rights again so well as he? And if we follow exactly what thou hast inspired him to teach us, why punishest thou us by taking him? As for me, O Lord,* continued the good prince, *I can be but little serviceable to this world; if you desire the death of a prince, I offer up my life with all my heart for a sacrifice. If you will be pleased to spare my master, my king, and my brother.* The history says, his prayer was heard, for he died as soon as he had put up his petition. An example which demonstrates, that not only the tenour of religion was preserved among those people, but further, that they followed the

dictates

dictates of the purest charity, which is the very quintessence and perfection of religion.

But Tchim-vam, his son and successor, gave such bright marks of his piety, towards the end of his life, that it leaves us no room to doubt of the truth of what I have advanced. You shall hear what the ancient Chinese books say of him: This prince, say they, who had always regulated his behaviour according to the ordinances of the supreme Governor of heaven, fell dangerously ill in the fiftieth year of his age, and thirty-seventh of his reign. When he knew the danger he was in, he called together the principal officers of his court, with a design to nominate his successor, and that he might omit nothing which was usually performed on such occasions, he arose from his throne where he had ordered his servants to set him; he made them wash his hands and face, cloath him with his imperial habits, and put his crown on his head; and then, leaning on a table of precious stone, he spake to the company in this manner.

‘ My sickness is every day worse and worse, for
‘ thus has Heaven ordain’d; I fear death will seize
‘ upon me, and therefore thought myself obliged to
‘ acquaint you with my last will. You know how
‘ great the reputation of my father and grandfather
‘ was, and how bright the examples of virtue, which
‘ they set the empire, did appear. I was very un-
‘ worthy to fill the place in which these great men
‘ sat; notwithstanding, I did succeed them, I do
‘ nevertheless acknowledge my ignorance and un-
‘ fitness.

‘ It is for this reason perhaps, that Heaven has
‘ shorten’d the days of my reign. I ought in this,
‘ as well as in all other things, to acquiesce; for
‘ you have all seen that I have hitherto received its
‘ orders with an humble fear, and a profound respect.
‘ I have endeavour’d, to follow them, without ever
‘ deviating

' deviating from them the least in the world ; I have
 ' also all my life time had in my heart my ancestors
 ' instructions touching my duty to Heaven, and to
 ' my people. On these two heads I cannot excuse
 ' myself of any fault, and, if my life has any
 ' reputation, it is all owing to that teachableness,
 ' which has brought down upon me the blessings of
 ' the sovereign Master of the world.

' It is on your account that I speak this (addressing
 ' himself to his eldest son) it is on your account,
 ' oh, my son ; be you the inheritor of your ancestors
 ' virtue, rather than of my power and crown. I
 ' make you a king, 'tis all that you can have of me ;
 ' be a wise, virtuous, and unblameable prince, this
 ' I command you, and the whole empire expects
 ' from you."

Under the reigns of this prince and his son * it
 was, that peace, honesty, and justice reigned in
 China, so that they oftentimes sent their prisoners
 to dig or plough the grounds, or get in the corn,
 without thinking that the fear of punishment would
 make them run away. After harvest they came
 again to receive that punishment of their faults
 which the Mandarines had appointed.

Lastly, if we examine well the history of China,
 we shall still find, that for three hundred years after,
 that is to say, down to the times of the emperor
 Yeouvam, who reigned eight hundred years before
 Christ, idolatry had not corrupted this people ; so
 that they have preserved the knowledge of the true
 God for near two thousand years, and did honour
 their Maker in such a manner as may serve both for
 an example and instruction to christians themselves.

They had all along a strict care to breed up beasts
 for sacrifices, and to maintain priests to offer them
 up ; besides, that the internal worship of the mind
 was prescribed, they did oblige themselves to a nice
 observation.

observation of even the smallest ceremonies which might in any ways be serviceable to the people's edification; the empresses did themselves breed up silkworms, and with their own hands worked coverings for the altars, and habits for the priests. The emperors have oftentimes tilled the ground, which produced the corn or wine destined for sacred uses. Again, the priests never dared to offer sacrifices before the people, unless prepared for it by an abstinence of three or seven days from conjugal enjoyments. They have had their solemn fast-days, and days of prayer in publick, especially when the empire laboured under any publick calamity, either by barrenness, by floods, by earthquakes, or wars from abroad.

With this outward worship it is, that the emperors prepare themselves for war; for taking upon themselves the government, or visiting the provinces; and that Heaven may favour their enterprises with success, they inquire of their subjects of their own faults, that they may amend them, believing that all publick calamities are occasioned thro' their ill government. We meet with a signal instance of this in history, which I cannot forbear reciting.

An universal barrenness having continued over all the provinces for seven years together (which time seems not far distant from the seven years of barrenness of which the scripture speaks, and perhaps this thing a little looked into may serve to amend or confirm our chronology *) the people were reduced to extreme want; and when prayers, fasts, and other acts of humiliation were used without success, the emperor not knowing any means proper to be used to gain relief from this publick misfortune, after having offered to God several sacrifices to appease his in-

* This emperor died 1753 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, and the seven years of scarcity, according to the scripture, happen'd 1743 years before the same birth.

dignation, he resolved at last to offer up himself for a sacrifice.

For this purpose he called together the chief persons of his kingdom, in the presence of them all dismantled himself of his royal apparel, and cloathed himself meanly. In this habit, with his head and face bare, in the same fashion that a criminal appears before a judge, he marched attended by his whole court, to a mountain a good distance from the town. When, prostrating himself before the divine Majesty, to whom he paid his adorations nine times, he spake in these words: *O Lord, you know the miseries to which we are reduced. It is my sins which have brought them upon my people, I come hither to own and acknowledge it in the presence of heaven and earth. That I may the better amend my faults, give me leave, O Lord, of all the world, to ask what action of mine has more particularly given you offence. Is it the splendor of my palace? I will take care to retrench what is superfluous: perhaps the profuseness of my table, or the delicacy and voluptuousness of it have brought this scarcity: hereafter nothing shall be seen there but thriftiness and temperance. The laws permit to me the use of concubines, but perhaps you dislike that I have too many. I am ready to lessen the number. And, if all this be not sufficient to appease your just indignation, and you must have an oblation; behold one, O Lord, I am heartily willing to die, if thou wilt spare this good people: let rain come from heaven on their fields to relieve their necessities, and thunder on my head to satisfy your justice.*

The prince's piety touch'd the clouds, for the air was presently overcast, and an universal rain immediately fell, which did in due season bring forth a fruitful harvest. When idolaters seem scandalized at the death of Jesus Christ, we use the example of this prince to justify our faith. You not only approve of this action, say we to them, in which one of your
emperors

emperors disrob'd himself of all that was magnificent, and offer'd himself a sacrifice for his subjects ; but you admire it, and recommend it to posterity as a fit pattern for all the princes of the world : how then can you dislike that excessive love and kindness, which made Jesus Christ offer himself an oblation and sacrifice for all men ; and despoil himself of the brightness of his Majesty, to invest us one day with his glory and divinity ?

These footsteps of the true religion, which we find in China for so many ages together, carry us naturally to make a reflection, which will justify the providence of the Almighty in the government of the world. People are sometimes amaz'd, that China and the Indies have been overshadow'd by the clouds and darkness of idolatry, almost ever since the birth of our Saviour, while Greece, a great part of Africk, and almost all Europe, have enjoy'd the clear light of faith ; but they never consider, that China, for two thousand years, had the knowledge of the true God, and have practis'd the most pure morality, while Europe and almost all the world wallow'd in error and corruption.

God, in the distribution of his gifts, is not an unjust respecter of persons ; yet he has laid out his times, to let his grace shine forth in due season, which, like the sun, rises and sets in different parts of the world, according as people make a good or bad use of it.

I do not know whether I may make bold to add, that as the sun, which by its constant motion hides itself to some, to shew itself to others, has notwithstanding, at the year's end, distributed to every country its equal portion of light and warmth ; so God by the secret and hidden course of his grace and spirit, which have been communicated to the world, hath equally divided them to all people in the world, tho' in different manners, and at different times. However it be, that God has made his wise distribution of

grace, I am sure of all nations China has least reason to complain, since no one has receiv'd a larger portion than she.

The knowledge of the true God, which lasted many ages after the reign of Cam-van, and in all probability, a long while after the time of Confucius, was not always supported in the same purity. Their minds were possessed by idolatry, and their manners became so corrupt, that the true faith, being but the occasion of greater ill, was by little and little taken away from them by the just judgment of God. Among all the superstitions which follow'd hereupon, there were two sorts which were principally established, and do, between them at this present, comprehend almost all the empire.

Li Laokun gave rise to the first of these. He was a philosopher who lived before Confucius; his birth was prodigious, if you believe what his followers say of it: for his mother carried him more than fourscore years in her flanks, from whence, a little before her death, he sprang out of her right side, which opened itself. This monster, to the sorrow of his country, survived his mother, and by his pernicious doctrine in a short time grew famous: nevertheless he wrote several useful books; of virtue, of the good of avoiding honour, of the contempt of riches, of that incomparable retiredness of mind, which separates us from the world the better to know ourselves. He often repeated the following sentence, which he said was the foundation of true wisdom. *Eternal reason produced one, one produced two, two produced three, and three produced all things*: which seems to show as if he had some knowledge of the Trinity.

But he taught that God was corporeal, and that he governed other deities as a king governs his subjects. He applied himself mightily to chymistry, of which some pretend he was the inventor. He beat his brains likewise about the philosopher's stone, and

did at length fancy, that, by a certain sort of drink, one might be immortal. To obtain which his followers practise magick, which diabolical art, in a short time, was the only thing studied by the gentry. Every body studied it in hopes to avoid death ; and the women thro' natural curiosity, as well as desire to prolong their life, applied themselves to it, wherein they exercise all sorts of extravagancies, and give themselves up to all sorts of impieties.

Those, who have made this their professed business, are called Tien se, that is Heavenly Doctors; they have houses given them to live together in society, they erect in divers parts temples to Laokun their master ; king and people honour him with divine worship ; and altho' they have examples enough to have undeceived them from these errors, yet they vehemently pursue immortality, by his precepts who could never gain it himself.

Time, which strengthens and confirms what is ill, did at length gain these false doctors such a reputation, as made them almost innumerable. The covenants which they make with the devil, the lots which they cast, their magical wonders, whether true or only seeming, make them dreaded and admired of the common herd ; and, whencesoever it comes to pass, there is no body who does not give some credit to their maxims, or does not hope to avoid death by their means.

One of these doctors * got himself so great a reputation, that the emperor gave him the name Cham-ti ; which is the name by which they call God himself ; and signifies Supreme Emperor. This piece of impiety gave the killing blow to the ancient religion ; for till then the Chinese, as much idolaters as they were, did always make a distinction between the Cham-ti, and the other gods. But, by a just judgment from God, the family of that prince was ex-

tinct, and the empire, which had hitherto observed its own rules of government, was the first time forced to submit to those of the western Tartars. This famous Colao †, who printed a book, could not but acknowledge: *In this time, says he, the emperor Hœi-tcoum did, against all manner of reason, give the attributes of the supreme God to a man. This most powerful and adorable God, above all the spirits in heaven, was sensible of the wrong done him; for he punished severely the wickedness of this prince, and utterly rooted out his family.*

The second sect, which is prevalent in China, and is more dangerous and more universally spread than the former, adore an idol which they call Fo or Foe, as the only god of the world. This idol was brought from the Indies two and thirty years after the death of Jesus Christ. This poison began at court, but spread its infection thro' all the provinces, and corrupted every town: so that this great body of men, already spoiled by magick and impiety, was immediately infected with idolatry, and became a monstrous receptacle for all sorts of errors. Fables, superstitions, transmigration of souls, idolatry and atheism divided them, and got so strong a mastery over them, that, even at this present, there is not so great an impediment to the progress of christianity, as is this ridiculous and impious doctrine.

No body can well tell where this idol Fo, of whom I speak, was born; (I call him an idol and not a man, because some think it was an apparition from hell) those, who with more likelihood say he was a man, make him born above a thousand years before Jesus Christ, in a kingdom of the Indies, near the line, perhaps a little above Bengala. They say he was a king's son. He was at first call'd Chio; but at thirty years of age he took the name of Fo. His mother, who brought him into the world, so

† Kieou-Lien Chan.

her right side, died in childbirth: she had a fancy in her dream, that she swallow'd an elephant, and for this reason it is, that the Indian kings pay such honour to white elephants: for the loss of which, or gaining some others, they often make bitter wars.

