

or at any rate charlatanism. Even in the most virtuous, even in the greatest," and his lips assumed an expression of disgust. "No, man cannot trust man."

"Madame de—— when she was making a collection for her poor orphans, used to tell me that such and such a prince had just given ten louis, a sheer lie. But what am I talking about? Napoleon at St. Helena. . . . Pure charlatanism like the proclamation in favour of the king of Rome."

"Great God! If a man like that at a time when his fortune ought to summon him sternly to his duty will sink into charlatanism, what is one to expect from the rest of the human species?"

"Where is truth? In religion. Yes," he added, with a bitter smile of utter contempt. "In the mouth of the Maslons, the Frilairs, the Castanèdes—perhaps in that true Christianity whose priests were not paid any more than were the apostles. But St. Paul was paid by the pleasure of commanding and speaking, getting himself talked about."

"Oh, if there were only a true religion. Fool that I am, I see a Gothic cathedral and venerable stained-glass windows and my weak heart conjures up the priest to fit the scene. My soul would understand him, my soul has need of him. I can only find a nincompoop with dirty hair. About as comforting as a chevalier de Beauvoisis."

"But a true priest, a Massillon, a Fénelon. Massillon sacrificed Dubois. Saint-Simon's memoirs have spoilt the illusion of Fénelon, but he was a true priest anyway. In those days, tender souls could have a place in the world where they could met together. We should not then have been isolated. That good priest would have talked to us of God. But what God? Not the one of the Bible, a cruel, petty despot, full of vindictiveness, but the God of Voltaire—just, good, infinite."

He was troubled by all the memories of that Bible which he knew by heart. "But how on earth, when the deity is three people all at the same time, is one to believe in the great name of GOD, after the frightful way in which our priests have abused it."

"Living alone. What a torture."

"I am growing mad and unreasonable," said Julien to himself, striking his forehead. "I am alone here in this cell."