When this monster was first born he had strength enough to stand alone, and he made seven steps, and pointed with one hand to heaven, and the other to the earth. He did also speak, but in such a manner as shew'd what spirit he was possess'd withal. *In heaven, or on earth, says he, I am the only person who deserve to be honoured.* At seventeen he married, and had a son, which he forsook, as he did all the rest of the world, to retire into a solitude with three or four Indian philosophers, whom he took along with him to teach. But at thirty he was on a sudden possess'd, and, as it were, fill'd with the divinity, who gave him an universal knowledge of all things. From that time he became a god, and began, by a vast number of seeming miracles, to gain the people's admiration. The number of his disciples is very great, and it is by their means, that all the Indies have been poisoned with his pernicious doctrine. Those of Siam call them Talapoins, the Tartars call them Lamas or Lama-tem, the Japoners Bonzes, and the Chinese Hocham.

But this chimerical god found at last, that he was a man as well others. He died at 79 years of age; and, to give the finishing stroke to his impiety, he endeavoured to persuade his followers to atheism at his death, as he had persuaded them to idolatry in his life-time. Then he declared to his followers, that all which he had hitherto told them was enigmatical; and that they would be mistaken, if they thought there was any other first principle of things besides nothing; *It was, said he, from this nothing, that all things sprang; and it is into this nothing, that all things must*

return. This is the abyss where all our hopes must end.

Since this impostor confessed, that he had abused the world in his life, it is but reasonable, that he should not be believed at his death. Yet, as impiety has always more champions than virtue, there was among the Bonzes a particular sect of atheists, formed from the last words of their master. The rest, who found it troublesome to part with their former prejudices, kept close to their first errors. A third sort endeavoured to reconcile these parties together, by compiling a body of doctrine, in which there is a twofold law, an interior and an exterior. One ought to prepare the mind for the reception of the other. It is, say they, the mould which supports the materials till the arch be made, and then is taken away as useless.

Thus the devil, making use of mens folly and malice for their destruction, endeavours to erase out of the minds of some those excellent ideas of God, which are so deeply ingraved there, and to imprint in the minds of others the worship of false gods under the shapes of a multitude of different creatures, for they did not stop at the worship of this idol. The ape, the elephant, the dragon, have been worshipped in several places, under pretence perhaps, that the god Fo had successively been transmigrated into these creatures. China, the most superstitious of all nations, increased the number of her idols, and one may now see all sorts of them in the temples, which serve to abuse the folly of this people.

It is true, they sometimes do not pay to their gods all that respect which seems due to their quality. For it often happens, that, if the people after worshipping them a great while do not obtain what they desire, they turn them off, and look upon them as impotent gods, others use them in the most reproachful manner; some load them with hard names, others with

hard blows. How now, *Dog of a spirit*, say they to them sometimes, we give you a lodging in a magnificent temple, we gild you handsomely, feed you well, and often offer incense to you, and after all this care, which we take of you, you are so ungrateful as to refuse what we ask of you.

Then they tie him with cords, pluck him down, and drag him along the streets thro' all the mud and dunghills, to punish him for the expence of perfume which they have offered up to him for nothing. If in the mean time it happens, that they obtain what they did desire, then they take the idol, and with a great deal of ceremony carry him back and place him in his nich again, after they have washed and cleansed him: they fall down to him, and make excuses for what they have done. In truth, say they, we were a little too hasty, as well as you was somewhat too long in your grant; why should you bring this beating on yourself? Were it not better to have granted our petition of your own free will, rather than be forced to do it? But what is done can't be now undone, let us not therefore think of it any more; if you will forget what is passed we will gild you over again.

A few years ago there happened a passage at Nankim, which does very well discover what an opinion the Chinese have of their gods. A man, whose only daughter was very ill, tried all the physicians, but without effect; he thought it therefore his best way to betake himself to the assistance of his gods. Prayers, offerings, alms, sacrifices, and all other means, were used to obtain relief. The Bonzes, who were greased in the fist, promised that an idol, whose power they mightily boasted, should grant her recovery. For all this the woman died, the father out of measure grieved, resolved to revenge himself, and to bring a formal accusation against the idol.

• He

He put in his complaint therefore to the judge of the place, in which after he had lively shewed forth the deceitfulness of this unjust god, he said, that he deserved an exemplary punishment for having broke his word. If this spirit, said he, could cure my daughter, it is palpable cheating to take my money, and yet let her die. If he could not do it, what does he signify? And how came he by his quality of godship? Do we worship him, and the whole province offer him sacrifice for nothing at all? So that he concluded it to be either from the malice and weakness of the idol, that the cure was not performed; wherefore his temple he judged ought to be pulled down, his priests shamefully dismissed, and the idol punished in his own private person.

The business seemed of consequence to the judge, wherefore he sent it to the governor, who, desiring to have nothing to do with those of the other world, desired the viceroy to examine into it. After he had heard the Bonzes, who were extremely concerned at it, he took their part, and advised him not to persist in the cause any longer: for, said he to him, you are not wise, to concern yourself with this sort of spirits. They are naturally ill tempered, and I am afraid will play some ill trick. Believe me, you had better come to an agreement. The Bonzes assure me, that the idol shall do what is reasonable on his part, provided you on your part do not carry things too high.

But the man, who was almost mad for the death of his daughter, did constantly protest, that he would sooner perish than relinquish his just rights. The sentence is given for me, said he, the idol fancied, that he might commit any sort of injustice without punishment, because he thought no body would be bold enough to take him to task; but he is not so safe as he thinks, and a little time will shew much of

is the most wicked, and the most a devil of the two.

The viceroy could not now go back, and was fain therefore to grant a trial; he sent the case to the sovereign council at Pekin, who remitted the trial to him again, he therefore subpoena'd the parties. The devil, who had but too many friends among all sorts of men, had also his share among the lawyers and proctors; those of them, to whom the Bonzes gave largely, found their cause good, and spoke with so much concern and vehemence, that the idol itself could not have pleaded better its own cause. Yet they had to deal with a subtle adversary, who had been beforehand with them, and had cleared the judge's understanding by a large bribe, being thoroughly persuaded, that the devil must be very cunning indeed, to withstand so clear an argument as this last was to the judges.

In short, after a great many hearings, the man carried his point. The idol was condemned to a perpetual banishment, as useless to the kingdom, and his temple was to be plucked down; and the Bonzes who represented him were severely chastised; they might notwithstanding apply themselves to the service of other spirits, to make themselves amends for the damage they had received for loving this.

Can any one who has not lost his senses adore gods of this character, weak, fearful, and whom one may affront safely? But alas! We may flatter ourselves that we are never so wise, yet how much is our wisdom distant from reason, when it is distant from the true faith.

Instead of coming hereby to a knowledge of the weakness of their gods, the people grow more and more blind every day. The Bonzes are above all obliged to keep up their credit and reputation, because of the advantage they make thereby. To bring this about the better, they make use of the following

maxims of morality, which they take great care to propagate.

We must not think, say they, that good and evil are as confused in the other world as they are in this; there are there rewards for the good, and punishments for the bad; which has occasioned different places to be set apart for the souls of men, according to every one's merit. The god Fo was the saviour of the world, he was born to teach the way of salvation, and to make expiation for all our sins.

He has left us ten commandments. The first forbids the killing of any living creature of what sort soever; the second commands not to take another man's goods; the third not to give up one's self to impurity; the fourth not to lye; and the fifth to drink no wine.

Besides these, they recommend to the people's practice several works of mercy. Entertain and nourish up, say they, the Bonzes; build them monasteries and temples, that their prayers and voluntary penances may obtain for you exemption from that punishment which your sins have deserved. Burn paper gilt and washed with silver, habits made of stuff and silk. All these in the other world shall be turned into real gold and silver, and into true and substantial garments, which shall be given to your fathers faithfully, who will make use of them as they have occasion. If you do not regard these commands, you shall be after your death cruelly tormented, and exposed to several Metempsychoses or transmigrations, that is to say, you shall be born in the shape of rats, horses, mules, and all other creatures. This last point makes a great impression upon their minds.

I remember, that, being in the province of Xanhi, I was sent for to christen a sick person. It was an old man of threescore and ten, who lived upon a small pension, which the emperor had given him. When I came into his chamber, O my good father, says he, how much am I obliged to you, who are going

to deliver me from a great deal of torment. Baptism, answered I, does not only deliver from the torment of hell, but intitles us to the enjoyment of a place in paradise: O how happy will it be for you to go to heaven, eternally to live in the presence of God! I do not, said the sick man, understand what you mean, nor perhaps have I explained my meaning clearly to you; you know, father, I have lived a long time upon the emperor's bounty. The Bonzes, who are perfectly well acquainted with all the transactions of the other world, assure me, that I shall be obliged after my death, by way of recompense for my pension, to serve him, and that my soul will infallibly go into one of his post horses, to carry dispatches from court thro' all the province. They have therefore been advising me to mind my duty in that new state; not to stumble, nor kick, nor bite, nor otherwise hurt any one; run well, and eat little, and be patient, say they, and you may move the gods to compassion, who often, of a good beast, make at length a person of quality, or a considerable Mandarin. I protest, father, the very thoughts of it makes me quake, it never comes into my mind, but I tremble; yet I dream of it every night, and sometimes methinks in my sleep I am already in the harness, ready to run at the first jerk of the postilion. Then I wake in a great sweat, and half mad, scarcely knowing, whether I am a man or a horse. But, alas! What will be my sorrow when this will be no more a dream but a reality.

This therefore, father, is the course I took. They tell me, that those of your religion are not subject to those changes: that men are always men, and are, in the other world, of the same kind as they are here. I beg of you therefore to receive me among you. I know your religion is hard to observe; yet, if it had ten times more difficulties, I am ready to embrace it; and, whatsoever trouble it put me to, I had rather be a christian than be turned into a beast. This discourse.

course, and the condition the man was in, wrought me into compassion; and afterwards considering with myself, that God makes use of ignorance and folly to bring men to the knowledge of the truth, I took an occasion from thence to undeceive him of his mistakes, and to lead him into the way of salvation. I instructed him a great while, at last he believed; and I had the comfort to see him die, not only with a clearer and better understanding of things, but farther with all the marks of a good christian.

In process of time, the superstitions of the people grew so numberless, that I do not believe any nation under the sun is so full of whimsies as China. The Mandarines are obliged to condemn all these sects as hereticks, as indeed they do in their books; but yet springing themselves mostly from idolatrous families, and having been instructed by the Bonzes, they in their practice follow the example of the common people.

Two of these Bonzes, seeing one day in a rich farmer's yard two or three large ducks, fell on their faces before the door, and sigh'd and wept grievously. The good woman, seeing them out of her chamber window, came down to see what was the occasion of their tears. We know, said they, that the souls of our fathers are transmigrated into those creatures, and the fear we are in, lest you should kill them, will without doubt go near to kill us: It is true, said the woman, we did intend to sell them, but, since they are your fathers, I promise you we will keep them.

This answer was not for the Bonzes purpose. They continued they, perhaps your husband will not be so charitable, and then, if any accident should happen to them, you may be sure it will kill us. At last, after a long discourse, the good woman was so far moved with their pretended grief, that she gave them the ducks to look after for some time to comfort them. They took them with a great deal of respect, prostrating themselves twenty times to them; but

very evening they made an entertainment of them for some of their company, and fattened themselves with them.

A prince of the blood lost a young man for whom he had a particular love; a few years after he spoke of it with a great deal of warmth and concern to the Bonzes, who said to him: My lord, do not trouble yourself any more, your loss may be repair'd; he whom you grieve for is in Tartary, and his soul is passed into a young man's body; but there must be a great deal of money to find where he is, and you must give good presents to the priests of that country. This news pleased the prince mightily, so that he gave them what they desired; and a few months after they got a boy any where, and gave him to the prince instead of the boy who was dead. Thus it is, that the whole country, from the peasant to the prince, are bubbled by these ministers of iniquity.

If they can't thus trick people out of their money, they try to get it out of them by doing acts of penance publickly, which the people esteem them mightily for, and shew them a great deal of pity and compassion. I have seen them dragging after them a long chain of iron as thick as one's arm, about thirty feet long, fastened to the neck or legs. Thus it is, say they, at every door as they pass, that we expiate your faults, sure this deserves some small alms. Others in publick places knock their pates with all their force with large bricks, till they are almost covered with blood. They have several other penitential actions; but what I was most surpris'd at was this.

One day I met in the middle of a town a young Bonze of a good mien, a genteel and modest look, such as might easily move any one's compassion and charity. He stood upright in a sort of a sedan very close shut, the inside of which was like an harrow full of nails very thick, with their points sticking out towards the man in the chair, so that he could not bend either one way or t'other without wounding himself.

self. Two fellows were hir'd to carry him from house to house, where he begg'd the people to have compassion on him.

He told them he was shut up in that chair for the good of their souls, and was resolv'd never to go out from thence till they had bought all the nails in which there were above two thousand) at the rate of six-pence a-piece, of which nails, the very smallest he had would derive incomparable blessings on them and their families. If you buy any of them, you will do an action of heroick virtue, and your alms are not bestow'd on the Bonzes, to whom you may take other opportunities of bestowing your charity, but to the good Fo, in whose honour we are going to build a temple.

In the mean while I happen'd to pass thro' the street; the Bonze, seeing me, came and told me the same tale. I told him, that he was very unhappy to torment himself thus in this world for no good, and did counsel him therefore to come out of his prison, to go to the temple of the true God to be instructed in heavenly truths, and submit to penance less severe, but more wholesome. He was so far from being in a passion with me, that he answer'd me calmly and courteously, that he was much obliged to me for my good advice, and would be more obliged to me still, if I would buy a dozen of his nails, which would certainly make me have a good journey.

Here hold your hand, says he, ~~turning~~ ^{turning} on one side, take these; upon the faith of a Bonze they are the very best in all my sedan, for they prick me the most, yet you shall have them at the same rate at which I sell the others. He spoke those words in such a manner, as would have made me on any other occasion have laugh'd; but at that time his blindness rais'd my compassion, and I was strangely concern'd to see that bondman of the devil suffer more to work out his own destruction, than a christian need do to gain his salvation.

Yet all the Bonzes are not penitents : while some abuse the credulous by their hypocritical pretences, others get money out of them by magical arts, secret thefts, horrible murders, and a thousand detestable abominations, which modesty won't let me mention here. People, who are only outwardly religious, spare nothing to gratify their passions ; and if they can but escape the justice of men, which in this place spares none who are caught wronging their neighbour, they care not what they do in the eyes of that God whom they will scarcely own.

Although the generality of the people are prejudiced in favour of them, yet the wiser sort are always upon their guard against these wretches ; and the magistrates always take great notice of what they do in their monasteries. It happened a few years ago, that a governor of a town, passing with his train in the highway, saw a great company of people got together, and had the curiosity to send to know what was the occasion of their meeting there.

The Bonzes were solemnizing an extraordinary festival ; they had set a machine upon a stage, at the top of which a young man put out his head over a little rail, which went all round the machine. The rail hid his arms and all his body ; one could see nothing at liberty but his eyes, which he rolled about as if he was distracted. Below this machine an old Bonze appeared upon the stage, who told the people that the young man which they saw was going to sacrifice himself, according to custom, in this manner. There ran by the road side a deep river, into which he would presently throw himself headlong. He can't die, added the Bonze, if he would, because at the bottom of the river he will be received by charitable spirits, who will give him as good a welcome as he can desire ; and indeed it is the greatest happiness that can possibly befall him ; an hundred persons have desired to sacrifice themselves

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instead of him, but him we chose before the rest because of his zeal and other virtues.

When the Mandarin had heard this, he said, that the young man indeed had a great deal of courage, but he wonder'd much that he did not himself tell the people of this his resolution; let him come down a little, said he, that we may talk with him. The Bonze, who was confounded at this order, did all he could to hinder it, and did protest, that the whole sacrifice would be ineffectual if he spake a word, nay, if he did but open his mouth, and for his part he could not answer for the mischief, such a thing would bring upon the province. For the mischief you talk of, replied the Mandarin, I'll be responsible; and then he commanded the young man to come down; he gave no other answer to these commands but hideous and frightful looks, and various distortions of his eyes, which almost started out of his head.

You may from hence, said the Bonze, judge what violence you offer him in commanding him down. He is already almost distracted, and if you continue your command you will make him die with grief. This did not make the Mandarin change his resolution, but he order'd some of his retinue to go up and bring him down. They found him tied and bound down on every side, with a gag in his mouth; and as soon as they had untied him, and taken away the gag from the poor fellow's mouth, he cried out, as loud as he could bawl; Ah! my lord, revenge against those assassins, who were going to drown me. I am a batchelor of arts, and was going to the court at Pekin, to assist at the examinations there; yesterday a company of Bonzes seiz'd upon me violently, and this morning very early they bound me to this machine, taking from me all power of crying out, or complaining, and intending to drown me this evening.

evening, being resolv'd to accomplish their accus'd ceremonies at the expence of my life.

When he began to speak the Bonzes were marching off, but the officers of justice, who always attend the governors, stopp'd several of them. The chief of them, who had pretended just before that the young man could not be drown'd, was himself immediately thrown into the river and drown'd; the others were carried to prison, and did after receive that punishment which they deserv'd.

Since the Tartars have been emperors of China, the Lamas, another sort of Bonzes, have been establish'd there. Their habit is different from those of China both in shape and colour, but their religion is the same with the Chinese, and they worship the god Fo; they differ from the Chinese only in a few particular superstitious practices. These Lamas are chaplains to the Tartar nobility who live at Pekin; but in Tartary they themselves are the gods which the people worship.

There it is that the god Fo has his most famous seat, where he appears under a sensible figure, and, as they say, never dies. He is kept in a temple, and an infinite number of these Lamas serve him with an ineffable veneration; which they strive as much as they can to imprint upon the minds of all others whatsoever. When he dies, for he is but a man placed there, they put in his room a Lamas of the same stature, and, as near as they can, of the same features, that the people may be the better deceiv'd by it. Thus the people of this country, and especially all strangers, are eternally bubbld by these impostors.

Among the different religions exercis'd in China, I do not think it worth while to mention to your highness a few Mahometans, who have liv'd for these six hundred years, in several provinces, and are never disturb'd, because they never disturb any one else upon the score of religion, being content to enjoy it themselves,

themselves, or to propagate it there among their kindred by marriages. However, it may be of use to tell you of a third sect, which is the religion, or philosophy, or policy of some of the learned; for one cannot tell by what name to call this doctrine, which is so obscure, that the very professors of it scarce understand what they teach; they call it in their language Iukiao, and is a sect of learned men.

That you may understand what I am going to tell you, you must know that civil wars, magick, and idolatry having put the empire into confusion for many ages, the love of learning was quite cashier'd, and there were found few doctors, who could by their writings awaken the minds of men out of that lethargy into which ignorance and corruption of manners had lull'd them; only, about 1070*, some creditable expounders were found; and, in 1200, one doctor did distinguish himself from all others, for his extraordinary understanding; by his example they began by degrees to take some pleasure in reading ancient books, which they had before thrown aside.

Lastly, in the year 1400, the emperor, being willing to stir up in his subjects a love of learning, made choice of fourscore and two of the most ingenious doctors, whom he commanded to compile a system agreeable to the sentiments of the ancient writers, which might serve as a direction for the learned hereafter. The Mandarin, who had the commission, set themselves diligently to work; but being prejudiced with those opinions which idolatry had diffused all over China, instead of following the true sense of the ancients, they tried, by false glosses and interpretations, to distort the words and sayings of the ancients to their prejudicate opinions.

They spake of God as nothing different from nature itself; that is, from that power, energy, or natural virtue which did produce, and put in order, all

the parts of the world, and which does still keep them that in order. He is, say they, a most pure and most perfect principle; he is the source of all things, and the essence of all beings, and that which constitutes the formal difference of every thing. They made use of those magnificent expressions of the ancients, that they might seem to keep to their doctrine; but indeed they raised new opinions, because they understand hereby I can't tell what sort of insensible soul of ~~the~~ world, which they imagine spread thro' matter, upon which it produces the several mutations we see. This is not that supreme Emperor of heaven, all just and all powerful, the chief of all creatures: in their works nothing is found but a better sort of atheism, and a licentious freedom from the worship of God.

But, whether it was because they were unwilling to express themselves plainly, or did accidentally make use of expressions of a larger signification than their meaning, yet they talk of Heaven as did the ancients, and ascribe to nature almost all those perfections which we attribute to God. They tolerate willingly the Mahometans, because like them they adore the Master and King of Heaven. They persecute all other sects with great violence, which at court they took up a resolution utterly to abolish throughout the whole empire.

Yet many reasons persuaded them from putting this resolution in practice, the chief of which were these; even several among the learned were dissenters from this new establish'd doctrine, for they could not shake off the prejudices they had suck'd in: besides all the people were wholly bias'd in favour of idols, so that their temples could never be pull'd down, but insurrections and disturbances must necessarily ensue. They were therefore contented to adjudge at Peking all the other sects hereticks

(which they still do every year) without setting themselves effectually to stop the practice of them.

These new books composed by their most learned men, and honour'd by the emperor's own approbation, were greedily received by every body. Some lik'd them, because they destroy'd all sorts of religion; and these make up the greatest number of Christians. Others approv'd of them, because the religion which they contain'd was so very little, that it cost them no pains nor trouble to practise it; and thus was the sect of the learned form'd, of whom one may justly say, they honour God with their mouth and with their lips, for they often say, that we must adore and obey Heaven; but their hearts are distant from him, seeing they explain those words in such a sort as destroys the very being of God, and stifles all sense of religion.

Thus this people, so wise heretofore, so full of knowledge, and (if I may use the expression) of the spirit of God, are now in these last days miserably fallen into superstition, magick, paganism; and lastly, into atheism itself, falling by degrees, story by story, till they come to the very bottom of the building; becoming thereby enemies to that reason which they had so constantly follow'd, and abominable to that very nature to which they now give such high encomiums.

This is, my lord, an account of the present state of China, with respect to the several religions there in use; for, as for the political honours which they pay to Confucius, they are not divine worship, and the palaces, which are call'd by his name, are not temples, but houses for learned men to assemble in. I was unwilling to particularize their ceremonies, their opinions, and their morals; besides that it would be tedious and endless, it is very difficult to give a certain account of them; because the Bonzes do every day invent new whimsies, and, if they can but live at other people's charge by abusing them, they do not

value whether they exactly follow the doctrine of their predecessors, which is in effect neither better nor frer from absurdities than their own.

Nothing now remains, but that I give your eminence an account to which of these sects, which divide the kingdom, the emperor is most inclinable. This prince, who is naturally wise and politick, has always kept in with the people. As he is upon a throne which the least blast may shake, he endeavours, as much as he can, to strengthen it by his people's love; he is so far from provoking them, that he makes himself very popular, yet not to such a degree as his father did, lest he should bring upon himself the Mandarin's hatred; yet much more than did the ancient emperors, to the end, that he may as much as possible sweeten that yoke, which a new government has put on their shoulders.

He does therefore permit, or rather tolerate superstition; he pays a great deal of respect to several Bonzes of the first rank, who have behaved themselves well in any of the provinces, or at court; nay, he does his own temper that violence as to let some of them live in his palace, those whom the princess his mother had before brought and establish'd there: but, tho' he thus favours their persons, he is no slave to their opinions. He perfectly understands the folly of them, and does upon several occasions laugh at those things which they enjoin for principles of religion, as extravagancies and fables. He often sends those who speak to him of them to the missionaries: *Hear, says he, those fathers who reason so well, I am sure they will not be of your mind.* One day he said to father Verbieft, his mathematician, *Why do not you speak of God as we do? People would be less set against your religion. You call him Tientchu *, and we call him Cham-ti. Is it not the same thing? Will you leave the use of a good word because*

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people

* Tientchu signifies Lord of Heaven; Cham-ti Sovereign Emperor.

people give false interpretations of it? My lord, said the father, I know that your majesty does follow the old doctrine of China, which several doctors have forsaken: and, if we should use their words, they would fancy we believe as they believe; but, if your majesty will by a proclamation publicly declare that the word Cham-ti signifies the same in effect, that the christians mean by Tien-tchu, we are ready to make use of any one of them as soon as the other. He liked the father's answer, but reasons of state hinder'd him from following his advice.

When the queen-mother was dead, those, who had the care of the funeral committed to them, informed the prince that it was necessary, according to ancient custom, to pull down part of the palace-wall, that the body might be carried thro' the breach; because that the royal family would be exposed to a great many misfortunes, if the body was carried thro' the ordinary passages. *You do not talk rationally,* said the emperor to them, *your heads are full of whimsies. What folly is it to think my good or bad fortune depends upon the way by which my mother goes to her tomb, It was my unhappiness to lose her, and to fear any misfortune, after so great a loss, would be to dishonour her after her death, by superstitious rites and ridiculous ceremonies.* Some time after several maids of honour to the empress came and fell at the emperor's feet, and begg'd with tears, that he would suffer them, who had serv'd the empress here, to follow her into the other world, where their services might be needful to her. He said to them: *I have taken care of that already, you need not therefore put yourselves to farther trouble about it.* And, for fear lest a cruel zeal might prompt them to lay violent hands on themselves, he commanded their hair to be immediately cut off, and that they should be confin'd. When they are shav'd, they fancy themselves useless, and unfit to serve persons of quality in the other world.

These examples are enough to let us see, that the emperor is very far from giving himself up to all these popular extravagancies. He honours Confucius, as the first and wisest philosopher in the world; in several things he follows custom, when he judges it much for his interest; at certain times of the year he offers sacrifices in the temples, according to ancient practice, yet he says, it is only in honour of the Cham-ti, and that he adores no other but the supreme Lord of the universe. Thus far the instructions of the missionaries have work'd upon him. He believes in one God, but state reasons, and the gratification of his passions, which are opposite to the spirit of Jesus Christ, have never suffered him to open his eyes to the truth of the gospel. The rigidity and severity of morals, which this requires, oftentimes stops the most resolute; and we see every day persons in the world, who have a greatness of soul enough to deserve the name of Heroes, who do yet want courage when they ought to behave themselves as those who bear that of Christians.

Nevertheless, this prince would not have any one think that he rejects our religion for want of courage. He told his mind to father Verbiest one day in these words: *Your law is hard, yet, whatever difficulty was to be undergone, I should not stick one minute to be of it, were I convinced of the truth of it. If I was once a christian, I am pretty well satisfied that in three or four years the whole empire would be so too: For I am their master.* We might have some hopes from these sentiments of the prince, if we were not on the other side persuaded, that the love of pleasure, and the fear of giving occasion to some revolution in the empire, were not almost invincible hindrances to his conversion.

But who can find out the Almighty's designs? And who has hitherto penetrated into the mysteries of his eternal councils? Are not the hearts of the greatest princes as well as of the meanest people in his keeping? it is from that Almighty hand that all our hopes are which has already confounded an infinite number of idols, and overthrown many of their temples; it has made viceroys, ministers of state, princes, and one empress submit to the yoke of christianity. The more the conversion of the emperor requires miracles, the more worthy it is of the great power and infinite goodness of God, who is called Great for no other reason than for the great and mighty things which he hath done.

Thus, my lord, if Europe continues to send into China fervent and devout missionaries, we may hope, that God will vouchsafe to make use of their zeal for the accomplishment of this great work. I am, in the most profound manner,

My Lord,

Your Eminence's most obedient

and most humble Servant,

L. J.



LETTER XI.

To Monsieur Rouillie, Counsellor of State in Ordinary.

Of the Establishment and Progress of the Christian Religion in China.

Sir,

THE ardent zeal, which you have always shewed towards establishing and promoting the christian religion in China, makes me hope, that you will be pleased with the letter which I now take the boldness to write to you. You will not only read therein those things which I have already had the honour to discourse with you so often about, but also many other useful remarks, which I hope may be worthy your curiosity and attention.

It will, without doubt, bring you a great deal of comfort, by shewing you, that your care, your prayers, and your bounty have been seconded by Heaven; and that, in contributing so much as you have done to the conversion of so many souls, you will at the end of the world be accounted a father of many faithful.

But, in spite of all that I can say, you will not be made sensible of the great good you do there, for it is with the greatest difficulty that you are brought to believe you do good: you will at least see, that the fervent missionaries, who for more than an age have laboured in the large field of the gospel, are not altogether unworthy their employment; and that the fruits, which they gather there, should be an encouragement to all Europe, to perfect this great work, which by them has been so happily begun.

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Among other things which the emperor objected against us, when discoursing of the christian religion, this was none of the weakest. If the knowledge of Jesus Christ, says he sometimes, is necessary for salvation, and if God desires the salvation of all men, why has he so long kept us in ignorance and error? It is now above sixteen ages since your religion, the only way men have to obtain salvation, has been established in the world; we knew nothing of it here. Is China so inconsiderable as not to deserve to be thought of, while so many barbarous nations have been enlightened?

The missionaries have very solidly answered this objection, and that with so good a face of reason, as did give ample satisfaction to the emperor. I do not here tell you, sir, their answer; you do yourself know all that could be possibly said thereto. But perhaps it will not be tedious to you to let you know, that China has not been so much neglected as it thinks. We cannot inform ourselves of all that has passed in this new world since the death of our Saviour; for the Chinese histories seldom speak of any thing but what concerns political government: yet the Divine Providence would be sufficiently justified in this point, if it had acted for the salvation of China no more than has come to our knowledge.

There is no doubt but St. Thomas preached the true faith in the Indies, and it is as certain, that the Indians had then great dealings with the Chinese, to whom almost all India was tributary. It is therefore very probable, that this apostle, to whom the care of this new world was committed, did not neglect the best part of it, which was then as much distinguished above the rest of the eastern part, as Italy was above the western in the most flourishing condition of the Roman empire; so that perhaps he himself travelled there, or at least sent some of his followers.

This conjecture which carries its own evidence with it, does still receive confirmation, from what the Chinese histories relate concerning those times. Their history says, that a man came into China and preached heavenly doctrine. He was not an ordinary man, adds the history, his life, his miracles, and his virtues made him admired by all the world. Furthermore, one may read in an ancient breviary of the church of Malabar, wrote in Chaldee; these words, which are in the office for St. Thomas's day. *It was by St. Thomas's means, that the Chinese and Ethiopians were converted and came to the knowledge of the truth.* And in another place, *It was by St. Thomas, that is to say, by the preaching of St. Thomas, that the kingdom of heaven went into the empire of China.* And in an anthem we read these words which follow: *The Indies, China, Persia, &c. offer up, in memory of St. Thomas, the worship due to thy holy name.* We cannot tell what conversions he wrought there, nor how long religion flourished; but this is certain, that, if religion hath not been kept up in China till now, the Chinese may thank themselves, who, by a criminal neglect and voluntary stubbornness, did so easily part with the gift of God.

Neither is this the only time wherein our Lord hath visited them. A great while after, that is, in the seventh century, a catholick patriarch of the Indies sent missionaries thither, who preached the true religion, with good success. Altho' their history hath mentioned something of this, yet it is done in so few words, and in so careless and obscure a manner, that we should never have had the happiness of being thoroughly acquainted with this mission, were it not for an accident which happened a few years ago, which it pleased God to bring about, for the stronger establishing the faith in this great empire.

In the year 1625, some masons digging at Sigan, the capital of the province of Xen, found a long table of marble which had been heretofore erected as a monument in the manner they build them in China, and which time had buried in the ruins of some building, or had hid in the ground, so that no remains of it were visible. This stone, which was ten feet long and six feet broad, was very nicely examined; the more for this reason, because on the top of it there was a large cross handsomely engraved, below which, was a long discourse in Chinese characters, and other letters which the Chinese did not understand; they were Syriac characters. The emperor had notice of it, and had a copy of it sent him, and did command that the monument should be carefully kept in a Pagode*, where it now is, about a mile from Sigan. The substance of the inscription on the table is as follows:

‘ There is a first principle of all things, of a
 ‘ spiritual and intelligent nature, who created all
 ‘ things out of nothing, and who subsists in three
 ‘ persons. At man’s creation, he endued him with
 ‘ original justice, made him king of the universe,
 ‘ and master of his own passions; but the devil,
 ‘ drawing him into temptation, corrupted his mind,
 ‘ and disturbed the inward peace and innocence of
 ‘ his heart. Hence sprang all those misfortunes
 ‘ which overwhelm human kind, and all those dif-
 ‘ ferent factions into which we are crumbled.

‘ Mankind, who since that fatal fall did always
 ‘ walk in darkness, would never have found out
 ‘ the path of truth, if one of these three persons
 ‘ of the Divinity had not taken upon him the
 ‘ nature of man, which man, we call the Messiah.
 ‘ An angel proclaimed his coming, and some time
 ‘ after he was born of a virgin in Judea. This mi-
 ‘ raculous

‘ glorious birth was set forth by a new star in
‘ the heavens. Some kings, who observed the star,
‘ came and offered presents to the Divine Infant,
‘ that so the law and predictions of the twenty
‘ four prophets might be accomplished.

‘ He governed the world, by instituting a very
‘ plain, spiritual, and heavenly law. He establish’d
‘ eight beatitudes. He endeavoured to dissuade
‘ men from setting their hearts on the good things
‘ of this world, in order to fix in them a love of
‘ those good things which will never fail. He
‘ set forth the beautifulness of the three principal
‘ virtues. He set open the gates of heaven to the
‘ just, to which place he himself ascended at mid-
‘ day, leaving on earth twenty-seven books of his
‘ doctrine, proper for the conversion of the world.

‘ He instituted baptism for the washing away sin,
‘ and laid down his life on the cross for all men
‘ without exception. His ministers cut not off
‘ their beards, but have their heads shaved, ex-
‘ cepting a circle of hair which they leave on.
‘ They have no servants, for they make them-
‘ selves superior to none, whether in the height
‘ of prosperity, or in the depth of affliction. In-
‘ stead of heaping up riches, they willingly impart
‘ their little all to those who are in want. They
‘ fast, both for mortification of themselves, and
‘ in observance of the laws. They reverence their
‘ superiors, and honour all good men. They pray
‘ seven times a day for the dead and the living.
‘ They offer sacrifice every week to purge them
‘ from their sins, and to purify their hearts.

‘ Even kings, who follow not this law, what-
‘ soever they do, can never make themselves truly
‘ estimable among men. In the reign of Tai-tçoum,
‘ a most wise and honoured prince, Olopoüen
‘ coming from Judea, after a long course of
‘ dangers by sea and land, at last arrived at China
‘ in

' in the year of our Lord 636. The emperor
 ' having notice of it, sent a Colao to meet ^{for the}
 ' in the suburbs of the imperial city, with ^{arts}
 ' to conduct him to the palace. When he ^{came}
 ' there, his law was examined, and the truth of
 ' it acknowledged; so that the emperor, in favour of
 ' him, made the following edict.

' No particular name comprehends the true law,
 ' neither are the saints fixed to one place; they
 ' are scattered thro' the whole world, that they
 ' may be universally useful. A man of Judea, of
 ' exemplary virtue, is arrived at our court: we
 ' have examined his doctrine, and found it admi-
 ' rable, with no mixture of pride, and built upon
 ' those principles which suppose the world had a
 ' beginning. This law teaches the way of salva-
 ' tion, and cannot but be extremely useful to all
 ' our subjects. I therefore judge it necessary, that
 ' it be taught them. Afterwards, he commanded
 ' that a church should be built, and nominated
 ' one and twenty persons to serve that cure.

' Kao, the son of Tai-çoum, succeeded him in
 ' the year 651, and endeavoured to make that re-
 ' ligion flourish which his father had received. He
 ' highly honoured the bishop of Olopoüen, and
 ' built in all the provinces churches for the true
 ' God; so that the Bonzes some years after, be-
 ' ing alarmed at the progress which christianity
 ' had made, used all means to stop the course of it.

' The persecution was great, and the number
 ' of the faithful grew small, when our Lord raised
 ' up two persons of extraordinary zeal, who de-
 ' fended the faith with so much vigour, that in
 ' a little time it recovered its former lustre. The
 ' emperor on his part strove to confirm it more
 ' and more; even so far, as to command five
 ' kings to go to church, and prostrate themselves
 ' before the altar, and to erect other churches in

• even shews to the honour of the God of the christians. Thus the foundation, shook by the struggle which the Bonzes made, became more solid and better fixed than ever.

• In the mean while the prince himself continued to give great signs of his piety; he made the pictures of his predecessors be carried to church; he offered himself an hundred pieces of silk upon the altar. • and mighty respect to Ki-ho, a missionary newly arrived out of Judea, and all his lifetime omitted nothing that was necessary for the propagating the gospel in his dominions. Venmin, who succeeded him in the year 757, inherited his virtue as well as crown. He built five churches. • He was famous for his other greater qualities as well as for his care of religion.

• The following emperors confirmed christianity by their edicts and examples. We can pray for them without fearing that our prayers will not be heard, for they were humble and peaceable; they bore with the faults of their neighbours; and did good to all sorts of men. Which is the true character of christianity, and is the true way to make peace and plenty flow into the greatest kingdoms.

• Others of them were exercised in the works of the brightest charity. The emperor So-tçoum offered at the altar, and built churches; besides he assembled together the priests of four churches, and for forty days served them himself with great respect; he fed the poor, cloathed the naked, healed the sick, and buried the dead. It is to keep up the memory of their great actions, and to let posterity know the present state of the christian religion here, that we have erected this monument in the year 782.

This, sir, is a faithful epitome of what is remarkable in this famous remain of Chinese antiquity. The Bonzes, who keep it in one of their temples near Si-

gan, have erected, over-against it, a long table of marble every way like it, with encomiums upon the gods of the country, to diminish as much as they can the glory which the christian religion receives from thence. The chronicle of China confirms, by the order and succession of the emperors, what the monument says of it; but I am apt to think, that the virtues of those emperors mentioned therein are exalted too much, some of whom, in history, are said to have done as much for paganism, as this says they did for christianity. However that be, it is a plain testimony, that the faith was preached there, and received by a great many persons. It flourished there at least an hundred fourscore and six years, and perhaps much longer, for we have no account of its failure, for the very memory of it was lost; and, when the new missionaries of our society came thither, they found no sign or footstep of it.

It was in the year 1552, that saint Xavier went thither in hopes to add this new conquest to the kingdom of Jesus Christ. It seemed that great man had made but an essay in the Indies, and, if I may use the expression, had but served an apprenticeship to that zeal, which he would be perfect master of in China. And surely Moses never had a more ardent desire to enter into the Holy Land, to gather with his people the temporal riches of that country, than this apostle longed to carry into this new world the treasures of the gospel. Both one and t'other died by the providence of God, in a time when their long voyages and infinite labours seemed answered by a great probability of success.

The scripture tells us, Moses's death was a punishment to him for his lack of faith; St. Xavier's seems to be a reward for the abundance of his. God had a mind to reward his zeal, his labours, and his charity; and was willing to defer, for a time, that torrent of mercy, which he designed for the empire of

China, that he might reward his servant with that glory, which he had procured for so many nations. He died in the isle of Sancheu, or as we speak it, Sancier, under the jurisdiction of the province of Canton; it is well known, that he lay in the ground several months, all which time God preserved him from the usual corruption; from hence he was carried to Goa, where, from that time, he hath been honoured as the protector of that place, and the apostle of the East.

The touch of his body consecrated the place of his burial. That island became not only a famous place, but also an Holy Land. Even the heathen honoured it, and fled thither, as to a city of refuge. In the mean time pirates haunted those coasts, that no vessels dared to go thereabouts; so that the place, where this sacred tomb lay, was quite unknown to the Europeans; and it is but a little while ago, that they discovered it by a particular accident.

In the year 1688, a Portuguese vessel which, coming from Goa, had on board the governor of Macao, was seized by a sudden gust of wind, and forced to let the ship drive towards these islands, do what they could. They cast anchor between the isles of Sancier and Lampacao, which were so near one another, as to make a kind of haven. Contrary winds, continuing eight days, gave father Caroccio a jesuit, who was on board, an opportunity of satisfying his devout resolutions. He went on shore, and was resolved, in spite of danger, to go in search of the faint's tomb. The pilot and most part of the sailors followed him, and they searched the whole island, but to no purpose.

At last a Chinese, an inhabitant of the place, imagining with himself, what it was which they so ardently sought after, undertook to guide them, and led them to a place which all the inhabitants revered, and where he himself began to perform

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actions and gestures of piety. The fathers, who could not understand him, began to search about for some sign or mark of the sepulchre, and found at last a stone five cubits long, and three broad, upon which were cut these words in Latin, Portuguese, Chinese, and Japonnese, *Here Xavier, a man truly apostolical, was buried.* Then they all fell on their knees, and did with devotion kiss that earth, which the tears and the last groans of that apostolic man sanctified. The inhabitants of the place came in and followed the example of the Portuguese: even the English, for one of their vessels came to an anchor in the same place, came thither to honour the saint, and prayed a great while at his tomb. Father Caroccio some time after said mass in his Pontificalibus, while the two vessels, the English and Portuguese, did several times discharge their artillery, and gave roarks of their common joy.



*a, the Isle of Sancian, b, Lampacao, c, the Port
d, the Tomb of Saint Xavier*

Lastly, to preserve the memory of that holy place, they resolved to build a good square wall all round the tomb, and to dig a ditch to secure it from all inundations. In the midst, between these walls, they raised the stone which they found overturned, and built an altar, as a memorial of the august sacrifice of the eucharist, which had been offered up here, which might also serve to celebrate it upon again, if either accident or devotion should carry the ministers or Jesus Christ thither any more. The people of the place did themselves assist towards the carrying on this little work, and shewed as much zeal for the honour of the saint as the Christians did.

This place is of itself very pleasant. You see there a small plain extended from the bottom of a hill, on one side of which is a wood, on the other are gardens cultivated; a rivulet, which turns and twines about, renders the island very fertile. It is not uninhabited, as some have wrote, there are seventeen villages in it. The land is manured, even the very mountains; and the inhabitants are so far from wanting the necessaries of life, that the growth of their island is enough to carry on such commerce as yields them a moderate plenty.

You will easily pardon me, sir, for this short digression concerning St. Francis Xavier. A missionary can't speak of him, without being naturally inclined to enlarge about every thing that concerns this great man. It was he, who settled upon a solid foundation all the missions into the Indies; and who, in the last years of his life, encouraged his brethren to enterprize the great design of the conversion of China. His zeal passed into their minds and hearts; and, tho' every body but Xavier thought it impossible that the design should take effect, the fathers Roger, Pasio, and Ricci, all three Italians, did resolve to spend all their pains, and, if it were necessary, all their blood in this great work.

The difficulties, which the devil raised, did not discourage them. They enter'd one after another into the southern provinces. The novelty of their doctrine brought them auditors, and the liberty of their lives made those auditors have a favourable opinion of them. At first they heard them with pleasure, and afterwards with admiration. Father Ricci, above all, distinguished himself by his zeal and understanding; for he was thoroughly conversant in the customs, the religion, laws, and ceremonies of the country, all which he had studied a long time before at Macao. He spoke their language fluently, and understood their writings perfectly; this was joined to a sweet, easy, complaisant temper, and a certain insinuating behaviour, which none but himself had, which it was hard to resist; but above all, an ardour which the Holy Ghost infus'd into the workmen of the Lord's harvest; all this, ~~say~~, got him the repute of a great man and an apostle.

Not but that he met with a great many rubs in the work of God. The devil overthrew his designs more than once. He had the superstition of the people, the jealousy of the Bonzes, and the ill-humour of the Mandarines to deal with; all which violently oppos'd what he was about to establish. Yet he never gave over; and God gave him perseverance, a virtue very necessary in the beginning such enterprises as these, which always meet with opposition, and which men of the best intentions in the world sometimes let fall, discouraged for want of present success to fortify them in the prosecution of their design.

Father Ricci, after many years fruitless labour, had, at last, the comfort of seeing the gospel flourish. He made many and mighty conversions in the provinces. The Mandarines themselves opened their eyes to the light of our holy faith, which our missionary carried even almost as far as to the court.

• emperor Wanli, then reigning, received him with great marks of respect and kindness; and, among divers European curiosities, which the father presented to him, he was so taken with some pictures of our Saviour and the Virgin Mary, that he ordered them to be set up in an high place in his palace, as things to which he would have a respect shewn.

This kind welcome from the emperor gained him the good will of all the lords at court; and, in spite of the opposition of some magistrates, who, according to their custom, could never deal handsomely by a stranger, he bought an house at Pekin, and gained such a foundation and establishment there, as hath been since the support of all the missions into this empire.

Religion was by this means known (and without it, it would have been impossible to have supported it;) thus it came into esteem, and was preached by the new missionaries, who made great advantage of father Ricci's first labours. The court and all the provinces resounded every where with that adorable name *, which the Jews heretofore, thro' the respect they bore to it, never so much as pronounced to their profelites, and which the new-converted Chinese named to their countrymen with a respect yet greater; for the European workmen being but few, gave an opportunity to several Mandarines, to preach the gospel, and there were some of them who by their zeal and understanding promoted the affairs of religion as much as the most fervent missionaries.

It is true, that these successes were some time after interrupted; for it is the character of truth, that it makes itself enemies, and the lot of the christian religion always to be persecuted. Providence being desirous to try the fidelity of these new christians, and to re-inflame the zeal of their ministers, permit-

Jehovah.

ted the idol priests to oppose the preaching of the gospel; so that it very near came to pass, that a cabal of some Bonzes, supported by several Mandarines, had, by the destruction of father Ricci, overthrown in one minute the work of several years.

But the greatest danger to this holy man and his mission came from his own brethren, I mean the European christians. Some Portuguese of Macao, incensed against the jesuits, resolved to destroy them in China, altho' with them they destroyed the christian religion there. They could not but know what the holy intentions of those fathers were in going thither; yet they accused them as spies, who under pretence of preaching the gospel, secretly managed a conspiracy, and had a design to seize upon China by the force and assistance of the Japonese, Hollanders, and christians of that country.

It must needs be a great amazement to any one, who observes the rage and bitterness of these false brethren, who, altho' engaged by their religion to propagate the work of God even with the loss of their lives, were yet resolved to destroy it by such vile and false aspersions.

This ridiculous story, which was set forth with heat and violence, and built upon some circumstances which carried some show of truth, easily found credit among the Chinese, naturally excessively suspicious, and very well satisfied by a long experience, that the least commotions or rebellion might bring the most powerful empires to ruin.

The persecution was very sharp, the weak christians were scandalized, and did apostatize from the faith. Father Martinez was taken up, imprisoned, and bastinado'd, till at length he died thro' his torments: and, if this accusation of the christians had ever came to the knowledge of the court, it is very probable it would have been the utter overthrow of christianity here. But our Lord stopp'd the grow-

ing evil in its bud, and, by the means of a Mandarin, a particular friend of father Ricci, gave peace to the mission, and liberty to the evangelical workmen.

After having surmounted a great many obstacles of this nature, and preached the gospel to an infinite number of people, this fervent missionary died. The heathens judged him the wisest and most understanding man of his age; the christians loved him as their father, and the preachers of the gospel made him a model whereby to form themselves. He had the satisfaction of dying in the midst of a plentiful harvest, but was disturbed, that there were so few workmen to get it in; so that he recommended nothing more earnestly to his brethren, who assisted him in his last sickness, than to receive with all imaginable joy and comfort all those who should come to partake of their labours: *If they find, says he to them, when they arrive here, crosses from the enemies of christianity, do you sweeten the bitterness of them, by demonstrations of the most tender friendship, and most inflamed charity.*

The churches of China, of which he was the main support, were shaken by his fall; for altho' the emperor for some years afterwards shewed himself somewhat favourable to the christian religion, yet, in 1675, there arose against it the cruellest tempest that it had ever yet suffered. It was occasioned by one of the principal Mandarines of Nankim*. They chiefly set upon the pastors, thereby the easier to disperse the flock. Some were cruelly beaten, others banished, almost all imprisoned, and carried afterwards to Macao, after having the honour of suffering a thousand injuries and reproaches for the love of Jesus Christ.

The tempest lasted near six years; but at last the persecutor, being himself accused, was, by God's

* *Chinkio*

judgment,

judgment, deprived both of his offices and also of his life. His death gave the christians some rest, who, after that, multiplied more than ever, thro' the labours of a great many missionaries. It was about this time †, that the right reverend fathers of the order of St. Dominick joined with us; many of whom do at this time labour in China with a great deal of zeal and success.

About this time father Adam Schall, a German, appeared at court, and added a new lustre to christianity, which had but newly sprang up again. He was perfectly skilled in mathematicks, and made use of his knowledge therein to obtain the emperor's kindness; he was, in a little time, so highly in the emperor's favour, that he thought he should be able, by his own interest alone, to establish the christian religion solidly. He began to make use of his interest with good success, when an insurrection overturned the whole government, and with it all his promising hopes.

This great state, whose power seemed to be enough to secure it from the most violent shock whatever, was made sensible then, that there is nothing constant in this world. Some robbers being met together, by the access of multitudes of male contents, who joined them, formed vast armies; they burned towns, and plundered whole provinces. China presently changed its aspect, and, from the most flourishing empire, became the stage for the most bloody war. Never were there seen so many murders and barbarities. The emperor, being surpris'd at Peking, strangled himself for fear of falling into the hands of the victors. The usurper was soon drove out of the throne by the Tartars, who seiz'd upon it. The princes of the blood, who in different places were proclaimed emperors, were vanquished or killed. Then all the Mandarines rose,

Some declaring for Tartary, others for liberty: others only carried on the fighting trade, in hopes to make their private fortunes from the publick ruin.

Some of those last were rather monsters than men, who giving themselves to all that licentiousness, which the most inhuman cruelty and barbarity could prompt them to, made whole provinces desolate, and shed more blood to satisfy their brutality, than the most ambitious prince in the world would for the conquest of an empire.

Religion, which groaned amidst those troubles, had the comfort nevertheless of seeing many great persons converted; one empress with her son were baptiz'd; scarce either of them lived after their reception of the faith, the fruits of which they could not enjoy but in the other world. Lastly, the Tartars by their valour, and by a conduct equal to the policy of ancient Rome, made themselves masters of China, and, in a few years, obliged all the provinces to submit to a foreign yoke.

Then we thought religion's case desperate; but God, who needs not the assistance of men, when he hath a mind to support his own work, inspired on a sudden this new prince with a greater affection for the christian religion, than we dared hope for from the Chinese emperors. He not only took away the government of the mathematicks from the Mahometans, which they had possessed for 300 years, and gave it to father Adam; but by a special privilege he suffered that father to apply himself to him immediately in all things, which concerned the missionaries, without first passing thro' the formalities of the courts of justice, who are very severe to strangers. This signal favour, joined with many others, raised up the courage of the christians, and gave the heathens greater liberty to close with the true religion. Many persons of the best quality at Pekin desired baptism; the provinces follow'd the example
of

of the court, and the harvest became so plentiful that the workmen were too few to gather it in.

Those who were employed therein, laboured with such an hearty zeal, that we do at this present feel the effects of it. There were found persons of eminent virtue, prudence, and understanding, whom God had formed during the troubles and civil wars, and which the Spirit of the Almighty drew out of the chaos, like so many stars, to shed forth the light of the gospel, unto the most hidden parts of this vast empire, accompanying their preaching with signs and wonders.

Among those extraordinary men, father Faber, Frenchman, distinguished himself above the rest. I had the happiness to tarry some time in that province, which was allotted to his care; and I have, after so many years, found the precious remains there, which are the necessary consequences of holiness. Those, who were witnesses of his actions, tell to their children the miracles which he wrought to confirm them in their faith; and, altho' one need not believe all which they relate of him, we cannot nevertheless deny, that God did in many occasions give an extraordinary concurrence in several great things which he enterprised for his glory.

It is worth knowing after what manner he founded the mission of Hanchum, a town of the first rank in Xensi, two days journey distant from the capital. He was invited thither by a Mandarine, and a small number of christians, which he found there, made him the more laborious to increase their number. God put into his hands a means of doing this which he never expected. One of the great boroughs, which in China are as big as the towns, was then over-run by a prodigious multitude of locusts, which eat up all the leaves of the trees, and gnawed the grass to the very roots,

The inhabitants, after having used all imaginable means, thought fit to apply themselves to father Faber, whose repute was every where talked of. The father took from thence an occasion to explain the principal mysteries of our faith; and added, that, if they would submit themselves thereto, they should not only be delivered from the present plague, but that also they should obtain innumerable blessings, and eternal happiness. They embraced it willingly, and the father, to keep his word with them, marched in ceremony into the highways, in his stole and his surplice; and sprinkled up and down holy water, accompanying his action with the prayers of the church, but especially with a lively faith. God heard the voice of his servant, and the next day all the insects disappeared.

But the people, whose minds were wholly bent upon the things of this world, as soon as they saw themselves delivered, neglected the counsel which the missionary had given them. They were therefore immediately punished, and the plague grew worse than it was before. Then they accused one the other of their want of faith; they ran in crowds to the father's house, and casting themselves at his feet. We will not rise up, father, said they, till you have pardoned us. We confess our fault, and protest, that, if you will a second time deliver us from this affliction with which Heaven threatens us, the whole borough will immediately acknowledge your God, who alone can work such great miracles.

The father, to increase their faith, made them beg a great while. At last, inspired as before, he sent up his prayer, and sprinkled his holy-water, and by the next day there was not an insect to be found in the fields. Then the whole borough, being brought over to the truth, followed the guidance of God's holy Spirit; they were all instructed and formed into a church, which, tho' it was abandoned for some years,

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is still reckoned one of the devoutest missions in
China.

They say also of this father, that he has been carried over rivers thro' the air, that they have seen him in an extasy, that he foretold his own death, and did several other such wonders; but the greatest miracle of all was his life, which he spent in the continual exercise of all the apostolical virtues, in a profound humility, in a severe mortification, in a settled patience, proof against all sorts of injuries, in a flaming charity, and a tender devotion to the Mother of God, all which he practised to his death, to the edification, and, I may say, the admiration even of the idolaters.

While christianity spread its root deep throughout the provinces, it flourished every day more and more at Pekin; the emperor did not seem far from it. He came often to our church, and did there adore the divine Majesty in such an humble manner, as would have been commendable in a christian. There are still writings from his own hand, wherein he acknowledges the beauty and the purity of our holy law; but a heart set upon sensual pleasures can never follow the directions of the Spirit. When father Adam has been pressing upon him: *You are said he, in the right; but how can you expect that any one should be able to practise all these laws? Take away two or three of the difficultest, and, after that, perhaps we may agree to the rest.* Thus this young prince, divided between the voice of human nature and grace, thought, that we might favour nature at the expense of religion; but the father gave him to understand, that we were only the publishers, not the authors of the gospel. Nevertheless, my lord, says the father to him one day, tho' we propose to the corrupt world a body of morals, which surpass their forces to comply with, and mysteries which are above their reason to comprehend, we do not from thence despair to have

• have our doctrine received ; because we do it by his order, who can enlighten the most darkened understanding, and strengthen the most weak nature.

These difficulties, which the emperor look'd upon as insuperable, did not take any thing from that kindness and respect which he bore to father Adam. He always called him his father, placed always his confidence in him : he made him twenty visits in two years : and gave him leave to build two churches in Pekin ; and ordered those, which in the persecution had been demolish'd in the provinces, to be rebuilt ; nay, granted him whatever could any ways contribute towards the solid establishment of the faith, which without doubt would have made an infinite progress, had not a violent passion changed the temper of that prince, and took him away from us at a time when we had the most need of a protection : we may justly say, that his death was owing to an extraordinary grief for the loss of a concubine. This woman, whom he had taken from her husband, inclined him to the worship of false gods, to that excess, that he was wholly altered from what he was before, as to his opinions of religion. And at that time it was, that he fell sick, his mind being full of notions from the Bonzes, who swarmed in his palace, and being vehemently tormented by his passion, so that he could not get a moment's rest. In the mean while, as he loved the father extremely, so was he desirous to see him once more before he died.

At this last meeting the good missionary's bowels yern'd upon him. He was kneeling at the prince's bed's-foot, whom he had educated as his own son, in hopes one day to make him head of the true religion. He saw him there under the load of a violent distemper, disturbed with the impure desires of unlawful love, given up to idols and their priests, just upon the brink of death, and that death an eternal one. The emperor, who saw him in this concern, would not let him

him speak upon his knees; but raised him up, and heard his last advice with somewhat less prejudice against it than usual; ordered him afterwards a present of tea, and dismissed him with such marks of tenderness as touched him to the bottom of his soul, of which he was the more sensible, because he never could bring it about, to work in him a true conversion.

His death was equally fatal to the Bonzes, who were thereupon driven from the palace, and to the true religion, which was thereby brought within a nail's breadth of destruction. Many churches built upon the coasts of the maritime provinces were destroyed, by an edict which commanded, that every body on the coasts should retire ten or eleven miles within land, and destroy all habitations within that compass all round the coasts, because a famous pirate made use of them in carrying on a war against the emperor. They were also just going to ruin Macao, and order was given to drive the Portuguese thence, when father Adam used his utmost effort to save it. At this time all his credit and interest, which he had employed so much to the advantage of religion, ended; for, in a little time, he became the object of the most bloody persecution that ever the church suffered.

The four Mandarin, who had the regency during the emperor's minority, moved upon different topicks, and especially animated against the christians, to whom this father was the main support, put him and three of his companions into prison. Other preachers of the gospel were summoned to Peking, who met with the same treatment, and were loaded each with nine chains. They burned their books, their beads, and medals, and whatever else carried the face of religion; nevertheless they spared the churches; as for the christian flock, they met with a more mild usage.

Those famous confessors had the honour to be dragged before all the seats of judgment. There is

was that their enemies did admire their courage. But they were above all moved by the miserable condition of father Adam.

That venerable old man, who but a day or two before was the oracle of the court, and the favourite of a great emperor, now appeared in the form of a slave, loaded with chains, and oppressed with infirmities, dejected by the weight and burthen of age, but much more by that of calumny which labour'd to blemish his innocence. He had a sort of catarrh which hinder'd him from making his defence; but father Verbiest forsook him not, and answered for him, to his enemies, in so sensible a manner, that the judges could not enough admire the constancy of the person accused, nor the heroical charity of the person who defended him.

However, as innocent as he was, he was condemned to be strangled, which is in China an honourable kind of death; but afterwards, as tho' they repented that they had not been unjust enough, they repealed the sentence, and gave another, wherein the father was condemned to be publickly exposed in the market-place, and be hacked alive into ten thousand pieces.

The supreme court sent the sentence to the regency, and to the princes of the blood, to have it confirmed; but God, who had till then seemed to have relinquished his servant, began to speak in favour of his cause by a terrible earthquake. The whole land was confounded at this prodigy. Every body exclaimed that Heaven itself would punish the injustice of the magistrates, who therefore, to appease the people, opened all the prisons in the town, and made an act of oblivion for all criminals, excepting the confessors of Jesus Christ, who were still kept in chains, as tho' they had been the only victims for whom Heaven had no concern.

But because there appeared divers prodigies, and in particular fire consumed great part of the court of justice, at last fear obtained that from these unrighteous

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judges, which innocence could not. They set father Adam at liberty, and permitted him to go home to his home, till the emperor should otherwise dispose of him. This great man blemish'd, indeed to outward appearance, by an ignominious sentence which was never repealed; but in truth full of glory, for having defended the honour of religion, by exposing his own life, died a little while after, worn away by the toil of an apostolical life, but more by the hardships and inconveniencies of a troublesome prison.

His death was too precious in the eyes of God, to be unaccompany'd with some signal blessing upon the sorrowful remains of persecuted christianity. It is true that the missionaries of the provinces were banished to Canton, among which three were Dominicans, one Franciscan (and another of the same order died in prison) and one and twenty jesuits; yet four were kept at the court, whom the providence of God made use of afterwards to settle christianity again in its pristine splendor.

God himself revenged the innocence of his servants. Sony, the first Mandarin in the regency, the most dangerous enemy the fathers had, died a month or two after. The second, named Soucama, was afterwards indicted and condemned to a cruel death, his goods confiscated; his children, in number seven, had their heads cut off, excepting the third, who was cut to pieces alive, the punishment which that wicked judge had design'd for father Adam, and with which God chastised his crimes in the persons of his children. Yam-quam-sien, who had been the chief instrument in the persecution, fared no better than them, for after the death of father Adam he was made president of the mathematicks, and had the charge of the kalendar of the empire committed to him. Father Verbiest accused him, and plainly made appear the ignorance of this painful mathematician.

This was a bold stroke, because the president's party was very strong, and the flames which had caused the persecution were not yet quenched, but many things concurr'd to give success to this enterprise. The understanding of the father, the kindness which the new emperor had for the Europeans, but especially the particular providence of God which did secretly manage this important affair; for it is certain that, in the several trials whereby they proved the goodness of our mathematicks, the heavens did so exactly agree with what our fathers had foretold, even above the certainty which our tables and calculations could promise us, that it seem'd as tho' God had guided the stars in such a course as was necessary to justify our missionaries account of them.

The president of the mathematicks used his best endeavours to defend himself; and, because he could not hide his ignorance in astronomy, he endeavour'd to put upon the judges, and persuade them that the christian religion contained much greater errors than those he was guilty of. In the midst of some meetings, where the emperor was present, he behaved himself in such a manner as the emperor could scarcely bear with him. He laid his hands across, and cried out as loud as he could: *See here, do but observe what these fellows adore, and what they would have us worship too, a man who was hanged, a person who was crucified; let any one judge hereby of their understanding and good sense.*

But all these excursions served only to diminish his own credit. This wicked person, more blameable for his crimes than for his ignorance, lost his charge, and was condemned to death. Notwithstanding the emperor suspended the execution of the sentence by reason of his extraordinary old age; but God himself executed his sentence of vengeance. He smote him with an horrible ulcer, and, by his sorrowful death, delivered religion from this monster of iniquity.

Then the care of the mathematicks was committed to Father Verbieft, the ancient missionaries were recalled to their old churches, but forbid to go about to build new ones, or to labour in the conversion of the Chinefe. Lastly, to magnify our happiness, the memory of father Adam was mightily respected even at court: he was publickly justified and cleared, his charges and titles of honour were remanded him, and his ancestors made nobility. The emperor himself appointed considerable fums of money to build him a stately maufoleum, which at this present is to be feen, in room of a fepulchre, adorned with ftatues and feveral marble figures, according to the cuftom of the country.

Thus it is that God, by a continual viciffitude, proves the conftancy of the faithful by perfecution, and encourages them again by punifhing their perfecutors. This happy peace, which the church gained thro' father Verbieft's means, encouraged the missionaries to repair that damage which hell had done. Befides the jefuits, there were feveral fathers of the orders of St. Francis, and St. Auguftin, who entered into the Lord's vineyard. New eftablifhments were gained every where, and, notwithstanding any prohibition, a great number of heathens were converted to the faith, being more afraid of eternal punifhment, than of that with which the laws of man feemed to threaten them.

So ardent and fo hasty a zeal will perhaps make you amazed; but befides that charity is always hazardous, many things contributed to confirm thofe who might elfe be afraid of fatal confequences. The firft of thefe is the great authority which the missionaries have acquired at court in a fmall time. Efppecially the emperor is fatisfied that they defpife honours, and that at home they lead an austere life. The prince is inform'd of this, and that it is impoffible he fhould be deceived. He had inform-

from spies, of all that passed in their houses, even so nicely as to know their mortifications and corporeal penances.

He sends also to the fathers houses a young Tartar, of good parts, under pretence to learn philosophy, but in reality to discover the most secret things in their families, and to be himself, I think, an occasion of offence. He stays there a year, without knowing what the prince's intentions are, who, having sent for him into his presence, commands him to tell him all the private disorders of these fathers, and especially how they have behaved themselves towards him. And when these young men constantly bear testimony of the fathers innocence, I know well, says the emperor, they have stopp'd your mouth with presents, but I know a way to open it again. Then he makes him be severely flogged at several times, yet is not the pain enough to make the young Tartar speak against his conscience; which pleases the prince mightily, who would be disturbed to find himself deceived in the idea which he has formed to himself of these fervent missionaries.

This obliged him afterwards to take their part in an assembly of the Mandarines, some of which do not esteem the missionaries because their outward carriage seems so good. *As for that matter,* says the emperor to them, *neither you nor I can find fault with them. After all that I can do to get information, I am persuaded that these people teach us nothing but what themselves practise, and they are indeed as modest as they appear outwardly to be.*

The second reason, which engaged the emperor to favour the missionaries, was the great understanding of father Verbiest, who in a small time was reckoned the learnedest man in the empire in all faculties. His reputation is every where spread abroad, and upon many occasions his opinion has the repute of an oracle. Some Mandarines one day speaking of the

Trinity, and using it as a fable, one of them said, *I do not know what the christians mean, and am as much puzzled as you; but father Verbieft is of that opinion; what say you to that? Can a man of his sense and understanding mistake?* They all held their tongues, and seemed to yield to this reason. So true is it that the use of human learning is so far from being (as some think) opposite to the spirit of the gospel, that it sometimes serves to establish it, and to render the most obscure mysteries therein credible.

The third reason is that hearty love which the emperor bore to the missionaries have for him. It is true the missionaries omit nothing which they think will please him; and as they are the most inflexible and resolute against doing any thing contrary to their religion, so are they the most complaisant and ready to comply with all the reasonable requests of the emperor. A rebellion which happened at this time put it into father Verbieft's power to do the crown a considerable piece of service.

Ousanguai, that famous Chinese general, who had brought the Tartars into the empire, thought he had then a good opportunity to drive them out again. He was naturally courageous, and in Xensi commanded the best of the Chinese soldiery, and had got together a vast deal of money. This made him set up to be emperor, and made him believe he could easily compass his design. And indeed he so order'd his matters, that he made himself presently master of the three great provinces Yunnan, Suchven, and Queycheu; afterwards a great part of the province A Houquam acknowledged him; so that these possessions and Xensi, which he had in possession a good while before, made him master of almost a third of China.

These conquests seemed to be the more secure to him, because at the same time the viceroys of Quam-tum and Fokien followed his example, and gave in

emperor on that side a mighty diversion; and besides a powerful pirate, with a great fleet, attacked, and, in a few days, took the island Formosa at the same time.

Less than this would have ruined the Tartars, if they had all concerted their business together; but jealousy, which does often overthrow the firmest leagues, ruined their projects. The king of Fokien fell out with that of Formosa, and, to preserve himself from being damaged by his fleet, made his peace with the emperor, who gave him such assistance as that he made his party good. The king of Quamtum, being unwilling to be any ways under the direction or command of Oufanguei, left him, and put himself under the protection of the Tartars, who turned all their forces ~~against this last rebel~~, more formidable than all the rest together; for he was master of the western provinces, and the success, which his troops had hitherto met with, gave them heart and courage enough to undertake any thing.

After the emperor had tried many several ways to no purpose, he plainly saw that it was impossible to force them from the places where they had intrenched without using his great artillery; but the cannon which he had were iron, and so heavy that they dared not carry them over such steep rocks, as they must do to come to him. He thought father Verbiest might be assistant to him in this matter; he commanded the father therefore to give directions for casting some cannon after the European manner. The father presently excused himself, saying, that he had lived his whole life far from the noise of war, that he was therefore little instructed in those affairs. He added also, that being a religious, and wholly employed in the concerns of another world, he would pray for his majesty's good success; but that he humbly begged that his majesty would be pleased to give him leave not to concern himself with the warfare of this world.

The father's enemies (for a missionary is never without some) thought that now they had an opportunity to undermine him; they persuaded the emperor, that what he commanded the father to do was no ways opposite to the will or intention of the gospel; and that it was no more inconvenient to him to cast cannon than to cast machines and mathematical instruments, especially when the good and safety of the empire were concerned; that therefore without doubt the reason of the father's refusal was because he kept correspondence with the enemy, or at least because he had no respect for the emperor; so that at last the emperor gave the father to understand, that he expected obedience to his last order, not only upon pain of losing his own life, but also of having his religion entirely rooted out.

This was to touch him in the most sensible part, and he was indeed too wise to stand out for a nicety or a scruple at the hazard of losing all that was valuable: I have already assured your majesty that I have very little understanding in casting cannon, said he to the emperor; but since you command me, I will endeavour to make your workmen understand what our books direct in this affair. He took therefore upon himself the care of this work, and the cannon was proved before the emperor, and found to be extraordinary good. The emperor was so well pleased with the work, that he pulled off his mantle, and, in the presence of the whole court, gave it to father Verbiest for a token of his affection.

All the pieces of cannon were made very light and small, but strengthened with a stock of wood from the mouth to the breech, and girt with several bands of iron; so that the cannons were strong enough to bear the force of powder, and light enough to be carried thro' any, even the worst roads.

This new artillery did every way answer what they proposed from it. The enemy were obliged to leave their intrenchments in disorder, and soon after to capitulate; for they did not think it possible to hold out against those any longer, who could destroy them without coming themselves into reach.

Oufanguei was himself dead; his son Hom-hoa, who carried on the war, strangled himself thro' despair; and the rest of them were in a small time utterly routed: so that the emperor then began to reign in peace, and continued more and more to shew marks of favour and affection to the missionaries; so that father Verbiest has often sighing said, that the Lord's vineyard was now open, that the heathens themselves gave liberty to enter upon it to plant, but that yet there were scarce any workmen to bring it in.

They send to him for pastors from every place; Tartary, the kingdom of Corea, the provinces of China, which have been left destitute by the death of their ancient pastors, invite, or rather press him to succour them. Neither does this scarcity come from the Europeans want of zeal, but from the differences which have arose between the sacred congregation, who send vicars apostolical into the East, and the king of Portugal, who pretends to a right to nominate all the bishops there, exclusively to any superior ecclesiastical power.

This dispute cools the ardour of those fervent missionaries, who dare not engage themselves where they must incur either the indignation of their holy father, or of a mighty prince, both which things are very formidable. And thus the work of God stood still, and those precious minutes were lost, which the favour of a great emperor, and the diligence of a zealous missionary, might have made so useful to the firm establishing our holy faith. But this is one of the *arcana* of providence, which, after

after it had confounded all the opposition of the enemies of the gospel, even at the expence of working miracles, does sometimes suffer that the zeal of catholicks should do more harm to religion, than the hatred and jealousy of idolaters.

Some time after, my lord bishop of Heliopolis was sent by the sacred congregation with some French ecclesiasticks, full of ardour to reform and increase the new christianity. This courageous prelate had once already missed his voyage: for contrary winds having obliged him sometime before to put in, at Manilla, a considerable island under the Spanish government, he was taken up upon suspicion there, and obliged to return back into Europe by the way of Mexico. This accident, which had broke his first measures, served only to fill his mind with new and those greater ones. He came to Paris, where his good intentions were well known. Rome heard him with pleasure, and followed his projects in all that respected the eastern missions; so that he came honoured with a power from the holy see, and laded with the alms of the faithful, who expected nothing less from his zeal than the conversion of the new world.

He therefore once more passed over the seas, and happily arrived at China, where he began to scatter abroad that flame which would warm all the missionaries. The jesuits, and other religious, not only acknowledged his authority, but also took the new oath which the sacred congregation had appointed, altho' the king of Portugal had absolutely forbid it. For they thought, that that prince, in whom the love of religion had always prevailed before his private interest, would not take it ill when he should know, that their refusal of it might have occasioned the destruction of christianity in China, and perhaps of the millions in all the other parts of the East.

THIS was matter of great joy to the bishop, who, after his happy beginning, made ready, according to his former notions, to new till this new vineyard of the Lord, whither he thought himself sent by the prophet heretofore *. *Ecce constitui te super gentes, ut destruas, & disperdas, & dissipes, &c.* But God Almighty was satisfy'd with his good intentions, and took him to himself a few months after his arrival. His death greatly surprized all the faithful, it did especially afflict the fervent ecclesiasticks, who were the companions of his voyage; the other missionaries submitted with resignation to the will of God, being perswaded, that whatsoever providence appoints is always for his glory, and the good of the elect, if they make a right use of it.

This was sweetened by the arrival of two other bishops, who a little while after supplied his place under the title of Vicars Apostolical. The first was monsieur d'Argolis, an Italian of the order of St. Francis, noted among those of his order, for his excellent virtues and extraordinary knowledge. He had been employed in the chiefest business there, and our holy father thought he could not make choice of a wiser man than he to place at the helm of so flourishing a mission. As he went by Siam, monsieur Constance, understanding his worth, presented him to the king, who would fain have kept him in his kingdom; but, because the orders of the holy see obliged him to go farther, he resolved at least to shew him some marks of his esteem and affection towards him, in ordering him, and two of his companions of the same order, a considerable pension; so that, had it not been for the revolutions which a little while after happened in his kingdom, this prince, worthy of a better fortune, would have had his minorities in China, as well as the most zealous princes in Europe.

Since

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Since this wise prelate hath been in China, the natural sweetness of his temper hath very much contributed to the comfort of the faithful, and conversion of the heathen. He hath visited all the provinces which the holy see committed to his care, consecrating priests, teaching and exhorting them, administering the sacrament of confirmation, uniting all their affections as much as possibly he could, whose different interests seemed to have cooled their mutual charity to one another in Jesus Christ. And tho' one would think that the Portuguese could never have a respect for him, because their pretensions are wholly opposite to this institution of vicars apostolical, yet he has behaved himself with so much prudence, that all nations here think themselves particularly obliged to him.

The second bishop, whom the holy see has dignified with the title of Vicar Apostolical, is monsieur de Basilée a Chinese, educated by the fathers of St. Francis's order, afterwards taking upon himself the order of St. Dominick. When he was only a missionary, he had a flaming zeal for the conversion of his dear country, and, during the persecution of father Adam, he was the main support of religion in all the provinces which he travelled thro', and strengthened in the faith. When he was consecrated bishop, he performed all his duties perfectly well, and the holy see did so far approve of his conduct, as to let him nominate his successor. He nominated his vicar-general the reverend father de Leonissa, an Italian of St. Francis's order, who in his private life might have been a pattern to the most strict religious, and, in the important employment of vicar apostolical, has shewn, that he has all that zeal, all that prudence, and all that constancy, which the government of a great church requires.

My lord bishop of Basilée, after he had thus chosen this worthy successor of his apostleship, fell

fic. Nankim, and died full of those happy visions which God gives even in this world to his saints. At his death, that faith shone brightly which had animated him in his life-time; and his last minutes, wherein he appeared to be filled with the most sensible touches of christian hope, seemed to give him an antepast of the joy of paradise. All his trouble was for the missionaries, by whom he was affectionately beloved, and for the christians, who lost in him the first priest, the first religious, and the first bishop that ever China had yet given to christianity. And as his blessed memory was every where spread abroad, they have set up his picture in several places; which the reverend father de Leonissa sent to the sacred congregation, to preserve the memory of a prelate, whose own merit, as well as our particular obligations to him, ought to make eternally respected.

Besides this, the pope honoured mr. Maigrot and mr. Pin, with the title of Vicars Apostolical, both of them doctors of the Sorbon, diligent, zealous, and set upon following the intentions of the holy see, and in a word, companions of mr. Heliopolis, and inheritors of a double portion of his spirit.

If the number of missionaries had been answerable to that of the pastors, the churches in China had now been perfectly filled; but, as I have said, the over care, which every one has taken to provide for it exclusively of others, has rendered people less desirous of going. Good men, nay, even those who have occasioned these disorders, have mourned for them in secret. Some zealous persons have endeavoured to remedy this. My lord bishop of Munster and Paderborn, whom the care of his own diocese did not hinder from extending his care even as far as the East, gave a settlement for six missionaries for ever to China; but, dying a little while after, his last will was never executed. Others in France,

in Spain, and in Italy, took a great deal of pains to help this forsaken mission, but they could never compass their designs.

Lewis the Great, who is himself as zealous for establishing the gospel as all the other princes put together, among the great designs which he has been intent upon to make religion flourish in Europe, thought, that he ought not to neglect that good which he might do in Asia. He was very sensible of the necessities of China, which father Verbieft had represented to him in one of his letters, in the most sensible manner in the world; and, altho' he very well knew, that he could not make missionaries (a quality which nobody can give but the vicar of Jesus Christ) he doubted not but that religiouses who were exactly skilled in mathematics, in attaining, according to his orders, an exact knowledge in astronomy, might at the same time, with good success, labour according to the design of their institution, in the conversion of infidels. He was very well satisfied, that, of all the means which human prudence could advantageously make use of in the most holy actions, there were none which promoted the concerns of religion in China more than the mathematicks.

Being therefore willing at once to satisfy his zeal for the advancement of the gospel, and the desire which he had of bringing the sciences to perfection, he made choice of six jesuits, whom he thought capable of giving good satisfaction to the learned, and instruction to intelligent persons. Those, who were thus appointed, could have wished they had all the abilities necessary for this employment. They did nevertheless set out with a good will, being ready to sacrifice their lives and all their small talents to the greater glory of God, and by consequence to the pious designs of the greatest prince in the world.

When

When we came into China, we found it in the condition I have been relating, the harvest was plentiful every where, but it was almost destitute of workmen ; or (to make use of father Intorcetta's words, one of the most noted missionaries) drowned in those tears, which the sorrow of seeing herself abandoned forced continually from her : *Benedictus Deus, qui fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam, liberavit vos à naufragio, ut prope naufragam nostram missionem ab aquis lacrimarum summiq̃ue mœroris eriperet ; vos omnes in corde servo, & tanquam veris Societatis filios virosque Apostolicos intimis animi precordiis amplector, &c.* Thus he spake to us in his first letter, to encourage us to assist in the glorious labours of this mission.

Providence put it into our power in a little time to employ ourselves usefully there ; and if we had done no other good than was the drawing after us by our example several other missionaries who followed us, and who now are full of their holy labours in the work of God, it would be a great comfort to us, and a very great advantage to China. But that which is much more comfortable is, that we have hereby contributed very much towards removing those lets and hinderances to the propagating the gospel of which I spake before ; for, at the remonstrance of father Tachard, supported also by that of the reverend father general, Innocent XI. suspended the oath. And after, Clement VIII. granted to the king of Portugal to nominate three bishops, one of Pekin, the other of Nankim, and the third of Macao. And at this present, our holy father, who in his ownself hath all the zeal, all the piety, and all the wisdom of his predecessors, animated by the same spirit, and moved (if I might do myself the honour of saying so) with what I have had the honour to represent unto him of the present state of these missions, is about to regulate

all the particulars therein by the prudent counsel and advice of the sacred congregation ; to the end that hereafter nothing may be so much laid stress upon as the interest of religion, and that all kingdoms of Europe, being united in the love of Jesus Christ, may with one consent labour to bring about and perfect this great work.

Thus, sir, I have given you a general view of the establishment and progress of christianity in the empire of China, from the preaching of the apostles till the last times. This church, heretofore very famous, but after that wholly overturned by superstition, hath at last been re-established one age ago, by one of the greatest men of our society, and augmented by the labours of a great many missionaries, governed by wise prelates, honoured by the protection of many emperors, supported by the bounty of all the princes of Europe, and which is more for its glory, persecuted by all the enemies of truth, and made precious in the eyes of God, by the chains, the banishment, and martyrdom of the confessors. I am, with all imaginable respect,

S I R,

Your most humble

and most obedient Servant,



LETTER XII.

*To the most Reverend Father De la Chaize, Confessor
to the King.*

*Concerning the Manner how each Missionary preaches
the Gospel in China; and of the Fervency of the
New Christians.*

Most Reverend Father,

ALtho' the important affairs of China, which detain me at present at Rome, require all my application, and seem to be my excuse if I am wanting in performing any parts of my duties so exactly as I could desire, I cannot nevertheless in the least forget both the obligations which I myself have to you in particular, as well as the missions in the East in general.

It was you, most reverend father, who formerly drew out the platform of them, who just then made choice of their ministers, whom your testimonials, together with the esteem of one of the greatest princes upon earth; have rendered in process of time more renowned than all their particular qualifications.

This royal protection, under which we have undauntedly affronted dangers; those letters written on our behalf to sovereigns and their officers; those magnificent presents, those regularly settled pensions, those extraordinary helps, (and what we value much more) those so grave counsels, favouring so much of the spirit of God, wherewith you have in a manner hallowed our first voyages, and which we still look upon as the safest rule of our behaviour and conduct, are benefits either received from yourself, or procured by your means. 'Tis but just, most reverend father, that, in what part of the world soever we be, we
C e . . . should

should testify our acknowledgments. For my part I am persuaded, that one cannot give you more solid demonstrations of them, than by maintaining, by our great zeal, what you have performed to our advantage. I supposed you would be satisfied, and that at least I should perform my duty, by acquainting you with the success wherewith it hath pleased God to crown our labour; and, what benefits we may hope to reap from the missionaries which you yourself will form, or at least, who shall come to us out of your hands.

In a word, the time I shall employ, in writing to you on this subject, is so far from any ways diminishing that due care and constant endeavour to promote the welfare of our missions, that, without all doubt, it will much contribute to their future establishment; for I hope, that your protection, becoming thereby more effectual and solid, will more advance our affairs, than all the pains and care which I can possibly take for their success.

Pursuant to the first project that we had, we were all of us to stay at Pekin, in the palace, and service of the emperor; but providence otherwise ordered it, and they at last gave way to our inclination, which moved us to disperse ourselves all over the provinces, for the propagating of religion. They were content to detain father Gerbillon and father Bouvet at court, where they immediately applied themselves to the study of languages with such success, that they were quickly in a condition to assist the christians, yea, and to be employed by the emperor in several important affairs. The most considerable was the peace between the Muscovites and Chinese; the treaty of which was then a-foot 300 leagues from Pekin, whither father Gerbillon was sent with prince Sofan who was nominated plenipotentiary for the empire.

Nipchou was the place where the ministers of the two nations assembled; each of them having a house

in soldiers attending, to terminate, if occasion served, what the negotiation could not decide: the haughtiness of both did oftentimes make them fly out into extremes; which would have proved fatal to both parties, if father Gerbillon by his discretion had not moderated animosities. He continually passed from camp to camp, made speeches, proposed expedients, pacified their minds, and he dissembled whatever might be apt mutually to exasperate them in the conclusion: He so dexterously managed the common interests, that the peace was concluded to the satisfaction both of Chinese and Muscovites. Prince So-fan was so well pleased with the zeal and wisdom of this father, that he declared publicly, that, if it had not been for him, all had been in a desperate condition; he express'd himself about the matter to the emperor to the same effect, insomuch that this prince had the curiosity to be acquainted with him. He found him to be a very sensible person, capable, sincere, forward to execute, and even to anticipate his orders. This character wonderfully pleased the emperor; he had a mind to have him near his person, at the palace, in the campaign, and in his progress into Tartary, where he bestowed upon him so many signal marks of his esteem, that the grandees of his court might have perhaps conceived some jealousy from them, had not the father's modesty won him the affection of every body.

These first favours were followed by an extraordinary one that was much better relished by this missionary; he pitch'd upon him for his tutor in mathematics and philosophy conjointly with father Bovet, whose merit he likewise much esteemed. The passion, this prince hath for sciences, makes him very intent upon studies every day in a manner two or three hours together, which he spares from his pleasure: it is more than probable, that, by the inquiry into natural truth, providence will conduct him

by degrees to the eternal fountain of truth, without which, all others serve not so much to perfect the mind, as to puff it up with pride in the eyes of men, and render it inexcusable before God.

Father Verbiest had already begun to explain the sciences to him; but, besides his making use of the Chinese tongue in his lectures, which is not proper, by reason of its often repeated equivocal, to illustrate notions otherwise obscure enough of themselves: besides that, I say father Verbiest died. These fathers supposed the Tartarian tongue would be better liked by this prince, and that it might serve their turn the better to make the notions intelligible. It happened according to their expectation, and the emperor became in a short time so capable, that he composed a book of geometry. He afterwards gave it to the princes his sons, and undertook to be their master in it; he called them together every day, explained to them the most difficult propositions of Euclid; yea, and this prince, having upon his shoulders the government of one of the most potent empires of the world, did not disdain, with his rule and compass in his hand, to spend his time in the family in speculations, which interest alone scarce makes delightful to private persons.

Whilst these two fathers by their credit made themselves fit to be in a short time the main support of religion, father Fontaney, father Visdelou, and myself, did endeavour not to be unserviceable in the provinces. Father Fontaney went to Nankim, father Visdelou took care of the churches of Xansi, where I also remained some time with him; from whence afterwards I removed to Xensi, the ancient place of Father Faber's mission, the christians of which place notwithstanding their having been deserted these many years, do nevertheless preserve their first fervency, and are still looked upon as the mould that great flock, and model of other believers. V
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understood at that time, by our own proper experience, what was often told us, that *the harvest truly was great, and that happy is that labourer whom the Master of the harvest doth please to make use of to gather it in.* Every thing is matter of consolation in this glorious employment; the faith of the new converts, the innocence of the ancient, the aptness of the children, the devotion and modesty of women; but yet, one is more especially affected by some eminent and exemplary conversions, to perceive the work of grace now and then wrought in the hearts of idolaters.

The truth is, these are in respect of us convincing proofs of that truth which we preach and declare: For indeed, by what secret charm could we be able to animate dead minds, and raise them (if I may presume so to say) to reason, to God, to all the maxims of the most pure and refined morality; minds, that have been buried and immersed from their very infancy in flesh and blood? What force and power, what blandishment could be able in an instant to bring into captivity rebellious minds under the yoke of a religion so severe as ours is, if Jesus Christ himself did not work miracles, and if the holy Spirit, by the inward and invisible operation of grace, did not supply the defect of his ministers?

This is that, most reverend father, which we experience every day with astonishing comfort, which doth establish, strengthen, and settle us unmovable in the same faith which God produceth in idolaters. I would to God I were able to relate to you particularly all that passes in China on this subject, where, in spite of all the stratagems of devils, God is so constantly and resolutely glorified. Yet, not being able upon my departure to pick up the particular memorial of each church, I shall only content myself to tell you in part what I myself have observed in my mission, and after what manner I have made it my business

ness to adorn it, according to the ideas and practice of the most grave and ancient primitive missionaries.

All my business was reduced to three principal points; the first was to cherish and keep up the piety of old believers by the preaching of the word of God, and above all, by particular exhortations; which is abundantly more profitable and edifying than any thing that is spoken in publick, where the discourse is often not understood, either because of the people's stupidity, or else by reason of the preacher's ill utterance and pronounciation. These poor souls, whom simplicity and fervency make teachable, do oftentimes hear that with tears in their eyes, which they do not comprehend but by halves; but yet, they always improve and edify by what they understand perfectly. They are especially most taken with comparifons, parables, and histories; and albeit they are not acquainted nor accustomed to that vehement and sometimes passionate action of our preachers, yet for all that, they are moved and wrought upon when they speak to them with earnestness and concern.

I no sooner came to a private house to confess sick persons, or about other business, but presently you should have all the family, nay, and the christians too of the neighbourhood flock together about me, and intreat me to speak to them concerning God. I had made but an indifferent progress in understanding and pronouncing their tongue, especially when I first began to preach, which nevertheless gave them no manner of offence; so far from it, that, if they could but never so little apprehend what I meant, they never were cloy'd with hearing me.

I have moreover taken notice, that they had always rather I should preach myself, how barbarous soever my language might appear, than that I should get them instructed, as I sometimes

did by the help of a Chinese catechist, that had been formed some time before to exercises of this nature. But, my visits not being so frequent as I could have wished, I endeavoured to make them up by godly books, with which, by God's blessing, China is very well stored, there having been some missionaries sufficiently zealous and able to compose books, and that very politely, upon all the points of religion. They have very curious and compleat catechisms, wherein the entire and compleat body of the doctrine of christianity, the life, miracles, and death of our blessed Lord, the commandments of God and the church are clearly explained. There are likewise to be found particular expositions upon the gospels, treatises upon moral and christian duties, some solid controversies adapted to every body's capacity, practices of piety for the different conditions of life, prayers and instructions for the use of the sacraments, a body of divinity for the learned, for they have translated some part of Tho. Aquinas, and last of all, St. Ignatius's exercises for those that mind heavenly things. Infomuch, that this spiritual seed of the evangelical word is scattered all over, and multiplied an hundred fold.

I could have wished there might have been a translation of the Missal, upon the account of saying mass in Chinese, together with an exact version of the holy scriptures. Conformable to the permission obtained for that purpose, the Missal was finished, and father Couplet presented it some years ago to the pope: however, after having duly examined the matter, it was not thought convenient to make use of it, but they continued to say mass in the latin tongue, as in other places. As for the compleat version of the Bible, there are such weighty reasons why it should not forthwith be published, that it would seem a rash piece of impudence to do it, and so much the more, because there is already

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